The Method of the Vedanta

A Critical Account of the Advaita Tradition

Sri Swami Satchidānandendra

Translated by A. J. Alston

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SRI SWAMI
SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASVATI

Translated from the Sanskrit by:
A.J. ALSTON

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS
PRIVATE LIMITED • DELHI

First Indian Edition: Delhi, 1997
First published in 1989 by Kegan Paul International Limited, London

ISBN: 81-208-1358-8

Also available at:

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS
41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007
8 Mahalaxmi Chamber, Warden Road, Mumbai 400 026
120 Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004
Sanas Plaza, Subhash Nagar, Pune 411 002
16 St. Mark's Road, Bangalore 560 001
8 Camac Street, Calcutta 700 017
Ashok Rajpath, Patna 800 004
Chowk, Varanasi 221 001

PRINTED IN INDIA

BY JAINENDRA PRAKASH JAIN AT SHRI JAINENDRA PRESS,
A-45 NARAINA PHASE I, NEW DELHI 110 028
AND PUBLISHED BY NARENDRA PRAKASH JAIN FOR
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED,
BUNGALOW ROAD, DELHI 110 007

FOREWORD

> There is a saying of those that know the tradition: 'That which cannot be expressed is expressed through false attribution and subsequent recantation.'*

Every argument has its origin in certain life-contexts, certain cultural situations. No argument starts in a vacuum because human beings are born in an already interpreted world. That world assumes a certain form of life, a form of life in which man is born and lives. Yet there is something amiss in every interpretation, some lack, some lapse, something missed and not grasped. Hence the urge to improve upon every received world view, every cultural disposition. We, sons and daughters of man are children of ontological disinheritance, we who live as perpetual displacements. This original penury we would undo through replacing one interpretation with another interpretation, one discourse with another discourse, one reality principle with another reality principle. The history of cultures is replete with such pathetic attempts. Myths gave place to theology, theology to philosophy, philosophy to science and, within each of these discourses, the less sophisticated interpretations to the more sophisticated ones. There is, as I said, something pathetic,

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* Śaṅkara on the *Bhagavadgītā* (13.13)

even, I would say, tragic, about these attempts. For discoveries often turn into closures, triumphs into disasters, progress into decline. New world views often demand a heavy price in terms of practice and its decadence, even in terms of holocausts and suicidal wars. Our new world view may, sometimes one fears, end up in an unprecedented tragedy.

To repose faith in new interpretations and new discourses is to be insensitive to the enormity of our loss, to the impoverishment of our souls and the staleness of our world. It is to be asleep to the truth that we know neither ourselves, nor our world, nor the awesome majesty of the word that we so heedlessly reify into a mere utensil. Three fourths of man, say the Vedas, is lost to man and three fourths of the word. To find what he has lost of himself and of his speech, he has to give up the arrogant privilege he has appropriated for himself, the privilege of giving meaning to what is, of interpreting it in terms of concepts, received or fabricated. This, says the Vedāntic tradition, is *avidyā*, this what he would call a privilege. For all that he deems to be tragic and cursed flows from it, from this interpretive passion which resides in man as something more primordial than himself. This act of deprivileging himself he cannot accomplish through that of a leaping will, itself a child of *avidyā* but through a sustained and careful analysis of his interpretations and, more importantly, through living the dispositions they imply. For we cannot, warns the true tradition of Vedānta, conclusively refute an interpretation in purely theoretical terms. Something in it survives all criticism, all refutation. One has to live the disposition implicit in a given interpretation to find it disown itself. Every interpretation is, to recant a little of what has been said above, redemptive, redemptive to the extent it can disown itself, find itself false. This it can but

only if it is analysed in depth and lived in depth. We have to live the *otherness* of realism, the otherness that informs man's relationship with the world, the essential *oneness* that idealism has found in that relationship and the uncertainty that ambiguists reveal in it with an almost uncanny ruthlessness. One has to live this *otherness*, this *oneness*, this *ambiguity* to find its truth and the limitation of that truth. One has also to live as *pure consciousness* of Vedānta, consciousness unrelated to any object, to (see) it transform itself into what we mortals can only call reality or the ultimate truth of things. There is no interpretation that does not command our respect, and, equally, there is no interpretation that can demand our allegiance. For our allegiance is with Being and not with how man or his speech can grasp it.

There is a tendency in the scholastic and commentatorial tradition of Advaita Vedānta to confuse interpretation with truth, symbol with reality. This tradition often dogmatised the redemptive untruths of the Upaniṣads into truths absolute and tried to retain what it was supposed to discard or recant. *The Method of the Vedanta* highlights this tendency of this tradition with a remarkable depth and clarity. With the exception of the great masters of this tradition, masters like Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara and Sureśvara, our commentators have all but forgotten the true tradition, the tradition of false attribution and subsequent recantation, of *adhyāropāpavāda*. They did not know how to de-think their thoughts and unsay their theories.

The composition of the *Vedānta-Prakriyā-Pratyabhijñā* is indeed an important event in the long history of advaita scholarship and interpretation. The work succeeds, to a great extent, in dispelling so many misconceptions which the ingenuity of scholars, traditional as well as modern, has woven around the teachings of the Upaniṣads. Thinkers and

jijñāsus, unequipped with knowledge of Sanskrit, would ever remain indebted to Professor A.J. Alston for giving them such a beautiful translation of this masterpiece. Even scholars of Sanskrit would find the translation helpful, such is its lucidity, accuracy and readability. Many of the obscure passages in the original turn remarkably transparent in this translation. Lovers of Indian culture would, I am sure, join me in expressing our deep sense of gratitude to the translator.

We have also the emotion to say, 'Thank you!' to the soul of his late wife, who typed out the entire manuscript even when she knew she was dying. Professor Alston chose to express his pain and her heroism through an understatement. Let me not profane his feelings through volubility.

There can be no doubt that this translation has won, and will win, for the *Vedānta-Prakriyā-Pratyabhijñā* the attention that it so richly deserves but could not receive earlier because of the deplorable state into which Sanskrit studies have fallen in our land. One could only wish that the Svāmin had also highlighted the lived dispositions implied in the various interpretations that we are called upon to recant. For the great teachers of the Upaniṣads demanded of their disciples to *outlive* views, not to *discard* them. Only this way, they knew, could man open out to truth, only this way could truth obey his call.

This way of innocence we badly need in these our clever but unhappy times. *The Method of the Vedanta* should prove, to an extent, a curative for this malady of our civilisation.

SOM RAJ GUPTA

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The present large-scale work is not exactly a history or a reference book or a reader, but it has something of the character of all three. Its purpose is to establish a clear view of the traditional Advaita Vedanta based on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gītā and Brahma Sūtras as systematized by Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara and Sureśvara, unencumbered by the mass of conflicting theories developed by later authors of the school. Instead of crediting Śaṅkara with an ontology, a cosmology, an epistemology and the other paraphernalia of traditional western metaphysics, the author concentrates on his theological method, and shows how he interpreted the texts that communicate to the student a direct awareness of his true nature as the Self of all by the process of 'false attribution followed by later retraction'. The characteristic views of the later authors are examined, in varying degrees of detail, to see where they throw light on this teaching which leads to direct awareness of the Self, and where, more frequently, they misunderstand and obscure it. Attention is paid to Bhartṛprapañca and other pre-Śaṅkara Vedanta theorists, and a chapter is accorded to Bhāskara as a characteristic representative of conscious opposition to Śaṅkara within the Vedanta fold.

The leading western authority on Śaṅkara's Advaita in postwar years, the late Professor Paul Hacker of Münster, remarked on the 'sharp-sighted' way in which the author of The Method of the Vedanta drew attention, in his earlier work called The Mūlāvidyā Nirāsaḥ, to a number of characteristics of Śaṅkara's doctrine that stand in pointed contrast to the received dogmas of the Advaita school. It is hoped that this free translation of the more detailed VEDĀNTA PRAKRIYĀ PRATYABHIJÑĀ may help to stimulate scholars in India and the West to go back to the Sanskrit original and ponder again the real significance of Śaṅkara's Vedanta doctrine in the light of it. It should also provide helpful pointers for the

guidance of the ordinary student who wishes to pick out what Śaṅkara actually said from the confused mass of teaching coming from the later theorists. The work should be of particular interest to the spiritual enquirer because it concentrates strictly on the correct interpretation of the central teachings of the Upanishads: no space is accorded to the detailed refutation of secular systems.

The main argument is carried forward by the author himself, in passages which are given in thicker type. These passages are backed by extensive quotations from the writers he is discussing, given in lighter type. In places the author adds explanatory notes which are here given in italics, the whole scheme corresponding to the three different forms of Devanāgarī type used in the Sanskrit original. A few italicized translator's notes are inserted, and in fact all passages enclosed within brackets are explanatory material by the translator. The system of numbering in the quoted extracts within the various sections has been simplified and slightly altered. As the result of a small correction, the section-numbers in the translation exceed those of the original by one from 183 to 191 and by two from 193 to 305. In a very few cases, where the translator failed to trace a bibliographical reference given in the original, he supplied a reference to a different text which had the same words in the belief that it would be more accessible to the western reader (e.g. the reference to the White Yajur Veda on p. 2). He has also supplied nearly all the cross-references marked 'M.V.', which should not be considered part of the original work, and is responsible for all translations of quoted texts, though ample references have been given to existing translations where available. In the case of some of the texts quoted, the translator has used more recent and accessible editions than those used in the original work. References to Sanskrit texts used are invariably given, except in the case of Śaṅkara, where the translator unfortunately did not have full access to the editions used by the author.

One point deserves special mention. The words 'Ignorance' and 'Consciousness' are given with a capital when they are used (as they most frequently are) in a technical sense peculiar to the school, though they may occasionally appear without capitals when they are used in their ordinary English sense (there are the inevitable border-line cases). But one should note carefully that the terms 'Ignorance' and 'metaphysical Ignorance', which are used synonymously, did not have the same meaning for Śaṅkara as they came to have for his followers. For Śaṅkara, metaphysical Ignorance was the crucial superimposition of Self and not-self that makes empirical experience possible (M.V. pp. 45 ff.;112); for the author of the post-Śaṅkara work called the Pañcapādikā, metaphysical Ignorance was that (assumed) 'power of Ignorance' that brought superimposition into being (M.V. p.387). It was this latter

conception that prevailed in the school, and it is a large part of the purpose of the present work to demonstrate its fallibility.

Established scholars of the calibre of M. Hiriyanna and S.S. Sūryanārāyaṇa Śāstrī have confessed to doubt and uncertainty in handling some of the passages here encountered. There must be many cases where the present translator has failed to grasp the true meaning. Nevertheless, it is hoped that even an imperfect translation of such a penetrating enquiry into the fundamental principles of Advaita Vedanta may serve as a useful stimulus to further study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks and acknowledgments, as translator, are due in the first place to the Adhyātma Prakāśa Kāryālaya, Holenarsipur, South India, for granting me permission to translate the work and for supplying supplementary materials.

They are also due, and in very great measure, to my late wife Ann, who typed the entire body of the work with selfless devotion in the last stages of the cancer from which she died.

They are also due to Miss Mary Alcock and Mrs M. Andralojc for help in checking the final text and references; to Mrs Patsy Clasen for completing the typing and corrections; and also to Mr P. Hopkins, Chairman of K.P.I., for taking up the publication of the book and making some very helpful arrangements.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ā.D.S.	Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra
Ā.S.S.	Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series
B.B.V.	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya Vārtika, see Sureśvara
B.I.	Bibliotheca Indica
B.S.	Brahma Sūtra, see Bādarāyaṇa
B.S.Bh.	Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya, see Śaṅkara
Bh.B.S.Bh	Bhāskara's B.S.Bh., see Bhāskara
Bh.G.	Bhagavad Gītā
Bh.G.Bh.	Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya, see Śaṅkara
Bhā	Bhāmatī, see Vācaspati Miśra
C.S.S.	Chowkhambā Sanskrit Series
G.O.S.	Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda
G.P.	Gītā Press, Gorakhpur
I.P.	Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, see Radhakrishnan
I.S.	Iṣṭa Siddhi, see Vimuktātman
Kh.	Khaṇḍana-Khaṇḍa-Khādya, see Śrī Harṣa
M.Bh.	Mahābhārata, see Vyāsa and Mahābhārata
M.R.V.	Māṇḍūkya Rahasya Vivṛtiḥ, see Sac
M.V.	Method of the Vedanta (the present work)
N.C.	Naiṣadīya (or Naiṣada) Caritra, see Śrī Harṣa

N.Sid.	Naiṣkarmya Siddhi, see Sureśvara
P.M.	Pūrva Mīmāṃsaka (ritualist)
P.M.B.	Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya, see Śabara
P.M.S.	Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Sūtra, see under Śabara
P.P.	Pañcapādikā, q.v. in Bibliography
Ś.B.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
S.B.E.	Sacred Books of the East, Oxford, reprinted Delhi
S.L.S.	Siddhānta Leśa Saṅgraha, see Appaya Dīkṣita
Ś.S.	Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka, see Sarvajñātman
S.V.	Sambandha Vārtika, see Sureśvara
Ś.V.	Śloka Vārtika, see Kumārila
Sac	Saccidānandendra Svāmin = Sri Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati, author of the present work
T.B.V.	Taittirīya Bhāṣya Vārtika, see Sureśvara
T.B.Vi.	Taittirīya Bhāṣyārtha Vimarśinī, see Sac
T.D.	Tattva Dīpana (comm. on V.), see Akhaṇḍānanda
T.N.	Translator's Note
T.P.	Tattva Pradīpikā, see Citsukha
T.S.	Taittirīya Saṃhitā
Tai. Br.	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
Taitt. Ār.	Taittirīya Araṇyaka
U.S.	Upadeśa Sāhasrī, see Mayeda
V.	Vivaraṇa, see Prakāśātman
V.P.P.	Vedānta Prakriyā Pratyabhijñā
V.P.S.	Vivaraṇa Prameya Saṅgraha, see Bhāratītīrtha

LATIN TERMS

ad fin.	towards the end
ad init.	towards the beginning
ad loc.	at the place cited
ibid.	at the same place
idem	the same (work)
loc. cit.	at the place cited above
per se	in itself
q.v.	which see
sic	left as it stands in the original
supra	above
viz.	that is to say

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INTRODUCTION

THE METHOD OF COMMUNICATING THE SUPREME REALITY IN THE UPANISHADS

There is one point of which careful and acute students of the Māṇḍūkya Kārikās of Śrī Gauḍapāda and the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara on the Brahma Sūtras, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gītā are well aware. They know that the concern of the Upanishads is to communicate to sincere enquirers direct experience of the supreme reality as their own Self — that supreme reality which is non-dual, has no particular features, and is beyond the range of speech and mind. They know that, to this end, the texts begin by falsely ascribing to this entity various attributes that it does not really possess. They know that the texts refer to it by such terms as 'Being', 'the Absolute', 'the Self' and so on, and speak of it as knowable, as being of the nature of Consciousness and Bliss, as being accessible through the teachings of the Veda and the Teacher, as undergoing a real transformation (pariṇāma) to manifest as the world, and as entering, in the form of the individual soul, into the universe it has projected, and enjoying it as an object of experience. Thus we find such texts as, 'In the beginning, my dear one, this (world) was Being alone' (Chānd.VI.ii.1), 'Verily, in the beginning this (world) was the Absolute' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10), 'In the beginning this (world) was verily the Self, one only' (Ait. I.i.1), 'This is what has to be known, the eternal, the self-existent' (Śvet.I.12), 'The Absolute is Consciousness and Bliss' (Bṛhad.III.ix.28,7), 'That goal which all the Vedas proclaim' (Kaṭha I.ii.15), 'He who has a Teacher can know' (Chānd.VI.xiv.2), 'He became both the solid and the impalpable' (Taitt.II.6), and 'Let me enter as the living soul and unfold name and form' (Chand.VI.iii.2).

But these attributes are only imagined in this way for purposes of instruction. These same upanishadic texts mean to ward off any suspicion that the superimposed attributes belong

to the supreme reality. So at the end of various passages of teaching they clearly retract what they had said earlier. Thus we have such texts as 'The Self must be apprehended simply as "It is", this being the truth of both its two forms (with and without apparent conditioning adjuncts). When it has been apprehended simply as "It is", its true nature becomes clear' (Kaṭha II.iii.13), 'He knows, and there is no knower of Him' (Śvet.III.19), 'You cannot know the knower of knowing' (Bṛhad. III.iv.2), 'That from which words fall back without attaining access, together with the mind' (Taitt.II.9), 'It is not born, neither does it die' (Kaṭha I.ii.18), 'Though really unborn, it appears as if born in many different forms' (White Yajurveda xxxi.19), 'All this universe is but the Absolute (brahman) alone' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.11), '(We find that, under analysis), the firehood of fire has vanished: a modification is a mere name, a suggestion of speech' (Chānd.VI.iv.1), and 'That is the real. That is the Self. That thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7).

And there are certain passages which specifically deny all knowable characteristics of the principle of reality called the Indestructible, such as the characteristic of being a substance or an attribute. For example, we have 'O Gārgī, this the knowers of the Absolute call the Indestructible. It is not gross, not subtle, not short, not long, neither red (like fire) nor fluid (like water), neither shadow nor darkness, neither wind nor ether, not adhesive, not taste, not odour, without eyes, without ears, without voice, without mind, without brilliance, without the vital principle, without an orifice, without a measure, having nothing within and nothing without. It consumes nothing, nor does anything consume it' (Bṛhad.III. viii.8), 'Imperceptible, inapprehensible, having no source from which it proceeds and having no colours or features, without eyes, ears, hands or feet' (Muṇḍ.I.i.6), and 'Without sound, impalpable, without form, beyond decay, without taste, constant, without odour, without beginning or end, fixed, beyond Mahat (the cosmic mind)' (Kaṭha I.iii.15).

THE SENSE IN WHICH THE UPANISHADS ARE AN AUTHORITATIVE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

This principle of reality called the Absolute (brahman), since it is that which manifests in the guise of the knower, is that on which all right empirical cognition and so on depend. Its existence is therefore established as logically prior to all empirical experience, including valid empirical knowledge. For, as the Self of all, it is immediately evident; and because it is self-luminous experience, it is self-evident, and does not, like pots and other objects, require anything else apart from itself to make itself known. For all these reasons it does not require any special positive teaching. So the Upanishads do not fulfil their function as authoritative means of knowledge,

in this context, through revealing a hitherto unknown object, in the manner of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge. How, then, do they fulfil this function? The competent authorities in this field quote the text 'But when all has become his own Self, then what could a person see and with what?' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15). And they say that it is only by a figure of speech that the Upanishads are spoken of as an authoritative means of knowledge. For their function is to communicate that reality in its true nature, beyond the play of the means of knowledge and their objects, merely by putting an end to the superimposition onto it of attributes it does not possess.

SUPERIMPOSITION AND ITS REMOVAL DO NOT AFFECT THE ABSOLUTE

The Absolute is not affected in any way either by the superimpositions made upon it in worldly experience or by the false attributions deliberately made by the Veda and the Teacher for purposes of instruction, or by their subsequent retraction. It gains no superior quality, nor does it suffer any defect. For the Absolute is pure Being, ever void of all plurality. It is imagined as associated with plurality and as subject to transmigratory experience by the metaphysically ignorant people of the world. The Upanishads and the Teachers deliberately conform their teaching to this erroneous view and say, 'All this is in truth the Absolute, homogeneous and void of all plurality. There is no universe of plurality apart from the Absolute. The individual soul is not anything different from it either'. For there are such upanishadic texts as, 'All this universe is (in truth) nothing but the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.11), 'All this is but the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2), and 'There is no other seer, no other hearer, no other thinker, no other knower but He' (Bṛhad.III.vii.23).

Nor should one suppose that the Upanishads and the Teachers conjure away a real universe by their teaching. The Upanishads never admit that any real distinctions exist which would justify us in speaking of a traditional science and a pupil learning it, or of a real metaphysical Ignorance that truly afflicted the pupil and was really brought to an end by the traditional teaching. When they speak of 'all this', it is but a device adopted for purposes of teaching. But no 'all this' exists at the time of teaching, or has existed before or will exist afterwards. This is the final truth. And thus one of the great authorities (Śrī Gauḍapāda) has said: 'If the world of plurality really existed, it would no doubt really come to an end. But this duality is a mere illusion. Non-duality is the final truth. False imagination might come to an end if it were anything that anyone had really imagined. This doctrine (that the world of plurality is imagined) is (itself only) for

the sake of teaching (those in metaphysical Ignorance). When the truth is known, there is no duality' (G.K.I.17,18).

THIS IS THE ONLY METHOD OF INTERPRETING THE UPANISHADS SANCTIONED BY TRADITION

This method of teaching is met with throughout the Upanishads. We know from the text 'That which has no plurality is communicated through false attribution followed by retraction', quoted in Śrī Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara's Gītā Commentary (XIII.13), that those who knew the true upanishadic tradition practised this method of teaching before the time of Śrī Bhagavatpāda himself. And we know also from the words of Gauḍapāda that he taught this traditional method. For he says, 'The text denies all that it had previously taught, by saying "He (the Self) is neither this nor that" (Bṛhad.II.iii.6), and by showing that the Self is beyond all perception and conception. Through this the Unborn is able to manifest' (G.K.III.26). The meaning is that, simply for purposes of instruction, the Veda first attributes to the Self, as principle of reality, features that it does not in fact possess. And it does this even though the Self is that which alone exists, within and without (Muṇḍ.II.i.2), and is also unborn and without differentiation. Then, when the Self has been thus taught, and the work of positive instruction is complete, the Veda itself retracts whatever it had previously taught, to show that none of it was the final truth.

REASONS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE PRESENT WORK

This method employed throughout all the classical Upanishads, though one in essence, assumes many different forms. Included among the sub-varieties to be examined below are forms of teaching in which the Absolute is associated with cause and effect, with creation, with the distinction between the individual soul and the Lord, with universals and particulars, with the distinction between the five 'sheaths' (kośa) and with the three 'states' (of waking, dream and dreamless sleep). I have written this book to bring this method home to the hearts of spiritual enquirers by presenting it in an exact exposition. Then, after showing how it has become obscured, I have restated this pure traditional method of upanishadic teaching, to enable modern enquirers to recognize it, and thereby to put them on the right path, free from all thorns, to a correct appreciation of the meaning of the Upanishads.

In regard to the teaching being obscured, I have shown in the course of the work how the teachers of Bhagavatpāda

Śaṅkara's time, and other earlier ones who belonged to different schools, were not able to recognize the paramount importance of this method of teaching found in the upanishadic texts. I have shown how they supposed that bondage and ignorance were realities, and that the seeker of liberation achieved his goal through bringing them to an end through resort to various practical disciplines alone. And I have explained how, in the light of these opinions, they devised a number of different and conflicting techniques for explaining the upanishadic texts.

Further, I have shown that there have been other expositors of a later period who, calling themselves followers of Bhagavatpāda, have not properly studied this true technique, and, while affirming that their views were in agreement with his, have set up theories that conflict both with his teaching and mutually with each other. I have also pointed out how there have been Vedantic commentators of other schools, later than Bhagavatpāda, who have been unwilling to acknowledge the importance of this true technique, and who have supposed that Bhagavatpāda's whole position has been refuted when a mere detail in his explanation of his position has been refuted, thereby deluding both themselves and others. I have also shown how there are Vedantic scholars of a later day who suppose that the Advaita propounded by Bhagavatpāda can be preserved merely by refuting the objections raised by the commentators of other schools, who do not belong to the true tradition. And I have shown, finally, that such scholars are often engaged in the defence of positions that are in fact in contradiction with those of Bhagavatpāda, without their even being aware of the fact.

THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE PRESENT WORK

The work is not limited to the exposition of the pure upanishadic spiritual technique and the exposure of many of the deviations found in other techniques. It is the writer's view that the belief that all that is required is an explanation of the Vedic texts according to one's own opinions, arrived at by mere reason, has been the chief cause of Vedantins' falling a prey to disputation and mutual contradiction. For this reason he has supplied an outline of the history of Vedantic thought as a means to examine the various techniques of interpretation of the upanishadic texts that it offers.

In this connection, it has been shown how the early Vedanta Teachers who came before Śrī Śaṅkara, though admitting in general that the message of the Upanishads was non-dualism, were not able to avoid points of mutual disagreement. The main positions of Bhartṛprapañca, who may have been approximately a contemporary of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara, have received

as complete an exposition as was possible from the commentaries of the latter and the Vārtikas of Sureśvara and their sub-commentaries by Ānandagiri. And they have been briefly refuted in accordance with the commentaries and Vārtikas.

Amongst the schools appearing after Śrī Bhagavatpāda, that of the author of the Vārtikas (Sureśvara) has been set out in some detail. For it was the venerable Sureśvara who expounded and supported in his own inimitable way the technique followed by Bhagavatpāda. Amongst those who adopted a standpoint of opposition to it, special attention has been given to the doctrines of Maṇḍana Miśra and Bhāskarācārya. For we shall show afterwards that almost all the later Vedantins were influenced by these two in working out their own line of thought.

Amongst the schools of those who wrote explanatory works as followers of Bhagavatpāda, those of the Pañcapādikā and the Vivaraṇa sub-commentary composed upon it, as well as that of the Bhāmatī, have been set out and accorded special prominence. The aim is to bring out how the arguments are tainted with the defects both of mutual contradiction and of contradiction with the commentaries of Śrī Bhagavatpāda. Other schools, up to and including that of Sarvajñātma Muni, have also been dealt with, to show how they are entangled in mere dialectics, a kind of vice indulged in to show off the author's skills as an interpreter. Efforts have also been made, within the limits of the author's capacity, to bring out how the Veda and reason and immediate intuition co-operate together, and how the earnest seeker of liberation can acquire a correct conviction about the truths taught in the Upanishads by following the traditional methods of enquiry approved by Bhagavatpāda, and thus attain their end.

A number of special points have been made clear in the course of the survey. For example, it has been pointed out how the Upanishads do not derive their authority as a means of knowledge solely from the fact of their being included among the texts of the Veda. They derive it from their power to lead ultimately to a direct experience of the Self, arising from the cancellation of all play of the empirical means of knowledge with their objects. This power is associated with their demonstration of the fact that the state of being an individual knowing subject, which is the prior condition for all empirical experience, is itself based on metaphysical Ignorance. (M.V.28) Among further special points are the following. The method observed in the Upanishads for communicating the metaphysical truth should be called Āgama (traditional instruction). That form of argument which follows the Veda and is a subordinate discipline practised for the sake of direct experience, as well as the secular reasoning used in its support, should be called 'reason'. The terms 'traditional instruction' and 'reason' are thus used by the true experts in Vedanta in a very precise technical sense. Empty dialectic based on perception and inference alone (śuṣka-tarka) amounts

to nothing more than personal opinion, and has no place in this discipline (M.V.31). Here, the term 'authoritative means of knowledge' (pramāṇa) is applied (not to the reasoning itself but) to that direct experience in which reasoning must invariably culminate if it is to be called upanishadic in the proper sense of the term (M.V.31). And the particular nature of direct experience as acknowledged in Vedanta has been explained as direct experience of the Self. This is what follows when the Self has been realized in its own true nature after all superimposition has been abolished through metaphysical knowledge (vidyā) (M.V.31). The purpose of this explanation is to rule out the teachings about 'trance' (samādhi) and so forth found in other schools.

No doubt the upanishadic doctrine maintains that all play of the empirical means of knowledge with their objects is based on Ignorance. But in this doctrine it is not the case that the visible realm is merely reasoned away by negative dialectic, as in the case of the teaching of the Buddhist Nihilists. For recourse is had to two standpoints in regard both to action and knowledge — the worldly standpoint and the Vedic standpoint. Until the worldly standpoint has been contradicted and cancelled on the strength of direct realization of the truth of the higher Vedic standpoint, the secular means of knowledge, such as perception, inference and the rest, all have validity in their respective fields, as do the Vedic passages dealing, for instance, with meditators and themes for meditation, or with injunctions and prohibitions and also the portions of the Veda dealing with liberation. The object of explaining all this is to rule out the incursion of the views of other schools (M.V.48 and 49).

Again, it is true that in the upanishadic doctrine the Absolute (brahman) must be the Self of all, without differentiation, without a second, ever pure, conscious and liberated by nature. And hence we have the verse, 'There is no dissolution and no creation. There is no one bound and there is no one undergoing spiritual discipline. There is no one seeking liberation and no one who has attained liberation. This is the highest truth' (G.K.II.32). Nevertheless, it has been explained how, when things are viewed from the standpoint of our experience in metaphysical Ignorance, learning and other helpful acquisitions have to be pursued by those earnestly desirous of liberation, and there must be firm adherence to knowledge (jñāna-niṣṭhā) once it has arisen (M.V.58). Liberation, when it consists in establishment in one's own true Self accompanied by the renunciation of all activity after the cessation of Ignorance, may be referred to by the term 'immediate release' (sadyo-mukti) (M.V.59 and 60). And from the standpoint of empirical experience we may speak of 'final release' (ātyantika-mukti) when the body falls (on death) at the end of the experience of the portion of merit and demerit that initiated the life in which liberation was obtained (M.V.60). And although from the

standpoint of empirical experience we can think of liberation in three different forms as 'release by stages' (krama-mukti), 'immediate release' (sadyo-mukti) and 'release after death' (videha-mukti), yet in release in its true nature there are no distinctions, since it is by nature our own Self, ever in our possession (M.V.61). From this empirical standpoint, therefore, the distinction between means and ends is intelligible — all this we have explained.

CONCLUSION

How far this effort has been successful must be left to the judgment of the acknowledged experts in the study of upanishadic doctrine. Whatever inkling I have been able to obtain of the true power of the traditional method has come through sustained remembrance of the holy feet of Bhagavatpāda. I offer this book to that World-Teacher in the true sense of the words, quite content with this alone, and indeed regarding myself as highly fortunate. As with my other works before, I offer this first part of the work called 'Recognition of the true Method of the Vedanta' to the Working Committee of the Adhyātma Prakāśa Kāryālaya at Holenarsipur to print and publish. They have enthusiastically accepted the work of disseminating my particular views on the Vedanta through the publication of my writings. It is my heart-felt prayer that the Lord Nārāyaṇa may bless this Committee so that, having earned the grace of Śrī Bhagavatpāda through their efforts in printing, publishing and distributing this first volume, they may be able to take up the publication of the second volume at a later time.

Saccidānandendra Sarasvatī Bhikṣu,
whose support is the remembrance of
Śrī Śaṅkara's holy feet.

Adhyātma Prakāśa Kāryālaya,
Thursday, 30th January 1964.

CHAPTER I
THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING THE TRUE METHOD

OM! Reverence to the line of Seers,
beginning with Brahmā, who have established
the tradition of the knowledge of the
Absolute! Reverence to the Great Ones!
Reverence to the Gurus!

1 THE TRADITIONAL METHOD OF THE VEDANTA THAT HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN BY AN UNBROKEN SUCCESSION OF GURUS, BEGINNING WITH BRAHMĀ

It is well known to those who follow the Veda that the phrase 'the method of the Vedanta' refers to the method for teaching knowledge of the Absolute observed in the Upanishads. Knowledge of the Absolute first manifests at the beginning of a world-period in the mind of Hiraṇyagarbha or Brahmā, who has received the Veda from the supreme Lord. The method, carried on continuously by a succession of Teachers beginning with Brahmā, has even come down to certain Teachers of modern times. And earnest seekers of release can still today achieve their goal by acquiring an unshakable conviction about the truths in the science of the Upanishads, taught by a true Guru. For we have the upanishadic text, 'In search of release, I take refuge in that deity, the light of my intellect, who projects Brahmā at the beginning of a world-period and delivers to him the Vedas' (Śvet.VI.18).

2 THOUGH THE METHOD HAS BEEN CLEARLY PROCLAIMED IN THE THREE STARTING-POINTS OF THE VEDANTA TRADITION (PRASTHĀNATRAYA), CONFUSION HAS BEEN INTRODUCED BY VARIOUS TEACHERS

This method of the Vedanta has received the support of the Bhagavad Gītā and other works, according to the principle 'The

Veda engenders knowledge in him who is fit to receive it'. The true distinction and true relation between the way of action and the way of renunciation has been established, and the character of those fit to tread them properly determined. The method has also been established through rational arguments by the revered Bādarāyaṇa Ācārya, who composed an exegetical work (the Brahma Sūtras) explaining the upanishadic texts.

However, in the course of long time the traditional path has occasionally fallen almost into oblivion. In these circumstances it has sometimes happened that certain Teachers, unable to discern the true nature of this method on account of their own mental imperfections, their minds deranged by impressions received from the teachings of other schools, interpreted the upanishadic teaching to their pupils in all sorts of different ways according to their personal understanding. On account of this, they occasionally gave out the teaching of other schools as if they were the traditional doctrine, and in this way it has come about that certain extraneous teachings have gained currency as orthodox Vedanta. Confusion about the true upanishadic doctrine was thus introduced by authors representing various schools of Vedanta, who made free use of quotation of texts, allied both to genuine reasoning and to sophistry. Then it was that Śrī Gauḍapāda Ācārya, actuated solely by a desire to serve the people, composed his Kārikās and stated the true traditional method in its proper form, through the medium of an explanation of the meaning of the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad. And Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, as well as his pupils and followers, propagated his commentaries on the three starting-points of the Vedanta (the Prasthānatraya, *viz.* the classical Upanishads, Brahma Sūtras and Gītā), thoroughly clarifying the true method, and purging away the mud of all the different spurious methods of interpretation. For their conviction was that if anyone heedlessly embraced any random method of interpretation he would be prevented from attaining the supreme good, and would fall into adversity.

3 DIFFICULTY OF RECOGNIZING THE TRUE METHOD CAUSED BY THE RISE OF NEW SCHOOLS

Even so, with the passage of time, the commentaries of Bhagavatpāda, too, fell into obscurity through the weak understanding of their students. Works had been written by Bhagavatpāda's direct pupil Sureśvara Ācārya to explain further the meaning of these commentaries, but, being themselves in places difficult to understand, they were not enough to prevent those whose minds had become affected by other traditions from entering onto wrong paths. Further, various expository works were written by people who could not shake off the influence of the theories of other schools, and gradually more and more con-

fusion about the true method of the Vedanta was introduced by people indulging in all sorts of different theories. To add to our misfortunes, certain dualist Vedantins arose, natural enemies of Advaita, who composed new commentaries in which they took hold of whatever explanations and theories of Advaita were current in their day, and refuted them as if they were the views of the revered Commentator himself. There are also hundreds of independent treatises by authors of our own school which proclaim themselves, without warrant, to have been written by Śrī Bhagavatpāda. And thus it has come about that the teachings of the revered Commentator can no longer promote recognition of the true method of the Vedanta even when they are heard, as the minds of the hearers are confused by the din of the quarrelling disputants. Formidable indeed is the power of Kali Yuga!

4 AN OBJECTION RAISED BY MODERN STUDENTS

Students whose minds have been driven this way and that by the various dissentient theorists are apt to raise the following objection. Amidst all this confusion, how can we distinguish the pure method of the Vedanta from those different theories which merely masquerade as such? For a long time now, all manner of different theories have been advanced by latter-day commentators who say that they follow the upanishadic doctrine, each of them producing arguments to refute the others. Those, too, who have written sub-commentaries explaining Śrī Bhagavatpāda's commentaries continually display differences in their formulation of the method. In the same way, the authors of subsidiary works of explanation base their work on differing conceptions of the true method.

Now, the Upanishads are still universally accepted as authoritative by all competent students. Everyone studying them follows the same texts. And it is agreed in Vedanta that that method alone should be recognized which is found to agree with the teaching of the Upanishads taken as a whole, when the meaning of the texts has been properly ascertained in accordance with the six exegetical criteria for determining purport.

(These are: (1) a commentator should safeguard the unity of theme found in the opening and closing passages of a topic (upakramopasaṃhāraikya); (2) he should take account of the emphasis implied by repetitions (abhyāsa); (3) in judging what is significant and what is subordinate, he should observe the principle that all significant teaching has the characteristic of not being available elsewhere (apūrvatā); (4) he should observe the principle that all significant teaching has utility (phala); (5) there need not be a literal interpretation of passages of eulogy or condemnation (arthavāda); (6) interpretations should have logical consistency (upapatti). T.N.)

Nevertheless, while various commentators interpret the Upanishads, as supported by the Epics and Purāṇas and other traditional texts, according to these criteria, they all do so arbitrarily, according to their own particular school. And it is well known that those who come in the wake of the founders of systems do not measure up to their great predecessors. All, however, are attached to their own theories and passionately concerned to refute those of their adversaries.

The authors of all these latter-day commentaries and sub-commentaries become involved, in the course of their discussions, in disputes based either on special pleading or on purely destructive dialectics, without ever satisfying their zeal for pouring out innumerable books. And yet none of them is seen to be universally accepted by all Vedantins as the best authority on the method. As it was the same with the ancients as it is with the moderns, how could we know that any one particular method was flawless? We cannot now collect together all the large number of ancient commentators in one place in company with the Vedantins of modern times. Nor do we now possess all the commentaries that have been written. It will therefore not be possible to consider all the schools comparatively and decide that any particular one is alone correct. And though innumerable books are available in the form of commentaries, expositions and independent treatises composed to bring out the meaning of the Upanishads from the standpoint of this or that school, it is hard to know which we should accept as authoritative, and by what qualities they should be judged—and equally difficult to know what should be rejected as standing in contradiction with what was authoritative. So, all in all, it seems to us that the recognition of the right method of the Vedanta is no easy matter.

5 ONE ATTEMPTED SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM: THE VIEW THAT THE VARIOUS FORMULATIONS OF THE METHOD ARE DUE TO VARYING DEGREES OF ABILITY IN DIFFERENT STUDENTS

Some say that this objection is not right. For Śrī Bhagavatpāda, they claim, saw that the Vedas, the Smṛti and the Purānas formed one united whole, and showed, through his commentaries on the classical Upanishads, the Brahma Sūtras and the Bhagavad Gītā, that non-duality was the sole final message of the Upanishads. This he did by refuting all theories involving duality. Since it is only failure to understand Bhagavatpāda's meaning that has occasioned the composition of new commentaries on the Upanishads from a dualistic standpoint, it remains true (the argument runs) that the study of the theories they contain is unnecessary for the more acute students who have faith in the authoritative commentary. But certain expositions exist which are of help to students of average or poor ability, in that they refute objections raised by other commentators and explain

how vision of non-duality is the means to unsurpassable beatitude.

Similarly, there exist many carefully composed independent works by Bhagavatpāda and his followers which aim to make the meaning of the Upanishads clear and to remove all thorns from the path of Vedantic hearing and reflection, even for the most tenderfoot students. As for what was said about the many differences of opinion that are found amongst the different methods of explanation, the reply has been given by an expert on the topic (quoted at Appaya Dīkṣita, 1916, Comm. p.4): 'Contradiction amongst imaginary suggestions made to help a person understand a reality that is not imaginary are not a defect. For it is not thought to be a defect if there is mutual contradiction between the various false versions of the minute star Arundhatī (Alcor) amid the neighbouring constellations to the north and east that different people suggest initially to enable others to identify the true Arundhatī'.

(Arundhatī is a minute star near the Plough, on which the bridal couple have to gaze at a certain point in the wedding ceremony. T.N.)

This (these theorists claim) is enough to resolve the differences of view that occur in the independent works on Vedanta. For the final aim in all the texts is to convey the unity and sole reality of the Self, and little value is attached to objects that are merely established by empirical experience. Thus even the mutual refutations found in the various different independent works do not imply a defect. For what was the object that the authors of these refutations had in mind? They saw that different enquirers stood at different intellectual levels. Therefore, with a view to promoting firmness on the path leading to knowledge of the identity of one's true Self with the Absolute, they applied themselves to teach a method which took proper account of the various different levels of understanding. There is no rule saying 'A person attains to the knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Self through this method and this alone'. And the author of the Vārtika (Sureśvara) has said, 'By whatever method of instruction men are brought to a realization of the inmost Self, that method is good here. There is no fixed rule about it' (B.B.V. I.iv.402).

Hence the whole view that one of the various methods is the right one, and the rest are to be rejected, is wrong. And this investigation aimed at recognition of the right method of the Vedanta is like the arbitrary pastime of picking out one particular constellation when the sky offers the whole infinite abundance of its twinkling stars to choose from.

6 EXAMINATION OF THIS ATTEMPTED SOLUTION

But our own view is that this solution will not be enough to satisfy the doubts of enquirers. For consider. Not only before the revered Commentator Śaṅkara, but even before Gauḍapāda, there had been not a few Vedantins of the Advaita (non-dual) persuasion who had adopted quite different methods of interpretation. Indeed it is clear that there had already been resort to different methods of interpretation amongst Advaitins even before the time of the composition of the Brahma Sūtras. For the commentary on the Vākyānvaya Adhikaraṇa (Brahma Sūtra I.iv.19-22) shows that the Teachers Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi and Kāśakṛtsna, considered in that passage, taught the doctrine of the identity of the Self with the Absolute, but that each followed quite different methods of explaining that identity. Nor was it at all the case that the commentator on the Sūtras (Śaṅkara). and the author of the Vārtika (Sureśvara) merely set their minds at rest with the reflection 'All those theorists had Advaita as their final message' and then remained silent. On the contrary, they stated their own method, supporting it with Vedic quotations and dialectical reasoning, and refuted the methods adopted by others as not being the right way to establish Non-Duality. For even Vedic texts are not adjudged to be an authoritative means of knowledge when they appear to be mutually contradictory and have not been brought into harmony, what to say of mere arguments. Of the various mutually contradictory theories, only one could constitute the right path. For, just as paths going in contrary directions cannot lead to the same spot, so there cannot be alternative correct views about a reality. Vyāsa has said: 'The path that goes to the eastern sea does not lead to the western sea. There is only one path leading to liberation. Listen while I explain it in detail' (M.Bh. Mokṣa Dharma 274.4).

Nor does the maxim about the approximate versions of Arundhatī apply here. For in that procedure one first points out a number of stars that are not in fact Arundhatī, and it is only the last to be pointed out that is really Arundhatī, and, when that is known, it is clear that the others were only provisional and brought in as a device to point out the real one. And the one who finally observes Arundhatī is quite clear about this. In this situation there are no contradictions. For it is always perfectly clear, in the way we have indicated, that the stars pointed out in the constellations to the east and north and so on were not the real Arundhatī. And though the stars pointed out by different people are different, some to the east and others elsewhere, there is no disagreement amongst the various people pointing to them that they are all just a device for pointing out the real Arundhatī, which is otherwise hard to see. But in the present context the case is far otherwise. The propagators of one method insist vehemently on the incorrectness of the other methods.

Nor can one maintain that there cannot be any contradiction between the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara and the later works purporting to explain them, if one merely alleges that different passages are designed to cater for the needs of students of different grades. For, unlike harmonious convictions, contradictory convictions cannot lead to the highest good. Nor was it relevant to quote the text of Sureśvara, 'By whatever method of instruction men are brought to a realization of their inmost Self...'. For that was not intended to lay down the general method of Vedantic interpretation. The context shows that the subject was theories of creation, as is clear from the succeeding verse. It runs, 'The rise, maintenance and destruction (of the world) are nowhere really possible. This will also be explained later, using words in their plain meaning' (B.V.V. I.iv.403). There is no suggestion here that, because the doctrines of all other theorists of the school have Non-Duality for their final message, there can be no contradiction with them. On the contrary, the author displays great zeal in bringing out the defects of those who do not follow the same method of interpretation as himself. But we desist from showing this in detail for reasons of space.

Similarly, there are clear contradictions between the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara and the independent works attributed to his name. Therefore, until we have found some means of showing the harmony among the different schools, it is clear that there is little hope of establishing the true method of the Vedanta on an impeccable basis.

7 ANOTHER ILL-INFORMED ATTEMPT TO SHOW THAT THE DIFFERENT THEORIES DO NOT CONFLICT

Others try to establish absence of conflict between Śrī Bhagavatpāda's commentaries and the sub-commentaries in a different way. They hold that conflicts can be resolved in the same way as they are in another science. In the science of grammar the maxim holds, 'One must rely on exegetical works for the particular meaning. For the presence of doubt is not a proof that there is no definite rule' (Nāgeśa, 1868, p.1). Similarly in Vedanta, they say, one must rely on later exegetical works for the particular meaning of what has been stated in a general way in the commentary. Or they refer to the new distinctions required to settle apparent contradictions between ideas urged at different places in the commentaries. Some things, too, are left unsaid in the commentaries. Hence various points are elaborated in the later works, as occasion arises, in order to amplify knowledge of the true Vedantic position. And on this basis these prattlers try to produce quotations in defence of the authority of the later exegetical works.

Others argue that some grammarians accept the principle 'Authority belongs to whichever sage came later' (Bhaṭṭojī,

1949, section 222, p.192). The idea is that if the author of the Vārtika (Kātyāyana) manifests dissent of any kind from what is said in the Sūtra of Pāniṇi, or if he adds anything in the way of a private gloss of his own, then it is his word that must always be accepted and not that of the author of the Sūtras. And when the author of the Commentary (Patañjali, who came after Kātyāyana,) refutes the statements of the author of the Vārtika (Kātyāyana) in order to establish some rule, then it is his opinion only about which rule was correct that should be accepted.

On this basis the view is put forward that wherever a conflict is found between the revered Commentator (Śaṅkara) and the later expository works, it is the view of Sureśvara or Padmapāda that must always be accepted (against that of Śrī Śaṅkara). Only thus, they maintain, can the objections of the dualists be fully refuted and the doctrine of the Commentator properly preserved.

Others argue as follows. It is known on the basis of tradition that Padmapāda (the alleged author of the Pañcapādikā) and Sureśvara were direct pupils of Bhagavatpāda. How could these two expositors of their master's work possibly have had the impertinence to adopt different traditions on their own account, in conflict with those of the Commentator? Would it not be more sensible to conclude that these two learned their master's doctrine from his own lips, and that they later clarified it so as to give an unanswerable reply to the objections brought forward by opponents after the commentaries had been written, thereby protecting them from criticism?

The common point in all these views is that the method propounded by the Commentator must be defended on the basis of accepting as authoritative the positions advocated in the sub-commentaries, positions which have now become universally current. And it is never right to attribute contradictions to the venerable authors of the sub-commentaries.

8 EXAMINATION OF THIS SOLUTION

This does not appear to us to be a correct solution either. To begin with, there is no reason why we should accept every principle belonging to another science, in this case grammar. True, Bhagavatpāda himself has enunciated the principle 'Where the view of another school is not refuted it is allowed to stand' (B.S.Bh.II.iv.12). So you might ask why we should not accept the principle of another science in the present context on his own authority. But in the present context, maxims can only be accepted if they are really applicable, not otherwise. And the part of the above-quoted maxim saying 'for the presence of doubt is not a proof that there is no definite rule' does not apply here at all. For that text refers to a particular context in the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali in the following way.

Commenting on the Sūtra 'ā, ai and au are called vṛddhi' (Pāṇini Sūtra I.i.1), the Mahābhāṣya makes a theorist who only knows one side of the matter say, 'Let us suppose that the "t" (appearing as the "d" in vṛddhirādaic) was inserted to remove a doubt. If the author of the Sūtras had just said "aic" without preceding it by "t", there would have been room for the doubt whether only the two vowels "ai" and "au" had been meant, or whether "ā" also had been included. So the "t" was inserted to eliminate this doubt'. But the exponent of the settled conclusion is made to reply, 'This would have been a mere doubt. And in all doubt the maxim applies that one must rely on commentaries for the particular meaning. For the presence of doubt is not a proof that there is no definite rule. Hence I (as commentator) will explain that the reference is to the three vowels ā, ai and au (while the insertion of the "t" has a different function). There are other places also (e.g. Pāṇini VI.i.93) where doubts of this kind arise and where the author of the Sūtras makes no attempt to elucidate them (leaving this task to the commentators)' (Patañjali, 1962, p.42).

Now, if this maxim is to be accepted in the Vedanta, too, we are agreeable. But it should only be applied when a doubt has been left unresolved in the material under comment. And we must make it clear that the explanatory texts that actually contradict the work on which they are commenting can never be rendered authoritative by appeal to this maxim.

Perhaps you will remind me that you have said that, whenever there is a conflict between an original text and a later commentary, we should accept the maxim of certain grammarians 'Authority belongs to whichever sage came later'. True, you said it. But if you accept that maxim wholesale you will incur a very unwelcome result. For you do not yourself hold the opinion that whatever is shown to be earlier is already by that mere fact subject to being contradicted and cancelled, so that whatever is later is authoritative. For if that were the case, then whenever there was any conflict between the commentary and a gloss on the commentary, or between a gloss and a sub-gloss, the later gloss or sub-gloss would invariably be authoritative. In fact the glosses and sub-glosses would rank highest, and supreme authority would lie in them, and they would refute the commentary which they were supposed to be explaining. But even those who accept the theories of the later glosses do not accept that. For it is very well known that all the authors of glosses and sub-glosses themselves affirm with a single voice that Bhagavatpāda is an infallible authority. And so it would be incumbent on the one who held that each later author was authoritative against his predecessors to explain how it was that the author of the original commentary was regarded as alone supremely authoritative. For otherwise the conflict between the Commentator and the authors of later glosses would remain unresolved. Nor do we find in our own science the same number of later authors deliberately contradicting the text on

which they were commenting that is found amongst the grammarians, so that we are not forced to pick out one and say 'He alone stands supreme'.

And there is another point. The maxim 'Authority belongs to whichever sage came later' was not universally accepted by all the ancients of every school. For in discussing whether or not the negative particle 'na' (not) when associated with an inflected ending invariably formed a compound, Śrī Śabara Svāmin wrote as follows: 'Kātyāyana, the revered author of the Vārtika, expressed the opinion that when the word "not" was associated with an inflected word it invariably formed a compound, affirming that citing an option would be useless, as the case was self-evident. But the venerable Pāṇini did not take this view. In the Sūtra "Option" (Pāṇini Sūtra II.i.11) he said that there was option in such cases. And the word of Pāṇini is to be taken as authoritative because he was a positive teacher (sadvādin). The word of Kātyāyana is not authoritative, because he was a mere corrector who dealt in negations (asadvādin). Those who deal in negations may be ignorant of something which really exists' (P.M.B. X.viii.4, cp. Devasthali, 1959, p.134). It is true that Kumārila Bhaṭṭa defends the authoritativeness of Kātyāyana on this point, in his commentary on this passage in the Ṭupṭīkā. He writes: 'Here, an expression like "king-man", where the first word is not inflected, should invariably be taken as a compound. For if the inflections were included, we would have the expression "the king's man" in full. Hence he (i.e. Kātyāyana) has said, "And the citing of an option would be useless"'. Still, it has been well shown that the maxim 'Authority belongs to whichever sage came later' is not respected by everyone in all schools. And as the present argument does not really gainsay this, it would be irrelevant to pursue it further. So the view that in Vedanta conflicts can be resolved in the same way as they are in another science (viz. grammar) is not correct.

It was also said that 'Padmapāda' and Sureśvara were known to be pupils of Bhagavatpāda, and that it was therefore impossible that they should have failed to have understood their own Teacher's meaning or composed explanatory works in conflict with it. To this we would reply as follows. It is true that there is a tradition that a certain person called Padmapāda Ācārya was a cherished pupil of Bhagavatpāda and was the author of the Pañcapādikā. But that tradition can only be accepted as resting on the authority of biographical romances such as the Śaṅkara Vijaya of Mādhava. There is no evidence for it anywhere else. There is nothing, either in the text of the Pañcapādikā as we now have it, or in the Vivaraṇa composed (by Prakāśātman) to explain it, to show that any person called 'Padmapāda' was its author. None of the manuscripts of the work contain a colophon saying it was composed by Padmapāda, nor is it anywhere stated that the author was a pupil of Bhagavatpāda. Hence there is still doubt even

today as to who the actual author was.

There can, however, be no doubt either about the contradictions that subsist between the Pañcapādikā and the commentary it is explaining, or about those between the Pañcapādikā and the Vivaraṇa sub-commentary composed to explain it. Here we will cite only one example. We find in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary the expressions 'This very superimposition, thus defined, the wise call "Ignorance"' (I.i.1, introduction) and 'Name and form, imagined through Ignorance as if they were the true form of the Lord, ... are spoken of in the Veda and Smṛti as "Māyā", "Śakti" and "Prakṛti"' (II.i.14). But in the Pañcapādikā we find it said that Ignorance 'is spoken of in many different ways in the Vedas, Smṛtis, Epics and Purāṇas, such as Name and Form (nāma-rūpa), the Unevolved (avyākṛta), Ignorance (avidyā), Divine Power of Illusion (māyā), Nature (prakṛti), Non-perception (agrahaṇa), the Unmanifest (avyakta), Darkness (tamas), the Cause (kāraṇa), Dissolution (laya), Power (śakti), the Great Sleep (mahāsupti), Sleep (nidrā), the Indestructible (akṣara) and the Shining Ether (ākāśa). (See M.V.132,4; 143,4.) Here there is a clear contradiction between the commentary of Bhagavatpāda and the Pañcapādikā. For, in the commentary, name and form are said to be *imagined through* Ignorance and to be *spoken of as* Māyā. But in the Pañcapādikā they are said to *be* Ignorance and Māyā.

Later in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.154,7) it is first laid down, with the help of such upanishadic quotations as 'Not indeed for the sake of the husband (is the husband dear)' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5), that the Self is the most desirable entity. The Pañcapādikā then goes on: 'If the Self is already known in advance to be the dearest thing, then to say "it should be seen" or "it should be heard about" (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) constitutes (not an injunction but) a mere eulogy'. And having thus affirmed that hearing and the rest belong to the realm of mere eulogy, the Pañcapādikā goes on to strengthen the argument by saying: 'The gerundive is not here used in the sense of an injunction. It is used to express the idea of fitness, according to the Sūtra, "The optative, the gerundive and the noun of agency may be used to express the idea of fitness"' (Pāṇini III.iii.169). But the sub-gloss on the Pañcapādikā called the Vivaraṇa, in explaining this very passage, contradicts it, saying; 'He means that the first Brahma Sūtra was laid down on the basis of accepting that hearing, supported by pondering and sustained meditation, were enjoined for the sake of right knowledge. And he now says that, although those texts are injunctions, they carry the additional sense of eulogy'.

(The author of the Vivaraṇa here twists the words of the Pañcapādikā to imply that knowledge can be enjoined, contradicting the author's evident intention. See below, author's note at M.V.259,6. T.N.)

How, then, could anyone maintain that contradictions such as this could all be parts of one theory? So the view that there could not be any contradiction between Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda and Padmapāda Ācārya because they were supposed to be Guru and pupil is not right. Nor can the view be sustained that there is no contradiction between the Pañcapādikā gloss on Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary attributed to 'Padmapāda' and the sub-gloss called the Vivaraṇa that purports to explain that gloss.

In regard to Śrī Sureśvara Ācārya, there can be no dispute that he was a pupil of Bhagavatpāda, as we have his own clear statement in the words, 'Having served the lotus feet of Śrī Śaṅkara I received (this pure knowledge...) and have now set it forth' (N.S.IV.74). And he spoke, indeed, of having composed a Vārtika on Śrī Śaṅkara's Taittirīya Commentary in the following words: 'Sureśvara, knower of the great truth and pupil of that mighty mendicant bearing the name of Śiva (i.e. Śaṅkara) who is the inspiration of a whole band of seekers of enlightenment, has composed this noble nectar-like Vārtika in devotion to him, to explain his commentary on the Taittirīya Upanishad, the heart of the teachings of the Taittirīya school' (T.B.V.III.90-1). Nevertheless, there would always be the possibility of his expressing his own views even where they contradicted the commentary on which he was writing a Vārtika; for we find this practice in the Vārtikas of Kātyāyana and Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. We might also gather this from reflecting on the definition of a Vārtika given by Vyāsa in an untraced text in one of the minor Purāṇas, 'The wise, who know what a Vārtika is, bestow that title on those works which open up reflection about what has been said, left unsaid or wrongly said'. And this possibility is clearly actuated in certain verses of Sureśvara's Vārtikas in which he refutes the commentary.

For example, we find in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary an explanation of the following passage from the Upanishad, namely, 'This human world is to be won through begetting a son and not through any other act. The world of the ancestors is to be won through ritualistic activity. And the world of the gods is to be won through symbolic meditations' (Bṛhad.I.v.16). The explanation given in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary says, 'This human world is to be won with the son as the only means, "won" here meaning "attained by some means"... One has to understand "not won through anything else, that is, not through ritualistic activity or through symbolic meditations". The world of the ancestors is to be won only through ritualistic action such as the performance of the Agnihotra, not through a son or through symbolic meditations. The world of the gods is to be won only through symbolic meditations, not through a son or through ritualistic activity'.

In his Vārtika here, Sureśvara maintains that the worlds of the ancestors and the gods can be attained by other means,

and that the explanation in the commentary unwarrantably inserts the word 'only' and is not correct. He writes: 'The word "only" in the Upanishad applies in the case of the son alone, for we know from the Veda that the world of the ancestors and the world of the gods can be attained by resort to more than one means. This is the only correct explanation of the upanishadic text, and the other explanation (i.e. that given in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary) is faulty. Only this explanation, therefore, should be accepted, and not the one that is seen to be faulty' (B.V.V. I.v.280-1). This constitutes a claim by Sureśvara that it is his own explanation that is correct and should be accepted, and not that of the revered Commentator.

Similarly, there is a text in the Taittirīya Upanishad, 'This is the self-within-the-body of the former (of the "food-self", the physical body or annamaya kośa)' (Taitt.II.3). This is explained in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary as follows: 'This is the self-within-the-body of that previously mentioned food-self. What is? This vital-energy-self'. Sureśvara, the author of the Vārtika, expresses his disagreement with this. He says: 'Or rather, the "self" referred to is that (metaphysical Self) defined earlier as Reality, Knowledge and Infinity. For the word "self" is only used in a secondary sense to mean anything else. Because that is the inmost principle of all, the present text should be seen to be referring to that (and not to the vital-energy-self) as the "self" of the food-self'. (T.B.V. II.284) And having thus set forth his own explanation, he goes on to explain the reason for his dissatisfaction with that of the Commentator in the words, 'The "self" from which an illusory snake (imagined in a rope) derives its existence does not consist in any mere illusory self such as a stick or other imaginary superimposition. The "self" of the snake is the rope'. (T.B.V. II.286)

So it is not right to say that Bhagavatpāda's pupils would be incapable of saying anything that contradicted him. All we are saying here, and this should not be forgotten, is that one should only accept that there was no contradiction between the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara and the glosses of his followers if such contradictions could somehow be shown never to have occurred. But since this is not possible, one should no longer try to insist on the idea that in all the different sub-schools it is one single method that is observed. If the case with the theories of expositors who are regarded as direct pupils is what we have shown it to be, it will obviously be far worse with the theories of such later writers as Vācaspati Miśra, who are universally agreed to have come later. So we shall not take the trouble to mention their contradictory statements here.

Further, there are over a hundred independent works on Vedanta attributed to Bhagavatpāda and probably written by other authors, the contents of which have been examined by

expert philologists without their yet being able to attain unanimity about who wrote what. Amongst works attributed to Bhagavatpāda we often find details of doctrine characteristic of later schools and even mention of points from mutually inconsistent systems. It is clear that such works are of no use for determining the true method of the Vedanta. So, we must take it that the second way suggested above (M.V.7) will no more suffice to overcome the doubts of enquirers than the first did.

Here I would like to bring before the reader, by way of example, the well-known work called Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi. It has acquired permanent currency (reading niścala-pracalatāṃ) as a work of Śrī Śaṅkara. But it follows a different poetical style from that of the revered Commentator. It frequently uses technical expressions not found in the Upanishads, Brahma Sūtras and Gītā, expressions which only became common in post-Śaṅkara works. It quotes as authoritative works such as the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha and Sūta Saṃhitā, which are nowhere quoted by the revered Commentator. All this shows that it was not a work of Bhagavatpāda. I have shown in the notes and appendix to my edition of the Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi with Kannada translation that it follows the Gītā Tātparyabodhinī in style and all other points, and is a work of Śrī Śaṅkarānanda. Naive indeed is the conviction that Śrī Śaṅkara himself was the author of all the independent works attributed to his name!

9 THE NEED FOR AN ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN RECOGNITION OF THE TRUE METHOD

Our enquiries so far, then, have shown the following. The true method handed down traditionally from beginningless time is still evident in the Upanishads, as can be seen from hints contained in the upanishadic and Smṛti texts. 'Brahmā taught this to Prajāpati, Prajāpati to Manu, Manu to the people' (Chānd.VIII.xvi.1), 'Now the lines of Vedic Teachers' (Bṛhad. III.v.1), 'Naciketas, having attained this knowledge taught to him by Death (Yama)... realized the Absolute and passed beyond passion and death. And anyone else who, like Naciketas, knows the inmost Self (adhyātma), will do the same' (Kaṭha II.iii. 18), 'He, Brahmā taught that knowledge of the Absolute which is the foundation of all the sciences, to Atharvan, his eldest son... both the higher and the lower knowledge' (Muṇḍ.I.i.1-2), and 'I taught this yoga to Vivasvat' (Bh.G.IV.1).

But the method has been taught in many different ways by ancient and modern Ācāryas and their followers. And the enquirer is faced with the following doubt. Are there many different methods taught in different Upanishads and in the language peculiar to different Vedic schools, and variously explained by different commentators? Or is it that there is

just one single method, and that when minor variations within it are found in the Upanishads and Gītā these are differently interpreted by immature minds? Or is it that all the different and obviously conflicting theories taught by contending theorists are all good, because they set forth the one true human end, like paths that start from different directions but all lead finally to the same city? Or is it that only one of these methods is the right one, and that earnest seekers of liberation should reject the rest as definitely leading one astray?

Hence, because the texts of the Upanishads and the texts of the Smṛti also seem confused, and because there is disagreement among many of the expositors of the Vedanta even though they are learned, and because enquirers of little understanding cannot make a right decision about the truth — for all these reasons it is clear that those who know the Vedanta must certainly make efforts to promote recognition of the true method, bringing out the truth by analysing what is right and wrong in all these views.

10 RULES TO BE FOLLOWED IN DETERMINING THE METHOD

Now let us consider how and under what conditions one should proceed in recognition of the true method. Unless some rules and order are introduced into the investigation, any method introduced by anybody could be accepted as correct, or else all could be rejected as untrue for lack of proof. And this result would not be right in itself, and would not be what anyone would want either. So we shall set out the criteria to decide which method is the true one.

(I) FIRST OF ALL, THAT METHOD SHOULD BE ACCEPTED WHICH CAN DETERMINE THE OVERALL TEACHING OF THE UPANISHADS IN LINE WITH THE TRADITIONAL RULES OF EXEGESIS. The meaning of the texts must be settled according to the criteria of 'opening' and 'conclusion' of a topic, etc., observed by the established experts in that field (the Mīmāṃsakas). The latter recognize also six Forms of Evidence (for deciding which passages are fundamental and which subordinate). They are direct relation (śruti), indirect implication (liṅga), syntactical connection in a sentence (vākya), context (prakaraṇa), position (sthāna) and etymology of names (śabda). (See Laugākṣi Bhāskara, 1974, pp.9-20.) These forms of Evidence (śrutyādi) should be regarded as authoritative, decreasing in power as the series progresses. If a single Vedic text stands in contradiction with many others it should be abandoned. As between texts dealing directly with the subject under discussion in the context in which they occur and those not doing so, the former must be accounted more authoritative. If there is nothing to contradict it, a word must be understood in its literal sense. As between the Veda and the Smṛti, the Veda is always

more authoritative (in case of conflict). Smṛti texts based on the Veda are more authoritative than those based on nothing more than Smṛti. It has to be accepted that only that method can be right which never transgresses these and other such rules of interpretation.

(II) AMONGST THE VARIOUS COMMENTARIES, ONLY THOSE OF ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA SHOULD BE FOLLOWED FOR DETERMINING THE METHOD. Though all agree that in the first instance the method has to be determined through close acquaintance with the whole body of upanishadic texts themselves, still, a person might well feel that ordinary people like us are not capable of understanding the meaning of the Veda through our own independent efforts, and that we depend on the expositions of others. We must therefore pin our faith on commentaries composed by some famous author and hope to understand the Veda through his help. It is for the sake of an enquirer who thinks thus, and who wonders, further, why the method of some particular famous author of his own choosing should not be accepted, that we say that the maxim ('Amongst the various commentaries...') formulated above as the heading of the present paragraph holds.

But why should one follow Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries only? For this we give two reasons:

(1) Because they are the oldest surviving commentaries. It is inherently probable that early commentators will have adopted the Vedantic method that agrees with tradition. For they stand in closer proximity to it, while later authors are by definition more remote. The latter could well be suspected of addiction to the exposition of other methods of their own devising, arising through lack of contact with true Advaitins, and resulting in the surrender of their thinking powers to the influence of the philosophies of the dualists, and in impregnation with their tendencies.

Observe, also, that there are reasons for supposing that in Śrī Śaṅkara's time no dualistic Vedantins yet existed. For instance, it is only the Sāṅkhyas and other non-Vedantic philosophers whom Śaṅkara examines and refutes in his commentaries. He does not examine and refute any dualistic Vedantins. And he says in his commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, 'For all exponents of the Upanishads agree that all the upanishadic texts teach the notion of the identity of the individual self with the supreme Self' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20). And we find in his Brahma Sūtra commentary the sentence, 'All those who preach liberation agree that liberation arises through right knowledge' (B.S.Bh.II.i.11). So we conclude that in his day no dualistic Vedantins yet existed who regarded the individual soul and the supreme Self as totally distinct, or who relied for liberation solely on other means apart from knowledge, such as devotion. Therefore, until some compelling

historical evidence is produced for the existence of dualistic Vedantins in or before Śrī Śaṅkara's day, the principle must hold good that the Vedantic method is only concerned with Non-dualism. So we can omit here any examination of the views of other later commentaries.

Admittedly there were a number of commentators before Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. But it remains true that the first need is to acquaint ourselves with Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, since today we can only ascertain the views of these earlier authors, and see the way in which their merits and defects were assessed, through the references in Śaṅkara's commentaries and the Vārtikas of Sureśvara. Since we only know the methods practised earlier through the assessment in these works, we must wait to examine the earlier writings until we have first studied Śaṅkara's commentaries.

(2) Because they are held in greater esteem than the subsidiary explanations. All the authors of the subsidiary explanations agree that the Commentator Śaṅkara is to be held in supreme reverence. Nowhere do we find it said, either in the Pañcapādikā and its sub-commentaries or in the Bhāmatī and its sub-commentaries, that one should accept any starting-point other than the revered Commentator. On the contrary, the authors of these works clearly state that they are only going to explain what the revered Commentator meant. So when what is given out as an explanation of the commentaries stands in direct contradiction with the very words of those commentaries, we hardly need labour the point that the meaning of the commentaries, and consequently the method they imply, must be sought directly from the commentaries themselves (and not from the later explanatory works).

(III) WHERE THE COMMENTARY AND THE SUBSIDIARY EXPLANATION CONFLICT, ONE MUST RESORT TO THE VERDICT OF THE VEDA AND REASONING. Sureśvara and the other post-Śaṅkara Advaita authors wrote their expository works, as we know from their own words, accepting the Commentator as a revered authority. Sureśvara, for instance, says at the end of his Vārtika on Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary: 'This Vārtika has been composed in a spirit of devotion to give a succinct explanation of the commentary written on the Kāṇva recension of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad by my Guru, which expounded the upanishadic doctrine of the unity and sole reality of the Self. That commentary is free from all impurity of motive, has power to destroy all the evil effects of false reasoning, is illumined by countless brilliant arguments and is an unfailing source of supreme peace to every good student' (B.V.V. VI.v. 24). And the author of the Pañcapādikā says: 'I apply myself with devotion to the task of explaining the clear but deep commentary with its weighty harvest of words and sentences' (P.P. p.6/1) and 'Therefore the view of the revered Commentator

must be accepted as the true tradition — of the revered Commentator who was the finest flower of all those who realized the Absolute, and who took birth solely out of compassion for the people and with a view to propagate true knowledge' (P.P. p.97/20). The author of the Bhāmatī also wrote: 'Having offered reverence to Śaṅkara, who possessed a clear intelligence and was a mine of compassion, I proceed to analyse his clear but deep commentary' and 'Preoccupation with the works of the Ācārya (Śaṅkara) sanctifies the impure speech even of a weak creature like me, just as the water from a puddle is purified if it enters the Ganges' (Bhā.I.i.1).

Nevertheless, we find in the Vārtika passages which declare, on the authority of Veda and reason, that some other explanation of the text is the correct one, and not that adopted by Śrī Śaṅkara. In such passages it is undeniable that the Ācārya's explanation is being explicitly contradicted, as we have already had occasion to show. (See M.V.8.) Even in those cases where there is a clear contradiction without any explicit avowal of the fact, we must conclude that the author of the Vārtika considered his own opinion as superior, and adopted a different path. We have no other choice. In such places, the goal of both authors is still the same, the determination of the meaning of the Vedic text. All adherents of truth must agree that one should accept that whichever system is supported by solid arguments, whether it be Śrī Śaṅkara's or that of a later expositor, must be accepted. And the revered Commentator himself spoke in this vein in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary (II.iii.6) when he said: 'Therefore all those who are clever at thinking up different interpretations of the Veda explain the meaning of the upanishadic texts differently. Even so, I would accept anything that represented the true meaning of the Veda. I have nothing against them personally'.

The expression is meant sarcastically, with the idea that the true meaning of the Veda is not found in this way. Nevertheless, one should understand that if it had been the meaning of the Veda it would have had to have been accepted.

(IV) IN CASES WHERE SPECIAL STEPS HAVE TO BE TAKEN TO ESTABLISH WHAT ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA'S VIEW WAS, THE COMMENTATOR'S OWN WORDS ARE TO BE ACCEPTED AS A BETTER AUTHORITY THAN ANY RÉSUMÉ ON THE PART OF A TEACHER BELONGING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL, OR THAN AN EXPLANATORY WORK BY A MEMBER OF HIS OWN SCHOOL. There is no need for further argumentation to support this. If one does not have the explicit word of the Commentator on a particular point, his view has to be inferred from what he has said on other points.

(V) WHEREVER THERE SEEMS TO BE A MUTUAL CONTRADICTION BETWEEN DIFFERENT COMMENTARIES ON THE THREE STARTING-POINTS

(UPANISHADS, GĪTĀ AND BRAHMA SŪTRAS), ONE SHOULD CHOOSE AS AUTHORITATIVE THE TEXT WHICH BEST SUPPORTS THE MAIN SYSTEM, AFTER AN ANALYSIS TO SEE WHICH TEXTS ARE AND WHICH ARE NOT DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH EXPOUNDING IT.

In the remainder of the work the author will be doing what he can, within the limits of his ability, to determine the true method of the Vedanta in the light of the above principles.

CHAPTER II
THE THREE STARTING-POINTS OF THE VEDANTA

11 WHY THE WORK BEGINS WITH A SURVEY OF THE STARTING-POINTS

It has been established, therefore, that there is an absolute need for a precise determination of the true method of the Vedanta. To this end, the first texts to be examined, according to accepted custom, should be the Upanishads, as they are the basic authority from which all else derives. And we must also treat of the Gītā and the Śārīraka Mīmāṃsa (i.e. the Brahma Sūtras), the two other starting-points (prasthāna) which are universally regarded as supporting them. We therefore proceed now to an examination of the three starting-points, to see how much help they will afford for our present enquiry. First we shall treat of the ten Upanishads over whose classical status there is no disagreement. Then we shall proceed to the Gītā and finally to the Brahma Sūtras.

12 THE SUBJECTS COVERED IN THE UPANISHADS

The Īśa Upanishad, embedded right in the texts of the White Yajur Veda as handed down by the Vājasaneya school, treats of various spiritual disciplines, such as renunciation of ritual, performance of the obligatory ritual, the combination of knowledge with Ignorance, the combination of meditation on Nature in its manifest form (sambhūti) with meditation on its unmanifest form (asambhūti). And it teaches how the one who performs these disciplines passes (after death) through the disc of the sun (to the realm of immortality).

The subjects dealt with in the Kena Upanishad are the following. First there is mention of the function of all the various bodily and mental organs. Then there is the statement that the organs are dependent for their powers on prompting received from the metaphysical principle of reality. Next

it is taught how that principle is beyond the range of any of the organs of knowledge, and that it is other than the known and also other than the unknown. It is also said that, because this principle is that whereby speech and other organs are enabled to bear on objects, it cannot itself be an object of meditation or worship. The text then goes on to show in more detail how this principle is not properly knowable as an object, but is known through an awakening, and how this awakening has to occur here in this life here below. Next it relates how Agni and Vāyu were unable to fathom this principle. Then it tells how Indra manifested in his true nature as the Absolute through the grace of Umā Devī. Finally, it explains how austerity (tapas) and other such disciplines are auxiliaries for enlightenment.

In the Kaṭha Upanishad it is taught how meditation on Agni according to a prescribed method leads to heaven as its reward, and how realization of the Absolute (brahma-vidyā) is associated with the Yoga of Self-Knowledge (adhyātma-yoga) and results in immediate immortality.

The Muṇḍaka Upanishad of the Atharva Veda speaks of a two-fold knowledge, divided as higher and lower, presenting the teaching in the form of an answer to the question, 'What is that by knowing which one knows all this?' It sums up the results of the lower knowledge by saying, 'One attains the world of heaven (svarga) through Vedic ritual, and the World of Brahmā through prescribed Vedic meditations associated with ritual'. Then it declares that the Absolute in its highest form, the undifferentiated metaphysical principle, known through the higher knowledge and designated by such names as the Indestructible (akṣara) and the Spirit (puruṣa) is, as cause of the world, one-without-a-second. He who knows it is omniscient and verily the Absolute itself.

The Praśna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda describes how the sage Pippalāda taught knowledge of the Absolute in its highest form to Lukeśa and other pupils. It also teaches how the Absolute (brahman) is to be distinguished even from Prajāpati and from the vital energy (prāṇa), and how it is the seat of the origin and dissolution of the Sixteen Fractions (kalā) beginning with the vital energy. Only through this knowledge can people cross beyond Ignorance.

The Māṇḍūkya Upanishad just examines the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep and then declares that the Self is void of them. It teaches how the syllable OM and the Self are identical.

The Taittirīya Upanishad begins with various themes for meditation. Having first taught that one can attain sovereign spiritual independence (svārājya) through meditation on (the conditional form of) the Absolute through the mystic words 'Bhūr, Bhuvaḥ, Svaḥ', it teaches that one can reach the realm of Prajāpati (brahma-loka) through meditating on that same (conditioned) Absolute as five-fold (Taitt.I.6-7). It affirms

the necessity of performing ritual, and lays down the instructions that should be given by a Teacher in the case of a pupil who has learned his Veda by heart.

In the second Vallī it proceeds to teach (the different topic of) Knowledge of the Absolute (brahma-vidyā). It describes how the Absolute (brahman) is the cause of the world. The text mentions how the Absolute enters into the world it has projected and becomes all, as the solid and the impalpable, and so forth (Taitt.II.6). And it relates how it passes over into the 'sheaths' (kośa) made up of food, vital energy, mind, knowledge and bliss, and finally realizes all its desires. In the third Vallī there is a story about a conversation between Bhṛgu and Varuṇa. Bhṛgu attained to that which is the support of all by coming to a knowledge of the Absolute as Bliss; this he did through dwelling on food, the vital energy and other objects of contemplation. Afterwards a few further symbolic meditations are mentioned.

The Aitareya Upanishad starts from a description of the powers of the cosmic vital energy and of the mode of its worship (taught in the Aitareya Āraṇyaka). It teaches how the supreme Self created all the worlds, how it enters the body through the skull, how transmigration proceeds, and how all will attain immortality through awakening to the Absolute, present as Consciousness in all bodies from that of Brahmā down, and knowing it to be their own Self.

The Chāndogya Upanishad begins by teaching various symbolic meditations. In the sixth Book the teaching whereby all that has so far been unheard is heard, all that has so far been unthought of is thought, all that has so far been unknown is known, is brought out through the story of a conversation between Śvetaketu and Uddālaka. Further points taught are that Being (sat) as the Absolute (brahman) is the cause of all the universe, that it enters the universe as the individual soul, and that the three elements projected by the Absolute become intermingled three-fold. 'This whole world has this (which is the subtle essence) for its Self. That is the real. That is the Self. That thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7). This teaching is repeated several times, along with an examination of the nature of sleep and death, and with the help of different examples. Then it is demonstrated how the whole universe and all the souls within it are identical as Being, as the Absolute.

Then further teaching is given in the seventh Book through the story of a conversation between Nārada and Sanatkumāra. There is mention of a hierarchy of principles, beginning with Name and ending with the cosmic vital energy, each of which, as the series progresses, is greater than the last. Beyond them stands a transcendent principle called the Infinite (bhūman). It is joy, the supreme Self in its true nature. Here one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, knows nothing else. The text sums this up by affirming that it is the

non-dual reality.

In the eighth Book we find the teaching that the Absolute is present as the small body of ether within the lotus of the heart. He who performs meditation upon it, it is taught, attains all his desires in the World of Brahmā (brahma-loka). And then in the next section Prajāpati speaks to Indra and, after considering the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, establishes that it is verily the Absolute that is the true Self of all, immortal, beyond fear or danger, free from all defects.

As for the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, the first Book begins with injunctions to meditation on Prajāpati (I.i.1 ff.) and on the vital energy (I.iii.1 ff), after first showing how Prajāpati, as the universe, can be identified with the horse of the Horse Sacrifice. Other topics covered include a recommendation to meditate on the Self (I.iv.1 ff.), the teaching that one realizes one's nature as the Self of all through knowledge of the Absolute (brahman) (I.iv.10), the doctrine of the projection of seven forms of food (I.v.1), and instruction in meditation on Vāyu (I.v.22) and on the cosmic vital energy (I.v.21,23).

The second Book brings the story of a conversation between Gārgya and Ajātaśatru. Here it is taught that the whole universe is dissolved in the supreme Self in dreamless sleep and projected anew on awakening, as is shown by the example of awakening a sleeping man. An explanation is given of the mystic formula 'the reality of the real', which conveys the true hidden nature of the cosmic vital energy (II.i.20). An account is given of the two aspects of the Absolute as 'the solid and the impalpable' (II.iii.1). The same two forms of the Absolute are then described in various new ways, such as 'definite being' (sat) and 'indefinite being' (tyat), while the Absolute in its true nature is indicated ultimately by the formula 'neither this nor that' (II.iii.1-6).

There follows the story of a conversation between Maitreyī and Yājñavalkya (II.iv.1 ff.). The points covered are the following. The means to knowledge of the Self are hearing, pondering over what one has heard and subjecting it to sustained meditation. Through knowledge of the Self all is known, and through no other way. The earth and other components that go to make up the world and the creatures that live in the world subsist in mutual interdependence, as is illustrated by saying that each is like honey to the other (II.v.1 ff.). All creatures, all gods and all worlds are held together (in the Self), as is illustrated by the example of the spokes of a wheel held together in the hub.

In the third Book the argument is carried forward in the form of a dispute between Brahmins assembled at a sacrifice held by King Janaka. The main topics are the following. What are the fruits of ritual and of symbolic meditation on various factors in the ritual? What becomes of those who perform the

Horse Sacrifice (III.iii.2)? What is the nature of the Absolute, present as the inmost Self of all? Those who know the Absolute give up desire. Metaphysical knowledge is extolled by saying that only he is a Brahmin in the true sense who knows the Absolute (brahman). Various principles beginning with earth and ending with Brahma-loka are said to form a hierarchy in which each successive plane is interwoven in (pervaded and sustained by) that which follows. The nature of Sūtra and Antaryāmin is explained. All is said to be interwoven in the ether, and the ether is said to be interwoven in the Absolute in its form called the Indestructible (akṣara), void of all distinctions. All (apparent) distinctions in the Absolute must be overcome. The Absolute is the support of all. As 'Neither this nor that' it is the true Self. As cause of the universe, it is 'Consciousness and Bliss'.

The fourth Book covers the following topics. Meditations on the Absolute with form are enjoined, for example conceiving it as Speech (vāc). Then there is the section on vision of the Self — a vision that is achieved by stages, through identifying oneself in meditation first with the Self as associated with the gross body, then with the Self as associated with the subtle body, then with the Self as associated with the cosmic vital energy, and finally through realizing the identity of the latter with the supreme Self, according to the principle 'Neither this nor that'. The meditations on the Self in different forms are associated with different names, such as Indha and others. (See Śaṅkara, Bṛhad.Bh.IV.ii.1-4.) Later there is again a demonstration that the Self is other than the complex of its bodies and organs, through an examination of the phenomena of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. And the Self is further conveyed as pure, as self-luminous, as the power of unbroken consciousness, as non-dual and as of the flavour of unsurpassable bliss. It is only the blind individual soul who experiences birth and death and the like. The vital energies of the enlightened and liberated person do not ascend from his body at death. Having already realized his true nature as the Absolute, he merely dissolves in the Absolute. The text goes on to explain how all the rituals enjoined in the Veda are useful for enlightenment, and there is an eulogy of the enlightened person as one who has done all that has to be done. The Book closes with an account of knowledge of the Self through a repetition of the conversation between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī (Bṛhad.V.iv.2 ff. cp. Bṛhad.II.iv.1). Thus the fourth Book takes up a large number of topics.

The fifth Book is merely an appendix, containing the injunctions for certain meditations not previously mentioned.

The Śvetāśvatara and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa Upanishad are often quoted in the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara and also in the Gītā and Brahma Sūtras. But as we do not have a commentary on them by the Ācārya, no individual analysis of their

contents will be given here.

13 THE DIFFICULTY FOR THOSE OF DULL INTELLECT IN ARRIVING AT THE TRUE METHOD OF THE VEDANTA FROM A MERE CONSIDERATION OF THE UPANISHADS ALONE

Those of dull intellect are not able to discern any one single method of teaching present everywhere throughout the Upanishads even after careful study of a statement of their subject-matter of the kind set out above. On the contrary, it appears at first sight that a whole variety of different methods are observed, each valid for its own subject-matter alone. In the Kena Upanishad we find the strict metaphysical distinction of the Seer from the seen. In the Taittirīya Upanishad we find elaboration of the doctrine of the five sheaths, and the description of the Absolute and the world as cause and effect. In the Praśna Upanishad there is a description of a regressive series of causes; here each cause as the series goes back is more subtle than the one before, and each cause dissolves into its more subtle successor in the regressive series. In the Māṇḍūkya, Chāndogya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishads the topic of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is occasionally introduced. Initially, therefore, it appears as if an independent examination of the Upanishads will not disclose any single method of teaching that occurs throughout.

14 THE SUBJECTS TREATED OF IN THE GĪTĀ

At this point in our deliberations it will be well to include an account of the Gītā, which is one of the fundamental starting-points of the Vedanta. For it was composed in order to lay down the truth about both the theoretical and the practical aspects of Vedanta. As a summary of the whole Vedic teaching, it is a useful auxiliary to the Upanishads. We therefore indicate here the subject-matter of the various chapters in order.

The first chapter describes the dejection of Arjuna, in order to set the work in its context in the Mahābhārata narrative. The second chapter first mentions how one can adopt either of two alternative standpoints, the 'Sāṅkhya' standpoint and the 'Yoga' standpoint. The existence of the actionless Self as the final reality is taught from the Sāṅkhya standpoint. Resort to action associated with renunciation of all individual purposes is taught from the Yoga standpoint, while dissolution in the Absolute (brahma-nirvāṇa) is taught as the end attained by those who attain to the Sāṅkhya standpoint.

In the third chapter it is explained how choice in resort

to these two paths depends on the qualifications of the student, also how resort to action is itself the means to acquire fixity in the actionless state. The fourth chapter teaches how the highest Lord, though unborn, changeless and indestructible, is able to take apparent birth, through Māyā, in order to preserve the Spiritual Law (dharma). It also explains how enlightenment is obtained through attendance on persons who are themselves enlightened, and how the actions of the enlightened man do not involve him in bondage. In the fifth chapter it is explained how, though both engagement in (proper) action and renunciation of action lead to the highest goal, still, engagement in action is the easier path for the seeker. It is also declared that for renunciates in the highest sense there is dissolution in the Absolute (brahma-nirvāṇa) in this very life as well as after death. In the sixth chapter it is taught how action and meditation both contribute to Yoga, though there is a difference in the way they do so. It is also taught how the Yoga of Meditation (dhyāna-yoga) should be performed, and how its result is vision of the Self, and how that result follows regularly.

The topics of the seventh chapter are as follows. First there is the teaching about the two forms assumed by the Lord, his higher and lower Nature (prakṛti). Then it is taught that the world is interwoven in the Lord, and that He is invested with its various attributes. Finally there is the teaching that, amongst those who take refuge in the Lord, it is the devotee who has also gained metaphysical enlightenment that is the best — and that our natural attachment for the pairs of opposites is an obstacle to enlightenment. The eighth chapter describes how those who meditate on the holy syllable OM apply themselves to Dhāraṇā Yoga and proceed (after death) by the path characterized by such names as 'the Path of Fire', how they reach the Absolute in its (unmanifest) form as the Indestructible by stages, and how others follow 'the Path of the Dark Lunar Fortnight' and return for rebirth on earth. The ninth chapter describes the nature of the supreme Self and states the method for attaining vision of the Self, which results in direct intuition. Various forms of worship of the Lord are also mentioned, as well as some of his special forms of divine manifestation; it is explained how it is only those who give exclusive devotion to the Lord who attain to Him. The tenth chapter gives a detailed description of the special divine manifestations of the Lord, as an aid to worship and meditation. The chapter closes with the admonition, 'One should know that the whole universe is but a fragment of the Lord'. In the eleventh chapter Arjuna begs the Lord to manifest before Him in his form as the universe, which He does. Then we have the hymn in praise of the Lord uttered by Arjuna. Further teaching is given to say that the Lord in his form as the universe is only attainable through devotion, and that such attainment is consequently only open to a disciple who

devotes himself exclusively to the Lord. In the twelfth chapter a comparison is made between those who worship the Lord in his form as the universe and those who worship Him in his (unmanifest) form as the Indestructible. Those who worship Him in his form as the universe are said to be wiser, as the discipline they follow is less troublesome. The following methods of worship of the Lord in his form as the universe are said to be progressively easier, namely Abhyāsa Yoga in the form of dwelling solely on the form of the Lord as the universe, dedication to performance of work for the Lord, and lastly renunciation of the fruits of all action. Mention is also made of the absence of hatred and other saintly characteristics that mark a worshipper of the Lord in his form as the Indestructible.

The thirteenth chapter shows how to distinguish between the Field (the physical and subtle bodies of the individual) and the Knower of the Field (the unchanging Witness-Consciousness that illumines those bodies), and affirms that the Knower of the Field in all Fields is none other than the Lord. Once again the topic of right knowledge is discussed, including such diverse subordinate themes as the moral prerequisites for knowledge such as absence of pride, the metaphysical nature of the Absolute that has to be realized, the discrimination of Nature (prakṛti) and Spirit (puruṣa), and an account of the various alternative approaches to vision of the Self. Finally there is reversion to a further description of what right vision of the Self is. Chapter fourteen deals with the ways in which sattva, rajas and tamas, the three 'constituents' (guṇa) of Nature, cause bondage. It mentions certain characteristics which enable us to recognize that this or that particular constituent is predominating. It points out the results caused by the rise to predominance of this or that constituent, and indicates the nature of him who has passed beyond the sway of the constituents. The fifteenth chapter describes the process of transmigration. It teaches non-attachment as the means to bring it to an end. It describes how he who attains the supreme abode (of Lord Viṣṇu) does not again return for rebirth. It declares that realization of the Self can only be achieved by one already engaged in transmigratory life. It gives a brief account of some special powers and glories of the supreme Self. It shows that the Lord is called the supreme Spirit (puruṣottama) because He transcends both the perishable and imperishable aspects of his Māyā. It commends knowledge of the supreme Spirit. The themes of the sixteenth chapter are the distinction between godly and demoniac dispositions, and the explanation of how the revealed traditions are the only authoritative source for knowing what should and what should not be done. In the seventeenth chapter there is a description of the differences in food, sacrifice, ascetic practices and charity according to whether the constituent sattva, rajas or tamas predominates,

The point here is to inculcate higher standards in these activities. There is also teaching to explain the function of the formula OM TAT SAT. The topics in the eighteenth chapter are as follows. Sacrifice, charity and ascetic practices should be performed without desire for personal reward. Those who abandon ritual do not necessarily invite suffering as a consequence. The Self does not do any act. An account is given of the differences of quality which occur according to whether sattva, rajas or tamas predominates in knowledge, action, manner in which one performs action, attitude, firmness of mind, joy and so forth. Mention is made of the specific duties for the various castes, beginning with the Brahmins. One attains competence (siddhi) for realizing the Absolute through worshipping the Lord by means of performance of one's duty. There is an account of the further discipline required by those who have attained to 'competence' if they wish to realize the Absolute. The one who has realized the Absolute also sees the Lord. Finally there is teaching about taking refuge in the Lord.

15 ONE CANNOT DETERMINE THE METHOD JUST THROUGH THE GĪTĀ EITHER

If one simply reflects over the topics taught in the Gītā, one gains some insight into the mutual relation of knowledge and action and other elements in the discipline. But ordinary people like ourselves will not easily be able to discover the method for determining the nature of knowledge of the metaphysical truth, or of the series of stages through which it is attained. For the Gītā is throughout more concerned with spiritual teaching than with argument. Here again, therefore, it is clear that the recognition of the right method of approach is a difficult matter if we rely on our individual thinking. In the Upanishads, indeed, passages of argument supported by examples are occasionally introduced. But we have seen that even there anyone who would investigate the method finds himself on a thorny path. And where, as in the Gītā, argumentation is hardly found at all, investigation into method will be more difficult still.

16 A TOPICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BRAHMA SŪTRAS AS A FUNDAMENTAL STARTING-POINT OF THE VEDANTA

Our next task must be to analyse and understand the structure of the Sūtras which stand as the official exegesis of the Upanishads (vedānta-mīmāṃsā). From the mere fact that it is called 'Mīmāṃsā', we know that argument must predominate in this work. The disposition of its topics is as follows.

The first Sūtra in the first Quarter (pāda) of the first

Book (adhyāya) says, 'Then therefore the enquiry into the Absolute (brahman)'. It teaches that this is an enquiry that has to be made. The second Sūtra gives a definition of the Absolute in the form 'That from which proceed the origination, maintenance and dissolution of this world'. The third Sūtra says 'Because the Veda is its womb', declaring thereby that the Veda is the only authoritative source of knowledge for it. The fourth Sūtra emphasizes even further how the Veda is the source of knowledge of the Absolute by advancing a reason and saying 'But that, (the Absolute, is the main topic of the Veda) on account of the harmony of the texts'. In the fifth topic (adhikaraṇa, i.e. at B.S.I.i.5) the notion that any non-conscious principle could be the cause of the world is refuted by the words '(The cause of the world is) not (the non-conscious principle "Nature" advocated by the Sāṅkhya philosophers), for that would be against the revealed teaching, (which speaks of the Creator) "taking thought"'. From then on the first Book is concerned, right up to the end of the third Quarter, with showing that the texts of the Upanishads co-operate harmoniously throughout to teach the existence of the Absolute.

The fourth Quarter of the first Book of the Brahma Sūtras starts from the idea that certain of the texts of the Upanishads might have the misleading appearance of referring to the 'Pradhāna' (Nature) of the Sāṅkhyas. And the argument is to show that they refer to something else, and thus to vindicate the view that the upanishadic texts co-operate harmoniously to teach the existence of the Absolute throughout. The second Book demonstrates how the doctrine earlier attributed to the Upanishads is not in conflict with the Smṛti (the traditional literature of the Hindus other than the Veda) or with reason, and refutes rival views. The third Book describes the way in which the soul undergoes transmigration, and examines at length the nature and function of symbolic meditations and other disciplines. The fourth Book is chiefly concerned with a description of the results accruing from metaphysical knowledge. All Vedantins agree broadly that this is the order of topics in the Brahma Sūtras.

17 THE TRUE METHOD OF THE VEDANTA IS NOT EASILY DISCOVERABLE FROM EXAMINATION OF THE BRAHMA SŪTRAS EITHER

Now, it is agreed by all that the Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa were composed to establish the true import of the Upanishads through logical argument. And it is true that we have an untraced maxim, 'The experts in the field know that Sūtras state the essence of a subject all round in a compact form, free from doubt, free from unjustified interpolations, free from error'. But although these characteristics no doubt

hold of the Brahma Sūtras, nevertheless — we cannot explain why — in their case the freedom from doubt has not been so complete as to preclude the rise and circulation of a number of mutually contradictory explanations. For we find that, even before Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, Bhartṛprapañca and other early authors, who claimed to be followers of the Vedanta standpoint, composed short commentaries (vṛtti) on the Sūtras that explained them in different and mutually inconsistent ways. Although these various short commentaries no longer exist, we find them examined in the commentaries of Śaṅkara and the Vārtikas of Sureśvara. And it is well known that these same Sūtras have been interpreted often in many different ways by writers coming after Śaṅkara, such as Bhāskara, Rāmānuja, Śrīkaṇṭha, Vijñāna Bhikṣu, Madhva, Vallabha, Bala Deva and others. Each of the different commentators supposes that his own particular method was that followed by the author of the Sūtras. It is also well known that their followers still dispute with one another about the method of interpretation today. Thus it is already clear that there is even less hope of discovering the true method of the Vedanta through a mere examination of the Sūtras than there would have been from the mere study of the Upanishads and Gītā.

CHAPTER III
ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA

18 HOW THE TEACHER ŚAṄKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA BELONGS TO THE TRUE TRADITION

From a mere examination of the subject-matter of the three starting-points of the Vedanta (Upanishads, Gītā and Brahma Sūtras) it is thus difficult to determine the correct method of the Vedanta. And this shows, as we have pointed out, that the first task, if we are to determine that correct method, is to examine the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara. The opinions of the commentators of his own period and earlier can only be inferred indirectly from passages referring to them either in the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara or the Vārtikas of Sureśvara. The early commentaries no longer exist anywhere today, so at the moment we have no other resource but to go to the commentaries of Śrī Bhagavatpāda. We now take up the question of whether the method laid down by Śrī Bhagavatpāda was his own invention, or whether it was handed down by tradition. For if this method was the personal invention of the revered Commentator, that will give rise to a doubt as to whether it really was or was not the method accepted in the Upanishads themselves.

It is well known that Śrī Gauḍapāda has the universal reputation in the Vedantic world of having been the Teacher of Bhagavatpāda's Teacher. The Kārikās he composed on the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad are even today still treated with the deepest respect by all Advaitins in the course of their formal study. Again, he is mentioned with honour in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the Brahma Sūtras as a knower of the true tradition (sampradāya), in the passages, 'And so a great knower of the tradition says' (B.S.Bh.II.i.14) and 'In this connection a great Teacher who knew the true tradition about the meaning of the Upanishads has said...' (B.S.Bh.II.i.9).

Now, Gauḍapāda himself has referred with marks of respect to earlier knowers of the tradition, in the words, 'By experts

in the Upanishads' (G.K.II.31) and 'By sages thoroughly conversant with the Veda' (G.K.II.35). And the Commentator (*viz.* Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda) has himself expressed his profound veneration for the true tradition at various places. For example, in his Gītā Commentary he quotes the view of those who have but an imperfect insight into the truth as follows: 'Bringing transmigratory experience to an end is a task that I have to achieve. I shall achieve it by acquiring knowledge of the Field (the individual physical body and subtle transmigratory body) and the Knower of the Field (the Lord present within those two bodies as Witness), and by *becoming* established in the nature of the Lord, the Knower of the Field, after having acquired direct knowledge of Him through the practice of meditation first'. And having quoted this incorrect doctrine (which implies that the ignorant individual soul is initially different from the Knower of the Field and has to *become* identical with the latter through its exertions) he comments: 'The contemptible "sage" who holds such a view thinks he is bringing out the true meaning of transmigratory experience and of liberation from it, and also the true meaning of the Veda as a whole. But in fact he is a "slayer of the Self", confused himself and leading others into confusion. Because he is bereft of the true tradition for interpreting the Veda, he rejects what it teaches and reads into it what it does not teach. One who does not know the true tradition for interpreting the Veda is therefore to be ignored as an ignoramus, even if he be learned in all the sciences' (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2). Elsewhere in the same work he writes: 'But some persons, believing themselves to be very wise, say that the intellect cannot attain to the Self because the latter is formless, so that it is hard to become established in right metaphysical knowledge. True, indeed, it is hard for those who have no Teacher and belong to no tradition, who have not heard the upanishadic texts in the traditionally prescribed way, whose minds are wholly attached to external objects and who have not pursued the right path with diligence...' (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.50). We also find the following sentence in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary: 'And in this connection one (i.e. Draviḍācārya) who knew the true tradition used to recount a little story' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20). Thus Bhagavatpāda showed his profound respect for the true tradition. For these reasons, and also because he was the pupil of a pupil of Gauḍapāda, himself widely famous as a knower of the true tradition, there can be no serious reason to doubt that Bhagavatpāda belonged to the true tradition.

19 THE TRADITIONAL METHOD ACCEPTED BY ŚAṄKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA

If we now look for an answer to the question, 'What, then, was

this Vedantic method that the Ācārya accepted as the one handed down in the true tradition?', we find the sentence: 'For there is the saying of those who know the true tradition, "That which cannot be expressed (in its true form directly) is expressed (indirectly) through false attribution and subsequent retraction"' (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.13).

And the meaning of this saying of the true experts is expounded in the commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka as follows:

(1) Whoso knows the Self, thus described, as the fearless Absolute (brahman), himself becomes the Absolute, beyond fear. This is a brief statement of the meaning of the entire Upanishad. And in order to convey this meaning rightly, the fanciful alternatives of production, maintenance and withdrawal, and the false notion of action, its factors and results, are deliberately attributed to the Self as a first step. And then later the final metaphysical truth is inculcated by negating these characteristics through a comprehensive denial of all particular superimpositions on the Absolute, expressed in the phrase 'neither this nor that'. Just as a man, wishing to explain numbers from one to a hundred thousand billion (points to figures that he has drawn and) says, 'This figure is one, this figure is ten, this figure is a hundred, this figure is a thousand', and all the time his only purpose is to explain numbers, and not to affirm that the figures *are* numbers; or just as one wishing to explain the sounds of speech as represented by the written letters of the alphabet resorts to a device in the form of a palm-leaf on which he makes incisions which he later fills with ink to form letters, and all the while, (even though he point to a letter and say 'This is the sound "so and so"') his only purpose is to explain the nature of the sounds referred to by each letter, and not to affirm that the leaf, incisions and ink *are* sounds; in just the same way, the one real metaphysical principle, the Absolute, is taught by resort to many devices, such as attributing to it production (of the world) and other powers. And then afterwards the nature of the Absolute is restated, through the concluding formula 'neither this nor that', so as to purify it of all particular notions accruing to it from the various devices used to explain its nature in the first place'. (Bṛhad. Bh.IV.iv.25)

20 THE METHOD OF FALSE ATTRIBUTION FOLLOWED BY RETRACTION UNDERLIES OTHER FORMS OF VEDANTA TEACHING

This one sole method, applied in different forms at different places, is found throughout the Upanishads, Gītā and Brahma Sūtras. It can therefore be recognized when examined in its different contexts, as long as the rules already referred to

(M.V. p.23, rule I) for determining context are kept firmly in mind. Here we will merely broach the subject in outline, so as to enable the student to preserve consistency and avoid confusion in following the wide variety of passages from the commentaries and basic texts of the Vedanta to be introduced below.

Although there are no distinctions in the Absolute, and it is already attained inasmuch as it is the Self of all, it is sometimes falsely spoken of in the Upanishads as something that has to be attained. The purpose of such texts is to counter the suspicion that it might be attainable through any other means apart from knowledge. In the same way the Absolute is in certain places falsely referred to as something that has to be known. The purpose of such texts is to deny that anything apart from the Absolute is worthy of knowledge. Sometimes the Absolute is falsely spoken of as a 'knower' (in the sense of being an individual capable of performing the act of knowing). The purpose of such texts is to deny that it can be an object of knowledge. Sometimes it is falsely spoken of as a Witness. The purpose of such texts is to deny that it is a knower (in the sense of an individual capable of performing an act of knowing). On the other hand in some texts the reference is solely to the Absolute in its true nature, and here even Witnesshood is denied, through the formula 'neither this nor that'.

In some places, it is falsely claimed that the Absolute can be known through the texts of revelation, the real purpose of such a claim being to deny that it is capable of being known through perception and the other secular means of knowledge. But in other places it is declared to be inaccessible even through revelation, and to be beyond the range of the mind. Here the reference is to the Absolute in its true nature, and it is denied that it can be known through texts (speech) or through the mind. In the same way it is falsely affirmed that the Absolute is the cause of the world. The purpose is to deny that the Absolute can be an effect, and then afterwards its true nature is conveyed by denying that it can be a cause either. Five sheaths (kośa) are enumerated and predicated of the Absolute one by one. Then these predications are successively denied, and the Self is thereby revealed as beyond the five sheaths and beyond all duality. In the same way, the role of epistemological subject is sometimes attributed to it in order to show that it is not an object. And then it is revealed as bereft of all duality, showing that it is not in truth a subject either. Again, first the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep are falsely attributed to the Self, then subjection to each of them is denied one by one. Finally, through the teaching that the Self is 'the Fourth' (turīya), there is an outright denial that it undergoes any changes of state at all. Why waste words? Whatever is attributed to the Absolute in the

course of communicating its true nature is eventually denied, so that the mind may be brought to a halt. And this has been declared by Śrī Gauḍapāda Ācārya, one 'who knew the true tradition for interpreting the meaning of the Upanishads', as follows: 'The text denies all that it had previously taught by saying "He (the Self) is neither this nor that". Thus the Unborn, the only reality within and without, only manifests when it is realized that it is not anything that is conceived by the mind' (G.K.III.26). Whatever is taught positively as a means of communicating the supreme metaphysical reality is all mere false attribution. Hence the Upanishad denies it by repeating the phrase 'This Self is neither this nor that' at intervals (Bṛhad.II.iii.6, III.ix.26, IV.ii.8, IV.iv.22, IV.v.15). And the meaning of the Kārikā is that the Self in its true nature, bereft of all distinctions, manifests of its own accord when all (else) has been negated.

21 THE ABSOLUTE CAN ONLY BE REVEALED THROUGH FALSE ATTRIBUTION FOLLOWED BY RETRACTION

'Well', you may ask, 'how can you say that this (basically negative) method that has been described is present throughout the commentaries on the three starting-points of the Vedanta (Upanishads, Gītā and Brahma Sūtras), when parts of these are concerned with describing (positive) philosophical doctrines and with the means to attain particular (positive) ends?' To this we reply as follows. The essence of the method of false attribution is that imaginary characteristics are first attributed to the Absolute, and this serves as a negation of whatever is incompatible with those characteristics; then later even the falsely attributed characteristics are negated. Efforts to abolish falsely attributed characteristics have to be continued till all are removed. In this way the true nature of the Absolute can become known through the mere negation of all false attributions. And it is clearly declared in the commentaries on the three starting-points of the Vedanta that there is no other way in which one can come to know it. To show this, one may quote the following passages.

(1) But how can the mere phrase 'neither this nor that' be of service in communicating the true nature of the principle called 'the reality of the real'? It does so, we reply, by negating all varieties of apparent conditioning adjunct (upādhi). The Absolute is that in which there is no particularity. There is no name, no form, no action, no distinction, no universal, no attribute. It is through these determinations alone that speech proceeds, and not one of them belongs to the Absolute. So the latter cannot be taught by sentences of the pattern 'This is so-and-so'. In such upanishadic phrases and words as 'The Absolute is Consciousness-

Bliss' (Bṛhad.III.ix.28.7). 'A mere mass of Consciousness' (Bṛhad.II.iv.12), 'Brahman', 'Ātman', the Absolute is artificially referred to with the help of superimposed name, form and action, and spoken of exactly in the way we refer to objects of perception, as when we say 'That white cow with horns is twitching'. But if the desire is to express the true nature of the Absolute, void of all conditioning adjuncts and particularity, then it cannot be described by any positive means whatever. The only possible method then is to refer to it through a comprehensive denial of whatever positive characteristics have been attributed to it in previous teachings, and to say 'neither this nor that'. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iii.6)

(2) Nor can the Absolute be properly referred to by any such terms as Being or non-being. For all words are used to convey a meaning, and when heard by their hearers convey the meaning the speaker had in mind. But communicable meaning is restricted without exception to universal, action, attribute and relation.... The Absolute, however, does not belong to any universal (genus), so it cannot be expressed by a noun such as 'Being' or 'non-being'. Being without attributes, it cannot be described by any adjective denoting an attribute. And being actionless, it cannot be expressed by any verb denoting activity. For the Upanishad speaks of it as 'Without parts, without activity, at rest' (Śvet.VI.19). Nor has it any relation with anything. For it is 'One', 'without a second', 'not an object' and 'the Self'. Hence it cannot be expressed by any word. And the upanishadic texts themselves confirm this when they say 'That from which words fall back' (Taitt.II.9), and in other passages. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.12)

(3) And because the Absolute has no particular characteristics, the Veda indicates its nature by denying of it the forms of all other things, as is shown, for instance, in the following passages: 'And so, therefore, the teaching is "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6), 'It is other than what is known, and above the unknown' (Kena I.4), 'That from which words fall back without obtaining access, together with the mind' (Taitt.II.9). And the Vedic texts also relate how when Bādhva was questioned by Bāṣkalin he gave his answer merely by not speaking. 'Sir, teach me in words', Bāṣkalin said. But the Teacher remained silent. Finally, at the second or third time of asking, Bādhva replied, 'I am telling you, but you do not understand. This Self is utter silence' (B.S.Bh.III.ii.17).

Similarly, in the Smṛti, too, the Absolute is taught by mere negation of what it is not, as for example in such passages as, 'I will tell you what you have to know, knowing which you will attain immortality. The beginningless Absolute (brahman) in its highest form is not said to be either Being or non-being' (Bh.G.XIII.12). And in the same way we have a further text from the Smṛti in which Nārāyaṇa, putting on the form of the

entire universe, spoke to Nārada and said, 'O Nārada, this is a mere illusion (māyā) projected by Myself, whereby you see Me associated with the attributes of all creatures. Do not suppose that this is My true nature' (M.Bh.Moksha Dharma 339.45). (B.S.Bh.III.ii.17)

(4) (The Absolute is that which ultimately has to be known). So, in order to show that it exists, it is first spoken of in its false form set up by apparent conditioning adjuncts, and fancifully referred to as if it had knowable attributes, in the words 'with hands and feet everywhere'. For there is the ancient maxim of those who know the tradition, 'That which cannot be expressed in its true form (directly) is expressed (indirectly) through false attribution followed by retraction'. And then the next verse of the Gītā is composed to make sure that it could not be supposed that the Absolute which is the object of our search truly had organs such as hands and feet, mere adjuncts falsely attributed to it. (Bh. G.Bh.XIII.14, intro.)

22 THE ROOT OF ALL FALSE ATTRIBUTION, KNOWN AS METAPHYSICAL IGNORANCE

Let us take it, then, that the Absolute can only be communicated by the method of denying of the Absolute all that has been falsely attributed to it. But if you start pointing out false attributions, when will you be sure you have got to the end of all of them? For wrong ideas are limitless, being subject to no rule. How then could the Upanishads achieve a definitive negation of *all* false attributions?

To this objection we reply as follows. There is one false attribution that is the root cause of all others. It is due to its presence that the other erroneous ideas come into being and work mischief during the time of their existence. So the Upanishads single out this error and call it metaphysical Ignorance (avidyā). And the knowledge whereby one establishes the true nature of metaphysical reality through negating that error is called enlightenment (vidyā).

Thus in this connection we have:

(1) Widely apart and leading to divergent ends are these, Ignorance and what is known as enlightenment. I know you, Naciketas, to be eager for enlightenment, for even many desires did not distract you. (Kaṭha I.ii.4)

(2) You, indeed, are our father. You take us beyond Ignorance. (Praśna VI.8)

(3) He, Brahmā, taught that knowledge of the Absolute which is the foundation of all the sciences to Atharvan, his eldest

son. (Muṇḍaka I.i.1)

And we find this Ignorance explained in the Commentaries as follows:

(4) When it is clear that the object and the subject, which pertain to the notion 'you' and 'I' respectively, and which are contradictory in nature like darkness and light, cannot each be of the nature of the other, it is evidently even more incorrect to identify their attributes. From which it follows that the superimposition of the object and its attributes, pertaining to the notion 'you', onto the subject, which pertains to the notion 'I' and is of the nature of pure Consciousness, must be erroneous. And the opposite superimposition of the subject and its attributes onto the object must be erroneous too. And yet, though these two principles are utterly distinct in nature, there is a failure to distinguish one from the other, and each, together with its attributes, is superimposed on and identified with the other. And from that there results this natural worldly experience, based on wrong knowledge (mithyā-jñāna) and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as 'I am this' and 'This is mine'.... This very superimposition, thus defined, the wise call Ignorance. And ascertainment of the ultimately real principle through discrimination between the confused elements (in this mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self) they call enlightenment (vidyā). (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(5) And hence it is that everyone superimposes every kind of activity, which really belongs to the realm of name and form, onto the Self, and superimposes the property of light (which really belongs to the Self alone) onto name and form. And since people superimpose name and form onto the Self-of-the-nature-of-Light, they become utterly confused by alternative fancies such as 'This is my Self', 'No, it is not of that nature', 'It is capable of action', 'No, it is not capable of action', 'It is pure', 'It is not pure', 'It is in bondage', 'It is free', 'It is motionless', 'It goes', 'It comes', 'It exists', 'It does not exist'. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.7)

(6) The 'conjunction' (mentioned in the Gītā verse under comment) between the Knower of the Field and the Field (cp. M.V. p.35), which are respectively subject and object and of utterly distinct nature, is in fact (no real conjunction at all but) a (mere mutual) superimposition of their attributes, arising from a failure to discriminate two utterly distinct entities one from another. It is comparable to the process (in the stock examples of perceptual error) by which 'conjunction' with a snake is superimposed on a rope, or 'conjunction' with silver is superimposed on shell (i.e. a piece of mother-of-pearl), through failure to discriminate the two.

This 'conjunction' of the Knower of the Field and the Field is essentially superimposition, of the nature of wrong knowledge (mithyā-jñāna). It is, however, possible to separate out the Knower of the Field, as the inner fibres of a piece of muñja grass may be separated from its outer stalk. It can then be known as we have defined it, through a discriminative knowledge of the Knower of the Field, acquired in the manner already described. It is then possible to be aware of the Absolute, that which we are here to know, void of all apparent conditioning adjuncts, as expressed in the formula 'It is not said to be either real or unreal' (Bh.G.XIII.12). Whoever does this acquires the clear conviction that (in ordinary experience) the non-existent is appearing as if existent, like elephants conjured forth by magic (māyā = mass hypnotism) or like dream-visions or cloud-palaces. And, in the case of one in whom this clear vision has arisen, wrong knowledge disappears, because it is in contradiction with right knowledge, and because its origin (non-discrimination) has been removed. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.26)

23 THE CAUSES, NATURE AND RESULTS OF IGNORANCE

We now know the nature of metaphysical Ignorance. It consists in the mutual superimposition of the Self onto the not-self, and of the not-self onto the Self, and also of their attributes. Various synonyms are found for it in the commentaries which are familiar from general usage, such as adhyāsa, adhyāropa, viparyaya, viparyāsa, mithyā-jñāna, mithyā-pratyaya, anyathā-grahaṇa, tamas, bhrānti and moha. Thus we have such passages as 'Ignorance is the supposition that what is transient, impure, of the nature of pain and not-self is eternal, pure, of the nature of joy and is one's Self' (Patañjali, Y.S. II.5) and 'When wrong knowledge (mithyā-jñāna), psychological defects, self-interested action, birth and pain have been successively removed, then, because each removes the next in the series, what results is liberation' (Gautama, Nyāya Sūtra I.i.2). There is, however, a special point in the Vedantic teaching. In no other system do we find the doctrine that when we make a mutual identification of the Self and the not-self and their attributes we are identifying the real and the unreal: (the other systems speak, rather, of the false identification of two reals).

We have seen that failure to discriminate the Self from the not-self is the cause of this Ignorance. This has been clear from texts quoted from the commentaries. We admit that a mere absence (such as absence of discrimination) cannot of itself cause anything. For non-existence has no distinctions, from the mere fact of being non-existence, or otherwise you might be able to produce oil as an effect resulting from the mere absence (non-existence) of sand. But there is nothing odd

about the present case. For it is a clear fact of experience that when the true nature of anything is not discerned, various false notions about it arise. So it is the Self, the real metaphysical principle, that is imagined under various names and forms when its true nature is not discerned. On this a great authority has said: 'As a rope imperfectly perceived in the dark is variously imagined as a snake or a stream of water or in other ways, so is the Self wrongly imagined as this and that' (G.K.II.17).

Thus we observe in worldly experience that superimposition as false imagination has absence of discrimination of the true nature of some reality as its prior condition. So we may say that the mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self has absence of discrimination of the true nature of the Self and the not-self as its sole prior cause. And this absence of discrimination is taught in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries by a variety of synonymous words implying want of knowledge, such as absence of knowledge (ajñāna), failure to perceive (agrahaṇa), not being aware of (anavagama), not being awake to (anavabodha, apratibodha). Because it is the cause of wrong knowledge, it is sometimes also called cause (kāraṇa), seed or sleep (nidrā, supti). Wrong knowledge is referred to in the authoritative texts as the 'effect' of absence of knowledge, or as its 'result' or as 'dream'.

For example, we find in the First Book of the Kārikās of Gauḍapāda: 'Viśva (Consciousness associated with the waking state) and Taijasa (Consciousness associated with the dream-state) are both accepted as being conditioned as cause (non-perception of the Self) and as effect (wrong perception of the Self). Prājña (Consciousness associated with dreamless sleep) is conditioned solely as cause. Neither cause nor effect (neither non-perception of the Self nor wrong perception of the Self) are found in Turīya (pure Consciousness as such, transcending all states).... Neither Prājña nor Turīya are aware of duality. In this respect they are equal. But Prājña is associated with the seed called sleep. Sleep does not exist in Turīya. Viśva and Taijasa are associated with both sleep and dream (where the word 'dream' is used in a broad sense to include waking experience as well as dream, each being regarded as a species of wrong knowledge). Prājña has sleep, but is free from dream (in the above broad sense). But the enlightened ones see neither sleep nor dream in Turīya. Dream is the state of one who perceives wrongly (anyathā-grahaṇa); sleep (nidrā) is the state of one who does not know the truth. When the delusion of these two states no longer occurs, one reaches the plane of Turīya (G.K. I.11,13-15)'.

Now we take up the explanation of the effects of Ignorance. Ignorance and enlightenment are described in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad as follows. 'When he feels (in dream) as if he were being struck, as if he were being overpowered, as if he were pursued by an elephant, as if he were falling into a pit, he

imagines through Ignorance whatever dangers he has experienced in the waking state. But when he thinks, like a god or king, "Verily, I am all this", that is his highest state' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.20).

Here, by citing the example of dream, the text indicates how universal experience shows that all this worldly life is the result of Ignorance. For in dream there is no real distinction between knower, knowledge and known, or between actions, their factors and results. The whole world knows that it is all a mere illusion, conditioned by false impressions (vāsanā). But at the time the dreamer thinks, 'People are really striking me. They are overpowering me. An elephant is chasing me. Help! I've fallen down a pit. Alas, what troubles have come upon me'. And we all know that, when the feeling of enlightenment supervenes, people have the idea, 'I have become a god, I have been anointed a king, I have realized my nature as the Self of all'. And the Veda shows that the results of superimposition are the same in waking as they are in dream. We also conclude from the commentary on this passage that this is so. For it says:

(1) A false notion arises, called Ignorance, based on the impressions of past experience. That is what the text is teaching. 'Appears to strike him' means 'appears to strike the dreamer'.... This, therefore, is the essence of Ignorance. It causes one to conceive what is the Self of all as not the Self of all. It sets up (the appearance of) other things over against the Self, though they do not really exist. It makes the Self finite. Hence desire arises for that from which one is cut off. Because one is cut off and feels desire, one resorts to action. From action follow consequences. (Bṛhad.Bh. IV.iii.20)

And in the commentary on the Brahma Sūtras we find the following:

(2) All commerce between the attested means of knowledge (perception, inference, revelation, etc.) and their objects, whether in the Vedic or secular sphere, proceeds on the basis of this same mutual superimposition of the Self and not-self called Ignorance, as does all Vedic tradition, whether concerned with injunctions and prohibitions or with liberation. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(3) This 'natural' (i.e. uncaused) beginningless and endless superimposition, which is of the nature of false supposition and which is the origin of the sense that one is an individual capable of action and experience, is directly familiar to everybody. (*ibid.*)

(4) And the entire upanishadic teaching is begun to

communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self and thus to put an end to this superimposition, the cause of all evil. (*ibid.*)

24 THE CAUSE, NATURE AND RESULT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The cause, nature and result of enlightenment have been compactly epitomized in the last quotation from the Brahma Sūtra Commentary, beginning 'And the entire upanishadic teaching...' (M.V.23,4). For Ignorance is the cause of all evil, in that it is what gives rise to the sense of being an individual capable of action and experience, and also to the instruments and objects of knowledge. Unless the instruments of knowledge are in play there cannot be any notion of an object set over against oneself and existent. And, if there is no knowledge of any second thing standing over against oneself, there is no scope for the rise of desire or fear relating to it. Without the rise of desire and fear and other passions there cannot be action or withdrawal to acquire the desirable and avoid the undesirable, or experience of the results of such action or withdrawal. Hence we conclude that it is Ignorance alone that is the cause of all evil, because it is what gives rise to empirical experience through instruments of knowledge. When things are viewed from this standpoint, even worldly advantages are seen to be a disaster. This superimposition was called the cause of all evil because even things that are to one's worldly advantage are perishable and will bring pain through undergoing destruction, and because they will plunge a person again and again into labour and trouble as he tries to realize his individual ends. The Veda itself shows that whatever is attained through action is perishable, and supports the idea with such texts as, 'For just as a state in the present world attained through previous action comes to an end, even so do the states in the next world gained through meritorious action come to an end' (Chānd.VIII.i.6).

The fact that enlightenment causes the destruction of Ignorance is already clear when we see that knowledge of the shell (mother-of-pearl) or the rope destroys the error of mistaking a piece of shell for silver or a rope for a snake. So it follows that, in the present context also, direct knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self has the result of putting an end to ignorance of the Self. The phrase 'to communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self and thus to put an end to this superimposition, the cause of all evil' (M.V.23,4), expresses this result, which is the cessation of Ignorance. As for the *nature* of enlightenment, it is the direct conviction 'The final truth is that only the Self exists'.

If we turn, finally, to the cause of enlightenment, we find that this is indicated by the phrase 'And the entire upani-

shadic teaching is begun' (M.V.23,4). The fact that all forms of imagination have the Self for their sole underlying substratum, and the fact that the enquirer is himself identical with the supreme Self — these points are clearly taught in such upanishadic passages as, 'All this universe has that subtle principle for its essence. That is the real. That is the Self. That thou art, O Śvetaketu!' (Chānd.VI.viii.7).

25 HOW BEING CAPABLE OF EXPERIENCE THROUGH VALID MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE AND BEING CAPABLE OF ACTION ARE STATES ARISING THROUGH IGNORANCE

A passage from the Brahma Sūtra Commentary quoted in an earlier section (M.V.23,2) promised that it would later be shown how all our experience of the means and objects of valid empirical knowledge, and the operation of all the Vedic and other traditional texts, depended on superimposition, called Ignorance. This fact that all our experiences originate from Ignorance, which implies that they are based on wrong knowledge (mithyā-jñāna), which is but a synonym for Ignorance, is clearly stated in the Brahma Sūtra Commentary, in the passage running: '(And from that there results) this natural worldly experience, based on wrong knowledge and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as "I am this" and "This is mine"'. And the revered Commentator makes it clear that he means by 'superimposition' a 'wrong notion' (mithyā-buddhi) when he says, 'Superimposition, we have already said, is one thing being wrongly taken for another'. Now, nobody could even contemplate the idea that Ignorance in the form of wrong notions or experience fabricated through mere words and ideas could imply a real relation like contact, such as the contact between a hand and a book, or a real relation like the relation of cause and effect subsisting between clay and pots. So we have to conclude that the commentary is affirming that the whole play of the means and objects of empirical knowledge is based on false conception. And in this connection the Veda hints that the complex of the soul and its bodies and organs is not in any (real and) constant relation with the Self by saying: 'The Spirit, remaining the same, appears to conform successively to the conditions of the two worlds (the present life and the next future one). It only seems to think. It only seems to move. It has entered on a dream, but transcends this world, the forms of death' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7). Although the Spirit has no contact with the body or its organs of knowledge and action, it appears to be the one acting when they act, and appears to move. In truth, however, it does nothing whatever in the course of dream (i.e. the dream of empirical experience in general, cp. Sureśvara, B.B.V. IV.iii.447 ff.). This appears to be what the upanishadic text means. As for the phrase, 'It transcends the

forms of death', that is explained in Śrī Bhagavatpāda's commentary: '"Death" here means desire, action, Ignorance and the rest. Death has no other nature. Its forms are the forms of the complex of the soul and its bodies and organs. So the Spirit transcends the forms of death, which depend on action and its consequences' (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.7).

With this teaching of the Veda in mind, the revered Commentator raises the question, 'But in what sense do we mean that perception and the other secular means of knowledge, together with Vedic tradition, belong to those in the realm of Ignorance?' And he replies: 'What we say here is this. Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in the feelings "I" and "mine" there can be no empirical knower, and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin' (B.S.Bh. I.i.1, intro.). Here it is clear that the revered Commentator quotes no authority to prove that the play of the means of empirical knowledge belongs only to those in the realm of Ignorance. So if he is able to state flatly that the power of making use of the means of knowledge does not arise without self-identification with the body and its organs, such a statement must rest on universal experience. And the revered Commentator speaks in various places of the relation between the Self and the body and other factors of the empirical personality as set up by false identification:

(1) Therefore, since being embodied is the result of false notions, it stands proved that the enlightened person is not embodied even when still alive. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(2) The question of whether the soul 'has' or 'has not' a body depends simply on whether metaphysical discrimination has or has not arisen. For the Vedic text says, 'Dwelling in all bodies, not Himself embodied' (Kaṭha I.ii.22). (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19)

(3) 'Relation with a body' includes relation with various bodies. What does 'relation with a body' in fact imply? It means the rise of the wrong idea that this body and so on, that is, the complex formed by the soul and its bodies and organs, is my very Self. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.48)

(4) The word 'body' is understood here to include the organs and the mind. That body (so understood) is the seat of experience for the Self. The Self is by nature pure and tranquil. It is visited, however, (in the course of Ignorance) by the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. But in itself it is immortal, in the sense of being free from death and the other characteristics of change that beset the body, sense-organs and mind, the latter being the product of the merit and demerit of previous births.... The body, then, is of this kind, always in the jaws of death, beset by the pleasant and the unpleasant. It is the seat of the Self for empirical

experience, and in this sense occupied by it. The one who has such a body is declared to be 'embodied'. 'Being embodied' is the state, arising through lack of metaphysical discrimination, in which the Self, which is by nature without a body, feels 'I am verily that body and that body is myself'. In this state, the Self is in the grip of the pleasant and the unpleasant. (Chānd.Bh.VIII.xii.1)

And this also explains the superimposition that results in the feeling that one is an individual capable of action and experience. For here also one only engages in activity of this kind if one identifies oneself with the complex of soul, body and organs. And indeed, the Veda and the Smṛti texts speak of various 'activities' of the Self only on account of the activities of the complex of the soul and its bodies and organs. And they speak of the Self (in its true form) isolated (from the complex) as void of activity. The commentary of Śrī Bhagavatpāda follows this practice in several places.

(5) When He breathes, He is called Vital Energy. When He speaks, He is called Speech (vāc). When He sees, He is called the Eye, when He hears, the Ear. When He thinks, He is called the Mind (manas). These are but the names of His activities. He who meditates on these aspects of Him singly, does not come to know Him. For, as conceived under one or other of these aspects, He is incomplete. One should meditate on Him merely as 'the Self'. (Bṛhad.I.iv.7)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The vital energy and the rest, as the text says, are but names denoting the apparent activities of the Self. They are only names deriving from and denoting the activities of the Self; they are not names referring to the Self in its true nature as pure Consciousness.... As long as a person thinks 'I see, I hear, I touch', and imagines that his Self is characterized by the human activities that belong to the illusory realm of Nature, he does not rightly know the Self in its entirety.

If a person should ask, 'How should one view the Self if one is to know it rightly?', the text replies, 'One should meditate on Him merely as the Self'. The Self (ātman) which possesses the vital energy and other particular aspects of himself that we have just mentioned, also pervades them. Because the Self (ātman) pervades them (āpnoti), they are said (because the word ātman is etymologically cognate with āpnoti) to *be* the Self. Because the Self includes all these particulars, it is the whole of which they are illusory aspects.... Therefore one should meditate on Him merely as 'the Self' (cp. M.V.38,6).

(6) When this Spirit is 'born' it accepts a body and becomes associated with impurities. When it leaves the body at the time of death, it leaves its impurities behind. (Bṛhad.IV.iii.8)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: By 'impurities' is meant the body and its organs, inseparably associated with impurity, the seats of action, meritorious and otherwise.... Thus it is established that this Light of the Self is different from the body and its organs, the 'impurities'. For it is first joined with them and later separated from them. If they were its properties, it could not become joined to them or separated from them (as they would always accompany it by nature).

(7) It is the Self as associated with the body, the senses and the mind that the wise call 'the experiencer'. (Kaṭha I.iii.4)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Rightly do the wise, the discriminating ones, speak of the Self associated with body, senses and mind as the experiencer, the one undergoing transmigration. For the Self alone is not an experiencer. It only appears to become an experiencer through association with such apparent conditioning adjuncts (upādhi) as the intellect (buddhi), etc.

(8) There is the person acting, the body as his seat of action, his various organs and instruments, the physical effort of various kinds put in by his body and organs, along with assistance from the gods as the fifth component. Whatever action of body, speech or mind a person initiates, whether proper or improper, these five factors are the conditions for it. (Bh.G. XVIII.14-5)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The seat of action is the body, which is the place where desire and aversion, pleasure, pain and knowledge have their play. Then there is the person acting, who is also the experiencer, himself marked by conditioning adjuncts. There are the various organs, such as the sense of hearing, etc., for perceiving sound and other objects, these organs being twelve in number (the five senses of perception, the five powers of bodily action, and the two forms of the mind, manas when it is wavering and buddhi when it is fixed). There are the various activities of the vital energy, such as the out-breath and the in-breath and the rest. And these four factors are completed by a fifth, the force of the gods, such as Āditya (the sun-god) who presides over the sense of sight, and other deities.

(9) This being so, that wrong-headed person who thinks that the Self is verily the one who acts cannot see the truth, through lack of a trained understanding. (Bh.G.XVIII.16)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Thus action has to be performed through these five factors. The phrase 'This being so' indicates that the teaching of the previous two verses shows why the person spoken of in the present verse is wrong-headed. The

reference is to the one without metaphysical knowledge who thinks that the one who performs action is his true Self, though the latter is pure and transcendent. Such a person thinks 'It is verily I who act' in the case of an act which is in fact performed by these component factors, which he only identifies with his true Self through Ignorance. Why does he think in this way? Through lack of a trained understanding, an understanding trained through the teaching of the Vedic texts and the words of the Teacher.... And so, for lack of a trained understanding, he does not see the true nature either of the Self or of action. Thus he is wrong-headed, that is, his mind is bad, perverted and defective, and a sure cause of further birth and death.

(10) The supreme Self, the Indestructible, being beginningless and without attributes, O son of Kuntī, though present in the body, does not act and is not tainted. (Bh.G.XIII.31)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Though present in the body: this means that we are aware of the presence of the Self in our bodies. Still, it does not act. And because it does not act, it is not tainted by the results of any act....

Who is it, then, who *does* act and become tainted in our bodies?... The Lord has already answered this, saying 'But it is Nature (implying Ignorance) that acts'. (Gītā V.14) For the notion that the Self acts or is tainted is itself of the nature of mere Ignorance. There is no action or taint in the highest Self from the standpoint of the highest truth.

26 THE TEXTS DEALING WITH INJUNCTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS PROCEED ON THE BASIS OF IGNORANCE

We must now examine the meaning of the statement in Śrī Bhagavatpāda's Commentary that all texts concerned with injunctions and prohibitions and with liberation proceed only on the basis of accepting superimposition as a fact (M.V.23,2). There is a difference here between secular experience and experience as dealt with in the Veda. In secular activity, no allowance is made for knowledge of a Self beyond the body. Materialists think only of obtaining the desirable and avoiding the undesirable insofar as these affect the body solely in this one life. Only those who desire to know particulars about obtaining the desirable and avoiding the undesirable in regard to other lives and other worlds are fit for the duties and experiences dealt with in the Veda. Here knowledge of the existence of a Self (beyond the body) is a necessary requirement. And thus it has been said by Śrī Bhagavatpāda, 'Without knowledge of the existence of a Self connected with other lives, there cannot be any desire to obtain the desirable or

avoid the undesirable in such lives. We see this in the case of the Naturalists (svabhāva-vādins). Therefore the Veda sets forth teaching about the existence of a Self connected with other lives, and explains the particulars of how to obtain the desirable and avoid the undesirable in other lives' (Bṛhad. Bh.I.i.1).

Hence the doubt might arise: 'Are the experiences (of the desirable and the undesirable) thus dealt with in the Veda the work of Ignorance or not?' For we owe any knowledge we may have of a Self over and above the body to the Veda. For if, in our attempts to safeguard the teaching of the commentaries, we were to suppose that these duties and experiences were not the work of Ignorance, that would contradict the point made at the end of the introduction to the Brahma Sūtra Commentary, 'Superimposition, of the nature of wrong knowledge (Ignorance), is what gives rise to the idea that we are individuals capable of action and experience. For this would be to accept that the sense of being an individual capable of action and experience, referred to in the Veda, was not the result of metaphysical Ignorance. But if, on the other hand, we accepted that capability of individual action and experience was based on Ignorance, that would undermine the authority of the Veda. For it would show that what it taught (when speaking about duties and the rewards flowing from the performance of them) was not true.

On this question, the Veda itself accepts the view that capability for individual action and experience are based on Ignorance. It says: 'Frail are these barques, consisting of the sacrifice, the sixteen officiating priests, the sacrificer and his wife, pertaining to ritual in its lower form. Those deluded people who praise this as "the best" go again to old age and death. Plunged in Ignorance, supposing themselves to be scholars and very wise, they wander about, struck hither and thither and bemused, like blind men led by one who is himself blind' (Muṇḍ.I.ii.7-8).

Nor is the authority of the Veda in any way undermined. For the only purpose of the Veda is to teach people how to attain their various ends. With this in mind, the revered Commentator has written:

(1) No one but a person who acts in an intelligent, thinking way, and knows of the connection of his soul with other worlds, is qualified to perform the ritualistic activity laid down in the Veda. But such a person does not depend for his qualification on a knowledge of the true Self that can only be known from the Upanishads — the Self which is beyond hunger and thirst and other such infirmities, which does not admit of distinction into different castes such as Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and which does not undergo the experience of transmigration. For knowledge of the true metaphysical Self would be useless in regard to ritualistic duties, and would

in fact disqualify one for them by contradicting the sense that one is an individual capable of action. But until knowledge of the Self in this true form arises, the Veda continues its teaching without overstepping the bounds of the experience of those afflicted with Ignorance. For example, such texts as, 'A Brahmin should offer sacrifices' proceed on the basis of superimposing onto the Self distinctions of caste, stage of life, age and so forth. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(2) Although the obligatory daily ritual is to be learned from the Veda alone, still, it only applies to one afflicted by Ignorance. And in the same way, prohibitions against acts, such as the slaughter of a Brahmin, which bring evil on the one who does them, can only be learned from the Veda. Yet such acts are only performed by those afflicted with Ignorance and lust and other such defects. Otherwise their performance would be inexplicable. And the daily, occasional and optional ritual are the same (that is, they are learned from the Veda, but only performed by those afflicted with Ignorance). (Bh.G. Bh.XVIII.67, intro.)

(3) Even the one who affirms the existence of a Self over and above the body is to be accounted of untrained mind if he sees the Self alone as the one who acts. So, being thus untrained, he does not see the truth, either about the Self or about action. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.16)

(4) An opponent may raise the following difficulty. It is taught, he may say, that one should acquire knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Self, thereby abolishing the distinctions which make up the factors of action, such as the person doing it, his instruments and so on. It is like knowledge of the rope, for instance, which destroys the illusory notion of a snake for which the rope had been mistaken. But this teaching stands in contradiction with the injunctions to perform ritual, for it would rob them of all scope. Yet we find that injunctions to perform ritual are in fact laid down. Such a contradiction cannot stand, as the Vedas are an authority for right knowledge.

But we reply that there is no difficulty. For the Vedas simply accept the factors of action as they are presented in ordinary experience. And on this basis they lay down ritual for those who desire liberation, as a means to do away with the accumulated effects of their sins. And they lay down ritual for attaining particular ends in the case of those who desire them. They are not concerned with affirming that the factors of action actually exist. (Tait.Bh.I.11)

(5) Wrong, also, was the opponent's view that, if the Veda taught the non-duality of the Absolute, this would render the part of the Veda that dealt with action inauthoritative. For

Vedic teaching is given to deal with conditions as actually perceived.... At first it accepts natural duality based on metaphysical Ignorance just as we perceive it. On this basis, it teaches ritualistic action to the one who is afflicted with natural Ignorance, and hence with such defects as desire and aversion; for the sake of whatever ends he may conceive.... Then, later, when he has come to see the defects inherent in action, its factors and results, and wishes to rest serene in his own true nature, which is opposed to all action, the Veda teaches him the means to this also, which is 'Knowledge of the Absolute' (brahma-vidyā), that is to say vision of the sole reality of the Self. (Bṛhad.Bh.V.i.1)

Even the meditations prescribed by the Veda fall within the province of mental activity. They therefore represent teaching given to people still afflicted with Ignorance, and teaching which accepts duality in the form of action, its factors and results, just as they are perceived by such people. About this there is little to be said. So the revered Commentator expressed himself as follows:

(6) All practical experience of the Absolute as an object of meditation, or as the one performing meditation, takes place in the state of Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.i.12)

27 THE TEXTS CONCERNED WITH LIBERATION APPLY TO THOSE AFFLICTED WITH IGNORANCE — BUT WITH A DIFFERENCE

We should now consider the texts dealing with liberation in their proper setting in the teaching as a whole. Even here, knowledge of the Absolute is taught on the basis of accepting the duality implied in such distinctions as Teacher, texts, pupil, knower, knowing, known and so on, just as ordinarily perceived. Such texts apply to those in Ignorance just as much as the texts enjoining and prohibiting action.

But there is this difference. The texts dealing with injunction and prohibition reveal a means to the accomplishment of some human end, and do no more. They do not say anything as to the reality or unreality of the distinction into action, its factors and results. But the texts dealing with liberation bless with liberation the one who really desires to know the true nature of his own Self, devoid of action, its factors and its results. Liberation means permanent establishment in that Self.

Hence there is no contradiction between the texts conveying injunctions and prohibitions and the texts teaching liberation. For the texts conveying injunctions and prohibitions have their scope earlier in the state of Ignorance; when the truth has been known, however, duality no longer exists. And in fact

there is never any contradiction between duality and non-duality. For no duality whatever exists from the standpoint of upanishadic revelation or of the Teacher who follows it, and the notion of the existence of texts, Teacher and pupil is only assumed for the sake of teaching pupils. It was with this in mind that the words were given, 'And the entire upanishadic teaching is begun to communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self...' (M.V.23,4). So there are no difficulties here. For the Commentator follows the different texts on which he is commenting at different places. In some he throws light on the practical experience of duality for those in the state of Ignorance. In others he explains how there is no such experience when non-duality has been realized.

(1) The supreme Self is loosely spoken of by immature souls as the embodied individual soul, taken to be limited by its apparent conditioning adjuncts, the body, sense-organs, mind and intellect. It is like the ether of space, which appears to be enclosed by conditioning adjuncts such as pots of varying shapes and sizes, when it is in fact not so enclosed.* The limitations undergone by the Self are of that kind (i.e. merely apparent). Relative to such adjuncts, experience of such distinctions as that between the performer and the object of an act does not imply any contradiction. This remains true as long as the teaching of the existence and sole reality of the Self in the text 'That thou art' has not been properly assimilated. But when the existence and sole reality of the Self is directly apprehended, all individual experience, including bondage and liberation, comes to an end. (B.S.Bh. I.ii.6)

**(For example, if you move a pot you will move the air in the pot, but the space that appeared to be 'in the pot' when it was in its original position cannot be moved: in fact there is no real enclosure of space in the pot, only apparent enclosure. T.N.)*

(2) The continuous empirical experience of the individual soul proceeds solely through its being afflicted with Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.3)

(3) All empirical experiences that occur before one has realized that one's Self is the Absolute are taken as real, like the experiences of a dream before awakening. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

(4) The inmost Self is one. There cannot be two inmost Selves. Where there is only one, practical experience of such a unity as if it were multiple, and reference to it as such, arise through apparent conditioning adjuncts. It is as when we speak figuratively of the ether of space in the pot and the ether of space in general (as if the pot really circumscribed

a volume of the ether of space and effectively cut it off from the rest of the ether, which it does not, as the ether is a continuum and too subtle to be effectively circumscribed by gross objects). Once this is understood, the Vedic texts speaking of distinctions such as subject and object, means of empirical knowledge such as perception, etc., transmigratory experience of the world, and the Vedic texts conveying injunctions and prohibitions, all become intelligible (even when non-duality is accepted as the final truth). And the Veda itself confirms this. For it shows that all empirical experience belongs to the realm of Ignorance in such texts as, 'For where there is an appearance of duality, there (a subject who is) one sees (an object which is) another'. (Bṛhad.IV.v.15) But this text goes on to deny any empirical experience in the realm of enlightenment in the words, 'But where everything has become the Self, what could one see, and with what?' (B.S.Bh. I.ii.20, cp. M.V.49,6)

(5) 'This doctrine (of the existence of pupil, texts and Teacher) is accepted only for purposes of teaching. When the truth is known, duality no longer exists'. (G.K.I.18)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: How, then, can the notion of Teacher, texts and pupil come to an end? The reply is as follows. An imagination could come to an end if anything had actually been imagined by anybody. Just as this world-appearance is an illusion like a rope-snake, so is this imaginary distinction between a pupil and his Teacher and so on. It is accepted as a means for teaching, but only before the rise of enlightenment. So it is for purposes of instruction (and not as a statement of metaphysical truth) that we have this teaching that there is a pupil and a Teacher and a subject taught. But when the object of the teaching is attained, when the supreme principle is known, duality does not exist. (G.K.Bh.I.18)

28 HOW THE VEDA IS THE FINAL MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

The method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction has been partially described. From the description so far given it has been established that the function of the upanishadic texts as authoritative means of knowledge is to promote knowledge of the unity and sole existence of the Self by eliminating Ignorance. They do not affect the Self or contribute to it in any way. For the Self is not the object of any means of knowledge, since in its true nature it is non-dual. And since it is by nature ever immediately evident and self-evident, it does not need anything else to establish itself. An appearance of duality is established through Ignorance. But it is the self-luminous principle, the witness of the

activity of all the organs such as speech and mind, which stands illumining all else with its Consciousness. For we have the upanishadic text, 'There is one shining deity present hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the inner Self of all beings, the regulator of action and its results, dwelling within all beings, the Witness, the Illuminator, transcendent, void of all empirical attributes' (Śvet.VI.11).

Perception and the other means of empirical knowledge are associated with this principle only through Ignorance. For it is by nature ever pure, conscious and liberated. And it is only through their association with this principle *as converted through Ignorance into a knowing subject* that perception and the other means of knowledge have any life at all; and they shine through its light alone. For we have such upanishadic texts as: 'You cannot see the seer of seeing, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking, you cannot know the knower of knowing' (Bṛhad.III.iv.2), 'The unseen Seer...' (Bṛhad.III.vii.23), 'Which cannot be thought by the mind, through which, they say, the mind thinks' (Kena I.6) and 'All this manifests through its light' (Muṇḍ. II.ii.11).

Even when there is the error of supposing the body, senses and organs to be the Self, this self-luminous principle remains the inmost principle of all, superior to all through being immediately self-evident. For we have the upanishadic text, 'That which is immediately evident is the Absolute, that is the Self, interior to all' (Bṛhad.III.iv.1).

When we say 'The Upanishads are the means to attainment of that principle', we should be clear that this 'attainment' only occurs through the elimination of our wrong supposition that this principle falls within the field of our ego-notion. The statement that the Upanishads are the means to its attainment is also used merely to indicate that the self-luminous principle is not known by any of the other means of knowledge, such as perception and the rest.

There is also a further point. Perception and the other empirical means of knowledge, along with the Vedic texts conveying injunctions and prohibitions — even along with the upanishadic texts themselves — are valid only as long as the Absolute has not been known in its true nature through the Veda, for then the wrong notion of 'knower through means of knowledge' is eliminated. After true metaphysical knowledge has been attained, only the non-dual Absolute remains. There cannot then be the notion that the Self is the object of a means of cognition, or that any means of cognition exists to know it. Hence the experts in the interpretation of the Upanishads have taught that the Upanishads are the 'final means of knowledge'.

(1) This principle is not within the scope of perception, as it does not have form or colour or any other perceptible

attribute. And it cannot be the object of inference or the other means of empirical knowledge either, as it does not have any property to serve as an inferential sign or to provide any of the other prerequisites of an inference. (B.S.Bh.II.i.6)

(2) If you object that, if the Absolute is not an object of knowledge, it cannot be known through the Veda, we reply that this is not so. For the aim of the Veda here is to put an end to distinctions imagined through Ignorance. The Veda does not aim to expound the Absolute as if it were an object characterizable as this or that. What, then, does it do? What it does is to eliminate distinctions such as those of knower, knowledge and known, which are imagined through Ignorance. And it does so by teaching that the Absolute, because it is the inmost Self, is *not* an object of knowledge. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(3) For the Self is not anything brought in to anyone as something new, for it is self-established and self-manifest from the start. The Self does not depend on any means of knowledge to be known, since the means of knowledge depend for their existence and power to operate on it. They belong to it, and are only brought into play to establish objects of knowledge which (unlike the Self) are not yet established. (B.S.Bh. II.iii.7)

(4) The Self of all is other than the performer of action, the object of the ego-notion, and conceived through that as 'I'. It is the witness of the ego-notion, present, the same, in all beings, one, constant and eternal, the Spirit (puruṣa). It is not attainable by anyone merely through following the Vedic texts concerned with injunction and prohibition, or merely through studying one of the various systems based on logical reasoning conducted independently of the metaphysical teaching of the Veda. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(5) And the text 'But I am asking you about that Spirit taught in the Upanishads' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26) affirms that the Spirit in question is specifically the Spirit *taught in the Upanishads*. This would only have been possible if it had been the primary topic that the Upanishads taught. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(6) And again, this (the metaphysical part of the Upanishads) is the final means of knowledge proclaiming the unity and sole reality of the Self. After that nothing further could be required. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

(7) For once the true nature of the Self is known, there can no longer be any more experience of the means and objects of empirical cognition. For the final means of knowledge puts an end to the condition of the Self as a knower whose knowledge comes through the empirical means of knowledge. And in putting

an end to this condition, the final means of knowledge itself ceases any longer to be a means of knowledge, just as the means of knowledge present in a dream cease to be such on waking. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69)

(8) Realization of the Absolute is not anywhere found either to destroy or create any reality. What it is invariably found to do is to put an end to Ignorance. So here also, the sense of not being the Absolute and the sense of not being the totality of all that exists, which are induced by Ignorance alone, should be put to an end by realization of the Absolute. (Bṛhad. Bh.I.iv.10)

(9) We admit that the soul is subject to the evils of transmigration before enlightenment, and that perception and other means of empirical knowledge pertain only to this realm. For there are texts such as 'But where everything has become the Self, what could one see and with what?' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14) which show that, on enlightenment, perception and the other empirical means of knowledge cease. Nor can you object against us that if perception and the other empirical means of knowledge fall away, the Veda, as an authoritative means of knowledge, falls away with them. For this is precisely our own doctrine. We base our doctrine that the Veda itself disappears at enlightenment on the authority of the passage (Bṛhad. IV.iii.22) which begins 'Here the father is no father' and goes on to say, 'And the Vedas are no Vedas'. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.3)

(10) Therefore, all injunctions and all other valid means of knowledge come to an end with the realization of 'I am the Absolute'. For when direct knowledge of the non-dual Self that is not subject either to destruction or production has been attained, then there can no longer be any means of knowledge, for they would have no objects and no individual knowing subject to resort to them. And it has been said: 'The Self is only an individual knowing subject before the attainment of direct knowledge of that Self which the Upanishads say has to be investigated. When the true nature of the individual knowing subject has been thoroughly investigated, then it is found to be (the supreme Self) free from sin and other defects. Just as the notion of the identity of the Self with the body is imagined at first to hold as valid, so are all the means of knowledge found in worldly experience (including the Veda) imagined to hold as valid until the Self has been realized'. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

29 THE NOTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE PERTAIN TO THE SPHERE OF IGNORANCE ONLY

It has already been stated (M.V.22) that the mutual superimposition of the not-self onto the Self and the Self onto the not-self, called Ignorance, is the root and origin of all other superimpositions onto the Self. And it has also been explained how the Upanishads, since they fall within the sphere of the play of the empirical means of knowledge, cease to be a means of knowledge after direct insight into the unity and sole reality of the Self has been attained. It has also been explained how the notions of knowledge and Ignorance themselves pertain to the sphere of Ignorance only. And it has been explained how the notion that Ignorance causes the Self to undergo bondage, and that knowledge removes that bondage and accords release, are also notions pertaining solely to the sphere of Ignorance.

Thus the means of knowledge called the Veda is (ultimately seen to be) an illusion. And its power to effect release through destroying Ignorance is also an illusion. And on this basis one might wonder whether direct knowledge of the supreme Self was itself also an illusion, or whether it was real. If it were an illusion, then the liberation it effected would also be illusory, and in that case what would be the point in the upanishadic discipline? If, on the other hand, we say that direct knowledge of the Self is real, then how could real direct knowledge arise from illusory upanishadic texts?

If this objection is raised, we must draw attention to two different ways in which it can be answered. If we take the phrase 'direct knowledge arises through the holy texts' to mean that such direct knowledge consists in the mere mental idea to which the texts give rise, then such knowledge would be illusory. It would be as illusory as a dream-sword used to slay a dream-tiger. Still, it will be enough to destroy illusory Ignorance. And being itself inseparable from Ignorance, it will be destroyed with the latter. Liberation, which will mean becoming established in one's own nature, will be attributed figuratively to one who was never involved in erroneous knowledge and its destruction, just as waking up is attributed to a dreamer who was never really involved with sword or tiger.

But is it not the case that, on this view, bondage will be an illusion and liberation, therefore, also an illusion? Let it be even so. No harm will result to the supreme reality.

But how (when the Upanishads are unreal) can the supreme reality be established as real? There is no occasion to raise such a doubt. Know that the supreme reality is self-evident and self-established. For superimposed fancies could not sustain themselves for an instant without the supreme reality as their substratum. So let it be enough, when considering the objection this way, to say that knowledge of the supreme reality will supersede automatically when wrong ideas are

removed.

In considering the other way of answering the objection, we begin by noting that when perception and the other empirical means of knowledge are put into operation to secure direct knowledge of their various objects, the final result is the emergence of a mental idea (vṛtti). The subsequent result of this mental idea is the manifestation of the Consciousness of the Self, which is in fact eternally self-established. The cognition resulting from an (in itself admittedly illusory) means of knowledge is thus in reality nothing other than the eternal self-established principle called Consciousness. In the same way, in the context of enlightenment also, there is a manifestation of Consciousness as a result of the mental idea that arises from a recognized means of knowledge, namely the upanishadic text. This, too, may be spoken of figuratively as the 'result' of the operation of (an in itself admittedly illusory) means of knowledge. There is thus no occasion to raise baseless objections.

(1) 'There is no destruction and no creation. There is no one bound and no one undergoing spiritual discipline. There is no one seeking liberation and no one who has attained liberation. This is the highest truth'. (G.K.II.32)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: If duality is spread forth, while in truth only the Self exists, then the conclusion is that all experience, secular and Vedic, belongs to the realm of Ignorance alone.

(2) But how can the Veda put an end to the notion of duality if the Absolute in its true nature remains beyond the scope of its activity? We reply that there is nothing wrong here, (since its function is to negate duality). For duality is superimposed on the Self through Ignorance, just as the snake is on the rope.... The Self is invariably present amidst all these (superimpositions of contradictory false notions such as 'I am happy', 'I am unhappy' and so forth).... Therefore 'happiness' and the other mental experiences are distinctions that are merely imagined in the Self, which in fact has no distinctions. And thus it follows that the purpose of the Vedic texts when they predicate 'non-happiness' and other negative attributes of the Self is merely to terminate such ideas as 'I am happy' and so on. And there is the maxim of one (Draviḍācārya) who knew the true tradition for interpreting the texts, 'Its validity stems from the fact that its function is to negate'. (G.K.Bh.II.32, cp. M.V.138,12; 229,2)

(3) If you say that knowledge and ignorance as experienced by the mind (cp. Sureśvara, T.B.V.II.578) are attributes of the Self, that is wrong. For we are directly aware of them as objects. Discrimination and non-discrimination lie in the mind

and are objects of perception, like a patch of colour. A patch of colour, being an object of perception, cannot be an attribute of the perceiver. And Ignorance is formulated in one's own experience as 'I am confused, my understanding is not clear'. In the same way, the clear discrimination arising from knowledge is also a matter of experience.* Men of knowledge communicate their knowledge to others, and others receive it. Therefore, knowledge and ignorance belong to the realm of name and form. Name and form are not attributes of the Self. For there is that other upanishadic text, 'The ether, verily, is that which determines name and form. That within which they lie is the Absolute'. (Chānd.VIII.xiv.1) And this name and form are merely imagined in the Absolute, like day and night in the sun. From the standpoint of the highest truth, they do not exist. (Taitt.Bh.II.8)

**(Some interpret: 'The fact that mental knowledge is distinct from one's own Self is also a matter of experience'. The Sanskrit would bear either interpretation. T.N.)*

(4) But how can the fact that the Self is the Absolute, which is true, be conveyed by the Upanishads, when the latter are by nature illusory?... There is nothing wrong here. For we find practical results such as death occurring from the mere suspicion that one has been poisoned. And we also see that a dream snake-bite and bathing in water in a dream exert their due effects in the context of the dream.

If it were to be claimed that such experiences were illusory, our reply would be as follows. The snake-bite and the bathing in the water on the part of the dreamer are illusory. But the knowledge whereby he is aware of having the dream, known technically as the 'resultant cognition' (phala), is real. For it is not contradicted on waking. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

(5) Here an opponent objects: To say that knowledge is the resultant cognition (phala) arising from the application of a means of knowledge (pramāṇa), and also that it is of the nature of the light of the Self, eternal, constant and raised above all change, is a contradiction.

To such an objector the Teacher replies, 'There is no contradiction. Why not? Well, that which is eternal and raised above all change is perceived at the end of cognitions coming through the recognized means of knowledge, as this is what such means of knowledge are for. Because the ideas arising from acts of perception and the rest are transient, the eternal and constant knowledge (that is the natural essence of the Self) appears (in them) to be transient. Hence it is spoken of figuratively as the 'result' (phala) of the application of such means of knowledge. (U.S. prose, para 108)

30 THE CANCELLATION OF THE THREE KINDS OF IGNORANCE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

Absence of knowledge, doubt and wrong knowledge form a triad, all three of which are different from knowledge. They share the common character of obscuring the true nature of the real. They all disappear on the rise of knowledge. In this sense it is right that they should all be called Ignorance (avidyā). And they are, indeed, sometimes referred to collectively by such terms as 'ajñāna' and 'avidyā'.

Nevertheless, here in the Vedanta system, it is 'wrong knowledge' (mithyā-jñāna) for which the technical term 'avidyā' is specially reserved. And the reason for this is that which has already been given. Ignorance in this sense is the cause of all evil, because it is that which sets in motion the means of knowledge in all empirical experience. For as long as a person thinks that his Self is associated with the body and its organs he can be designated as 'the embodied one', 'the individual soul', 'the conscious individual' (vijñānātman), 'the knower', 'the seer', 'the hearer', 'the one who acts', 'the experiencer' or by other words which refer to the various apparent conditioning adjuncts (upādhi) he assumes. And as long as the superimposed notion that one is an empirical knower lasts, one will have such notions as 'I do not know', 'I am in doubt', 'I have had a wrong idea' and 'Now such and such a matter has been correctly appraised through such and such a means of knowledge'. He will be the one to whom the experience of knowledge and ignorance occurs. And thus through natural Ignorance he will feel, even in regard to his own Self, 'I am ignorant, I do not know my true Self', 'On this point I have a great doubt, namely, "Which of these selves is my true Self?"' and 'Sometimes I wrongly identify myself with such external objects as my physical body and my sons and other family members'.

But what about the time when one gets rid of Ignorance through the upanishadic texts and the words of the Teacher, and knows one's own Self in its true form? Then the two forms of Ignorance consisting of absence of discrimination and doubt depart of their own accord: there is no need to make any further effort to dismiss them. Ignorance with its root (absence of discrimination) and its consequences is not swept away by knowledge like dust by an act of sweeping. Knowledge dispels Ignorance by its mere rise, as darkness disappears automatically with the rise of the sun. As for the rise of knowledge, that depends on nothing more than the upanishadic texts and the words of the Teacher. This it is, as we have already explained, that communicates knowledge of the ever self-established Self, which is itself indifferent to knowledge and Ignorance.

(1) The knot of the heart is cut. All doubts are dispelled.

All a person's merit and demerit (the cause of his rebirth) is destroyed, when the Absolute has been known, who is both the transcendent and the manifest. (Muṇḍ.II.ii.9)

(2) Whether Ignorance be understood as absence of knowledge, as doubt, or as positive wrong knowledge, in any case it can only be eliminated through knowledge, and not through action. For action is not contradictory to any of them. (Bṛhad.Bh. III.iii.1, intro.)

(3) An obscure (tāmasa) idea is Ignorance (avidyā) because it conceals. It may be a positive wrong apprehension, or it may instil doubt, or it may be simply failure to apprehend. It is rightly said to conceal because, when the light of discernment shines, it disappears. And the triad of non-apprehension, doubt and misapprehension are only found in the presence of some obscuring factor such as the disease of double-vision in the eyes. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2)

(4) For when knowledge in the form 'Fire is hot and luminous' supervenes, it is no longer possible to have such wrong notions in regard to fire as 'Fire is cold and non-luminous', or to have doubt, or to have failure to apprehend. (Īśa Bh.18)

(5) All commerce between the attested means of knowledge (perception, inference, revelation, etc.) and their objects, whether in the Vedic or secular sphere, proceeds on the basis of this same mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self called Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, M.V.23,2)

(6) And until Ignorance ceases, the individual soul remains caught in experience of the results of actions bringing merit and demerit and in the state of individuality (jīvatva). (B.S. Bh.I.iv.6)

(7) And as long as the connection with the intellect as conditioning adjunct lasts, so long does the individuality and transmigration of the soul last. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.30)

(8) The Self is always evident by its very nature, the sole obstacle to this being Ignorance. We have the example of a piece of shell which is actually being perceived (as a 'this'), and yet, since it is misapprehended as silver, it is not (properly) perceived. The sole obstacle here is misapprehension. The (indeterminate) perception of the shell (as a mere 'this') can only be knowledge, since it is only knowledge that is obscured by wrong knowledge. In the same way, Ignorance in the form of misapprehension is the sole obstacle in the case of the perception of the Self. (True) perception of the Self, therefore, arises from the removal of Ignorance through metaphysical knowledge and in no other way. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

(9) In worldly experience we find that colour manifests as soon as there is contact between the visual organ and light. In the same way, Ignorance of the Absolute disappears the moment that direct knowledge of it arises. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

(10) All experience, whether secular or based on Vedic teaching, comes to an end in the case of the man of steady wisdom, in whom metaphysical discrimination has arisen. For his Ignorance has come to an end, and that experience was based on Ignorance.... For when there is knowledge, Ignorance disappears. It is like the abolition of the darkness of night when the sun rises. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69)

(11) Immediately knowledge of the Self has been obtained, it puts an end to Ignorance. No process occupying time is admitted here. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

(12) If you say that there must be a distinction in the Self according to whether Ignorance has or has not been put to an end, we reply 'No'. For we hold that the notion that the Self is afflicted by Ignorance itself belongs to the realm of the false imagination of Ignorance. As we have already explained, (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1), the Self is not affected by Ignorance, any more than the rope, desert, shell and sky are affected by the imputed snake, mirage, silver and impurities of dust or cloud. If you say that there must be a distinction in the Self according to whether it is or is not a producer of Ignorance, just as there is a difference in sight according to whether it is or is not afflicted by double-vision — again we say 'No'. For the Upanishads deny that the Self, in its true nature, is an individual capable of any form of action, by saying (Bṛhad. IV.iii.7) 'It only *seems* to think, it only *seems* to move'. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iv.6, cp. M.V.206,7 for continuation of the passage)

31 HOW VEDIC TRADITION AND INFERENCE LEAD ON TO DIRECT EXPERIENCE

The line of reflection so far presented has made it clear that Ignorance alone is the root-cause of all the evils of transmigration, and that its essential nature consists in the superimposition of the notion of being an individual knowing subject onto the Self. In the realm of empirical experience, this Ignorance appears to be cancelled and brought to an end by knowledge arising from the texts of the Upanishads. From the standpoint of ultimate truth, however, the Self, as the final reality, transcends the experience of knowledge and Ignorance.

In this context, there is a particular method of instruction approved of by the Veda. Its function is to communicate the true nature of the Self by negating the notion that the

supreme Self, ever pure, conscious and liberated by nature, is the individual knowing subject set up by Ignorance. This method is given the technical name 'Āgama' (traditional instruction) by the experts on the Upanishads. It is true that the term 'Āgama' is widely used in a broader sense as a name for the whole body of the traditional texts of the Vedanta school. And in the Bhāgavata and other Purāṇas the basic texts of the Pāñcarātra and other schools are given the name of 'Āgama', on the ground that they have come from (āgata) the teaching of competent authorities. But this particular method of teaching that we are here expounding, in which the true nature of the supreme reality, beyond the range of speech and mind, can be communicated in its true form through the subsequent retraction of all that had previously been attributed to it — this method also, we must take note, is referred to specifically by the term 'Āgama' by those who know the true tradition. Of this the following texts from Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries provide examples.

(1) Because this entity has no attributes like colour, it is not an object of perception. And because it has no signs which can be used as a basis for inference (since these, too, depend on perception), or any other features that could lead to indirect forms of knowledge, it is not within the realm of inference or other forms of indirect knowledge either. This entity can only be known through the traditional texts (āgama), like the results in future lives of our ritualistic and righteous acts. (B.S.Bh.II.i.6)

Here, because the phrase 'traditional instruction' is associated with denial of perception and inference, etc., it means the whole body of the traditional texts of the Vedanta school.

(2) Do you say that the opponent (the expounder of the Śaiva Āgamas) has a traditional body of teaching (āgama) of equal authority with that of the traditional texts (āgama) of the Advaitin, since his texts come down from the omniscient Lord Śiva? (B.S.Bh.II.ii.38)

Here the word Āgama is used to refer to the authoritative texts of the Māheśvara (Śaiva) school.

(3) The nature of the Absolute has been laid down in the first two Books of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, the Madhu Kāṇḍa, in which tradition predominates. Then, in the Yājñavalkya Kāṇḍa, concerned with the rational justification of that traditional teaching, it has been reflected on through disputation, with resort to thesis and counter-thesis. And in the fourth Book the teaching has been subjected to further detailed reflection in the style of questions and answers, by pupil and Teacher, and summarized in a concluding passage. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.v.1,

intro.)

Here we have to understand that the phrase 'traditional instruction' (āgama) refers (not simply to the texts of the Vedanta but) to a special method of teaching. For the distinction between 'with traditional instruction predominant' and 'with rational justification predominant' was made in regard to the content of two different sections of the Vedic text itself, the Madhu Kāṇḍa and the Yājñavalkya Kāṇḍa.

In this connection, it is clear that a person of very bright intellect, who is able to realize his own true nature, lying beyond all empirical experience, merely through listening to the texts of the Upanishads, has no need to look for any further means of knowledge or to pursue any other discipline in this field. For he has put away all superimposition, and is established in his own true nature. Of course, even when he was engaged in superimposition, he was (in a sense) established in his true nature. For one can never lose one's own true nature; and even in the state of superimposition there is not the slightest connection between one's true nature and the various ideas superimposed on it. Nevertheless, through failure of apprehension, it appears as if the person had at that time fallen from his true nature. And from that standpoint, we speak of him throwing off superimposition through knowledge and becoming established in his true Self. This is how the matter must be understood.

This 'being-established-in-one's-own-true-nature' is called immediate experience of the Self (ātmānubhava). We have already pointed out the reason for this, which is that the Consciousness which constitutes the Self manifests as direct experience at the conclusion of a mental cognition (M.V.29,5). So in this matter we are not obliged, as we are in the case of the teachings of the ritualistic section of the Veda, to confine our appeal to the authority of the word of the Veda. For we can appeal to that which produces a form of knowledge which regularly culminates in direct experience.

But those of middling or inferior intellectual powers are not able to understand the meaning of the texts correctly and bring it into their immediate consciousness merely from hearing the texts once. In their case, reasoning in support of the Veda is a proper step. And reasoning in the secular style, as long as it is constructive and in conformity with the texts, is also permissible. For we have the upanishadic text, 'It should be heard about, it should be pondered over' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5). But reasoning, even when it is in support of the Veda, should only be accepted as a preliminary discipline undertaken for the sake of direct experience. In this context, direct experience only is the authoritative means of knowledge, whatever the sources that lead to it.

This direct experience, regarded as a means of knowledge,

is not (intermittent and limited) like the knowledge resulting from sense-perception. Nor is it a mere mental phenomenon, like a pain originating from the chest or from head-ache (all pain being transmitted to the mind, according to classical Indian psychology). It illumines all knowledge of the external and internal worlds. It is in reality nothing other than the true form of Consciousness that is the very nature of the Self. But it is spoken of as 'direct experience' relative to the objects which it illumines with its light. The sun, for instance, is mere light. But it is spoken of as 'an illuminator' relative to the various objects which it illumines. And the light of the Self is referrred to as 'direct experience' in the same way.

As for that reasoning which is not based on the traditional texts, which does not issue in valid knowledge in the form of direct experience, and which consists in mere human speculation — that is called 'bare logic' or 'dry logic' (śuṣka-tarka), and it has no place in reflection as practised in Vedanta.

(4) And so it is true that the supreme principle cannot be conveyed by perception or the other recognized means of empirical knowledge. But it can be conveyed by the traditional method (āgama). To teach this the text says, 'It is other than what is known and above the unknown'. (Kena Bh.I.4)

(5) Known technically as 'the Absolute' (brahman), it is of the nature of immediate experience, void of all the attributes of transmigratory life. This is the meaning of the word 'that' (in the phrase 'That thou art'), familiar to the experts in the Upanishads. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

(6) For logical reasoning is accepted only as an auxiliary to Vedic revelation. (B.S.Bh.I.i.2)

(7) In the case of enquiry into the Vedic ritual, the Vedic and other traditional texts alone are the criterion. But this is not so in the case of the enquiry into the Absolute. Here it is the same texts that are the authority, but with immediate experience (and firm remembrance, etc.) added in the case of the purely metaphysical texts. For knowledge of the Absolute requires to culminate in immediate experience (anubhava), and (unlike the part of the Veda dealing with commands and prohibitions) has an already-existent reality for its object. (B.S. Bh.I.i.2)

(8) Therefore an investigation is opened, by means of a philosophical enquiry into the nature of the Absolute, into the meaning of the texts of the Upanishads. This enquiry is supported by dialectical reasoning not in conflict with the upanishadic texts, and its purpose is the attainment of supreme

beatitude. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1)

(9) Repeated resort to the appropriate means of knowledge is indeed useless in the case of the person who can attain immediate experience of the fact that his true Self is the Absolute merely from hearing the text 'That thou art' spoken once. But for him who is not able to do so, repetition is the proper means. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

(10) The Self that has to be known has no parts. But the nature of having many parts, such as body, sense-organs, lower mind, higher intellect, experience of objects and so forth is superimposed onto it through Ignorance. A person may eliminate one part through one conviction, another through another. In this sense, knowledge of the Absolute is a progressive process. But this process is only the preliminary form of knowledge of the Self. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

Knowledge of the Self here means direct experience of the Self.

(11) True, it has been said that the Veda itself proclaims that reason must be respected, as it enjoins pondering as well as hearing. But this should not be used as a pretext for allowing empty hypothetical reasoning to gain entry. For in the present context only those arguments that are sanctioned by the Veda may be resorted to, and that only as an auxiliary to the attainment of direct experience. (B.S.Bh. II.i.6)

(12) Moreover, objections based on mere empty dialectic should not be raised on topics which can only be known through Vedic revelation. Trains of reasoning on these topics where the premises are not based on Vedic revelation, but on mere human speculation, are without any firm foundation. For human fancy is unbounded. (B.S.Bh.II.i.11)

The Ācārya (Śaṅkara) speaks on the one hand of 'topics which can only be known through Vedic revelation', and on the other of 'trains of reasoning on these topics that are not based on Vedic revelation, but on mere human speculation'. What he wishes to point out is that there is no harm in relying on the processes of empty dialectic when one is engaged in refuting the views of an opponent who himself relies solely on dialectic, if the refutation deliberately follows the opponent's method. For here Vedic revelation is of no avail, since it is not accepted as authoritative by the opponent. The idea is that true believers will not be able to see the hollowness of any philosophy unless its reasoning has been refuted following its own methods. That is why we see both Gauḍapāda and the revered Commentator (Śaṅkara)

following the methods of empty dialectic when they are engaged in refuting the doctrines of the Buddhists and others.

32 METHODS OF TEACHING THE ABSOLUTE THROUGH DOCTRINES OF CAUSE AND EFFECT, ETC., ARE VARIANTS THAT ARE SUBSIDIARY TO THE MAIN METHOD

Various subsidiary methods for teaching the Absolute are accepted in the Vedanta school, for the sake of dull and middling intellects, as part of the logical theorizing leading eventually to direct experience. For example, there is teaching about the distinction between cause and effect, the distinction between universal and particular, the distinction between subject and object, the distinction between the five 'sheaths' and the three 'states' and other such topics. But in every case there is one basic method at work. The aim throughout is to reveal unity by negating superimpositions and so to enlighten the student as to the unity and sole reality of the one Self and so to effect his realization of that Self. This will become clear through examining the various different methods one by one.

33 THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CAUSE AND EFFECT

First, we consider the distinction between cause and effect. The Chāndogya Upanishad speaks of the non-dual Absolute as 'Being' (sat). It teaches that 'Fire', 'Water' and 'Earth' (lit. 'food') were projected from it. It teaches that Being, as the supreme deity, entered Fire, Water and Earth as a living soul and unfolded name and form. It teaches through examples such as that of clay and iron (and the effects of which they are the material cause) that the effect is non-different from its material cause, and that through a knowledge of the material cause there is a knowledge of all the effects. It supports this with arguments. And then it declares that the true Self of the whole world and of Śvetaketu, the hearer of the teaching, is the Absolute. It does this in the words, 'All this world has this for its Self. That is the real. That is the Self. That thou art'. (Chānd. VI.vii.7)

Again, in the Muṇḍaka Upanishad the whole world of the moving and the fixed is said to proceed from the non-dual Absolute, known as the Indestructible Principle, as the Real, as the Spirit and by other names. And then it is said, 'This immortal principle is the Absolute. The Absolute is in front, the Absolute behind, the Absolute to the right, the Absolute to the left. This whole universe is nothing but the Absolute. It is the object of supreme love' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12).

Thus the Muṇḍaka, also, teaches that the world is one with the Absolute or Self.

In the Taittirīya Upanishad, it is first said that the projection of the world consisting of the ether and other elements proceeds from the Absolute. And in the end it is declared that one finds perfect stability, bringing freedom from all fear, in identifying oneself with the Absolute, bereft of all relation with the perceptible and imperceptible aspects of the world (Taitt.II.7)

In all cases of this kind, a doctrine of cause and effect is accepted as a preliminary device to help induce the mind to understand the unity and sole reality of the Self. The Veda does not teach that the effect is real. For instance, in the example given in the Chāndogya, it is first said that all effects are mere names, just a suggestion through speech. Then it is laid down that, relative to them, the cause alone is real. In the same way, it is laid down that the supreme cause alone is real, it being taught that all its modifications are mere names. It is therefore laid down clearly and with utmost emphasis that the doctrine that there exists a universe of effects is only admitted at all in order to teach the existence of a cause as its ultimate ground. Thus we have:

(1) Just as, my dear one, all that is made of clay is known from one lump of clay, so it follows that a modification is a name, a suggestion of speech. The truth is, 'It is only clay'. (Chānd.VI.i.4)

(2) Behold! The firehood of fire has disappeared. A modification is a name, a suggestion of speech. The truth is 'There are (only) three subtle elements (lit. colours)...'. (Chānd.VI.iv.1-4)

(Here M.V.33,2 (the present section) refers back to the three deities that are said to form the subtle elements of fire, water and earth, and are also said to have been threefolded or interwoven by the supreme deity called Being to develop 'name and form', the apparent objects of the world (Chānd.VI.iii.3, VI.iv.5-7). The whole scheme of the world presented here by the Chāndogya is to be viewed only as a device for leading the mind on towards unity. M.V.33,2 shows how the gross element fire is composed of the three subtle elements of fire, water and earth. The references given at M.V.33,2 to Chānd.VI.iv.1-4 show that, according to the tentative scheme, all the manifestations of fire in the world are composed from the three subtle elements. But Chānd.VI.ii.3 shows that the two other subtle elements or deities, water and earth, spring from the fire deity, which in turn springs from the deity called Being. M.V.33.3 teaches that this implies that they can all be reduced to Being. M.V.33,4

harking back to M.V.33,1, re-affirms the broad principle that if y proceeds from and abides in x, with x for its material cause, it can be reduced to x. Thus the whole world of apparent distinctions can be reduced to pure Being, and this teaching of Śrī Śaṅkara is rooted in the Chāndogya Upanishad. See also M.V.36 introduction;36,2;47,1;164;168,16;233,8. T.N.)

Śaṅkara's Commentary on Chānd.VI.iv.1: Before discriminative knowledge of the three subtle elements (coloured red, white and black) that go to make up fire, you had the notion of fire. That notion of fire has now (after discrimination of the three component subtle elements) disappeared, and the word 'fire' also.... Fire was but a notion based on a word. As the text says, 'A modification is a name, a suggestion of speech'. By 'name' it means 'a mere name'. Consequently the idea of fire, too, as well as the name, is false. What, then, is real in this case? The answer is that it is only the three subtle elements that are real. The idea is to lay it down that nothing whatever exists here except the three subtle elements. (Chānd.Bh.VI.iv.1)

(3) With food (= the subtle earth element) as the sprout, seek for water as the root. With water as the sprout, my dear one, seek for fire as the root. With fire as the sprout, my dear one, seek for Being as the root. All these beings, my dear one, have Being for their root, have Being as their abode, Being as their support. (Chānd.VI.viii.4)

(4) And from the giving of such examples as clay, etc., we see that the purpose of teaching the creation of the world-appearance was really to expound the non-difference of the effect from the material cause. And thus a great authority on the tradition has declared: 'When creation is mentioned in the Veda, and taught in various ways, through such examples as clay, iron and sparks, this is only a device for introduction (of the doctrine of the sole metaphysical reality of the Self)'. (See G.K.III.15) In truth there is no differentiation of any kind. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.14, cp. M.V.168,14-16)

Also, in the teaching coming from the Gītā, it is said that the Lord is the cause of the production and dissolution of the world at the beginning and end of each world-period through his two 'Natures' (prakṛti, Bh.G.VII.3-7). The idea here is to show that the universe is not self-caused, and to indicate that the effect is non-different from the material cause. And to prevent the suspicion that there must be another cause to bring forth the Lord Himself, it is said that there is no principle higher than He and beyond Him, and this is to emphasize, also, that He is the supreme reality.

(5) Know that all beings have this for their womb. I am the

origin and the dissolution of the whole universe. O Dhanañjaya, there is nothing higher than I. (Bh.G.VI.6-7)

Thus it is declared that the Lord pervades the whole universe, and that it derives its stability from dependence on Him. The purpose is to bring home to the heart of the listener that even when the universe is in manifestation there is no second reality over against the Lord, and that the universe has no independent existence.

(6) This whole universe is spread forth by Me in My unmanifest form. All beings abide in Me but I do not abide in them. Indeed, they do not in truth stand in Me! Behold My Divine Power! (Bh.G.IX.4-5)

And in the teaching coming from the Brahma Sūtras it is clearly stated that the effect is non-different from the cause, and that an exposition of the distinction between cause and effect is undertaken only as part of the method of communicating their non-difference.

(7) From which proceed the origination, maintenance and dissolution of this (world). (B.S.I.i.2)

(8) And the Absolute must be understood as the material cause of the world, or otherwise there would be a contradiction between the thesis and the example offered to illustrate it. (B.S.I.iv.23)

(9) The world as effect is non-different from the Absolute as cause, as is shown by such texts as 'a suggestion of speech' and others. (B.S.II.i.14)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: When the text says 'and others' (i.e. and other texts like 'a suggestion of speech'), one can quote a whole number of examples of texts teaching that the Self is one and is the only reality. For instance, 'All this universe has that subtle principle for its essence. That is the real. That is the Self. That thou art' (Chānd. VI.viii.7). 'All this is the Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.6). 'All this is the Absolute' (untraced). 'All this is the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.ii.12). 'There is no plurality whatever here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19). And unless the Self were one and the only reality, one could not explain how everything could be known from one thing (as implied at Chānd.VI.i.4-6). Thus this whole universe of experiencers and objects of experience must be seen as nothing other than the Absolute. It is like the non-difference of the ether of space, as apparently enclosed in the big pot and the small pot, from the ether of space in general. (M.V.27,4) And it is like the case of such illusions as a mirage, which are non-different from the

substratum on which they appear, such as the desert soil, since their nature is to appear and vanish, and their nature is inexplicable. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

34 CREATION IS ACCEPTED AS REAL FROM A PRACTICAL STANDPOINT TO HELP ONE CLASS OF STUDENTS

Thus, under the traditional Vedic method of instruction, whereby cause and effect are initially taught as distinct, the notion of creation is at first accepted, but not in order to teach creation as a fact. Why then? In order to teach the non-duality of the supreme principle, by showing that the world, as effect, is non-different from the Absolute, as cause.

Let us take this as granted. But a person of dull intellect might reason as follows. Is the creation spoken of in the Veda altogether unreal from the highest standpoint? Or is there some element of reality in it even from that standpoint? For it does not seem possible that there could be no grain of reality at all in creation, when the Veda, which is the special authority on such a matter (which transcends the powers of perception and inference) describes it at such length. And again, the world is experienced by everyone through perception and the other means of knowledge as a coherent realm in which a person engaged in action can accomplish his acts. How could any thinking person dismiss it as unreal?

Here the experts give a reply and say that this is a point that must be understood in the light of a distinction. Effects may be said to exist as long as the factors of action denoted by words seem capable of co-operation for use in the performance of ritual or of prescribed meditations, and when the Absolute has not yet been discriminated from the conditioning adjuncts of name and form. But this existence is only accepted from the standpoint of practical worldly experience. All creation is admitted to enjoy its illusory existence before the illusory play of name and form set up by Ignorance (avidyā) has been cancelled. But when the aim is to identify the Absolute in its true nature, then it is declared that it is the Absolute alone that is referred to by every word and comprehended in every idea. For even when they are manifest, it is impossible to explain name and form either as identical with or as different from the Absolute. And if they are spoken of from the standpoint of vision of the Absolute, they do not in truth exist. Thus it stands proved that the Absolute has no second, is beyond all empirical experience and is eternally and constantly self-established. So there is no contradiction.

(1) The enlightened ones have always taught that objects really come into being to those who hold to the reality of objects and are afraid of the teaching that they do not come into being; for this (doctrine of real origination) accords with perception and practical dealing (especially with the performance of caste and other duties). (G.K.IV.42)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The teaching that things really come into being is given by the enlightened ones, by those who teach non-duality... because this is what is perceived, and also to make it possible to follow the rules of caste and stage of life. For these two reasons, it is taught that things really come into being. But this teaching is only given to those who are habituated to speaking of objects as real, who have weak powers of discrimination, who have simple faith in the ritualistic teaching and a firm and persistent belief in the reality of objects. And it is taught as a means to a different idea. The idea is, 'Let them think of it like that for the moment. But there will come a time when discrimination of the unborn, non-dual Self will arise of its own accord in the hearts of earnest students of the Upanishads'. The teaching is given in that spirit, and not with the idea that it is the final truth.

(2) We give the name of an elephant to what is conjured forth by the mass-hypnotist because we perceive it and because it figures in practical dealings (is tied up, mounted, etc.); and it is in just the same way that we say (of a thing in the world) 'It is an existent reality' because we perceive it and because it figures in practical dealings. (G.K.IV.44)

(3) Those entities that are 'born' do not really come into being. Their 'birth' is like a hypnotist's magic display. And that magic display (māyā) itself is a thing that does not exist. (G.K.IV.58)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: And those other souls (read ātmāno) and other entities that (appear to) come into being — they also are imagined. This is, in the same way as at Kārikā IV.57, called 'concealment'. The entities that come into being only through 'concealment' do not come into being at all from the standpoint of the highest truth. If the entities come into being, as described, through 'concealment' they do so through illusory appearance (māyā), and should be seen to be like a hypnotist's magic display. Is the hypnotist's magic display a reality? No. 'That magic display is itself a thing that does not exist'. The idea is that the term 'Māyā' is a name for something that does not exist.

(4) And the author of the Sūtras, too, speaking from the

standpoint of the highest truth, said 'Non-different from that', (i.e. the world as effect is non-different from the Absolute as cause). Speaking from the standpoint of empirical experience, however, he says 'Let it be, as in the world' (B.S.II.i.13), and describes how the Absolute can be represented as a great ocean. Here he accepts the world of effects and the doctrine of real transformation (pariṇāma) because it will be of use for the prescribed meditations on the Absolute associated with various finite forms. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

(5) If you say that, if the conditioning adjunct 'name and form' existed, such upanishadic texts as 'One only without a second' and 'There is no plurality here' would be contradicted, we reply 'No'. For this idea has been refuted by the example of water and foam, and by the examples of clay and the like as material causes. From the standpoint of ultimate truth, however, no name and form really exist for the followers of the Upanishads, such as truly could be discerned as separate principles, distinct from the principle of supreme reality, any more than the modifications of clay and other such substances are distinct principles apart from those substances. For name and form are but modifications of the supreme reality, as foam is of water and pots are of clay. And from this standpoint it is seen that texts like 'One only without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1) and 'There is no plurality whatever here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19) do in fact refer to the supreme reality.

The case is different, however, as long as the Absolute remains, under the influence of natural (uncaused) Ignorance, unperceived in its true transcendent nature, in clear discrimination from the conditioning adjuncts of body and organs consisting of name and form. This true nature, indeed, stands untouched by the imputed adjuncts, just as the shell is untouched by the silver for which it is mistaken, and the colourless ether of the sky is unaffected by the colour and shape falsely attributed to it when it is seen as blue and concave (tent-formed). But here the natural (unregenerate) vision conditioned by the organs consisting of name and form continues, and it is under this condition that all this world is presented to us as a reality separate from our own Self. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1)

35 TWO DOCTRINES: THE EFFECT IS REAL BEFORE PRODUCTION: ORIGINATION IS ILLUSORY

Because the world of name and form, being no more than an apprehension, is only a piece of false imagination, it no more undergoes origination, maintenance and dissolution than a rope-snake does. Nor can origination, maintenance and

dissolution apply to what is real in the highest sense, as that is by nature constant, eternal and raised above all change. But in the case of a rope not properly recognized as such there can be false notions, such as a rope-snake and others. And in the same way, when the Absolute is not properly recognized as such, it is quite intelligible that there should be such false notions as that of the rise of the world of name and form. For this is what is found to be the case; and when the mistaken entity is known in its true nature, in the case of the Absolute as well as the rope, the false notion is found to be cancelled.

In the Vedanta school this fact is accepted, and interpreted according to the doctrine called Sat-kārya Vāda. Though the effect is utterly non-existent *as effect*, it is eternally real as the Absolute, the substratum on which it is projected. This is the claim of Sat-kārya Vāda. The Absolute has no origin (lit. is 'unborn') and non-dual. Talk of its 'birth through Māyā' refers to its coming into manifestation as the illusory world of name and form — an appearance of which it is itself the reality.

(1) There is no destruction and no creation. There is no one bound and there is no one undergoing spiritual discipline. There is no one seeking liberation and no one who has attained liberation. This is the highest truth. (G.K.II.32)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: A piece of mental imagination like a rope-snake does not actually either rise up from or dissolve back into the rope. Nor does any real snake actually rise up in or become dissolved in the mind. Nor do both these things happen. The same is true of duality in general, which is not different from the rope-snake in point of being a mere mental phenomenon.

(2) Considered in its true nature as the Self, this (world of) plurality does not exist as anything separate from the latter (the Self). Nor is it anything different from the Self when considered in its intrinsic plurality (because it is illusory). The various appearances within it are not distinct either from each other or from the Self, neither are they non-distinct. Such is the view of the wise. (G.K.II.34; for Śaṅkara's Comm., cp. M.V.283,6)

(3) As a rope imperfectly perceived in the dark is variously imagined as a snake or a stream of water or in other ways, so is the Self wrongly imagined as this and that. And as the imaginations cease when the rope is known for what it is, without the addition of any second thing, with the conviction 'This is verily a rope', so imaginations cease when the Self is known for what it is. (G.K.II.17-8)

(4) But will it not follow (from the denial of empirical attributes in the Absolute in such texts as 'void of sound' etc., that the effect is) unreal (before its manifestation)? No. For this would be a bare negation. (B.S.II.i.7)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Objection: You maintain that the Absolute is pure and void of all the great elements beginning with sound. But you also claim that it is the material cause of the world; and you claim that the world is opposite in nature to the Absolute, since it is essentially impure, and is possessed of all the elements, beginning with sound. Now, if all this were true it would imply the non-existence of the (impure world as) effect (in its material cause, the Absolute) before production. And this is not acceptable to an exponent of the doctrine of the existence of the effect before production (sat-kārya vāda) like you.

Answer: There is nothing wrong in our position here. For (as the Sūtra here says), the opponent's position proceeds 'from a bare negation'. For this is a bare negation, without anything to be negated.... The effect does not exist independently with a nature other than that of the cause, even now. On this we have such texts as, 'All things extrude him who sees them as other than the Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.6). The existence of the effect *as* the cause, however, is in no way different before or after its production.

Well, but is not the cause of the world the Absolute *void of sound and the other elements?* Yes. But the effect, the world consisting of sound and the other elements, cannot exist except as the cause, either before creation or now. (B.S.Bh.II.i.7)

(5) The Self is unborn, but appears to undergo birth in various forms through Māyā, as we know from such texts as 'There is no plurality whatever here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19) and 'Indra (goes about in many forms) through his magic powers' (Bṛhad.II.v.19). (G.K.III.24)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The phrase 'through his magic powers' in fact means 'through our sense-perceptions'* which are of the nature of Ignorance. And this also follows from the text, 'though really unborn, He appears as if born in many different forms' (White Yajurveda XXXI.19). Therefore He only 'undergoes birth' by way of illusion. The word 'but' is inserted for emphasis, to secure the meaning '*only* through illusion'. One and the same being cannot be both unborn and born in many ways, any more than fire could be cold and at the same time hot.

**(Indra = indriya = sense-organs; māyā in plural = prajñā in plural (by Yāska XII.27) = cognitions. See M.V.220,8*

and 9. T.N.)

(6) But the Absolute becomes subject to transformation and to all empirical experience through apparent distinctions, consisting of name and form, manifest and unmanifest, which are imagined through Ignorance and are indeterminable either as being the metaphysical reality itself or as being anything different. In its ultimately true form, however, it remains beyond all empirical experience and not subject to transformation. (B.S.Bh.II.i.27. For more detail, see also M.V.47,6; 138,8;220,7.)

36 VEDIC SUPPORT FOR THE LAST TWO POINTS

Some people may think that the way in which we have just described the doctrine of the reality of the effect before production and the doctrine that all coming into being is illusory does not literally agree with the Veda. For (they will say) the origination of the universe from the Absolute, as well as its maintenance through and dissolution in the Absolute, are always taught as real facts in the Upanishads. We have such texts as 'The ether was born from the Self' (Taitt.II.1), 'He projected the cosmic vital energy' (Praśna VI.4), 'The universe is born here from the Indestructible Principle' (Muṇḍ.I.i.7), 'That from which these creatures are born' (Taitt.III.1), 'He projected these worlds' (Ait.I.2) and 'Then He projected fire' (Chānd.VI.ii.3). We find the same teaching in the Gītā, in such texts as 'I am the origin of all' (Bh.G.X.8). And there is the Sūtra in the Brahma Sūtras which gives the definition of the Absolute as 'That from which proceed the origination, maintenance and dissolution of this world' (B.S.I.i.2). So how can one set all this aside and deny the reality of the world and embrace the doctrine that coming into being is an illusion? We would prefer to say that the Absolute, being omniscient and omnipotent, is verily the cause of the world in the literal sense. And we have such Vedic texts as 'He who is omniscient, all-knowing' (Muṇḍ.I.i.9) and 'His supreme power is taught to be abundant and varied' (Śvet.VI.8).

But this doubt is unjustified. For the true form of the Absolute is invariably indicated through the very negation of the other forms that do not really belong to it, in such texts as 'And so there is the teaching "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6) and 'It is not said to be either real or unreal' (Bh.G.XIII.12). And when the Absolute is known in its true form one does not desire to know anything further.

As for the texts proclaiming the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the universe, the Veda itself declares in the text 'With fire as the shoot my dear one, seek Being as the root' (Chānd.VI.viii.4) that their real purpose is to

proclaim the unity and sole reality of the Self. Therefore, since we have such Vedic texts as 'Indra through his magic powers (māyā)' (Bṛhad.II.v.19) it must be understood that the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the universe are illusory, and that the texts apparently proclaiming them really have another meaning. For one must accept that the texts which convey that form of knowledge after obtaining which one does not desire to know anything further must be of greater authority than any other texts. And the statement that the Absolute is omnipotent is made from the standpoint of empirical experience only, not from that of the highest truth. For a power, also, is (ultimately) nothing but its material cause, even as an effect is nothing but its material cause. And as guarantee of this we have such emphatic passages in the Veda as 'This whole universe is in truth (nothing but) the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12) and 'All this is but the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2).

(1) The text denies all that it had previously taught by saying 'He (the Self) is neither this nor that'. Thus the Unborn, the only reality within or without, only manifests when it is realized that it is not anything that is conceived by the mind. (G.K.III.26)

(2) But why should the texts proclaiming the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world be regarded as subordinate to those denying the existence of any distinctions within the Absolute, and not the other way about? Our reply is that the texts denying distinctions yield a form of knowledge after obtaining which nothing further remains to be known. For when once the unity, sole existence, eternality, purity and so forth of the Self are directly known, no further need or desire to know anything else arises. One feels, and with justification, that one has attained the final goal of human life. And there are Vedic texts which support this, such as 'What delusion, what grief, can there then be for one who sees the unity of all?' (Īśa 7), 'O Janaka, you have attained the fearless state' (Bṛhad.IV.ii.4) and 'He who knows the bliss of the Absolute experiences fear from no quarter'. (Taitt.II.9)...

It is seen, also, that the enlightened ones experience profound inner contentment and other such glorious states; and the Veda denounces all the claims to reality of the delusive modifications in the text 'He goes from death to death who sees the appearance of plurality here' (Bṛhad. IV.iv.19). So the texts which deny all distinctions of the Absolute cannot be subordinate to any of the others. Nor is it the case that the texts proclaiming the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world are able to communicate a truth leaving no further knowledge to be desired. On the contrary, we are forced to conclude that they are

inserted for the sake of some other teaching. For the text first says, 'Know, my dear one, that this (body) is a shoot that has grown up. It cannot be without a root' (Chānd.VI. iii.3). And then at the end it goes on to show how (not any modification of matter but) Being alone must be known as the one root of the whole universe. (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.14)

(3) And because the texts dealing with the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world are really concerned with communicating the unity and sole reality of the Self, it follows that the Absolute does not (in truth) possess a plurality of creative powers (śakti). (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.14)

(4) Therefore the power (śakti) must be identical with the material cause (in which it resides), and the effect of the power must be identical with the power. (B.S.Bh.II.i.18)

This asserts that the power and its effect are both identical, in their nature, with the material cause, this being directly evident in the case of the power, while in the case of the effect the identity is evident mediately through its identity with the power.

(5) The Vedic texts on creation would be valid equally whether creation was or was not a fact (in which latter case they would have the purpose of drawing attention to the sole reality of the Self, as already explained at G.K.III.15, cp. M.V.33,4). That interpretation of the texts which agrees with reason must be accepted, and no other. (G.K.III.23)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: All creation belongs to the (illusory) realm of projection through Ignorance. It is not a fact from the standpoint of ultimate truth. For we have the text 'He (alone) exists within and without, the Unborn' (Muṇḍ.II.i.2).

(6) And we hear from the Veda 'There is no plurality whatever here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19), 'Indra goes about in many forms through his magic powers (māyā)' and 'That which is really unborn appears to undergo birth in various forms' (White Yajurveda XXXI.19). But that 'birth' is through illusion. (G.K.III.24)

(7) The real can only be born through illusion, not truly. He who holds that the real is truly born (cannot say that the Unborn is born, for that would be a contradiction. He) will have to say that the already born is born (which involves infinite regress). (G.K.III.27)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Just as a real object like a rope can undergo 'birth' as a snake through illusion but not truly,

so can the Self, which, even though not subject to perception, is real, undergo 'birth' as the world through illusion but not truly, in the manner of the 'birth' of the rope as a snake. But from the standpoint of ultimate truth the Unborn does not undergo any birth whatever.

As for the thinker who tries to say that the Self as Unborn, the supreme principle of reality, truly undergoes birth — well, if he tries to say that the Unborn undergoes birth, it will be a contradiction. Hence the implication of his doctrine is that it is the *already born* that undergoes birth. But to say that it is the already born (only) that undergoes birth implies infinite regress. (For, in order for a thing to be born at all, on such a view, it would have to have been born previously, and that birth would imply a previous birth and so to infinity.)

37 THE METHOD OF COMMUNICATING THE TRUE NATURE OF THE ABSOLUTE INDIRECTLY THROUGH ATTRIBUTING TO IT THE FALSE NOTIONS OF UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR

Such, then, was the method of communicating the true nature of the Absolute indirectly by setting up a hypothetical distinction between cause and effect. It included the device of explaining the nature of the effect, accompanied by the denial of the existence of cause or effect. And all this was for the sake of establishing the true nature of reality. This we have explained. Now we go on to consider the method of communicating the true nature of the Absolute through the device of attributing to it the false notions of universal and particular.

On this subject we have the Vedic text: 'One cannot hear the individual sounds when a tattoo is beaten on a drum. One can only hear the sound of the drum, or of the beating of the drum' (Bṛhad.II.iv.7). This is the meaning. One can only hear the sounds that come forth from a drum that is being beaten as 'the sounds of the drum' — that is, one can only hear them as the universal 'sound' in particularized form, particularized here by the blows on the drum. The particular sounds cannot be perceived (reading na... grahītum śakyante) separate from the universal 'sound', as they do not exist independently of it. This principle must be applied in evaluating particulars everywhere. And from this we conclude that no particulars exist independently of the universals to which they belong. The text goes on to give further examples of the way in which we have to understand the nature of universals and particulars in the case of sound, saying 'as when a conch is blown...' (Bṛhad.II.iv.8) and 'As when a lute is played...' (Bṛhad.II.iv.9). Thus none of the particular sounds of any class of sound exist except as particulars of

that class. And the various classes of sound do not exist apart from the great universal 'sound' itself. And, in the same way, the particulars and classes of touch, colour, taste, and odour do not exist apart from the great universals to which they respectively belong. And we see by analogy that none of the particulars and classes found in the world during its period of manifestation exist independently of the (greatest and all-inclusive) universal called Being.

But how should we understand this term 'universal' (if it is to mean 'Being' in the profoundest sense)? It cannot be the universal called'Being'as conceived by the Logicians, which (is merely the objective universal that) accompanies all particular objects. For that objective universal is invariably accompanied by (and dependent on) the Witness-consciousness which is its own true Self. We know from our own direct experience that the universal called 'Being' in this sense has no existence apart from that Consciousness which is its invariable support.

But if we argue that the Self as Consciousness lies outside the Logicians' objective universal called 'Being', will this not imply that the Self is non-being? And it is neither possible nor desirable to suppose that the Self is non-existent. So will one not have to accept that the Self is the objective universal called 'Being' whether one wants to or not? No. For in such cases as dreamless sleep and world-dissolution at the end of the world-period the Self remains, but the objective universal called 'Being' does not accompany it. The Logicians, indeed, do not admit the existence of substances and other particulars (in the period of world-dissolution) before the beginning of a new world-period, as it would contradict their doctrine of the non-existence of the effect before its production. And there cannot be a universal without particulars. Therefore, we conclude that that which everywhere accompanies all universals and particulars in the period of world-manifestation is the manifestation of the Self alone, of the nature of Being. And that is the Self as Consciousness, which is the Self in its true form. No other universal called 'Being' (such as the universal of objective Being imagined by the Logicians) exists.

Thus when the texts speak of the existence of universals and particulars, using the examples of the drum and the rest, they do not intend to inculcate the idea that the Self is a supreme objective universal. Their purpose, rather, is to direct the mind towards the Self as Consciousness, which is itself neither a universal nor a particular, by teaching that neither universals nor particulars exist independently of Consciousness. Hence it is clear that the reference to universals and particulars is only a phase of the method of teaching by false attribution followed by denial.

(1) The purpose of producing a number of different examples

here is to show that universals are many. There are many different kinds of universal, some conscious, some non-conscious. The problem is to show how they all form a hierarchy falling within one (special kind of) superior universal, massed Consciousness. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.9)

(2) It is only through the perception of the universal 'Sound' itself that the particulars belonging to that universal can be perceived. The latter cannot be perceived independently, for they have no existence as independent particulars. And in the same way no particular reality is perceived in waking or dream independently of Consciousness (prajñāna). Therefore it is correct to say that particulars have no existence as anything other than (massed) Consciousness. (Bṛhad.Bh. II.iv.7)

(3) But is it not a fact that, even on the thesis of the Vaiśeṣikas, everything is correlated with Being, for the word and notion of Being accompanies all categories such as substance and attribute, as when we speak of an 'existent substance', an 'existent attribute' or an 'existent act'? No. This might conceivably be true in regard to the present. But in regard to the past the Vaiśeṣikas do not admit that any effect was existent before its production; for they explicitly maintain the opposite view, namely that the effect was non-existent before production. And they are not reconciled to the (upanishadic) doctrine that Being, one only without a second, existed before the production of the universe. Thus this supreme cause called Being of which the Chāndogya Upanishad speaks is different from the universal called 'Being' as conceived by the Vaiśeṣikas. And this is clear from the examples (cited by the Chāndogya Upanishad to illustrate its doctrine of Being), such as that of clay (where the pot preexists before production). (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.1)

38 THE METHOD OF COMMUNICATING THE TRUE NATURE OF THE ABSOLUTE INDIRECTLY THROUGH RECOURSE TO THE NOTIONS OF SEER AND SEEN

Considered from the natural standpoint of common experience, this universe seems to consist of the three categories of seer, seeing and seen, as expressed in the formula 'Through this I see that'. From this standpoint, the seer is the one who experiences objects by permeating them with the activity of his instruments of cognition. Seeing means the activity of the various organs of knowledge, such as the powers of sight and hearing and others. The seen is the object in the form of sound, touch, colour and so forth. The word 'seeing' is also used to mean the *result* of the activity of the organ

of cognition, that which enables us to say 'He sees, he hears, he thinks, he knows'. In this context, discrimination of the seer from the seen means determining the true nature of the seer by distinguishing it totally from the seen.

The seer (subject) is known through the I-notion, the seen (object) through the this-notion. The distinction between subject and object depends on the distinction between the notions 'I' and 'this'. What is known *solely* as 'I' cannot in any way be known as 'this'. It is the seer in the true sense. All other seers are either 'seers' in a secondary sense, or else illusory. When we say in worldly parlance 'The king sees through the eye of his spy', we are speaking of seership in a secondary sense. Since everyone knows that the king and his spy are different, the 'seership' of the spy is attributed to the king in a secondary or figurative sense. But, when we think and speak of the body and its organs as if they were seers, this is not figurative usage; it is illusion. For we regularly think and say 'I see' in regard to the activities of the organ of sight and the rest, which are not seers, without any sense of figurative usage. And in this connection we have a Vedic text which points out that the distinction between the seer and the seen belongs to the realm of duality based on Ignorance: 'For where there is an appearance of duality, there (a subject who is) one sees (an object which is) another, (a subject who is) one smells (an object which is) another, (a subject who is) one tastes (an object which is) another, (a speaker who is) one addresses (a person who is) another, (a hearer who is) one hears (a person who is) another, (a thinker who is) one thinks of something which is) another, (a subject who is) one touches (an object which is) another, (a subject who is) one knows (an object which is) another' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15).

This worldly vision, based on Ignorance, consists in modifications of the mind, and is hence transient. The modifications of the mind which arise are permeated by Consciousness and reflect Consciousness, and the people of the world think that it is these modifications alone which deserve the name of knowledge. But there is another vision which alone deserves to be called vision from the standpoint of the highest truth, which is eternal and constant Consciousness, the very nature of the Self. There seer and seen are one, like the sun and its light. The supreme Self is *called* 'the Seer' on account of this vision, but this is only affirmed relative to objects, such as the modifications of the mind, because it illumines them. It is in fact *only* a seer, and is never seen, and hence it is 'the Seer' from the standpoint of the highest truth. On this we have the Vedic text, 'You cannot see the seer of seeing, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking, you cannot know the knower of knowing. He is your Self, present within all' (Bṛhad.III.iv.2).

This Seer becomes a seer in the worldly sense only through having the modifications of the mind attributed to it falsely. We have already pointed out (M.V.25,5-10) that the Self becomes an individual knowing subject through a (misplaced) sense of 'I' and 'mine' held with regard to the body, sense-organs, mind and so forth. And the Self only becomes subject to the popular notions 'He sees' and 'He thinks' through the operations of this transient vision, falsely projected through Ignorance as if it really belonged to the Self. For it is only when conceived as associated with this worldly vision that He who is the support of the cosmic vital energy is spoken of as 'the seer, the one who touches, the one who smells, the taster, the thinker, the knower, the one who acts, the individual soul wielding the instruments of knowledge. From the standpoint of the final truth the Veda maintains that there is no seer apart from the supreme Self, possessed of constant and eternal vision, the Witness of all, and proclaims 'There is no break in the seeing of the seer' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.23) and 'There is no other seer, no other hearer, no other thinker, no other knower but He' (Bṛhad.III.vii.23). But if one examines this worldly vision one sees that it is characterized by the coming and going of dreamless sleep, waking and dream, and is inherently unstable. Then the Veda shows that the Self is void of the triad of seer, seeing and seen, and beyond all empirical experience and conception. And it communicates it by denying what had been falsely attributed to it previously, saying 'But where all has become his own Self, what can he see and with what? What can he smell and with what? What can he taste and with what? Whom can he address and with what? Whom can he hear and with what? What can he know and with what? With what can he know that whereby he knows all this? This Self is "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15).

(1) 'Where' (in the upanishadic text saying 'For where there is an appearance of duality') means 'In that particularized form of the Self, arising from the apparent limitations imposed by the complex of the soul and its bodies and organs, set up by Ignorance and only admitted by the text on a hypothetical basis'. The text goes on 'For where there is an appearance of duality...' It means that there is an appearance of duality, an appearance of something different, some object other than the Self, in the Absolute, although the latter, from the standpoint of the highest truth, is without duality....

'Where' in the text is followed by 'there'. 'There', because there is an appearance of duality, and only because of this appearance, one who is different from the supreme Self, who is only admitted to exist hypothetically, a self that is not the Self in the true sense, a self that is different from the true Self only in the sense that the reflection of the

moon in water is different from the moon, that different self is the one who smells. As for the one who smells, he smells an object of smell, which is different from him, with an act of smell, which is different again. The words 'one' and 'another', in the upanishadic text quoted above, '(A subject who is) one smells (an object which is) another', refer (not simply to nominative and accusative but) to all case relations in general. The word 'smells' refers to both act and result, as in the case of 'he cuts' (which refers both to the act of raising and lowering the knife and to the resulting severance, so that 'smells' refers both to the physiological process and to the resultant awareness). (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.14)

(2) You cannot see the seer of seeing, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking, you cannot know the knower of knowing. He is your Self, present within all. (Bṛhad.III.iv.2)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Seeing is of two kinds, that which passes for such in the world, and that which is really such. That which passes for such in the world is a function of the inner organ (mind) associated with the sense-organ of sight. It is an act, and hence it begins and ends. But the seeing of the Self is (not an act but) the very nature of the Seer, as heat and light are the very nature of fire, and hence it has no beginning or end. Because it appears to be fused with the seeing that is an act, and which is only its conditioning adjunct, the Self is spoken of as 'the seer', and is assumed to include the distinction between 'the seer' and 'his seeing'.

As for that worldly form of seeing, tinted with colours through the sense of sight, it is (not in itself eternal but) something that comes into being apparently fused with the constant and eternal vision of the Self, and carrying a reflection of the latter. It comes into being and passes away, permeated by that constant and eternal vision. That is why, although the vision of the Self is always seeing, one speaks of it figuratively and says either 'It is seeing' or 'It is not seeing', though in fact the seer of seeing undergoes no change. And the text will say later, 'It seems to think, it seems to move' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7) and 'There is no break in the seeing of the Seer' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23). (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iv.2)

(3) There is no break in the seeing of the Seer (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23). There is no break in the smelling of the one who smells (Bṛhad.IV.iii.24). There is no break in the knowing of the knower. (Bṛhad.IV.iii.30)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: In waking and dream, the Self as the principle of pure light becomes known as enjoying

experience in various forms such as 'seeing' (hearing, smelling) and so forth, through various apparent conditioning adjuncts, such as the eye as organ of sight. In dreamless sleep the activity of the various conditioning adjuncts breaks off, and they are no longer illumined by Consciousness, and Consciousness is no longer apprehended as if differentiated by them. And yet Consciousness is spoken of as present in dreamless sleep in accordance with experience, just as it is present when differentiated by the apparent conditioning adjuncts (in waking and dream). (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.30)

(4) He who has the feeling 'Let me smell this' is the Self. The nose is for smelling. He who has the feeling 'Let me say this' is the Self. The voice is for speaking. He who has the feeling 'Let me hear this' is the Self. The ear is for hearing. He who has the feeling 'Let me think this' is the Self. The mind is his divine eye. (Chānd.VIII.xii.4-5)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: As the phrase 'He who has the feeling... is the Self' is used in each case, we conclude that the nature of the Self is Consciousness. It is as if one were to say 'What shines in front is the sun, what shines to the right, what shines behind, what shines to the left, what shines above is the sun', which would mean that the nature of the sun was light.

(5) The Self effects knowledge by its mere presence (lit. existence), not by any active effort. It is the same with the Self as with the sun, which also illumines by its mere presence, and without any active effort. (Chānd.Bh.VIII.xii.5)

(6) When He breathes, He is incomplete and is called Vital Energy. When He speaks, He is called Speech (vāc). When He sees, He is called the Eye, when He hears, the Ear. When He thinks, He is called the Mind (manas). These are but the names of His activities. He who meditates on these aspects of Him singly, does not come to know Him. For, as conceived under one or other of these aspects, He is incomplete. One should meditate on Him merely as 'the Self'. (Bṛhad.I.iv.7,M.V.25,1)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The vital energy and the rest, as the text says, are but names denoting the apparent activities of the Self. They are only names deriving from and denoting the activities of the Self; they are not names referring to the Self in its true nature as pure Consciousness. And so they do not refer to the Self in its entirety. As long as a person thinks 'I see, I hear, I touch', and imagines that his Self is characterized by the human activities that belong to the illusory realm of Nature, he does not rightly know the Self in its entirety.

If a person should ask, 'How should one view the Self if

one is to know it rightly?' the text replies, 'One should meditate on Him merely as the Self'. The Self (ātman) which possesses the vital energy and other particular aspects of himself that we have just mentioned, also pervades them. Because the Self (ātman) pervades them (āpnoti), they are said (because the word ātman is etymologically cognate with āpnoti) to *be* the Self. Because the Self includes all these particulars, it is the whole of which they are illusory aspects.

Here, the teaching is as follows. 'Being the seer' and other such states (of the Self in worldly experience) are based on apparent conditioning adjuncts and do not represent the Self in its entirety. They are finite versions of the Self. The Self in its entirety is what permeates 'being the seer' and all other particular states set up by conditioning adjuncts like the organ of sight. As illumining all these, the Self has its true nature as Consciousness. Here it is the knower by nature, the seer in the true sense of the word.

39 COMMUNICATING THE ABSOLUTE THROUGH DISCRIMINATING IT FROM THE FIVE SHEATHS

We now take up for consideration the method of discriminating the five sheaths. A passage in the Taittirīya Upanishad begins 'The Absolute is Reality, Knowledge, the Infinite' and goes on to say 'He who knows it hidden in the subtlest ether in the cave of the intellect obtains all joys at once'. This is to show that it has to be known in the cave of the intellect. The text then goes on to explain the method of that knowledge by teaching the projection of the five elements in order, beginning with the emergence of the ether immediately from the Self or Absolute, and how the human body is composed of the essence of food derived from the elements, a fact which it refers to at the same place in the phrase 'Man arises from food'. Accepting provisionally that ordinary people wrongly identify themselves with the gross body composed of food, the text goes on to speak of the false sense of identity with the vital energy, and says, 'There is another self within that, made up of the vital energy'. And after that it says, 'There is another self within that, made up of mind', 'There is another self within that, made up of knowledge', 'There is another self within that, made up of bliss'. It teaches that each new self successively is the inner self of the previous one. And, at the last, it mentions the Absolute (brahman) as the 'tail' or 'prop' of the self made up of bliss. From this we conclude that from the standpoint of the final truth it is verily the Absolute that is considered to be the inmost Self of all. Man in his true form as the one Spirit (puruṣa) cannot have five different selves. 'Whoso knows this goes beyond this self made up of food when he leaves the body at death'

(Taitt.II.8). And in the end he will have to go beyond the self made up of the vital energy, beyond the self made up of mind, beyond the self made up of knowledge and beyond the self made up of bliss in the same way. We conclude this from the fact that the five selves (or 'sheaths') ending with the bliss self are spoken of at the end of the passage as having to be transcended. So here again we see that we have another method for strengthening one's sense of identity with the Absolute, the final reality. One does so through falsely identifying oneself successively with one 'self' or 'sheath' (kośa) after another, and then negating the previous one successively at each stage (including negation of the bliss self through identification with the Absolute at the end).

(1) The supreme Self is the very life of the 'sheaths' described in the Taittirīya Upanishad, beginning with the sheath formed of food. We have already explained (G.K.III.3,M.V.46,1) how this Self resembles the ether of space. (G.K.III.11)

(2) The text goes on, 'There is another self within this self made up of food'. The idea is to reveal the Absolute finally as the inmost Self standing within the series of the five selves, beginning with the food-self and ending with the bliss-self, by rejecting these five illusory 'sheaths' set up by Ignorance, as one reveals the inner grain of kodrava rice by removing successively its various husks. (Taitt.Bh.II.2)

(3) Thus it is not just as circumscribed by the self formed of food (the physical body) that living beings feel themselves to have a self. All living creatures also feel themselves to have a self on account of the 'self of vital energy', which exists within the body of food, and pervades it throughout. And in the same way all living beings feel themselves to have a self through the self made up of mind, through the self made up of knowledge and through the self made up of bliss, each of which is more subtle than its predecessor in the series and pervades it, and each of which is formed from the material elements such as the ether, and is set up by metaphysical Ignorance.

Over and above these they also have a true Self, which is by its very nature the cause of the ether and the other physical elements. It is eternal, not subject to modification, all-pervading, defined as 'Reality, Knowledge, the Infinite', beyond the five sheaths, the Self of all. For this is the Self of all in the true sense. This last idea is included by implication. (Taitt.Bh.II.3, cp. M.V.171;199)

40 COMMUNICATING THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SELF THROUGH A DISCRIMINATION OF THE THREE (APPARENT) STATES OF WAKING, DREAM AND DREAMLESS SLEEP

Now we begin the study of the method of communicating the true nature of the Absolute by discriminating the three states. We are familiar with three states of the soul, those of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. Waking and dream are the states of awareness, dreamless sleep the state of non-awareness. It is impossible to imagine any other state apart from awareness and non-awareness. So when these three states have been considered, we have considered all states and the nature of the objects belonging to them.

These states can only exist supported in the universal Self as Consciousness. They exclude one another mutually, but Consciousness always accompanies them, without being affected by their attributes. Waking and dream, and the worlds of waking and dream, are never perceived in the absence of the Self as Consciousness. From this it follows that the states are unreal, and that the Self is real and of sovereign omnipotence. From the fact that in dreamless sleep we attain to Being or the Self, we conclude that in its true nature the Self is pure Being, void of all plurality.

(1) These three states alone constitute the realm of the knowable. For anything knowable outside them is inconceivable. (G.K.Bh.IV.88)

(2) The sage, having known the Self, the great, the all-pervading, that through which one experiences both dream and waking, no longer experiences grief. (Kaṭha II.i.4)

(3) Having enjoyed himself in this dream-state, and roamed about and seen auspicious and inauspicious sights, this Spirit goes back by the route he came and returns to the waking state. He is not accompanied in waking by what he saw in dream. For this Spirit is relationless....

Then, verily, this Spirit, having enjoyed himself in the waking state, and roamed about and seen auspicious and inauspicious sights, goes back by the route he came and returns to the dream state. (Bṛhad.IV.iii.16-7)

(4) No objects are seen in waking and dream in the absence of consciousness. Therefore it is logical to say that without consciousness such objects would not exist. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.7)

(5) When this Spirit sleeps (svapiti), then, my dear one, he is merged (sampanna) in pure Being, he has become one with his own Self (svam apīta). That is why they say of him 'he sleeps' (svapiti), for he has become one with his true Self

(svam... apīta). (Chānd.VI.viii.1)

(6) But states such as the internal state of consciousness (called dream) are actually *perceived* in the Self. How are we to know that they are unreal like the illusory snake misperceived in a rope on the mere (unsupported) authority of a negation? To this question we reply as follows. Consciousness persists throughout all the states, ever unchanged, whereas the states exclude one another mutually like the imagined distinctions such as snake, stream of water, stick and the rest misperceived in the rope. Consciousness, on the other hand, is real, as it persists everywhere without exception. (Māṇḍ. Bh.7)

41 HOW THE TRUE NATURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL IS BEING OR THE ABSOLUTE

In the waking state there is self-identification with body and organs and hence the appearance of being an individual knowing subject, having the recognized means of knowledge. In dreamless sleep, however, this self-identification breaks off, and there is the appearance of a lapse of one's condition as individual knowing subject. Hence the Veda describes the state of dreamless sleep as the attainment of Being, and of entering one's own true nature. However, nothing can ever truly depart from its own true nature. So we conclude that the state of being an individual knowing subject in the waking state was a mere illusory appearance.

This will become clear from a consideration of the state of being an individual knowing subject in dream. Nobody thinks that there is then any connection with a real body and real organs. And yet it is well known that the Self appears in that state to be an individual knowing subject — it appears to have the power to hear, think and know. And from this we can see that, in the waking state too, being an individual knowing subject is only a false appearance caused by conditioning adjuncts. Both waking and dream appear as waking when they are taking place, so that it is impossible to find any special sign whereby we could recognize definitively 'This is waking'.

This being so, and because the Veda teaches that in dreamless sleep the soul attains its true state, its sole natural state, we can see through comparison that the apparent individual subjecthood in waking and dream, imagined through Ignorance, is only the apparent assumption (by the Self) of a form that is not its true nature.

(1) The Spirit (puruṣa) is the seer, the toucher, the hearer, the smeller, the taster, the thinker, the knower, the active one, the cognizer in all empirical knowledge. His support is the supreme, immutable Self. (Praśna IV.9)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: He is called the Spirit (puruṣa) inasmuch as he fills (pūraṇa) the apparent conditioning adjunct (upādhi) consisting of the complex of the bodies and organs, which has already been mentioned. And just as the reflection of the sun in water or other medium returns back into the sun (on the destruction of the reflecting medium), so does the Spirit (after appearing as the seer and toucher and so forth) rest finally in the supreme Self, the Immutable, that which remains over as the ultimate support of the universe.

(2) In the same way the soul, in the states of waking and dream, becomes interpenetrated with duality set up by Ignorance, and becomes active and suffers pain. And then afterwards, to get rid of its weariness, it enters into its own Self (in dreamless sleep), into the Absolute, the transcendent. It takes leave of the complex of bodies and organs, and becomes non-active, and feels happy in the state of highest serenity. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.40)

(3) Of course, it is also true that the individual soul is never anything but united with the Absolute, as it can never lose its own nature. But in waking and dream it appears to acquire a foreign nature on account of its contact with apparent conditioning adjuncts, and it is relative to this appearance that it is said to 'attain' its true nature in dreamless sleep, because the apparent foreign nature is then lost. (B.S. Bh.III.ii.7, cp. M.V.226,10;246,13)

(4) In dream there are no proper organs either for knowledge or action. For the sense-organs are withdrawn, and there are no eyes or other organs with which to perceive chariots. And how could the chariots of dream really be created in the twinkling of an eye as they appear to be? And where would there be timber for it? (B.S.Bh.III.ii.3)

(5) The Veda speaks of dream activities using the phrase 'as if'. 'Either he appeared as if enjoying himself in the company of women, or else as if laughing, or else as if seeing terrible sights' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.13). Even people in the world speak of dreams in this way, 'It seemed as if I had climbed a mountain peak' or 'It seemed as if I was beholding a forest range'. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.40)

(6) The wise say that dream and waking are one. For distinctions of subject and object are the same in each, as has been shown (at G.K.II.4) in previous reasoning. (G.K.II.5)

(7) The appearance of particular cognition on the part of an individual knowing subject arises through the association of the Self with such apparent conditioning adjuncts as location in a particular intellect. When such cognition ceases (in

dreamless sleep), we speak of the individual as being in contact with the supreme Self. But this is a figurative way of speaking, which holds true relative to the apparent conditioning adjunct, but which does not imply that any real limitation (or separation) ever occurred. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.34, cp. M.V. 246,7)

(8) And it is only this kind of relation (i.e. of identity with one's own Self) that is possible in dreamless sleep, and not another. For the Veda speaks of one's being connected with one's own true nature in the words 'He has become one with his true Self' (Chānd.VI.viii.1). And one cannot depart from one's own true nature. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.35).

42 HOW THE SELF IS OF THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Well, let that be so. And we must also note that the consciousness of the individual knowing subject certainly lapses, as, for instance, in dreamless sleep. Consciousness in waking is external. Consciousness in dream is internal. These two states are mutually exclusive, as are the two different worlds that belong to them and the two different ways in which the objects of those worlds are known. And the individual knowing subject lapses completely in dreamless sleep. It is common knowledge that everyone in the world remembers his dreamless-sleep experience as 'I knew nothing'. And there is a Vedic text on the point which runs: 'He (Indra) said, "A person (in dreamless sleep) does not then know himself as 'I am such and such', nor does he know these objects of the world. Verily, he goes to destruction"' (Chānd.VIII.xi.2).

Indeed, it is the very essence of dreamless sleep that a person should not then know anything. For if he knew anything, then his mode of vision would be like that of dream and waking, and he would not be in any special state, different from them. And it would follow that when we examined the state of dreamless sleep we would not find any awareness of the true nature of the Self, and the knower in his true form would verily lapse. Or else we should have to conclude that reality was a void, on the ground that we then perceived nothing.

But this is not so. For it is impossible to deny the fact of experience. The memory 'In sleep I knew nothing' could only occur to one who had had the experience. And no one can deny that the true form of the Self as knower is, precisely, experience. So there is no place here for the doctrine of the Void.

It is true that we have the Vedic text: He said, 'A person (in dreamless sleep) does not then know himself as "I am such and such"'. If this only means that in dreamless sleep there is no particularized cognition, let it be so, it does our

argument no harm. We ourselves affirm that there is no particularized cognition in dreamless sleep, in the form of seeing or hearing and so on. And we hold that dreamless sleep is, precisely, the cessation of all that. But the cause of the absence of particularized cognition is not separation from the Self as the knower in his true form. The cause is the absence in that state of any knowable object. It is to convey this that the Veda says, 'When he does not know anything then (in dreamless sleep), he is knowing when he does not then know anything. There is no break in the knowing of the knower, for it is indestructible. But there is not then (in dreamless sleep) any other thing over against him which he could know' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.30). Therefore consciousness is the very nature of the Self, as light is the nature of the sun. But its lack of particularized cognition in dreamless sleep is due to the fact that in that state everything is identical with Consciousness. Thus Consciousness is no more absent in dreamless sleep than it is in the other two states (of waking and dream). And hence the Veda says, 'When they have attained Being (in dreamless sleep), they have no (particularized) knowledge' (Chānd.VI.ix.2) and 'Embraced by the Self as Consciousness, he has no knowledge of anything, within or without' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.21).

(1) If it be objected that consciousness lapses in dreamless sleep, we reply that it does not. For dreamless sleep is actually experienced. (Māṇḍ.Bh.7)

(2) It is true that the text says 'He goes there (in dreamless sleep) to destruction'. But the reference is to the destruction of all particularized cognition, not to the destruction of the knower. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19)

(3) The point is that the appearance of not being conscious that characterizes the state of dreamless sleep arises from the absence of any objects to be conscious of, not from the absence of consciousness. It is like the case of light pervading the ether between solid objects. Here the light is imperceptible, not because it is not present, but because there is nothing for it to illumine. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.18)

(4) Dreamless sleep is the state of cessation of particularized cognition. It admits of no distinctions. There one has attained Being. And because Being is one (and without internal distinctions) the text was only right to say 'There he has no particularized cognition'. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.7)

(5) And this same soul, embraced by its own Self in the form of consciousness in its true natural state as transcendent light, becomes a perfect unity, the Self of all, with no internal differentiation, and knows no other object outside

itself and no distinction within itself, such as 'Here I am, happy or unhappy'. In this connection you asked, 'Why does he know nothing in this state of dreamless sleep if his natural state is the light of consciousness?' I have now stated the reason, which is that he is a perfect unity, like that of a man and his wife in embrace. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.21)

43 THE SELF IS EVER VOID OF THE STATES

We have spoken of attaining unity with the Self as 'the conscious one' (prājña) in dreamless sleep. (M.V.23) And it has been explained how this is a person's true nature. It is not that in dreamless sleep a person has to reach any new condition that did not belong to him before. Being 'the conscious one' (prājñatva) means, indeed, being possessed of 'prajñā', defined as constant and eternal Consciousness. From this we conclude that it permeates dream and waking also. And so it follows that (in one's true nature) one is the supreme Lord (parameśvara) in dream and waking no less than in dreamless sleep.

In dream and waking, however, there is an appearance of being an individual experiencing subject, based on self-identification with an individual's complex of bodies and organs. The fact that one is revealed as the supreme Lord when this self-identification is given up is stated elsewhere in various passages of the Veda, such as: 'The individual soul stands on the same tree (as the Lord), bewildered, grieving and helplessly drowned in sorrows. But when he sees that other one, the adored Lord, he knows "His glory is mine", and all his grief departs' (Muṇḍ.III.i.2). In this way one may reject the sense of being an individual knowing subject that is falsely superimposed on the Self in the three states, and then one realizes that one was always the supreme Lord. And from this we conclude that the sole purpose of the method of teaching the three states was to bring out how, in one's true nature, one is void of all states. For the further teaching that one is 'the Fourth' is only intelligible on this basis.

(1) The one in dreamless sleep is called 'the conscious one' (prājña) in relation to his earlier condition (in dream and waking). Or else he is called 'the conscious one' to show that he has a peculiar nature as bare (undifferentiated) consciousness. That is, in the other two states (of dream and waking) there is also particularized cognition in addition. (Māṇḍ.Bh.5)

'Particularized cognition' refers to that additional form of consciousness based on the sense of being an individual knowing subject. The word 'also' shows that even when there is particularized cognition there is also Consciousness in its true nature in addition.

(2) 'The conscious one' (prājña) is the supreme Lord. For He is ever associated with Consciousness (prajña) in the sense of 'omniscience'. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.42)

(3) Ignorance, which assumes the form of duality, is a wrong idea like the wrong idea of a man that we may have when we misperceived a post. Until one puts an end to Ignorance through realizing the true nature of one's own Self as the constant and eternal Witness, raised above all change, in the conviction 'I am the Absolute', the individual soul will remain an individual soul. But it is possible to emerge from the sense of identity with the complex of body, sense-organs, mind and intellect. This occurs when one is enlightened through Vedic teaching which says: 'You are not that complex of body, sense-organs, mind and intellect. You are not the one subject to transmigration. What then is the truth? The truth is that the sole reality is the Self, of the nature of pure Consciousness. That thou art'. When this enlightenment occurs, one then becomes awake to the true nature of one's own Self as the constant and eternal Witness, raised above all change. One rises above the sense of identity with this body and its organs. Verily, one who succeeds in this realizes his own true Self as the constant and eternal Witness, raised above all change. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19)

(4) Two birds, together, companions, occupy the same tree (the body). One eats the sweet fruit, the other looks on. (Muṇḍ.III.i.1)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Of these two occupying the tree, one is the Knower of the Field (M.V.p.35) as associated with the apparent conditioning adjunct of the subtle body. Failing to discriminate the true Self from the subtle body, he resorts to the tree and eats the berries in the form of experience of the pleasures and pains arising as the 'fruit' of his previous deeds. It is called 'sweet' (not in the sense of being invariably pleasurable but) in the sense of being rich with a variety of gradations of feeling. The other does not eat. He who does not eat is the Lord, ever pure, conscious and liberated by nature, omniscient, having all creatures for his apparent conditioning adjunct. For he is the prompter both of the experiencer and the experienced, simply by existing as the eternal Witness. He is the other who looks on, not eating. He only observes.

(5) 'When', says the Upanishad. That is, when he sees through meditation that other one, that one who is different in nature and who does not have the tree for his adjunct, who is the Lord of the whole world, not subject to transmigration, beyond hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, decrepitude and death. Then he (identifies himself with that other one and) acquires the

conviction 'I am the Self of all. I am the same to all. I abide in all beings. I am not that other illusory self, limited by adjuncts springing from Ignorance'. When he has the feeling in regard to the glory and grandeur of the whole world 'All this belongs to Me, the supreme Lord — when he is finally able to see this, then he passes beyond sorrow'. (Muṇḍ. Bh.III.i.2)

(6) The first quarter of the Self is Vaiśvānara. His sphere is the realm of waking experience. His consciousness is of the external realm. He has seven organs and nineteen mouths. He experiences the gross perceptible objects of the waking world. (Māṇḍ.3)

(According to Śrī Śaṅkara, the seven organs of Vaiśvānara are those mentioned at Chānd.Up.V.xviii.2, where the Self is presented for meditation as Vaiśvānara, a giant human figure, having head, eye, breath, body, bladder and two feet represented by parts of the cosmos, such as the world of heaven, the sun, the wind, the earth and so on. The 'nineteen mouths' refer not to the cosmos but to the organs of the individual experiencer — the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, the five forms of the vital energy and the four forms of the mind (manas, buddhi, ahaṃkāra, citta = doubt, decision, ego-feeling and imagination). Vaiśvānara is thus the Self as witnessing Consciousness, but also Consciousness in the illusory form of all experiencers and all objects of experience in the waking state. As the objects of such experience He is called Virāṭ. T.N.)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: It is accepted that the final message of all the Upanishads is the identity of all as the Self. So it was right for the text to speak of the Self with the adjuncts of the gross perceptible body (piṇḍa) on the plane of individual existence (ādhyātmika) as having seven organs, beginning with the world of heaven. For the intention was to indicate the identity of the Self having the adjunct 'Piṇḍa' (the individual body in the waking state) with the Self having the adjunct 'Virāṭ', the latter constituting the whole world of gross objects perceived in the waking state, existing on the plane of the divine (ādhidaivika) cosmic forces....

Teaching the identity of the Self that has Piṇḍa for adjunct with the Self that has Virāṭ for adjunct was also meant to indicate the identity of the Self having the individual dreamer (taijasa) for adjunct with the Self having Hiraṇyagarbha for adjunct, (Hiraṇyagarbha being the creator-god, first-born at the beginning of a world-period, the cosmic intellect in which lie the subtle impressions (vāsanā) from which the gross world of Virāṭ will emerge, cp. Bṛhad.Bh. V.v.1), and who also (cp.Praśna Bh.V.5) constitutes the totality of subtle bodies, likewise composed of impressions, of all

creatures). There was also the intention to indicate the identity of the Self of the individual in dreamless sleep with the Self having the adjunct called the Avyakta (the Unmanifest Principle, namely the undifferentiated seed-state or 'causal' state of name and form before manifestation at the beginning of a world-period, not determinable as either identical with or different from the Self, from which first Hiraṇyagarbha and then Virāṭ will spring, cp.Bṛhad.Bh.V.v.1).

Here it is taught that the Self apparently bound down in waking experience must arise from self-identification with the individual gross body, take leave of the notion that he is an individual knowing subject, and realize his nature as Vaiśvānara. Likewise it is taught that Hiraṇyagarbha is the true nature of Taijasa, the individual enjoying dream experience.

(7) Viśva, the Self in subjection to the illusion of waking experience, is faced by external objects. In his case, therefore, Consciousness is experienced in the gross form of external objects. Here, however, in the case of Taijasa, the Self in subjection to the illusion of dream-experience, Consciousness is experienced merely in the form of subtle impressions. That is why there is reference to 'rarified experience'. (Māṇḍ.Bh.4)

Here the revered Commentator speaks of a gross form of Consciousness and a subtle form of Consciousness that are objects *of experience for the Self. From this we infer that he is denying that the Self is a knowing subject in the commonly accepted sense, and affirming that the Self is the Lord, the Witness illumining the knowing subject as ordinarily conceived.*

(8) He is the Lord of all, He is omniscient, He is the Inner Ruler, He is the womb of all, the source of all beings and that into which they will finally dissolve back. (Māṇḍ.6)

(9) At the time of the dissolution of the vital energy at death, the vital energy of those who formerly identified themselves with limitations persists in unmanifest form. And, just in the same way, when dreamless sleep, as a state of non-particularity, comes over one who (in the waking state) has been identifying himself with the vital energy, the vital energy persists in unmanifest form and as seed for the fructification of future experience. The Witness, also, is the same in both cases, the Witness of the Unmanifest. And this Witness is identical with the (apparently multiple) 'Witnesses' of those who identify themselves with the finite (in the waking and dream states). So that the author of the Kārikās was right to classify consciousness in dreamless sleep as 'having become one' and as 'a single mass'. (G.K.Bh.I.2)

Here Prājña (the conscious one) and Prāṇa (the cosmic vital energy) are treated as synonyms. Each is regarded as a seed that gives birth to the individual soul. And it is taught that when Prājña is conditioned by the adjunct of dreamless sleep it is non-different from Consciousness supporting the world of name and form in its unmanifest state on the cosmic plane (avyākṛta). Prājña is also the seed of the individual soul in the sense of being (as Consciousness) the substratum of the illusory projection of the appearance of an individual subject, having the experience of waking and dream.

44 HOW THE SELF'S APPEARANCE OF HAVING THREE FORMS IS ILLUSORY

The revered Commentator remarked, following universal experience, 'The one in dreamless sleep is one with the cosmic Unmanifest principle, there being no distinctions in either of them'. (Māṇḍ.Bh.3, *ad fin.*) This statement requires careful attention. There are Vedic texts which say that, when the world is in the stage of dissolution between world-periods, name and form, in their unmanifest state, are one with the Self and can be referred to as 'the one Self'. Thus we have 'In the beginning this (world) was verily the Self, one only' (Ait.I.1) and others. And there are texts in the same spirit which say that in dreamless sleep, also, name and form are in unmanifest state and one with the Self. For instance, we have such texts as 'In the state of dreamless sleep, the sleeper has become all one, massed Consciousness, consisting of bliss, experiencing bliss' (Māṇḍ.5) and 'Yājñavalkya taught him "(In dreamless sleep) the seer is one, transparent like water, without a second. This is the realm of the Absolute, O Emperor. This is his highest state. This is his greatest attainment. This is his supreme realm (loka). This is his highest bliss"'(Bṛhad.IV.iii.32). The texts also speak of all manifestations of the vital energy, of the worlds, the gods and all creatures proceeding from the Self as associated with dreamless sleep. 'As a spider climbs upwards on the web that has proceeded from its own spittle, as small sparks fly out from a fire, even so do all the manifestations of the vital energy, all the worlds, all the gods presiding over them and all the creatures in them proceed forth (from this Self when the individual soul awakens from sleep)' (Bṛhad.II.i.20). The Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, too, speaks of 'the source of all beings and that to which they finally dissolve back' (Māṇḍ.6).

Thus the method of communicating the Absolute by teaching that the Absolute undergoes the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep and that of teaching that it is the cause of the world belong together. In both cases it is taught that the origin, maintenance and dissolution of the world

proceed from the highest Lord, and this teaching is given to indicate that the world is non-different from Him. The name and form found in dream and waking exclude one another mutually, and each lapses when the other is in play. Both lapse by nature in dreamless sleep. Hence we conclude that they are only superimposed on the Self through Ignorance. So our final conviction must be that the whole notion that the Self undergoes the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is itself a mere illusion (māyā).

(1) The Veda teaches that there is a dissolution of the world (pralaya) and a re-projection in dreamless sleep and waking when it says: 'When one is in dreamless sleep and sees no dream, then he becomes one with this cosmic vital energy. Then speech, together with all names, enters back into him, as also the power of sight, together with all forms, the power of hearing, together with all sounds, and the mind together with all thoughts. Then, when he awakens, just as sparks fly out in all directions from a blazing fire, so all the vital energies (subtle organs of perception and action) spring forth from this Self to their respective stations, and from them come forth the gods, and from the gods the worlds' (Kauṣītaki III.3). (B.S.Bh.I.iii.30)

(2) For in the present context only those arguments that are sanctioned by the Veda may be resorted to, and that only as an auxiliary to the attainment of direct experience. For example, one may argue that since dream-experience and waking experience are mutually exclusive they (are transient and so unreal and therefore) do not affect the Self; and because in dreamless sleep the world-appearance is lost and one unites with the Self, the real, it follows that one is the Self, the real, free from the world-appearance; because the world-appearance rises from the Absolute, it follows, from the law that effects are non-different from their material causes, that it is nothing other than the Absolute. It is reasoning of this kind that is legitimate. (B.S.Bh.II.i.6)

(3) The upanishadic doctrine is that in dreamless sleep the individual soul unites (in pure identity) with the Absolute in its highest form, and that it is from the Absolute in its highest form that the world, beginning with the vital energies (senses), springs forth (when the soul awakens). (B.S. Bh.I.iv.18, cp.M.V.246,12)

(4) There are Vedic texts which teach that the world, as effect, is non-different from the Absolute, its material cause, without exception in past, present and future. For example we have, 'All this (world) is but the Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.6), 'All this is but the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2), 'All this in front is verily but the Absolute, the immortal' (Muṇḍ.

II.ii.12) and 'Verily, all this is the Absolute' (Chānd.III. xiv.1). Here, the refutation of the charge that, if the effect were non-different from the material cause, the cause would be tainted by the defects of the effect, is as follows. The cause has no real connection with the effect or with its attributes, since the effect is superimposed through Ignorance. The same argument holds against the view that the effect would taint the material cause with its defects when it dissolved back into it.

And in this connection there is another illustration. The magician is himself in no way affected in past, present or future by the magic display he has spread forth by his hypnotic power (māyā), as it is nothing real. And, in just the same way, the Self is unaffected by the illusory appearance of the world of transmigratory experience. Similarly, the one who sees a dream remains one and the same, and is not touched in his real nature by the dream-illusion, as it does not persist with him when he is awake or when he has attained identity with all in dreamless sleep.

Likewise, the Witness of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is one. It never lapses, and is untouched by the three states, which themselves come and go. This appearance of the supreme Self as characterized by the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is a mere illusion, like the appearance (through misperception) of a rope as a snake. In this connection, a great Teacher who knew the true tradition about the meaning of the Upanishads has said, 'When the individual soul, asleep under a beginningless illusion, finally awakens, he awakens to a knowledge of the unborn, sleepless, dreamless, non-dual reality' (G.K.I.16). (B.S.Bh. II.i.9)

(5) But if anyone thinks that, because (between the two affirmations of the existence of the Absolute at Bṛhad.IV.iii.7 and IV.iv.22) there is an intervening exposition of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, it follows that the text means to teach that the Absolute is by nature subject to transmigratory experience in any form, then he might as well set off for the east and find himself in the west. For the purpose of the texts in expounding the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is not to declare that the Absolute is subject to these states or to transmigratory experience in any form, but to show, on the contrary, that it is entirely *bereft* of the three states and that it is *not* subject to transmigratory experience in any form. (B.S.Bh.I.iii. 42)

This was written in response to the passage in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad (IV.iii.7) 'Which is the Self? It is the Spirit (viewed under adjuncts) with intellect predominating (vijñāna-maya) lying within the heart, within the vital

energies (subtle organs of perception and action), the inner light'. (See M.V.79,3.) On the other hand in the Māṇḍūkya we find that the Self is first identified with forms such as Vaiśvānara (M.V.43,6) found in the waking state, and other forms (Taijasa, Prājña, M.V.23) found in the other states, each as the case may be. But then afterwards there is a text beginning 'Not with consciousness of the internal (mental) realm, not with consciousness of the external realm...' which declares that the Self is not touched by any of the states. From this we conclude with certainty that mention of the three states was only made here in order to deny that the Self was subject to any state.

45 DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL AND THE LORD NEGATED THROUGH A CONSIDERATION OF THE THREE STATES

There is another point that emerges through the teaching by the method of attributing the three states to the Self. To begin with, it comes out that the name and form of the waking state, and the bodies and organs composed of them, are imagined through Ignorance and are therefore illusory. Equally illusory is the alternation between consciousness and non-consciousness on the part of the individual souls that appear in that state, as also the notion that they enjoy the power to have knowledge as individual subjects and the power to act as individuals and to experience the results of their actions. Indeed, the whole notion of the distinction between an experiencer and his experience is illusory, along with all that goes with it. Also illusory, in that context, are the notions that the Lord is a 'lord' in the literal sense, that He is the cause of the world, or that the individual souls are subject to His rule. Equally illusory is the notion that name and form persist as a remnant in the form of a seed-power in dreamless sleep and cosmic dissolution. For the seed-power there inferred falls within the realm of what is imagined through Ignorance.

Hence the Veda declares that the soul in its true nature is none other than the Absolute, unborn and without a second. It also makes various specific denials, including the denial that the Self has internal or external consciousness relative to the internal (mental) or external (extra-mental) realms imagined through Ignorance. And it affirms the true nature of the Self as Turīya, void of any touch of the three states or the realms belonging to them.

(1) Name and form, imagined through Ignorance as if they were the very nature of the Self, the omniscient Lord, indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything (independent and) different from it, the seed of transmigra-

tory experience and the differentiated world, are spoken of in the Veda and Smṛti as 'The Power of Māyā belonging to the omniscient Lord' and as 'Nature' (prakṛti). The omniscient Lord is different from them. For the Veda says 'The shining ether, verily, draws forth name and form. That in which they exist is the Absolute' (Chānd.VIII.xiv.1). (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

It is from the empirical standpoint that name and form are spoken of as indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything different, relative to their illusory form as it appears. But it should not be forgotten that it has already been shown at M.V.35 that from the standpoint of the highest truth they are the Self.

(2) Thus the Lord conforms to the conditioning adjuncts, wrought of name and form and set up by Ignorance, in the same sense that the ether conforms to the conditioning adjuncts such as the clay pot and the coconut water-vessel, etc. And within the realm of human experience He rules over the conscious beings called individual souls, who are in truth nothing but his own Self, but who assume the limitations of the body, mind and senses in the same way that the ether of space assumes the limitations of the pots of different shapes and sizes in which it is apparently enclosed. But the body, mind and senses are wrought of name and form, which are set up by Ignorance.

Hence the 'lordship' of the Lord, as well as His omniscience and omnipotence, exist in relation to conditioning adjuncts which are of the nature of Ignorance. From the standpoint of ultimate truth, there can be no talk of any opposition between a Lord and His subjects, or of omniscience, etc., in the Self, in which all apparent conditioning adjuncts are by nature annulled through knowledge. And this has been declared in such Vedic passages as, 'Where he sees nothing else and hears nothing else and knows nothing else, that is the infinite' (Chānd.VII.xxiv.1) and 'But when all has become his own Self, then what could a person see and with what?' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15) In this way, the Upanishads as a whole teach that there is no empirical experience in the state of knowledge of the final truth. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

(3) And the author of the Sūtras, too, speaking from the standpoint of the highest truth, said 'Non-different from that', (i.e. the world as effect is non-different from the Absolute as cause). Speaking from the standpoint of empirical experience, however, he says 'Let it be, as in the world' (B.S.II.i.13), and describes how the Absolute can be represented as a great ocean. Here he accepts the world of effects and the doctrine of real transformation (pariṇāma) because it will be of use for the prescribed meditations on the Absolute associated with various finite forms. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp.

M.V.34,4)

(4) Ignorance, which assumes the form of duality, is a wrong idea, like the wrong idea of a man that we may have when we misperceive a tree-stump. Until one puts an end to Ignorance through realizing the true nature of one's own Self as the constant and eternal Witness, raised above all change, in the conviction 'I am the Absolute', the individual soul will remain an individual soul. But it is possible to emerge from the sense of identity with the complex of body, sense-organs, mind and intellect. This occurs when one is enlightened through Vedic teaching....

One then becomes awake to the true nature of one's own Self as the constant and eternal Witness, raised above all change. One rises above the sense of identity with this body and its organs. Verily, one who succeeds in this realizes his own true Self as the constant and eternal Witness, raised above all change. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19, cp. M.V.43,3)

(5) Moreover, when one becomes awake to the non-difference of the soul and the Absolute through such texts teaching their non-difference as 'That thou art', this puts an end to the notion that the individual soul is suffering transmigration and also to the notion that the Absolute is a world-creator. (B.S. Bh.II.i.22)

(6) We see in the world that, in childhood and other early states of life, virility and other such attributes are present in rudimentary form, but are taken as not present because they are not actually perceived, while in youth and other later states they become manifest. And it cannot be that in youth they suddenly emerge from non-existence, or we would find them suddenly emerging in eunuchs, for example.

In the same way, this connection of the soul with the intellect that we are discussing exists in potential form during dreamless sleep and periods of world-dissolution, and then manifests again at the time of awakening or of creation. (B.S. Bh.II.iii.31)

(7) And when this world dissolves at the end of a world-period it is not completely dissolved, for a potentiality (śakti) remains over. When it rises up again (at the beginning of the next world-period) it does so on the basis of this potentiality. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.30)

(8) Thus, although there are no distinctions in the Self in its true nature, we see that this dream-like empirical experience of distinctions continues regularly during the period of world manifestation, based on wrong knowledge (even though punctuated by intervals of dreamless sleep when wrong knowledge is in abeyance). Therefore we should infer by analogy

that a potentiality (śakti) for future distinctions remains in the period of world-dissolution, too, this potentiality itself being a mere appearance, conditioned by wrong knowledge. (B.S. Bh.II.i.9)

What is being affirmed here is that potentialities (śakti) like that for contact with or separation from the intellect, inferred to exist in dreamless sleep and cosmic dissolution, are themselves only imagined through Ignorance.

(9) Indeed, if the word 'Being' were here understood as pure Being without seed, those dissolved in dreamless sleep or in the dissolution at the end of a world-period could not emerge again. Or, alternatively, those who had been liberated would be reborn, as there would be no difference between them and the ones in bondage in point of having no seeds of future rebirth (after death). Moreover, such a doctrine would render the upanishadic teachings on spiritual knowledge pointless, as there would be no seeds to be burnt up by knowledge. Hence, throughout the whole range of the Veda, Being is only called 'vital energy' or referred to as the cause of the world when it is assumed to be associated with seeds. And that is why (in order to bring out the final truth) there has to be explicit denial of association with seeds in certain other texts, such as 'the transcendent, beyond the Indestructible principle' (Muṇḍ.II.i.2), 'He alone exists within and without, Unborn' (Muṇḍ.II.i.2), 'from which words fall back' (Taitt.II.9) and '"neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6). (G.K.Bh.I.2)

(10) The production of all entities, whether they belong in the realm of Viśva, Taijasa or Prājña (M.V.23), is a 'production' through the illusion of name and form set up by Ignorance, of things that (in their true nature as the Absolute) are already real. (G.K.Bh.I.6)

(11) Not with consciousness of the internal realm, not with consciousness of the external realm, not with consciousness of both, not a mass of (undifferentiated) consciousness, not intuitively omniscient, not non-conscious, not visible, not within the scope of practical experience, intangible, indefinable, unthinkable, indescribable, whose proof lies solely in the notion 'the Self', being the dissolution of all plurality, perfectly peaceful, auspicious (śiva), without duality. This is how they conceive 'the Fourth'. This is the Self. This is what has to be known. (Māṇḍ.7)

46 HOW THE SELF IS IN NO WAY TOUCHED BY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Here we have only expounded five of the ways used for

communicating the Absolute, such as the teaching that it is the cause of the world and so on, and that only in the most general terms. But it should be enough to show that other less important applications of the method of false attribution followed by subsequent denial are also valid. In this way, students should be able to deduce the pattern of the other methods used. Whatever characteristics are attributed to the Self as a means to awaken the student to ultimate reality are always finally denied. This is the heart of the method. It is in this spirit that the Veda attributes to the Self that existence as an individual soul that is familiar from worldly experience. And to this soul it attributes possession of a body and its appendages, also birth and the other changes of the life-cycle, power to act and undergo experience in the world, rebirth and transition to other worlds, followed by re-embodiment on this earth on the expiry of the karmic merit and demerit that carried it away. And it teaches also how one who has lost all love for the world comes to the feet of a Guru, listens to his teaching, ponders over the meaning of what he has heard and acquires release from transmigration through understanding it. We have already explained (M.V.27) how even this contact with revealed teaching only takes place within the realm of Ignorance. And though the Self is thus associated with practical experience at all levels, it undergoes no change as a result, any more than the shell, the rope and the pure and infinite ether of the sky are affected by the silver, the snake and the roof-like shape and impurities (of clouds and dust) falsely attributed to them in the course of worldly experience.

The Self is ever identical with the Absolute, eternal, pure, conscious and free. In worldly experience it appears both to support and be concealed by Ignorance. Yet this does not introduce any change into its nature. The Vedic texts proclaiming the identity of the Self with the Absolute, such as 'That thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7) and 'I am the Absolute' (Bṛhad. I.iv.10) affirm just this. Even at the time when the rope and the shell are appearing as snake and silver, there is in fact no snake or silver. In the same way, even at the time when one appears to be undergoing transmigratory experience, there is no real transmigratory experience occurring in the Self, which is why the competent authorities bring forward these examples of the rope-snake and the rest.

There is, however, this difference between the examples and the thing they illustrate. In the examples, the snake and the rest do not really exist in the rope and the rest. It is simply that the perceiver erroneously supposes the snake and the rest to be there, and thinks and speaks accordingly. The case with the thing these examples illustrate, namely illusions in regard to the Self or Absolute is somewhat different. Here we have a case of practical experience of relation with the Self set up by erroneous knowledge. The difference is that here even the notion that the erroneous knowledge ever

belonged to the Self, as well as its cancellation, are both seen to belong to the realm of Ignorance. In the case of such superimpositions as the rope-snake, each superimposition is experienced as a wrong notion. Similarly, the superimposition of the not-self onto the Self is also experienced as a wrong notion. But occasional wrong notions such as the rope-snake arise and suffer cancellation while the individual knowing subject remains in being as such. This, however, is not the case with the superimposition of the not-self onto the Self. For the superimposition onto the Self of the notion that it is an individual knowing subject is part of that general superimposition of the not-self onto the Self. And when that latter superimposition is cancelled, the whole notion of an empirical experiencer is cancelled with it.

One cannot conceive this root-superimposition of the not-self onto the Self as having either a beginning or an end in time. For time itself only comes into existence with this superimposition. And the authorities speak of it as beginningless and endless (M.V.46,12). And it must not be forgotten that we have already shown that the whole notion of Ignorance and enlightenment itself belongs to the realm of Ignorance (M.V.27,1, etc.).

(1) The Self appears to undergo birth through the multiplicity of souls, just as the ether of space appears to undergo birth through the multiplicity of new forms into which it appears to be enclosed through the production of pots (cp. M.V. 27,4). The ether is also the example to explain the apparent rise of new objects like pots through the compounding of the elements (since the elements are taught to proceed from the ether and the effect is nothing over and above the material cause). (G.K.III.3, cp. M.V.75,9)

(2) The Self stands within all bodies, motionless and unaffected, like the ether of space, whether they die or are born, whether they go, come or stand still. All bodies and organs are appearances projected like dreams by the power of illusion inherent in the Self. Their existence cannot be established logically, whether they are taken as varying in eminence or as all the same. (G.K.III.9-10; for Śrī Śaṅkara's comm., see M.V.242,6-7)

(3) Nor does (the appearance of) being affected by Ignorance or (the appearance of) its removal make the slightest difference to the real. Imagine the case of a person in thick darkness, mistaking a rope lying on the ground for a snake. He feels afraid, trembles and runs away. But suppose another person says to him, 'Do not be afraid. That is not a snake. It is a rope'. And suppose that on hearing this he gets rid of his fear and trembling and stops running away. In such a case, it will make no difference to the reality (the rope)

whether the snake-idea is present or has been removed. It is the same in the case of the Self. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.6)

There is no difference in the reality, the rope, either when the snake-idea comes or when it is removed. In the same way, there is no difference in the Self when the notion that it is affected by Ignorance is present, or when it is removed. That is the point being made.

(4) Perhaps you will object that it is inconceivable that the Absolute should be concealed by Ignorance. But such an objection would be wrong. For knowledge of the Absolute is recommended in the Veda. When a piece of shell is lying within the field of vision, one does not inform anyone that that is what it is, and say 'This is a piece of shell, not a piece of silver', unless it has been erroneously perceived as silver. In the same way, unless there had been false superimpositions made onto the Absolute through Ignorance, there would not have to be exhortations to rise to a knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Absolute in such texts as, 'All this is the Absolute' (Chānd.VI.ii.1), 'All this is the Self' (Muṇḍ. II.ii.11) and 'This duality is not anything other than the Absolute' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19). (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

One has to accept that the Absolute is concealed by Ignorance, as the teachings in the Veda about knowledge are inexplicable otherwise. That is the point being made.

(5) We do not say, the opponent claims, that there is no superimposition onto the Absolute of attributes it does not possess, superimposition parallel with the false superimposition of the attributes of silver onto a shell. What we say is that the Absolute is not the cause of superimposition onto itself of attributes that it does not possess, and that it is not the author of Ignorance.

Very well, replies the Advaitin. We agree that the Absolute is not the author of Ignorance and that it is not deluded by it either. Even so, there is nothing *other* than the Absolute which is the author of Ignorance, and no other conscious being apart from the Absolute that is deluded by it, as we know from such texts as, 'There is no other knower but He' (Bṛhad.III.vii.23), 'There is no other knowing principle apart from that' (Bṛhad.III.viii.11), 'That thou art' (Chānd. VI.viii.7), 'The Absolute knew itself alone' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10), 'I am the Absolute' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10) and 'He who thinks "I am one and He another does not know"' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10) (Bṛhad.Bh. I.iv.10)

Here it is taught, on the authority of the Veda, that from the standpoint of Ignorance the Absolute is afflicted with Ignorance, while from the standpoint of the final truth it is

free from it.

(6) But it would not be right to say that this absence of individual experience (in enlightenment) is conditional on the attainment of any particular state. For the text 'That thou *art*' (Chānd.VI.viii.7) shows that the fact of one's true Self being the Absolute is not conditional upon any particular state. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.169,15)

What this means is that the Self is not really an individual transmigrant soul even in the state where the appearance of being one is being superimposed onto it.

(7) Verily, this is that great unborn Self, beyond decay, death and fear. The Absolute, indeed, is fearless. He who knows the Absolute as fearless verily becomes the Absolute. (Bṛhad.IV.iv.25)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Here the whole message of the Upanishad is condensed in brief. It was to convey this idea properly that the false notions of origination, maintenance and withdrawal of action, its factors and results, were first attributed to the Self. And then finally the truth was communicated by denying all that, and negating all distinctions that had been falsely attributed to the Self, through the formula 'neither this nor that'.

(8) The Self is imagined as different unreal beings and is also conceived as 'non-dual'. Even the unreal beings only manifest through the Self in its non-dual aspect. Therefore it is non-duality that is truly propitious. (G.K.II.33)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: And so the Self, although in truth it is only the Self and ever uniform in nature, is imagined as different unreal beings, such as the cosmic vital energy, and also conceived in its finally true form, comparable to the rope as substratum of the imaginary snake. And these unreal beings, such as the cosmic vital energy, can only be imagined on account of the non-dual principle — pure Being, the Self. For there cannot be a piece of imagination without a substratum on which it is imagined. And thus it is non-duality that is alone truly propitious, even when false imagination is in play. For the non-dual never lapses, being itself the sole substratum of all imaginations. But the illusions of imagination are unpropitious.

(9) Perhaps you will object that there is a difference between the Self when it is the victim of Ignorance and the Self when it is not, just as there is a difference between sight that is and sight that is not afflicted by the disease of double-vision. But the objection would be wrong. For the

text 'It only *seems* to think, it only *seems* to move' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.7) denies that the Self could be, on its own, the victim of Ignorance. And the error called Ignorance arises from the collaboration of several different processes (and not from the Self alone). And this (our denial that the Self is the victim of Ignorance) agrees with the fact that Ignorance stands over against the Self as an object which it witnesses. (Bṛhad.Bh. IV.iv.6, cp. M.V.101,7)

(10) Similarly, in the sentence 'He sees the piece of shell as silver', the word 'shell' means the actual shell, whereas the word 'silver' implies the imaginary idea of silver. One merely imagines silver, although there is in fact no silver there. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.5)

(11) For the final means of knowledge (the highest texts of the Veda, which yield knowledge of the Self), brings to an end the notion that the Self is an individual knowing subject employing means of knowledge. And this final means of knowledge (the Veda) itself ceases to be a means of knowledge the moment it brings that notion to an end, just as the (apparent) means of knowledge that prevailed in dream (dream-perception, dream-inference, etc.) cease to be authoritative on waking. And we see in the world that a means of knowledge does not promote any further activity once the object in view has been known. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69, cp. M.V.190,5)

After the shell has once been known, means of knowledge are no longer employed to discover it. In the same way, once one's own Self has been known in its true state free from the idea that it is an individual knowing subject, the Self is no longer a 'knower' in the empirical sense, nor is there any further employment of means of knowledge to obtain knowledge of that supreme metaphysical principle. That is the point being made.

(12) This natural (uncaused) beginningless and endless superimposition, which is of the nature of false supposition and is the origin of the notion that one is an individual capable of action and experience, is directly familiar to everybody. (B.S. Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

Here superimposition is said to be beginningless and endless and directly familiar in common experience. This affirmation is made on the assumption that there is an individual subject employing means of knowledge, as it is presented in empirical experience. The next sentence brings out how knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Self cancels the sense that one is an individual knowing subject (and cancels time with it). So there is no contradiction between what was said first and what is said later.

47 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SPEAK OF THE FALSITY OF DUALITY?

There is a further point that can be seen to emerge from our discussion so far. It is that duality is false and subject to cancellation through knowledge. But it should be clearly understood that duality is not accepted as any second real thing standing over against the Absolute, but rather as something ultimately non-different from it. From a phrase like 'Superimposition is a synthesis of the real with the false, and all practical experience is based on it', one should not draw the wrong conclusion that superimposition is ever really performed or that it really exists and has to be cancelled by knowledge. For false attribution and subsequent negation themselves have significance only within the realm of Ignorance. For this reason, from the standpoint of the highest truth Advaitins should not be considered and spoken of as people who proclaim the falsity of the world. They should be considered, rather, as people who proclaim the sole existence and (undifferentiated) reality of the Self. A false notion cannot be real while it lasts and then undergo obliteration at the time of correction. We find in the world that a rope, for example, will remain exactly what it is, even if it be falsely imagined as a snake or the like. And in the same way, the Absolute remains what it is, even when it is falsely imagined as the world and the soul and so forth. This is the finally accepted truth.

(1) Does it then follow that everything that is perceived is non-being, like a rope misperceived as a snake? No. That is not our position. For we hold that it is invariably real Being that is perceived, only it is perceived under the distinctions of duality and hence as different from what it really is. Thus we do not maintain that anything anywhere is non-being.

The rationalist philosophers (Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas) believe in the existence of entities other than pure Being. Hence they speak of the non-existence of these entities before their rise and after their final destruction. But we do not believe that any entity other than pure Being exists anywhere or at any time, whether a name or a named object. On the contrary, it is invariably Being to which some other name is given through the notion of it as something else. It is parallel with the case of the snake-illusion, where it is in fact the rope that is called a snake under the impression that it is a snake. And it is parallel with the normal worldly practice of thinking of the lump of clay or the clay pot as different from the clay and calling them 'the lump' and 'the pot'. But for those who discern the rope in its true nature, the name and notion of the snake cease, as do the name and notion of the pot and the rest in the case of those who distinctly perceive the true nature of the clay. And in just the same way the name and notion of all modifications of Being

into other forms cease for those who discern the true nature of pure Being. For, as the texts say, the latter is 'that from which words fall back without attaining it, together with the mind' (Taitt.II.4) and 'He who is beyond all definitions and without support' (Taitt.II.7). (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.3, cp. M.V. 138, 12)

The text is saying that, just as in the case of those committing a perceptual error in the world, the name and idea of a snake are wrongly referred to the reality, the rope, so, in the case of those who do not have true knowledge of the Absolute, the name and idea of the world are wrongly referred to the reality, the Absolute.

(2) It will be like the application of the name and notion 'man' to a tree-stump not clearly recognized as such in the twilight, or like the application of the name and notion of silver to a piece of shell unwittingly mistaken for silver. How, then, can one say that the word and notion 'I', when applied to the complex of the individual soul and its bodies and organs, are a case of figurative usage, when they arise from failure to distinguish the Self from the non-self? Profound scholars, who know the distinction between Self and not-self in theory, apply the name and notion of 'I' to the body through confusion, just like shepherds and goatherds. Hence those who maintain that an eternal Self exists as something quite separate from the body and its organs apply the notion of 'I' to the body and organs not figuratively but erroneously. Therefore, because possession of a body is conditioned by erroneous ideas, it stands proved that the enlightened one is disembodied while still alive. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.141,6)

The point being made is that the name and notion 'I' that arise falsely in relation to the complex of bodies and organs in the case of the individual soul, like the false names and notions that may arise in regard to a tree-stump or a piece of shell, have for their sole real object the Self, the substratum of the false body-idea. In all such cases one should avoid the error of supposing that anything exists over and above the substratum. We have already (M.V.35) refuted the notion of crude minds that imaginary entities like the rope-snake undergo any real *production.*

(3) If the world of plurality really existed, it would no doubt really come to an end. But this duality is a mere illusion. Non-duality is the final truth. (G.K.I.17)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: But the world of plurality no more exists than a snake imagined in a rope. A snake imagined in a rope through an erroneous idea is not something that actually exists and is then later brought to an end through

discriminatory knowledge. The case with a mass hypnotist's display is similar. When the spell is removed from the spectators' eyes, we cannot say that any existent reality has ceased to be. And similar again is the case with this mere illusion of duality called the world. All that really exists is the non-dual Self, comparable to the rope in the rope-snake illusion, or to the mass hypnotist in the case of the magician's display. Hence the meaning is that no world of plurality either comes into being or comes to an end (cp. M.V.227,3, note).

Here again we have a denial that the imagined world of plurality either exists or passes away, any more than the rope-snake either exists or passes away.

(4) The form of the soul in which it appears to be an individual capable of action and experience, tainted by attachment and aversion and other defects, and subject to various evils, is set up by Ignorance and is not real in the highest sense. Its true form as the highest Lord, having the opposite characteristics, such as freedom from all evil, is realized in knowledge through the dissolution of the false form set up by Ignorance, as the rope is known through the dissolution of the rope-snake. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19)

Here also it is said that the erroneously imagined state of being an individual soul, though not a real fact, is dissolved through knowledge, like the rope-snake and the rest.

(5) The water and other features of a mirage are nothing over and above the stretch of desert on which they appear, since their existence is exhausted in their being seen and their nature is inexplicable. In the same way, it should be seen that this world of experiencers and experienced objects is nothing over and above the Absolute. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

(6) Differences of form are accepted as being imagined through Ignorance. If the real shows distinctions of form that are only imagined through Ignorance it is not thereby invested with real parts. The moon does not in fact become many when seen as if many by an eye afflicted with double-vision. The Absolute becomes apparently subject to transformation (pariṇāma) and to all empirical experience through apparent distinctions consisting of name and form, manifest and unmanifest, which are imagined through Ignorance and are indeterminable either as being the metaphysical reality itself or as being anything different. In its ultimately true form, however, it remains beyond all empirical experience and not subject to transformation. (B.S.Bh.II.i.27)

The point being made here is as follows. There is no real

plurality in the moon seen by one afflicted with double-vision. Similarly, there are no real distinctions in the Absolute. It undergoes no distinction on account of name and form (reading nāma-rūpa), either in their manifest or their unmanifest state. For such distinctions are only imagined through Ignorance. Nor is the Absolute the actual substratum of any real experiences of transformations and so on introduced by name and form.

48 HOW IN THE STATE OF EMPIRICAL EXPERIENCE A DISTINCTION AMONG MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE IS OBSERVED

We know from many texts that, in the manner already explained, the Upanishads do not admit any reality over and above the Absolute or Self. For instance, we have 'All this world is the Absolute; the Absolute is the greatest' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12), 'Where he sees nothing else and hears nothing else and knows nothing else, that is the infinite' (Chānd.VII.xxiv.1), 'All this is but the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2), 'All this (world) is but the Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.6), 'All this has this (Being) for its Self, that is the real, that thou art' (Chānd. VI.viii.7) and 'There is no plurality here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19).

Nevertheless, it is affirmed that before the Absolute is known in this way, all experience arising from authoritative means of knowledge in the worldly and Vedic spheres holds good as perceived. The Vedanta does not admit that one can argue away what is actually perceived, in the manner of the total Nihilists. Within this state of empirical experience, there is resort to a distinction between different criteria for valid knowledge according to whether one adopts the standpoint of worldly experience or the standpoint of Vedic teaching.

The worldly standpoint is the natural one, associated with attachment and aversion and so forth. Action performed from this standpoint and arising from motives based on natural knowledge does one harm. But a person may acquire control of his senses and act only according to Vedic teaching. He is then said to be following the Vedic standpoint, and this is the difference between the worldly and Vedic standpoints in regard to action.

But a distinction also has to be drawn between the worldly and the Vedic standpoint in knowledge. Here the worldly standpoint is that where the individual, through natural ways of thinking, or, as we might say, on the mere basis of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge, identifies himself with the complex of his bodies and organs, having the feelings 'I' and 'mine' in regard to them. The Vedic standpoint arises when he follows the Veda and identifies himself with the pure Self, which is untouched by the bodies

and organs and is not an individual capable of action and experience. The terms 'Vedic standpoint', 'standpoint of the Ṛṣis' and 'standpoint of the final truth' are used as synonyms, as also are 'worldly standpoint', 'natural standpoint' and 'standpoint of empirical experience'. And the Vedic standpoint, in which the final truth is seen, is that of the Ācārya who has seen that truth, and may also be called the 'Ācārya's standpoint'.

Sometimes we have the experience 'vision in line with', as when a person may follow the teachings of the Veda and Ācārya and may suppose his own experience to be in line with theirs. Thus, when commenting on the text 'Those wise ones who see Him situated within their own bodies' (Kaṭha II.ii.12), the revered Commentator explains it as saying 'Those whose minds are restrained from all internal and external ideation and enjoy direct experience of the Lord, following the teachings of the Ācārya and the Veda'. We have already seen that the Veda teaches that, while a person is still in the realm of Ignorance, his first step is to reject the natural worldly standpoint through the Vedic standpoint and to set forth on that highest path which brings both worldly welfare and final beatitude (M.V.26 and 27). And we have also mentioned (M.V.28) that, after knowledge of the Self, perception and the other empirical means of knowledge, as also Vedic teaching, no longer apply.

(1) This ordinary empirical experience of the world, solidly established as it is through all the various means of knowledge, cannot be argued away without prior knowledge of some other reality. For where no exception can be shown, an established rule holds. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.31, cp. M.V.172,5)

(2) He who acts according to his whim, rejecting the rules for conduct laid down in the Veda, does not attain happiness in this life or in heaven after it, and fails to realize the true goal of life. Therefore it is the Veda that is your authority for what you should and should not do. One should perform one's actions here below with full knowledge of what the Veda prescribes and prohibits. (Bh.G.XVI.23,24)

(3) A person's nature, associated with desire and aversion, will impel him to act according to its dictates, and this will lead him to abandon his own proper duty and assume that of another. But desire and aversion can be controlled by their enemy, discriminative knowledge. And when a person follows this course he comes to see the world from the Vedic standpoint and is no longer at the mercy of his natural disposition. (Bh.G.Bh.III.34)

(4) No doubt Brahma Sūtra II.i.24 said: 'If you say that the Vedic Absolute cannot be the cause of the world because in the

case of a conscious efficient cause we regularly find resort to instruments, whereas it is not admitted that the Absolute resorts to instruments, we reply that you are wrong, for the process is conceivable on the analogy of the flow of milk from the udders of a cow'. But this was only advanced from the standpoint of secular reasoning to show that an effect can take place of its own accord without the need for an external instrument. From the standpoint of Vedic revelation, however, all things depend on the Lord, and this doctrine we in no way abandon. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.3)

(5) But the teaching is given from the Vedic standpoint, as in the case of Vāmadeva. (B.S.I.i.30)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The god Indra, through attaining the standpoint of the Ṛṣis, became aware of himself as the supreme Self. He had the conviction, in agreement with the Veda, 'Verily, I am the Absolute'. So he taught '(Since I am the Absolute), know me alone' (Kauṣītaki III.1).

(6) Perhaps you will say that the statement 'Even though he were to kill all these creatures he would not kill them' is only an eulogy, but, even so, a contradiction. But in fact there is no difficulty here. The problem is solved when we take into account the two standpoints from which things may be seen, the worldly (or empirical) standpoint and the standpoint of absolute truth. The Lord is saying, 'Even though he may appear to have killed them from the standpoint of empirical experience, from which standpoint he would take body, senses and mind as the Self and think 'I am the killer', from the standpoint of ultimate truth, as just explained, he is not the killer, and is not bound (to further transmigratory experience) by any act of killing. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.17)

(7) Perhaps you will object that if one claims perfect unity for the Absolute there will be a total absence of any plurality or variety. And then perception and the other secular means of knowledge would be contradicted. They would just be erroneous cognitions, like the false notions of a man and the like that may arise in regard to a tree-stump seen in the dark. The Vedic texts which deal with prescribed and prohibited actions, too, depend on difference. If that were absent, they would stand contradicted. Even that part of the Veda which deals with liberation depends on such distinctions as that between pupil and Teacher, and would be impossible without them....

To this we reply as follows. There is nothing wrong. All empirical experiences that occur before one has realized that one's Self is the Absolute are taken as real, like the experiences of a dream before awakening. Until the realization of the unity and sole reality of the Self, no one has the

idea that such phenomena as the means of empirical knowledge, the objects of such knowledge and the resultant cognitions are false. On the contrary, before realizing that their Self in its true nature is the Absolute, all living beings identify themselves with those very phenomena, feeling 'I' and 'mine' in relation to them through Ignorance. Thus all worldly experience and Vedic teaching hold good before one realizes that one's true Self is the Absolute. Ordinary people, when asleep, see beings of high and low degree in dreams. And this knowledge is felt to be genuine perception until awakening, and there is no notion during the dream that only an appearance of perception is in play. It is the same with waking perception before realization of the Self. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp.M.V.146,5; 165,4, note)

49 TEXTS ON THE ABSOLUTE WITHOUT ADJUNCTS AFFIRM ITS EXISTENCE: TEXTS ON THE ABSOLUTE WITH ADJUNCTS PRESCRIBE THEMES FOR MEDITATION

The Absolute is taught in two ways in the Upanishads, with and without conditioning adjuncts. Its form with adjuncts is also called 'with form' and 'with attributes'. We have examples of its being taught in this way in such texts as 'With a golden beard and golden hair, golden right up to the tips of his nails' (Chānd.I.vi.6) and 'He is the one acting in all activity, He is the one desiring in all good desires, He includes all odours and tastes' (Chānd.III.xiv.2). And the Absolute is taught as being without conditioning adjuncts in such texts as 'Partless, actionless, motionless, faultless, untainted' (Śveṭ.VI.19) and 'Neither this nor that' (Bṛhad. II.iii.6).

Here, one might well accept that the Absolute without adjuncts was communicated through the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction, already described. But the student might also wonder what role the texts speaking of the Absolute associated with adjuncts played in this process. And again, one might suppose that the Absolute with adjuncts and the Absolute without them could not really be the same entity. For having adjuncts and not having them are contradictory states. If this were the case, the teaching would be inauthoritative, as it would imply contradictions in upanishadic doctrine. And so one would have to ask, 'Should we take it that texts speaking of the Absolute without adjuncts are auxiliaries to those speaking of it with adjuncts, and should therefore be treated as subordinate? Or is it rather that the texts speaking of the Absolute with adjuncts are auxiliaries to those speaking of it as without adjuncts, so that the texts on the Absolute with adjuncts should be treated as subordinate?

And there is another point. There are texts which declare

a reward for knowledge of the Absolute with adjuncts gained through particular meditations. For instance, 'He who knows thus rises above all evil' (Chānd.I.vi.7), 'Through this he obtains the worlds beyond the sun and also the desires of the gods' (Chānd.I.vii.7) and 'And so through this he obtains the worlds below the sun and also the desires of men' (Chānd. I.vii.8). There are also texts mentioning the reward for knowledge of the Absolute without adjuncts, such as 'What delusion, what grief, can there be for one who sees the unity of all?' (Īśa 7) and 'All are liberated, immortal in the highest sense' (Muṇḍ.III.ii.6). Some therefore hold that one cannot believe that all the Upanishads combine to teach the Absolute according to a single method, since there is no criterion to show why one should reject some texts and accept others.

On this point revered Bādarāyaṇa has said, 'The Absolute is certainly without form, as the texts speaking of it thus are concerned primarily with affirming its existence as such' (B.S. III.ii.14). The Absolute has to be understood as being verily without conditioning adjuncts, not as confined within adjuncts and having internal distinctions of form such as colour and so forth. Why? Because the texts speaking of the Absolute without adjuncts are primarily concerned with affirming its existence and indicating its true nature.

And Bādarāyaṇa has also explained the place of the texts speaking of the Absolute associated with apparent conditioning adjuncts in the words 'And because they may be interpreted on the analogy of light, they are not useless' (B.S.III.ii.15). The texts affirming that the Absolute has form are not useless, for they are concerned with teaching about prescribed meditations. It does not follow from the mere fact that there are texts speaking of the Absolute as conditioned by form that the Absolute has form in reality. When light is viewed through apparent conditioning adjuncts, for example as passing between the fingers and so on, it may appear to be curved, but it does not follow that it is curved in its true nature. The same is true in the case of the Absolute. For it was shown earlier (B.S.Bh.III.ii.11) that the conditioning adjuncts apparently affecting the Absolute are aspects of name and form, which, in turn, are imagined through Ignorance.

Further, we have the upanishadic text: 'That which cannot be uttered by speech and through which speech makes utterance — know that that only is the Absolute, and not that which people (here) worship. That which cannot be thought by the mind, through which, they say, the mind thinks — know that that only is the Absolute, and not that which people here worship' (Kena I.5-6). This text maintains that the Absolute, in its true nature, is beyond the range of speech and thought and without conditioning adjuncts. It is also beyond the scope of all meditation and worship associated with form. And so the Veda declares openly that the form of the Absolute where it appears to be conditioned by adjuncts is not the

highest truth. Thus our thesis that the Absolute has to be understood as being verily without adjuncts has been proved.

It was objected, however, that rewards were declared in the Veda for knowledge of the Absolute with and without adjuncts alike. To this we reply that the rewards of varying degree that are promised in the texts speaking of the Absolute as associated with apparent adjuncts pertain to the realm of Ignorance. In the texts speaking of the Absolute without adjuncts, however, only one reward is declared, that of immediate liberation. So there is a significant difference between the two classes of texts, and the objection has no force.

(1) Where there is a conflict, texts primarily concerned with the particular subject matter of the topic in hand have more authority than those primarily concerned with some other topic (cp. M.V.10, rule I, p.23). This is the rule which enables one to make a decision and say that, although there are Vedic texts speaking of the Absolute as associated with conditioning adjuncts as well as those speaking of it as not so associated, the Absolute is in fact without form. And it follows that the opposite view is demonstrably wrong. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.14)

(2) But does not this mean the contradiction of what was said earlier (B.S.Bh.III.ii.11) about the Absolute not having two different sets of characteristics even in association with conditioning adjuncts? We say that it does not. For no real attribute can be introduced into a substance by a mere apparent adjunct. In any case, the adjuncts are set up by Ignorance. And we have already explained at various places how worldly experience and Vedic revelation apply while natural Ignorance is in play. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.15)

The point being made here is that because the Absolute is only taught to be associated with adjuncts for purposes of meditation, there is no contradiction with the traditional method of interpreting the Upanishads, since all meditations (performed in obedience to Vedic rules) belong to the realm of Ignorance.

(3) The purpose (of the text in using the word 'eva') is to exclude the apparent conditioning adjuncts through which the Absolute can be referred to as the speech of speech, the seeing of sight, the hearing of hearing, the mind of mind, the one engaged in action, the experiencer, the controller, the ruler and as 'the Absolute consisting of Knowledge and Bliss'. For the Absolute is transcendent, without distinctions, perfectly homogeneous. The force of the word 'eva' ('alone') is to show that the Absolute is without distinctions and is the Self *alone*. The text then adds that the Absolute here treated of is not the Absolute associated with distinctions arising from adjuncts. It is not the Absolute on which people

meditate, considering it to be other than their own Self, and endowing it with such characteristics as 'being the Lord' and the like. (Kena Bh.I.5)

(4) When aspects of the world-appearance are taught in the course of the exposition of meditation for specific fruits (upāsanā), as in such texts as 'Consisting of mind, with the vital energy for body, luminous in nature' (Chānd.III.xiv.2), they should not be regarded as having been mentioned for the sake of some dissolution. For meditations of this kind are connected by context with such injunctions to meditate for specific rewards as 'He should have a definite purpose' (Chānd. III.xiv.1). And since the Vedic passage itself shows that such attributes are mentioned for the sake of meditation for specific rewards, it is not right to interpret them figuratively as having been mentioned to bring about dissolution. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

The point being made is that the texts giving meditations for specific rewards are primarily concerned with prescribing action. Hence they do not fall within the scope of the method of interpreting Vedic texts as false attribution followed by subsequent retraction.

(5) It is (only) in the state of Ignorance that there can be practical experience of or verbal reference to the Absolute as either the object of meditation or the one performing meditation. (B.S.Bh.I.i.12)

(6) This idea that the individual soul and the Inner Ruler are different is a result of the apparent conditioning adjuncts of bodies and organs set up by Ignorance. It does not represent the final truth. The inmost Self is one. There cannot be two inmost Selves. Where there is only one, practical experience of such a unity as if it were multiple, and reference to it as such, arise through apparent conditioning adjuncts. It is as when we speak figuratively of the ether of space in the pot and the ether of space in general (as if the pot really circumscribed a volume of the ether of space and effectively cut it off from the rest of the ether). Once this is understood, the Vedic texts speaking of distinctions such as subject and object, means of empirical knowledge such as perception, etc., transmigratory experience of the world, and the Vedic texts conveying injunctions and prohibitions, all become intelligible (even when non-duality is accepted as the final truth). (B.S.Bh.I.ii.20, cp. M.V.27,4)

The teaching here consists of the following points. The notion that the individual soul is different from the highest Lord arises through self-identification with the conditioning adjuncts of the bodies and organs. The notion that the

individual soul and the Lord are respectively meditator and object of meditation (under limited forms) springs from this earlier distinction. The authoritativeness of the texts prescribing meditation on the Absolute conceived under conditioning adjuncts, and of mention of the soul's enjoyment of the promised rewards for such meditations, applies to the empirical mode of vision only.

(7) Moreover, the rewards promised in passages teaching meditation for a specific end are different on different occasions. Sometimes the reward promised is the remission of the effects of past sinful deeds, sometimes the attainment of an exalted status (such as that of a deity), sometimes liberation by stages. Thus the texts teaching meditation for a specific end are distinct even among themselves, and should not be interpreted as forming a single topic in company with the texts teaching the existence and true nature of the Absolute. (B.S. Bh.III.ii.21)

50 CERTAIN VEDIC TEXTS PROCLAIM THE EXISTENCE AND TRUE NATURE OF THE ABSOLUTE

There are Vedic texts, quite different from those primarily concerned with prescribing courses of action, which are primarily concerned with proclaiming the true nature of reality. We have already explained how the method of interpretation as false attribution followed by subsequent retraction applies to them alone. And we have also seen how the Absolute as expounded in the texts dealing with meditations prescribed for specific ends is associated with apparent conditioning adjuncts of name and form imagined through Ignorance. And we have further seen that the method of interpretation as false attribution followed by subsequent retraction is not applicable to those texts, because they depend on injunctions to perform meditations for specific ends.

However, some have expressed a different opinion. Their conviction was that when a text is not concerned with prescribing action, when it merely states the nature of things as they are, it is not unquestionably authoritative. They say that it may then be a mere piece of 'eulogy', designed to promote or discourage a certain course of action. Or else it may be an auxiliary to an injunction to act, indicating the true nature of the one performing a ritual and of the deity to whom it should be offered. Or else (despite its appearance as a factual statement) it may represent an injunction to meditate on the Absolute conceived under conditioning adjuncts, or an injunction to perform some other action. Or again, it might be accepted as factually authoritative in communicating the nature of the Absolute, but only if taken as an auxiliary to a categorical command (niyoga) to know the latter, so that

authority lies in the command.

These views will be examined critically in a later section (M.V.64). In the present section we shall examine the view of those who hold that there are not and cannot be texts in the Veda confined to the mere communication of facts about already-existent reality, since this is the province of other means of knowledge.

There are texts like 'This Absolute is without a before (cause) or an after (effect), without anything inside it or outside it in space. This Self, the Witness of all from within, is the Absolute' (Bṛhad.II.v.19) which proclaim the existence and true nature of the Absolute. It cannot be imagined that these texts are either injunctions to act for a given end (vidhi) or categorical commands (niyoga). For the words composing them can be seen to co-operate to proclaim the existence and true nature of the Absolute, and to do that alone. And from this it follows that they are not concerned with other topics such as indicating who should perform a particular act. Nor are they proclaiming the nature of any already-existent reality which is within the scope of other authoritative means of knowledge. For in the Absolute all distinctions are cancelled, and all means of knowledge with them. Nor is it correct to say that there is no reality subject to communication. For everything can be communicated as being the true Self of the hearer, and no one can deny the existence of his own Self. Nor should it be objected that the knowledge derived from such texts is useless. For there is immediate evidence that it produces the result of the destruction of Ignorance and its attendant evils. Therefore it stands proved that the Absolute is an already-existent reality, that it is the Self, that it is subject to communication through the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction, and that this knowledge is of utility to man.

(1) There are some (Mīmāṃsakas who follow Prabhākara) who claim that there is no section of the Veda that simply expounds the true nature of reality. They hold that the Veda consists entirely of injunctions and prohibitions and material subordinate to these. But this view is wrong, for the Spirit proclaimed in the Upanishads is not subordinate to anything. The Spirit proclaimed in the Upanishads, and only in the Upanishads, is the Absolute. It is not the being that undergoes transmigration. It is different from the substances of the world, which are claimed by the Mīmāṃsakas to be open to the four typical kinds of action for purposes of Vedic ritual, namely (1) producing (of a new substance, such as a cake, by kneading the dough), (2) obtaining (of an already-existent substance, such as the milk of a cow, by milking it), (3) transformation (in which one state of an already-existent substance is dissolved, to be supplanted by another, as in melting the sacred butter by heating it) and

(4) purification (where an already-existent substance is altered without its present state being effaced, as in ceremonial purification by sprinkling water).*

The Spirit is taught in sections where it is itself the primary topic, and is not introduced as a theme subordinate to some other topic. Nor can you say, 'The Self does not exist, it is not known'. For the Veda affirms the existence of the Self in the text 'This Self is neither this nor that' (Bṛhad. III.ix.26). This shows that the Spirit taught in the Upanishads is our own Self. And no one can deny the existence of their own Self, for it would be the Self of the one performing the act of denial....

And in the text 'But I am asking you about that Spirit taught in the Upanishads' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26), the specification 'taught in the Upanishads' only makes sense if that Spirit is taken to be found proclaimed only in the Upanishads, and proclaimed as their primary topic. The statement that there is no section of the Veda concerned with proclaiming an already-existent reality was therefore a mere rash assertion. (B.S.Bh. I.i.4), cp. M.V.282,2, note)

**(See Keith, 1921, p.85 f.; Śālikanātha, 1961, p.457 f. Śrī Śaṅkara himself interprets the four basic kinds of action in a different way, not bound down to the ritual as in the Mīmāṃsakas. See M.V. 59,12. T.N.)*

(2) Nor can it be made out (with the Ritualists) that the texts in the Upanishads proclaiming the existence and true nature of the Absolute are really concerned with explaining the true nature of the one performing an act. For there are texts such as 'What should he then see and with what?' (Bṛhad. II.iv.14) which deny the existence of action and its factors and results. And while it is true that the Absolute is an already-existent entity, it is not true that it is an object of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge. For the Absolute cannot be known as the Self without the help of Vedic texts like 'That thou art'.

Nor was our position in any way harmed by what was said about the teaching of the existence of the Absolute being of no practical value to man, on the ground that, as an already-existent entity, the Absolute was not subject to rejection or acquisition. For it is only through the knowledge that the Absolute, not subject either to rejection or acquisition, is his own true Self that man can overcome all his misery and achieve the goal of life. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

Here we have a refutation of the view that the texts proclaiming the true nature of the real are concerned with the nature of the one doing an act, and of the view that what they teach is either within the scope of other authoritative means of knowledge or else useless.

(3) Once it has been determined that the words of the sentence co-operate systematically to teach the existence and true nature of the Absolute, it is not right to suppose that they mean anything else. It would imply contradiction with Vedic teaching and baseless conjecture, unsupported by revealed doctrine. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(4) Knowledge of the Absolute arises from the texts which expound the nature of reality and are not primarily concerned with prescribing action. Such was the view of the Ācārya Bādarāyaṇa, who said, 'But that, (the Absolute, is the main topic of the Veda), on account of the harmony (systematic ordering) of the texts' (B.S.I.i.4). (B.S.Bh.III.iii.1)

(5) We have set out in detail, in commenting on the Sūtra 'But that, (the Absolute, is the main topic of the Veda), on account of the harmony of the texts' (B.S.I.i.4), how the texts concerned with expounding the Absolute state the nature of reality only, and do not lay down categorical commands. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

(6) We ask you, therefore, 'Do the texts which proclaim the true nature of the Self produce certain and fruitful knowledge or do they not?' If they do, how can they help being authoritative? Have you not seen examples of the fact that metaphysical knowledge of the Self results in the benefits of the cessation of Ignorance, grief, delusion and fear and all the other defects which cause continuation of transmigratory life? There are hundreds of upanishadic texts proclaiming that this is the case, such as 'What delusion, what grief, can there be for one who sees the unity of all?' (Īśa 7) and 'I am only a knower of the texts, my lord, not a knower of the Self.... Hence I am subject to grief. Take me beyond grief, my lord' (Chānd.VII.i.3). Have you not heard them? Now, we ask of you, do we find the same certain and fruitful knowledge in texts like 'He wept'* (T.S. I.v.1)? (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7, cp. M.V. 64,5)

Here the point being made is that the texts concerned with the existence and true nature of the Absolute are an authoritative means of knowledge and not mere explanatory passages (like 'He wept', which may be fanciful), because they give rise to certain and beneficial knowledge.

**(Attacked by the other gods, Agni 'wept' or 'howled' — 'arodīt' from the Sanskrit root 'rud'. Therefore Agni is called Rudra. His tears became silver. Therefore silver must not be given on the sacrificial altar, i.e. if a gift is made to a priest in the form of silver, this should be done away from the sacrificial altar. T.S. I.v.1. Śrī Śaṅkara dismissed such myths as 'little stories' — ākhyāyikā —*

invented to promote some practical aspect of the teaching. TN.)

51 THE HIGHER AND LOWER ABSOLUTE

Thus the Absolute without conditioning adjuncts is communicated in the texts primarily concerned with proclaiming the existence of the Absolute as the true Self. The texts primarily concerned with prescribing meditations on the Absolute conceived under conditioning adjuncts teach it as limited by such adjuncts. Thus two forms of the Absolute are taught in the Upanishads. In this connection, we have learned that the texts concerned specifically with expounding the existence and nature of the Absolute have authority on that theme because they are primarily concerned with that topic, and that they teach that the Absolute must be accepted, from the standpoint of the highest truth, as being free from conditioning adjuncts. 'Without adjuncts', 'without plurality', 'without distinctions', 'without attributes', 'the cause', 'the chief' and 'the supreme (para)' are in this context synonymous terms. Also synonymous are 'having conditioning adjuncts', 'having plurality', 'having distinctions', 'having attributes', 'the effect', 'the subordinate' and 'the lower (apara)'.

This distinction in the Absolute between a supreme aspect and a lower aspect rests on the authority of such Vedic texts as 'This Absolute, O Satyakāma, in its supreme and lower aspects is Om' (Praśna V.2). The non-duality of the Absolute is not contradicted, since the conditioning adjuncts are set up by Ignorance. Forms and attributes and so forth that are merely set up by Ignorance keep their reality from the standpoint of empirical experience, in the way explained above (M.V.48). And the Absolute, since it is the cause of all name and form and so the power (śakti) behind all, stands as the Self of all, since an effect is non-different from the power from which it springs (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.36,4, with note).

And there are other parts of the Vedic doctrine that are all explicable on this basis, such as the teaching that those who practise meditation on the Absolute under conditioning adjuncts reach the Absolute by the Path of the Flame and other routes, as also the teaching about the attainment of exalted positions and about the attainment of parity with the Lord in enjoyment of the rewards of merit.

(1) Are there two Absolutes, a supreme Absolute and a lower Absolute? Yes, there are two, as is shown by such texts as 'This Absolute, O Satyakāma, in its supreme and lower aspects, is Om' (Praśna V.2).

What, then, is the supreme Absolute, and what the lower? To this we reply as follows. Where particularities arising from name and form set up by Ignorance are denied, and the Absolute is spoken of in negative terms such as 'not gross, etc.', there

we have the supreme Absolute. When that same Absolute is referred to as qualified by some particular aspect of name and form for purposes of meditation, in such words as 'Consisting of mind, having the vital energy for its body, luminous in nature' (Chānd.III.xiv.2), there we have the lower Absolute. But would not this contradict the texts affirming the non-duality of the Absolute? No. This objection stands refuted because the conditioning adjuncts are name and form set up by Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.14)

(2) For it is the supreme Absolute itself which is taught, in some places only and for the sake of meditation, to be associated with conditioning adjuncts of a pure and elevating kind, and to have characteristics implying modification, such as 'being composed of mind' (Chānd.III.xiv.2) and so on; in this context the Absolute is referred to as being 'in its lower form (apara)'. (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.9)

It should not be supposed that this text is in conflict with the text 'This Absolute, in its supreme and lower aspects, is Om' (Praśna V.2). For that latter text (was not a metaphysical statement but only) taught a meditation on Om conceiving it as the Absolute in its supreme form (the reward for which was liberation by stages). Consult B.S.Bh.I.iii.13.

(3) As for the difficulty that the Vedic texts also attribute to the Spirit a golden beard and the like, which is not compatible with his being the highest Lord, we reply to that as follows. The golden-bearded form could very well be one of those illusory forms deliberately assumed by the highest Lord for the sake of His devotees. For we have such a text from Smṛti as: 'O Nārada, this that you behold is an illusion that I have projected. Do not suppose that in my true nature I am associated with the attributes of all creatures in this way' (Vyāsa, M.Bh.XII.339.45).

Again, when the very highest form of the Lord is taught, with all particularities denied, we have such texts as 'without sound, without touch, without form or colour, undecaying...' (Kaṭha I.iii.15). But sometimes the highest Lord, since He is the cause of all, is taught, for purposes of meditation, as having certain mutable characteristics. We have such texts on this subject as 'He is the one acting in all activity, He is the one desiring in all good desires, He includes all odours and tastes' (Chānd.III.xiv.2). On this basis, texts teaching that He has a golden beard and the like are intelligible. (B.S.Bh.I.ii.20)

(4) The teacher Bādari holds that the superhuman being conveys his charges to the Absolute in its lower form, associated with finite attributes. (See Chānd.IV.xv.5.) This is because the Absolute in its (lower) form as effect has a particular

position and so can be 'reached'. But one cannot conceive 'goerhood' or 'being gone to' or 'the act of going' in relation to the Absolute in its highest form, for in this form it is all-pervasive and also the inmost Self of all 'goers'. (B.S.Bh. IV.iii.7)

(5) We have already explained, in commenting on the Sūtra 'The soul is spoken of in this way (i.e. as atomic) when it is considered **predominantly** under the attributes of the intellect' (B.S.II.iii.29), that although the Self is all-pervasive, it has the appearance of movement when the intellect and other apparent conditioning adjuncts move, just as the ether of space appears to move with the movement of pots (cp. M.V.27,1 and 4). (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.14)

(6) Liberated souls have all supernatural powers such as reducing their bodies to minute size, except that of producing, maintaining and withdrawing the universe. Those latter powers belong solely to the Lord, whose existence is eternal and self-evident. (B.S.Bh.IV.iv.17)

(7) And so the identity with the Lord enjoyed by those liberated ones who still take their stand on the Absolute as modified into the world of effects (the Absolute in lower form) is not total. For the Veda (Kauṣītaki I.7, Bṛhad.I.v.20,23) teaches that souls who are liberated in this way have parity with the Lord, whose existence is beginningless and self-evident, only in point of enjoyment (not in respect of rulership of the universe). (B.S.Bh.IV.iv.21)

52 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND PRESCRIBED MEDITATIONS

In the realm of Ignorance, there is no contradiction if meditations on the Absolute as associated with conditioning adjuncts, along with injunctions to perform them, are found in the section of the Veda devoted to metaphysical knowledge. For both meditation and knowledge, as the latter occurs at this preliminary stage, are denoted by the technical term 'Vidyā', and both are modifications of the mind.

It is true that meditations on the Absolute conceived under conditioning adjuncts have points in common with action. They are performed to intensify the merit arising from ritual and for the sake of well-being in this life and lives to come. And yet they also qualify as knowledge, since they are mental and promote introspection and have liberation by stages as their reward. And it is because they are in this last respect altogether different from action that they are dealt with in the context of knowledge of the non-dual reality.

Thus, insofar as they are both mental, knowledge of the

non-dual reality and meditation on the Absolute as associated with conditioning adjuncts are both equally referred to in the Veda and Smṛti by such terms as 'jñāna', 'vidyā' and 'upāsanā'. Yet there is an essential difference between them. Upāsana (alternative form of upāsanā) is a synonym for dhyāṇa (meditation). It is a mental activity, dependent on the efforts of a person acting, and, like ritualistic action, can only be known about through the injunctive texts of the Veda. But knowledge properly so called is the result of the application of a means of valid cognition. It is sometimes defined as a mental idea that arises in true correspondence with the thing known. Thus meditation on the Absolute as associated with conditioning adjuncts is a kind of action, and so depends on the factors and results of action, all of which are false superimpositions. But knowledge (in the deepest sense of the word) is that intuitive awareness of reality in which all superimposition is abolished.

(1) Meditation is dwelling on something mentally. Though mental, it depends on human will, and can either be done or not done or done in a different way. Knowledge, on the other hand, is the result of the application of a means of valid cognition, and bears on the true nature of an already-existent object. Knowledge, therefore, does not fall within the province of what can be done, not done or done differently. It is conditioned neither by a command nor by the human will, but by the nature of an already-existent entity. Thus, even when knowledge is mental, there is a very great difference between knowledge and a deliberate mental act like meditation.

In the text prescribing a symbolic meditation, 'Man, O Gautama, is verily the sacrificial fire.... Woman, O Gautama, is verily the sacrificial fire!' (Chānd.V.vii.1 and viii.1) the conception of man and woman as the sacrificial fire is purely mental. As it comes into being by the mere force of obedience to an injunction, it is a mental action and subject to human will. But the idea of fire, when one is in the presence of that well known object, is not dependent on an injunction, nor is it a mere creation of the human mind. It is in fact a piece of *knowledge*, conditioned by the nature of the object perceived. It is not an act. And one should realize that it is the same with all objects of the various means of knowledge (such as perception, inference, etc.). (B.S.Bh. I.i.4, cp. M.V.68,2)

(2) Meditation (upāsana) means approaching the deity mentally in the form in which it is described in the explanatory texts of the Veda which present deities as objects of meditation. It implies meditation on the deity in that form to the exclusion of all worldly thoughts until there arises a conviction of one's identity with the true form of that deity which is as powerful as one's previous conviction of identity with

one's body in worldly experience. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iii.9)

(3) And in this section, devoted overall to knowledge of the non-dual reality, some meditations that lead to a higher worldly station are introduced. Those here included, however, are of the kind that leads to very high results approximating to liberation. They have for their subject-matter the Absolute in a form only mildly distorted from its true non-dual nature, as in such texts as 'Consisting of mind, having the vital energy for its body' (Chānd.III.xiv.2) and so on. They are related to aspects of the ritual, and their reward is enhancement of the merit arising from performance of certain items of ritual. On the other hand they have their similarity with the metaphysical parts of the Upanishads in that they are concerned with mental ideas. (Chānd.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(4) What, then, is the difference between knowledge of non-duality and these meditations? The answer is that knowledge of non-duality puts a final end to that notion of a distinction between the factors of an action, such as the person doing it, its object, instruments and results, which we have the natural tendency to superimpose onto the actionless Self. It is like the dissolution of the superimposed snake or the like which occurs through right knowledge of the true nature of the rope. Meditation, on the other hand, consists in taking some conception laid down by the Vedic texts and making the stream of ideas in one's mind conform to it continuously over a period, without admitting the intrusion of ideas of anything else. That is the difference between knowledge and meditation. (Chānd.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(5) Such meditations contribute to the final understanding of the metaphysical truth by purifying the mind, and are in this sense auxiliaries to knowledge of non-duality; and, because they offer a definite conception to hold on to, they are easy to practise, and are hence placed here at the beginning of the Upanishad, before the transition to the metaphysical teaching proper. (Chānd.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(6) One should only meditate on those attributes of the Self that are taught in the Veda — not on those not taught in the Veda, even if they be known empirically to exist. (Chānd.Bh. II.ii.1)

(7) Nor can anyone acquire new and different knowledge of anything under the force of an injunction if he has already known it as different through a valid means of cognition. Even if he thinks of it differently (e.g. thinks of woman as the sacrificial fire, cp. Chānd.V.viii.1) under the conviction that he is enjoined to do so, this does not amount to knowledge, but only to imaginative mental activity. And if a thing

that had been properly known through a valid means of cognition suddenly began to appear different of its own accord, that would simply be error. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

Let us suppose that a person, who has known something in one way through a valid means of cognition, meditates upon it as something different in obedience to a Vedic injunction. The point here made is that genuine knowledge will remain unchanged by this, even though the person is obeying a Vedic injunction. For instance, if one is enjoined to see Viṣṇu in a stone image, that does not abolish the notion that it is a stone image. The notion of Viṣṇu is the product of subjective human endeavour. It is only a piece of meditation, and so a piece of mental activity. If, however, there were only the stone image, and through darkness or some other obscuring factor there arose other ideas of it, such as the notion that it was a man, that should be considered simply as error.

(8) And in consonance with this we find the words 'knowledge' and 'meditation' used interchangeably in the Upanishads, as, for example, in the text 'And I say this of anyone who knows what Raikva knows' (Chānd.IV.i.4) followed closely by 'O Raikva, teach me, venerable master, that deity on which you meditate' (Chānd.IV.ii.2). Sometimes we find the text using the word 'meditation' at the beginning and 'knowledge' at the end, as in 'He should meditate on mind as the Absolute' (Chānd. III.xviii.1) followed by 'He who *knows* thus shines and burns bright with an aura of good name and fame and the lustre of spiritual knowledge' (Chānd.III.xviii.3). (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1)

(9) That which is within this (ether of the heart), that one should investigate, that one should seek to know in immediate intuition. (Chānd.VIII.i.1)

Here we have the idea: 'That which is within this Brahman, called the ether of the heart, that should be sought, that should be investigated'. It is a meditation that is being enjoined (though a word like 'investigation' would seem at first sight to imply knowledge). For a reward for the performance of the meditation is stated later, 'Those who die having known the Self... (all their desires are fulfilled and they are able to wander at will in all the worlds)' (Chānd.VIII.i.6).

(10) Because this meditation (vidyā) was never received by any Brahmin before you, therefore the teaching of it was entrusted to the Kshatriyas alone in all the worlds. (Chānd. V.iii.7)

Here the word 'knowledge' (vidyā) is used to refer to a meditation, to the Meditation on the Five Fires (Pañcāgni-Vidyā detailed at Chānd.V.iii.1 — V.x.2).

(11) He who meditates on Name as the Absolute is able to travel at will as far as the range of Name extends. (Chānd.VII. i.5)

Superimposing deliberately the idea of the Absolute on Name is an enjoined act, dependent on the will of man. So this is evidently a meditation.

(12) Verily, through vision of the Self, through hearing of the Self, through thinking over the Self, through knowing the Self, all is known. (Bṛhad.II.iv.5)

Here, vision of the Self is (not a matter of meditation but of) knowledge *in accordance with reality, as there is mention of knowledge of the one resulting in knowledge of all.*

(13) Those who meditate on (lit. know) Me as Lord of the Creatures, as Lord of the Gods, as Lord of the Sacrifices, know Me even at the time of death, their minds under control.... But how are You to be meditated on (lit. known) at the time of death by those of controlled minds?... Those who, intent on Myself, abandon all their actions to Me and meditate on Me with unwavering concentration... are rescued by Me from the ocean of death and rebirth. (Bh.G.VII.30, VIII.3, XII.6-7)

Here the reference throughout is to meditation to be performed deliberately at the will of man.

(14) Thus the fire of knowledge burns all action (and the resulting merit and demerit) to ashes.... This is the sovereign knowledge, the sovereign secret, purifying, excellent, immediately evident, in conformity with the spiritual law, extremely simple to achieve, inalterable.... But those who meditate on the unmanifest principle, indestructible, indescribable, all-pervading, unthinkable, raised above change and motion, eternally fixed... (Bh.G.IV.37, IX.2, XII.3)

Here the reference is to knowledge of the undifferentiated Absolute in its true form throughout (so that the word 'meditate on' (paryupāsate) is here used in the sense of 'know').

53 THE MEANS TO KNOWLEDGE

The Absolute is the Self of all. Because it is immediately evident by nature, it follows that it is only hidden by Ignorance. The only thing that will avail here is the metaphysical knowledge that comes from the texts of the Upanishads, as that removes superimposition of every kind. The Absolute is spoken of specifically as 'the Spirit taught in the Upanishads' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26). And another text, 'He who has a Teacher

can know' (Chānd.VI.xiv.2), shows that the Absolute has to be attained through the teachings of an Ācārya who knows the true upanishadic tradition.

However, those whose minds are attracted by external objects find that their thinking is clouded by latent desires. For them, neither the texts of the Upanishads nor the words of the Teacher are alone enough to grant knowledge that the Absolute is their own true Self. The Veda and the Smṛti therefore give instructions on rituals and meditations to purify the mind and promote the longing for introspective contemplation. Even here, rituals and good works will only purify those who are averse from evil conduct. The Smṛti says 'The Vedas do not purify him who acts ignobly'. Thus it is clear that only he can engage in meditation as a prescribed duty whose mind has been purified by rituals and good works, so that he has become introspective and contemplative. For meditation is essentially a mental practice.

And there are inner means prescribed for knowledge for the person inclined to introspection and contemplation. The Veda speaks of inner and outer control (śama and dama) and the rest, while the Smṛti speaks of 'absence of pride' and the rest (Bh.G.XIII.7 ff.). We know that these are means to metaphysical knowledge of the Self, because the Veda says so.

The most direct means, however, are hearing the texts, pondering over them, and subjecting them to sustained meditation.* For it is universally recognized that they bear immediately on what requires above all to be known, and illumine it by their very nature. Thus it stands proved that rituals and the rest are indirect means to metaphysical knowledge through removing external obstacles, while hearing of the texts and so forth are the direct means, because they bear on the subject and illumine it immediately and directly.

**(One can hardly avoid translating 'nididhyāsana' as 'sustained meditation'. But the author shows that for Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara the term had other meanings. See M.V.56; 100,2, note; 124, 1, note; 125,2, note; 259,17, note. See also the author's English works, Salient Features, pp.43-53; Clarification, p.98-9; Vision, pp.71-9, 115. T.N.)*

(1) And the text 'But I am asking you about that Spirit taught in the Upanishads' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26) affirms that the Spirit in question is specifically the Spirit *taught in the Upanishads*. This would only have been possible if it had been the primary topic that the Upanishads taught. (B.S.Bh. I.i.4, cp. M.V.28,5)

(2) If it had been simply a matter of an injunction to meditate on 'I am pure Being' as a mere idea, if the hearer was not being told that his true nature was Being when addressed as 'thou' (in the text 'That thou art'), then there would have

been no occasion to teach a specific means to knowledge in the additional text 'He who has a Teacher can know' (Chānd.VI.xiv. 2). For the need for a Teacher from whom to hear the text and receive the injunction to meditate would have been obvious, as in the case of the texts of the ritualistic section of the Veda such as 'He should offer the Agnihotra'. (Chānd.Bh.VI. xvi.3)

(3) And so this doctrine, which proceeds from upanishadic tradition, only leads to proper knowledge when it is given out by a Teacher fully conversant with that tradition, who is not a mere logician. (Kaṭha Bh.I.ii.9)

(4) The text specifies 'those Teachers who have correct knowledge'. The Lord means that only the knowledge taught by them is effective, and not any other kind of knowledge. This granted, the point made in the next verse will follow naturally. 'Having known which', that is, having acquired this knowledge as taught by them, 'you will not again be afflicted with confusion as you are now, O Son of Pāṇḍu'.(Bh.G.Bh.IV. 34-5)

(5) It is true that the obligatory ritual, such as the Agnihotra, if performed to the accompaniment of prescribed meditations on its symbolic significance, is superior to the same ritual performed without such meditations, just as a learned Brahmin is superior to one who is not learned. But the Agnihotra and other rituals are not quite without significance for knowledge even if performed without such meditations. For we have the Vedic text 'Him the true Brahmins seek to know... through sacrifice...' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22, M.V.55,1), which refers to the Agnihotra and other ritual as a means to knowledge without specifying whether it has to be accompanied by the prescribed meditations on its symbolic significance or not.... It is, however, correct to assume that, as a means to knowledge of the Self, ritual such as the Agnihotra has more power and produces more significant results when performed to the accompaniment of prescribed meditation.... For there is the text, 'What one does with knowledge, faith and meditation is more potent' (Chānd.I.i.10). But this text, by saying that the Agnihotra and other rituals as accompanied by meditation are *more* potent in their special result, nevertheless implies that these same rituals have *some* efficacy and significance for that result even when they are not accompanied by meditation. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.18, continued below, M.V. 54,2)

Here it is explained how both ritual alone and ritual accompanied by meditation are each a means to knowledge.

(6) Yogis perform action without attachment or egoism, with

body, mind, intellect and sense organs, for purification of the mind. (Bh.G.V.11)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The term 'ātma-śuddhi' here means 'purification of the mind' (sattva-śuddhi).

(7) Against such a position the author of the Sūtras says, 'Nevertheless, the seeker of knowledge should be equipped with inner and outer control and the other preliminary disciplines'. For these disciplines have been enjoined in the passage, 'Therefore, possessed of inner and outer control, abandoning all action for personal ends, strengthening himself by voluntary resistance to discomfort, and concentrating his mind, he should see the Self here in the midst of this life in the present body' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23). What has been enjoined by the Veda, the author of the Sūtras continues, must necessarily be carried out.... Rituals such as sacrifices are also required for knowledge, as the Vedic text on the subject shows (cp. just above, M.V.53,5).... Smṛti texts, too, such as the Gītā, explain how ritual sacrifices and the like, if performed without desire for individual gain, are a means to knowledge of the Self for those who desire liberation (Bh.G.XVII.25).... A distinction, however, between the two kinds of means to knowledge should be drawn. Inner and outer control and the rest are more proximate means, because they are directly connected with knowledge of the Self through the phrase 'he who knows thus' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23). Ritual sacrifices, on the other hand, are only connected with promoting the *desire* to know, and hence are to be regarded as more remote aids. (B.S.Bh.III.iv. 27)

(8) No one can attain Him through knowledge who is not averse from evil conduct, who is not tranquil, concentrated and of peaceful mind. (Kaṭha I.ii.24)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: He who is averse from evil conduct, whose mind is concentrated and withdrawn from the passionate inclinations of the senses, who is of peaceful mind and cares not even for the rewards promised for concentration, and who has a Teacher — such an one attains the Self, as earlier described, through knowledge.

(9) The instrument for vision of the Self is the mind, purified and educated by inner and outer control, etc., and by the Veda and the teachings of the Teacher. (Bh.G.Bh.II.21)

(10) What it means is this. The highest form of 'establishment in knowledge' is the state of knowledge of one's own true Self in immediate experience. Such knowledge depends for its rise and maturation on the Vedic texts and the instructions of the Teacher, along with auxiliaries such as

purification of the mind and the cultivation of absence of pride and other qualities mentioned at Bhagavad Gītā XIII.7 ff. It consists essentially in knowledge of the identity of the Knower of the Field (see above, M.V. p.40) with the supreme Self. And it is associated with the abandonment of all action. Action is caused by the false notion of a distinction between the various factors that go to make it up, such as the one doing it, the instrument, the object, the result and so forth. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.55)

(11) One who has faith, whose senses are under control and who is intent on service of the Teacher attains knowledge. (Bh.G.IV.39)

(12) Faith and the rest (including service of the Teacher) remove the (natural) incitements to transgress the spiritual law. Listening to, pondering over, and subjecting the upanishadic texts to sustained meditation, on the other hand, are directly concerned with what has to be known. When sin and other obstacles pertaining to the body and mind have been removed, hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are by their very nature the means to knowledge of reality in its true form. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.2)

(13) O Maitreyī! The Self has to be seen! It has to be heard about, pondered over and subjected to sustained meditation. Verily, through vision of the Self, which comes through pondering and meditation, all this is known. (Bṛhad.II.iv.5)

54 ALTERNATIVE COMBINATIONS OF THE MEANS TO KNOWLEDGE

But if ritual and all the rest are to be regarded as means to knowledge, there is a point which requires consideration. Are they all to be resorted to indiscriminately? Or can we find any rule according to which some people should resort to only some of them?

On this point, we can accept the rule that members of the three higher castes, who are qualified to perform the ritual laid down in the Veda, may perform that ritual with or without the accompanying meditations on its symbolic significance. In either case they will derive purity of mind and the inclination towards introspective contemplation. They will then be able to attain knowledge through hearing, pondering and sustained meditation. Inner and outer control and so on, of which restraint (yama, see Yoga Sūtra II.29 ff.) is the most important element, are easy to obtain for those who have already acquired purity of mind. For this reason the disinterested performance of rituals, too, since it leads to purity of mind, is an auxiliary cause of the rise of knowledge. But

there is no rule to say that rituals must necessarily be performed by everyone, even by those whose minds have been purified by performance of rituals in previous lives. For them, the means to knowledge are hearing and the rest, associated with the *inner* disciplines of faith, devotion and so forth.

Those who are not qualified to have knowledge of the contents of the Veda or to practise the rituals which it lays down may apply themselves to the restraints and observances appropriate for their caste, and acquire knowledge through hearing and reflecting over the teachings of the Epics and Purāṇas and through other such practices. Exalted beings like the gods, to whom the Vedas are by nature ever manifest, have the right to practise hearing and the rest without application to the preliminary discipline of learning the texts by heart. And we learn from the Veda that in the case of Prajāpati, whose mind was perfectly pure, knowledge arose without his even having to practise hearing and the other disciplines (M.V.54,5). In the same way we have to understand that combinations of, or choices between, the various remaining parts of the discipline, such as faith, dedication, service of the Teacher and the rest, are required in different ways, either severally or collectively, for different grades of pupil, in order to qualify them for hearing and so on and for the rise of knowledge.

(1) Action is a means to liberation indirectly, through promoting knowledge. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.16)

(2) Hence regular performance of the Agnihotra and other ritual, with or without prescribed meditations, whether performed by the seeker of liberation in this life or a previous one, is instrumental, so far as it goes in any given case, in extinguishing that demerit arising from past sins which obstructs knowledge of the Absolute. In this sense, such action is a means to knowledge of the Absolute. Depending in turn on the inner discipline of hearing, pondering, faith, dedication and service of the Teacher, it co-operates with knowledge of the Absolute towards the one end of liberation. (B.S.Bh. IV.i.18, continuing on from M.V.53,5)

(3) But in the case of those Śūdras like Vidura and Dharmavyādha, in whom knowledge of the Absolute arises through the power of the impressions of good deeds performed in previous births, nothing can prevent such knowledge from bringing its due result. For knowledge brings its results inevitably and without exception. Moreover, the text from Smṛti, 'One should read it out to all four castes' (Vyāsa, M.Bh.XII.327.49) declares that all four castes have the right to instruction in the Epics and Purāṇas. But the principle that the Śūdra has no rights in regard to the Veda stands. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.38)

(4) In this connection, it is certain that there can be desire for liberation amongst the gods. It arises, for instance, from their noticing that their special powers belong to the realm of change and are not eternal. They are also in a position to achieve it, as we know from both verse and prose passages of the Veda, as well as from the Epics, Purāṇas and worldly tradition (reading purāṇa-lokebhyo), that they enjoy embodied existence. Nor are there any texts prohibiting the gods from the pursuit of liberation. It is true that there are texts saying that a student must undergo an initiation (upanayana) before he can study the Veda. But the fact that the gods do not undergo this initiation does not disqualify them from Vedic practice. For this initiation is for the purpose of study and learning by heart, but the Veda is by nature manifest to the gods. And the Veda also exhibits them (as at Chāndogya VIII.xi.3) assuming roles like that of a celibate student (brahmacarya) in order to acquire knowledge. (B.S.Bh. I.iii.26)

(5) The fact that Prajāpati was able to obtain vision of the unity of all is intelligible. For he had burnt all the sins that subvert merit, knowledge, dispassion and majesty, and transmute them into their opposites. Thereby he underwent a special birth with a pure body and organs. His vision of unity arose (without the need of instruction) from that. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.2)

(6) There may be differences of choice or combination of excellence or deficiency in the means used to attain an end.... Thus, in attainment of knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Self, the origin is sometimes actions performed in a previous life, as in the case of Prajāpati. Sometimes the means is mental concentration, for we have the text 'You should strive for knowledge of the Absolute through mental concentration' (Taitt.III.2-3, etc.). Sometimes faith and other factors are spoken of as the cause of knowledge of the Absolute in such texts from the Veda and Smṛti as 'He who has a Teacher can know' (Chānd.VI.xiv.2), 'He who has faith acquires knowledge' (Bh.G.IV.39), 'Know that through prostration... ' (Bh.G.IV.34), 'From the Teacher only' (Chānd.IV.ix. 3) and 'It should be seen, it should be heard about' (Bṛhad. II.iv.5). (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.2)

55 THE LIMITS OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

One should also consider the question of how long, up to what point, the spiritual practices are to be continued. Are the ends of the Vedic teaching fulfilled when the spiritual practices have been performed once? Or does one have to go further and carry out spiritual practices repeatedly? If

repeated practice is necessary, how long should it be continued?

The Smṛti text, 'A person qualifies himself for becoming established in knowledge by worshipping Him (from whom the world proceeds) through the performance of his particular religious duties' (Bh.G.XVIII.46) shows that, since spiritual practices lead to a visible result, religious duties have to be carried out without desire for reward until purity and dispassion have arisen in the mind. But those who have acquired dispassion should adopt the life of a wandering monk (paramahaṃsa), as we know from the Vedic text 'He should wander forth as a monk the very day that dispassion arises' (Jābāla Up.4). But he should carry on with his religious duties until dispassion dawns, for we have the Smṛti text, 'Of the two, Karma Yoga is better than abandonment of karma' (Bh.G.V.2). The Smṛti text 'But renunciation, O mighty-armed one, is hard to achieve without the previous practice of Karma Yoga' (Bh.G. V.3) shows that Karma Yoga is the special means to renunciation in the true sense of the word, namely direct intuition of the supreme reality.

As for the immediate means to knowledge, such as hearing the upanishadic texts and so on, the decision between choice of one of them, or combination of some or all of them, depends on the qualifications of the person practising them. For example, the highest kind of candidate is able to acquire immediate intuitive vision that his Self is the Absolute from merely hearing the relevant upanishadic texts once. These people who realize the goal by merely hearing the texts once have nothing further to do. When once the sun has risen, no further action is needed to remove darkness. But those who are not able to acquire intuitive knowledge of the meaning of the texts in their own direct experience have to go on hearing the texts and reflecting over them to remove the doubts that prevent their meaning being understood, and they have to continue with this until intuitive knowledge arises. For we see that those of dull understanding acquire knowledge through diligent repetition. 'Reflection' here implies resort to reasoning under the guidance of the Vedic texts, in the manner already explained (M.V.31,7-12), and to secular reasoning in conformity with that. In this way, notions that have been wrongly superimposed on the Self are removed one by one.

But those who cannot acquire intuitive knowledge of reality by hearing and reflection alone have to resort to sustained meditation also. In any case, the general rule is that hearing and the rest have to be continued until there is intuitive knowledge of reality. For attainment of intuitive knowledge of reality is their purpose. The fact that they are mere means to this is shown by the Vedic text, which first says 'The Self has to be seen'. This shows that seeing the Self is the goal. And the text then goes on to teach that hearing and the rest are the means to that goal, in the words 'It must be

heard about, pondered over, subjected to sustained meditation' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5).

On the other hand inner and outer control and the rest, along with absence of pride and other qualities (prescribed at Gītā XIII.7 ff.), are mere auxiliaries, and there is no set limit to their observation. They are intended for carrying knowledge to perfection, and whatever has that for its purpose is itself an aspect of being established in knowledge (jñāna-niṣṭhā). Hence, when we speak of resort to the means of knowledge coming to an end when knowledge is acquired, it does not mean that these auxiliaries also come to an end.

(1) Him the true Brahmins seek to know through repetition of the Veda, through sacrifice, through charity, through austerity and through extreme moderation in the enjoyment of sense-objects. (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22)

(2) Good works such as sacrifice, charity and austerity should not be given up. Verily, they must be continued. Verily, sacrifice, charity and austerity purify the hearts of the wise. O descendant of Pṛthā, it is My fixed and final view that these good works, too, should continue to be performed, without feelings of attachment or thought of reward. (Bh.G. XVIII.5-6)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The word 'too' (in the phrase 'these good works, too',) is used to show that such works should be continued by the seeker of liberation even though, when performed by a man of attachment hoping for rewards, they are a source of bondage.

(3) Monks wander forth from home desiring Him (the Self) alone as their realm (loka). (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22)

(4) Repeated resort to hearing, pondering and sustained meditation would indeed be useless in the case of the person who gained immediate experience of the fact that his true Self was the Absolute merely from hearing the text 'That thou art' spoken once. But it is appropriate in the case of the person who cannot do so. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

(5) We find it to be the case that those who have but a vague idea of the meaning of a text on hearing it once do come to shed their various misconceptions and understand it rightly after repeated hearings. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

(6) There are some for whom the meanings of the words 'that' and 'thou' are obscured by ignorance, doubt or misunderstanding. In their case, merely hearing the text 'That thou art' will not yield knowledge of its true meaning. For one can only understand the meaning of a sentence if one first under-

stands the meanings of the words composing it. In the case of such people, repeated hearing of the texts and reasoning over them is appropriate in order to discern the true meanings of the words. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2, cp. M.V.207,3-4)

(7) It is true that the Self which is being communicated has no parts. But many parts are erroneously attributed to it, such as body, mind, senses, intellect and sensation. Here, one act of attention can dispose of one erroneously attributed part, another can dispose of another. In this sense, communication of the Absolute may be by stages. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

(8) For all yogis of weak or medium calibre, restraint of the mind is the means to pass beyond all fear, also to the eradication of misery, to awakening to the Self and to unbroken peace. (G.K.III.40)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: There are some people who take the mind and the senses, and all else that is other than the Absolute in its true form, as non-existent from the highest standpoint, like a rope-snake. They have 'become' the Absolute, and feel no fear, and have perfect natural certitude as to the indestructible peace called liberation, which depends on nothing external. As we have already explained (G.K.Bh.III.36), there are then no further spiritual practices for such a person to do.

But there are other yogis on the spiritual path of weak or middling powers of vision. They regard the mind as something other than the Self, but related to the Self, and are not awake to the sole reality of the transcendent Self. In their case, passing beyond fear depends on restraint of the mind. So also does eradication of misery. For those who lack discrimination, and regard the Self as related to the mind, cannot escape misery as long as the mind is active. In their case, awakening to the Self, also, depends on rigid control of the mind. So does that indestructible peace which is called liberation (cp. M.V.259,17, note).

Here 'rigid control of the mind' (mano-nigraha) means sustained meditation (nididhyāsana, cp. M.V.53).

(9) For hearing and the rest have to be carried on until there is direct vision of the Self, but then they end. For their goal is one that is realizable in this very life. (B.S. Bh.I.i.1)

(10) But the wandering monk gives up all ritualistic duties, and there can be no obstacles for him arising from the omission of acts. As for inner and outer control and the rest, which are his peculiar duty, these strengthen his steadfastness in the Absolute, and are not opposed to it. The duty

laid down for his order is in fact establishment in (firm adherence to) a steadfast absorption in the Absolute, fortified by inner and outer control and other such disciplines. Sacrificial ritual and the like, however, which are the duty of other orders, do prove an obstacle to the monk if he strays from his path to perform them. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.20)

(11) The Lord is Himself going to explain in detail the nature of that Knower of the Field (M.V. p.40) in all his majesty, the knowledge of whom leads to immortality. This will come at the point beginning 'I will teach you what you have to know' (Bh.G.XIII.12 ff.). But now He is going to teach the group of virtues, such as absence of pride and the rest, which lead to knowledge. When they are present, a person becomes qualified to know what has to be known. One intent on these is said to be a renunciate, a person established in his absorption in knowledge. Because this group of virtues is the means to metaphysical knowledge, the Lord lays down that they may be referred to *as* knowledge. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.7)

(12) And another reason why the order of wandering mendicancy cannot be merely for those who are physically or otherwise unfit to perform ritual (as the Mīmāṃsakas claim it to be) is the fact that entering this order is part of the discipline for bringing metaphysical knowledge to its full maturity as realization of the Absolute. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.20)

56 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRESCRIBED SYMBOLIC MEDITATIONS (UPĀSANA) AND SUSTAINED MEDITATION ON THE ABSOLUTE (NIDIDHYĀSANA)

It has been explained how the monk who has attained through dispassion to genuine adoption of the life of wandering mendicancy must necessarily carry out the discipline of hearing the texts and pondering over them regularly and continually until he gains immediate vision of the Self. He who does not attain this immediate vision merely from hearing, must carry out further regular hearing, supported by pondering over the meaning. Weak and mediocre candidates, however, must also perform sustained meditation (nididhyāsana, cp. T.N. at M.V. 53, intro.).

Sustained meditation, like the unbroken meditation implied in the prescribed symbolic meditations, is a piece of action. Hence it is sometimes called meditation (upāsana). Yet such symbolic meditations as 'Woman is the sacrificial fire' (Chānd.V.viii.1) are differently defined. Upāsana (as contrasted with nididhyāsana) means maintaining a stream of identical images of which the form is (not dictated by one's knowledge of any reality but) prescribed in the Veda.

Nididhyāsana, on the other hand, means fixing the mental gaze on the principle of reality to determine its true nature, like one examining a jewel.

A candidate practising meditation in the form of upāsana must select one of the meditations laid down for attaining to the Lord as associated with attributes, and maintain the same image in his mind, according to the dictates of the Veda, until he has obtained immediate vision of the object of his meditation. For meditation realizes its true end when it is used as a means to direct vision. But its reward is attainment of the Absolute in its lower form at a later time (i.e. after death) in the World of Brahmā. Here there is enjoyment of the same experience as the Lord. And at the end of the world-period the final metaphysical knowledge will arise, and there will be deferred release in company with Brahmā. Such is the teaching of the Veda.

The aim of the one practising sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) is different. He tries to attain direct vision of reality (here in this very world) by turning his mind away from all else. And there is the difference — as against upāsana — that after the rise of knowledge nothing further remains to be done. It is this sustained meditation that is referred to at Kaṭha Upanishad I.ii.12 by the name 'Adhyātma Yoga'. In the Gītā it is sometimes called 'Dhyāna Yoga' (e.g. XVIII.52). In the Māṇḍūkya Kārikās it is called 'restraint of the mind' (G.K.III.41, etc.). Its nature is described there in that latter work. Everywhere its result is described in the same way as right metaphysical knowledge, and from this comes immediate liberation (sadyo-mukti).

(1) If immediate vision of the Lord or other object of meditation had been secured through one form of meditation, it would be purposeless to start another. As for the theory of a combination of different meditations, this would render it impossible to attain direct vision of any deity, as the mind would be thrown into distraction. And the Vedic texts show that meditation should culminate in immediate vision of (= self-identification with) the being on whom the meditation is performed. For example, there are such texts from the Veda as 'He who has direct vision of this does not fall into doubt' (Chānd.III.xiv.4) and 'Having already identified himself with the deity of his meditation while still alive, he merges with him completely at death (Bṛhad.IV.i.2, cp. Sureśvara, B.B.V. IV.i.23 ff.). And there are Smṛti texts teaching the same point, such as '(Whatever being one remembers at death), on whom one has meditated constantly, (to him one goes, O son of Kuntī)' (Bh.G.VIII.6). Therefore one should choose only one of the various meditations which bring the same reward, and adhere to that until the reward is attained, in the form of realization of one's identity with the object of meditation'. (B.S.Bh.III.iii.59)

(2) When the World of Brahmā, which belongs to the Absolute in its ('lower' or) 'effect' form, is about to dissolve at the end of a world-period, the souls who have attained to perfect metaphysical knowledge in that world proceed, together with Hiraṇygarbha (Brahmā), the presiding deity of that world, to what the author of the Sūtras calls 'the supreme'. 'The supreme' is the perfectly pure highest abode of Viṣṇu. Thus a release by stages (krama-mukti) has to be assumed, on account of the mention of 'non-return' and other such circumstances in certain Vedic texts. (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.10)

(3) The wise man comes to know God through mastering Adhyātma Yoga, and gives up joy and sorrow. (Kaṭha I.ii.12)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Mastering Adhyātma Yoga: Adhyātma Yoga means withdrawing the mind from objects and concentrating it on the Self. Having meditated on the deity, the Self, through attainment of Adhyātma Yoga, the wise man gives up joy and sorrow because there are no gradations of value in the Self.

(4) 'He is seen by those of subtle vision through their subtle minds' says the Veda (Kaṭha I.iii.12), pointing out that the highest state of Viṣṇu is difficult to attain. Then the same text goes on to teach yoga as the means to attain it, in the words 'The wise man should dissolve the senses into the mind and should dissolve the mind into the intellect. He should dissolve the soul into the great self and he should dissolve that into the Self that is pure peace' (Kaṭha I.iii.13).

That is, he should first give up the use of speech and the other organs of action and perception and should remain identified with the lower aspect of the mind alone. He should then note that the lower aspect of the mind, too, has defects such as an inclination towards the sense objects and unsteadiness in its decisions, and he should dissolve it into that higher aspect of mind (buddhi) which has fixed determination for its nature and is sometimes known by the technical term 'intellect' (vijñāna). He should refine the intellect and resolve it into 'the great self', the experiencer or apex of the intellect. The 'great self', however, must be dissolved in the 'Self that is pure peace', the supreme Spirit that is the subject of the section, the summit of human experience. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.1)

(5) Resorting to dispassion, always intent on the Yoga of Meditation (Dhyāna Yoga). (Bh.G.XVIII.52)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Meditation means dwelling on the true nature of the Self. Yoga means one-pointed concentration on the Self. He who is intent on 'Dhyāna' and 'Yoga' thus

defined is the one 'intent on the Yoga of Meditation'. The use of the word 'always' is to show that he has no other duties, such as daily repetition of the Vedic verses.

The Lord wishes to explain what is implied in establishment in absorption in knowledge. He first states the inner discipline in the passage beginning 'associated with a pure intellect' (Bh.G.XVIII.51) and ending 'becomes fit for realization of the Absolute' (Bh.G.XVIII.53). Then He describes the result, namely immediate liberation, in the two verses beginning 'Having become the Absolute, pure in mind...' (Bh.G.XVIII. 54-5).

(6) That yoga should certainly be practised with resolute mind. Giving up without exception all desires that come from individual will, restraining the sense-organs on every side through the mind, one should gradually withdraw from all activity, with will and intellect firmly controlled; keeping the mind fixed on the Self, one should not think of anything. Wherever the fickle mind wanders, one should bring it back and fix it on the Self alone, under firm control. Supreme joy comes to such a yogi, whose mind is at perfect peace, whose lusts have subsided, who is sinless and who has become the Absolute. Such a yogi, free from all sin, always controlling his mind in this way, easily attains the supreme joy of contact with the Absolute. With his mind controlled through yoga, he sees himself in all beings and all beings in his own Self, seeing the same everywhere. (Bh.G.VI.23-9)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: 'Seeing the same everywhere' is said of one who has the same undifferentiated vision or knowledge of unity and identity with the Absolute and the Self in regard to all things of different grades, from Brahmā to the beings of the vegetable and mineral realms. (Bh.G.Bh.VI.29)

Here, having explained the method of the Yoga of Meditation (dhyāna), the Lord shows in the last verse that its result is knowledge.

(7) The mind must be restrained tirelessly, as if one were emptying the sea with the tip of a blade of grass. One must resort to special means to restrain the mind when it is dispersed amid desires and enjoyments. The mind must also be awakened and held in restraint even when it is perfectly calm in the dissolution of dreamless sleep. Mere dissolution in dreamless sleep is no better than desire (since it is also the seed of future worldly experience). One restrains the mind from desires and enjoyments by remembering 'All is pain'. When one remembers 'All is the Unborn (the Absolute)', one does not even see what is born. When the mind is drowsy in its practice of yoga one should arouse it, and when it is

distracted one should again calm it down. One should know that the mind is soiled with latent impressions, and should not allow it to move when it has attained the state of equilibrium, free from the tendency either to dissolution or distraction. Even there, one should not savour the joy. One should acquire non-attachment through the discriminative wisdom that sees all joy as born of Ignorance. When the mind, although at first motionless, moves out once more, one should again carefully bring it back to unity. When the mind no longer either undergoes dissolution in dreamless sleep or distraction amidst desires and enjoyments, and it is motionless and without manifestation, then it has reached its state of perfection. It (has reached the state of 'no-mind', G.K.III. 32, and) is the Absolute. (G.K.III.41-6)

Here there is first a detailed description of the method of restraining the mind, and afterwards an explanation of the result in the form of the mind's attainment of the Absolute.

(8) It has already been established in the first topic of the present Book (i.e. at B.S.Bh.IV.i.1, cp. M.V.125, intro.; 206,6, note 3; 259,8) that all meditations (upāsana) imply repeated activity. Amongst meditations in general, those which aim at leading to right intuitive knowledge have to be performed until the end is achieved, like pounding the paddy to extract the rice. In their case, the extent of the repetition required is clear. For after their final goal of right intuitive knowledge has been achieved, no further action could be prescribed. Intuitive knowledge of the identity of one's true Self with the Absolute cannot be prescribed. It takes one beyond the realm of the Veda. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.12, cp. M.V. 206,6, note 1)

Here, repetition of the practice of hearing, pondering and sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) is implied by the fact of their being linked with the word (prescribed) 'meditation' (upāsanā). Sustained meditation (nididhyāsana), in particular, has to be practised as a form of meditation (upāsanā). For it must be realized that this has already been established in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary in the words, 'When we speak of meditation (upāsana) or sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) we are referring to activities which imply repetition as an essential feature' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1).

57 THE LEARNING AND OTHER VIRTUES TO BE PURSUED BY THE RENUNCIATE SEEKING LIBERATION FALL WITHIN IGNORANCE

The seeker of liberation, the one endued with metaphysical discrimination, should rise above the three basic desires for

a son, for wealth and for advantages in the after-life, and should master his 'learning', here understood as knowledge of the Self. Then he should 'desire to stand based on strength'. That is, he should not reveal himself as possessed of knowledge and other accomplishments, but rather should strive to stand based on the strength of the Self alone. Then he should strive to become a sage, and should acquire supreme eminence in knowledge through exclusive pursuit of the Self. Otherwise, one should suppose, his mind might be drawn towards external objects by the overpowering force of natural extraversion. And the Vedic doctrine is that he should acquire total contempt for all ideas other than that of the Self, and should become utterly absorbed in the vision of the Absolute, and then he will be a Brahmin in the true sense.

Even this discipline is carried out, like rituals and prescribed meditations, on the basis of the erroneous idea that one is an individual capable of action. Hence it belongs emphatically to the realm of Ignorance. In the same way, the notions that the individual soul is an individual soul, that it has attained dispassion, that it desires liberation and that it has obtained liberation are all appearances that hold good from the standpoint of practical experience only. The final truth is that the Self alone exists, and that it is the Absolute, unborn and without a second.

(1) Therefore the Brahmin, having mastered his 'learning', here conceived as knowledge of the Self, should strive to stand based on the strength of the Self. And having mastered both learning and strength, he becomes a silent contemplative sage (muni). When he has mastered both the preparations for sagehood and sagehood itself, then he becomes a Brahmin in the true sense of the word, a knower of the Absolute. (Bṛhad. III.v.1)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The Brahmins of ancient times knew that this Self was beyond the scope of means and ends in the domain of action. They rose above all ends and means, characterized here as 'desires', and lived as mendicants. And they abandoned all action as a means either for ends in this life or lives to come. Therefore, even today, a Brahmin, that is, one who is to get knowledge of the Absolute (brahman), first masters this indirect knowledge of the Self called 'learning' — that is, completes his indirect knowledge of the Self. Then, through the help of the Teacher and the traditional teaching, he rises above desires. Indeed, this 'learning' in its true form consists in rising above desires....

Therefore, having risen above desires, he should strive to stand based on the strength of direct knowledge of the Self .... 'Strength' here refers to the total elimination of vision of objects, an elimination which is achieved through knowledge of the Self. The phrase 'He should strive to stand based on the

strength of the Self' means that he should strive to remain in the state where vision of objects is eliminated.... Then he becomes a silent contemplative sage (muni), that is to say a yogi, through pondering (manana).... The phrase 'the preparations for contemplative sagehood' means the perfection of wisdom and strength, understood respectively as knowledge of the Self and elimination of all notion of the not-self. Sagehood is the culminating point and final result of elimination of all notion of the not-self. When this has been achieved, the Brahmin has done all that needs to be done. The idea 'All is the Absolute' arises.

(2) Sagehood is a third stage, laid down after those of 'the state of a child' (bālya, see M.V.57,3, note) and 'learning', implying knowledge of a deeper form.... But if it be assumed that knowledge has already been achieved, how can it be affirmed that there is an injunction to resort to the life of a sage, an affirmation made on the ground that sagehood represents a special degree of knowledge that has not yet been mentioned? This is explained by the words 'where there is a special case' occurring in the Sūtra. It means that in the special case where knowledge of the high degree implied by contemplative sagehood has not been attained, on account of the continued overpowering force of the vision of difference, there we have an injunction to resort to sagehood. (B.S.Bh. III.iv.47)

In Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary it is said that even the enlightened person, insofar as he conforms in life to the empirical standpoint, may appear to be overpowered by vision of difference, and that the life of contemplative sagehood is prescribed to counteract this. The quotation in the previous sentence (omitted above) 'having known the Self' shows that it is the truly enlightened person who is in question. For that reason, it also follows that the one who merely desires enlightenment should also practise the life of contemplative sagehood, so there is no contradiction.

(3) He should avoid all hypocrisy and pride and the like, not revealing his knowledge, learning and spirituality. He should be like a small child, who does not try to show himself off to others, because his sensibilities are not yet developed. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.50)

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary, 'bālya' is explained as the strength (bala) derived from knowledge. In the Brahma Sūtra Commentary, it is explained as a small child's (bāla) nature, free from hypocrisy and show. The two ideas should be taken as complementary.

(4) The monk should know from the beginning what has to be

rejected, what has to be realized in immediate intuition, what disciplines have to be adopted and what has to be neutralized. It is traditionally held that, apart from the Self that has to be realized, the other three categories (what has to be rejected, adopted and neutralized) are illusory. (G.K.IV.90)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The three worlds of waking, dream and dreamless sleep have to be rejected as non-existent in the Self, as an imaginary snake has to be rejected as non-existent in the rope in which it has been imagined. What has to be realized in immediate intuition is the supreme reality beyond the four modes of judgment.*

The true discipline is to become a monk and give up the three desires for a son, wealth and advantages in the life to come. And then one has to cultivate the qualities of wisdom, strength (or childlike simplicity) and sagehood. Psychological defects like attachment, aversion, infatuation and the like have to be rooted out. The monk must know that his discipline lies in all these things that have to be rejected, realized in immediate intuition, adopted or neutralized. And he must know all this right from the start.

Apart from what has to be realized in immediate intuition — apart from the One, the Absolute, the supreme reality — the other three classes of things which have to be rejected, adopted or neutralized are illusion, mere figments of Ignorance. This is the traditional teaching of the knowers of the Absolute. It means that these three classes of things are not ultimately real.

**(The four modes of judgment are given at G.K.IV.83. The author translates the verse as follows at M.R.V., English intro. p.46: '"It is; it is not; is and is not; neither is nor is not" — he who has seen that Glorious One untouched by these four one-sided viewpoints by which He seems to be for ever obscured, he verily is the all-seer'. T.N.)*

(5) No soul is ever born. The Self undergoes no birth. That is the highest reality where nothing is born. (G.K.III.48)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: All these disciplines such as restraint of the mind are mere projections of the imagination, like the objects of clay or iron imagined as real entities distinct from their material cause. So also are the various prescribed meditations. The idea is that they are mere means to apprehension of the supreme reality, not that they are themselves the final truth. The final truth is that no soul was ever born, no individual capable of action and experience.... This reality is something superior to the 'realities' previously treated of as mere means to ends. In this reality, which is the Absolute, nothing is born, not an atom.

58 AFTER THE RISE OF METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE THERE IS ONLY ABSORPTION IN THE SELF AND NO ACTION

Though the Veda and Smṛti lay down what are the disciplines for metaphysical knowledge, yet one cannot predict which of those who carry them out will attain it or when they will do so. If there is no impediment, one who carries out the means to metaphysical knowledge will find that it matures in that very life. But if there is an impediment, then it will still mature, but in a later life. For this reason we find that metaphysical knowledge sometimes matures during life as a celibate student, or in the householder's state, or in the state of retired forest life as the case may be, whenever one of these states may happen to favour the fruition of disciplines carried out in earlier lives. Whenever anyone gains metaphysical knowledge, it implies automatically that he renounces all action. Metaphysical knowledge and action cannot exist in any way whatever. Thus the Veda permits a person to retire from any stage of life, from that of a celibate student on, and take up the life of a wandering monk. For we have the text, 'Let a person renounce after completing the life of a forest-dweller; or, if conditions be otherwise and favourable, let him renounce even in the midst of life as a celibate student or in the midst of life as a forest-dweller' (Jābāla 4). Where, however, a person is for some reason unable to become a renunciate in the formal sense (i.e. to adopt the life and insignia of a monk) on the rise of metaphysical knowledge, here, though it may appear from the empirical standpoint that he is carrying on with the active life, from the standpoint of true vision he has no connection with action. In his case there is no egoism or desire for reward for his actions, so that they do not count as action. From his own standpoint all action was abolished on the rise of metaphysical knowledge. And there can only be metaphysical knowledge where there is total absence of any sense that one is personally engaged in action.

(1) If a person comes to know the Self immediately as 'This am I', in desire for what and for the sake of whom would he continue to identify himself with the miseries of the body? (Bṛhad.IV.iv.12)

(2) But he whose joy is in the Self alone, who is fully satisfied by the Self and content with the Self alone — there is nothing that such a person has to do. (Bh.G.III.17)

(3) When there is no obstruction arising from the maturation of the merit and demerit from previous deeds, then the means to metaphysical knowledge, if put into operation, produce metaphysical knowledge here in this life. But if there is

such an obstruction, they only give rise to enlightenment after the present life.... (The laws governing the fruition of merit and demerit are inviolable.) For the conditions of time, place and occasion that call forth the maturation of the karmic results of one deed cannot call forth that of another. For deeds (e.g. extremely good and extremely bad ones) have contradictory karmic results. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.51)

(4) But one who sees inaction in action and action in inaction becomes actionless and a renunciate through that very insight. Though he may have been engaged in action before attaining metaphysical discrimination, afterwards he does not engage in any action any longer, but allows just enough activity to his body to sustain life. He who begins his life in action due to merit and demerit from previous lives, and then at some later point acquires right metaphysical knowledge, from then on sees no purpose in any action, and renounces action together with its accessories. Should it, for any reason, be impossible for him to give up the life of action, he may remain engaged in action as before, for the good of the world, yet because he has no purposes of his own to serve, and is without attachment either for action or its rewards, he does nothing. The action of such a person is verily inaction, as it has been burnt in the fire of knowledge. (Bh.G.Bh.IV.20)

(5) When a person has in this way lost the idea that he is either a Brahmin or a Kshatriya, the renunciation of that idea automatically implies the renunciation of the actions appropriate to that caste, together with the accessories required for the performance of its duties (e.g. household fire, sacred thread, etc.). (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.1)

(6) In worldly experience we find that colour manifests as soon as there is contact between the visual organ and light. In the same way, Ignorance of the Absolute disappears the moment that direct knowledge of it arises. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

(7) For the conviction of the one who knows the Absolute is: 'I am the Absolute, by nature incapable of individual action or experience eternally throughout past, present and future time, quite contradictory to the notion which prevailed before, namely that I was an individual, capable of action and experience. In truth, I was not ever capable of action and experience before, I am not capable of them now, and I never shall be in the future'. Only on this basis is liberation intelligible. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.13, cp. M.V.203,7, note)

59 LIBERATION IS NOTHING OTHER THAN THAT FIRM ESTABLISHMENT IN THE SELF THAT PREVAILS WHEN IGNORANCE HAS BEEN CANCELLED

The argument so far has shown that the notions of bondage and liberation fall within the realm of empirical experience, itself based on the mutual superimposition of the Self and not-self. Liberation may accordingly be seen as the establishment in the non-dual Self that occurs when metaphysical Ignorance and the other typical characteristics of transmigratory life are brought to an end. This occurs through the intuitive metaphysical knowledge that arises from the Vedic texts and the teachings of the Ācārya. But liberation so conceived only makes sense from the standpoint of Ignorance.

Various phrases are used in Śrī Śaṅkara's text to refer to such a state of transcendence of all plurality (kaivalya). For example, we find 'being established in one's true nature' (Māṇḍ.Bh. intro., M.V.59,1), 'being established in one's own Self', 'being established in one's true essential nature', 'being established in one's true nature which is the inmost Self', 'having one's own Self as one's (sole) support', 'realization of one's own true nature', 'the state of realization of the Absolute' (M.V.59,8) and 'freedom from the body' (M.V. 60,2; 67,4).

This state of liberation implies identity with the Absolute. And, since the Absolute is nothing other than the true nature of the enquirer, it is not a state that has to be acquired through any form of action, either through production, transformation, purification or obtainment (cp. M.V.59,12). It is simply a matter of knowing one's own true nature through removal of the metaphysical Ignorance that obscures it. Even the doctrine that liberation has to be effected through knowledge is only a figurative way of speaking. Attainment of the Absolute is 'attainment' in the same figurative sense as the 'attaining himself as the tenth' achieved by the tenth man through coming to see that he was the tenth. (A simple villager, deputed to count ten people, could only reach nine because he forgot to count himself, and was reminded by a bystander 'You are the tenth'.)

There is no break in the knowledge of the Self of such a knower, even though he conforms to the erroneous vision of the world, for he is merely conforming to what he knows to be an error. Such a person's actions do not involve him in merit and demerit and consequent further transmigratory experience, as they are performed only for the welfare of the people. And if he gives spiritual teaching, it is only to help seekers of liberation. Even here, he does not feel that, in the final analysis, he is an individual person performing an action.

(1) What, then, is that purpose? We reply as follows. When anyone is suffering from a disease and the disease ends, the patient is then established in his true nature (as healthy). Similarly, when the dualistic world of plurality comes to an end, the soul, previously in pain, becomes established in its true nature. 'Attaining' this state of non-duality is the purpose. (Māṇḍ.Bh.1, intro.)

(2) And so, when metaphysical Ignorance ceases, one becomes established in one's own true Self. This is (figuratively called) 'attainment' of the supreme. (Taitt.Bh.I.1, intro.)

(3) If the Self is eternal and so not produced by knowledge, does not this mean that mere knowledge is useless? No. For metaphysical knowledge leads on to the immediately evident result of revealing one's own true intrinsic nature, transcending all plurality, through putting an end to metaphysical Ignorance. Knowledge which puts an end to the darkness of metaphysical Ignorance culminates in this immediately evident result of transcendence. The light of a lamp has the immediate result of dispelling Ignorance, darkness and illusory notions like that of a rope-snake. The result of such a light will be the conviction that the rope (alone exists and) transcends all false notions like that of a snake, which now no longer exist. Similarly, the result of metaphysical knowledge is that the Self manifests free from all false imagination and transcendent. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.67, intro.)

(4) On the death of this body there will be no occasion for another to come into being, for attachment and the other binding psychological defects will not have been in play. Transcendence of all plurality will have been realized without effort, since transcendence is no more than being established in one's own true nature. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.67, intro.)

This sentence was written in the context of conforming for argument's sake to the basic assumptions of those who hold that total freedom is to be achieved solely by performance of the obligatory ritual. Similarly, in the Brahma Sūtra Commentary (IV.iii.14) there is a phrase conforming to the assumptions of the same doctrine. It runs: 'Transcendence of all plurality, meaning establishment in one's own true nature, ensues because there is no longer anything to cause one to join with another body'. All the passage will be given in context at M.V.65,3 below.

(5) The so-called immortality of the gods and other beings is transient. But *this* immortality, which means establishment in one's own true nature as the inmost Self, is permanent. (Kaṭha Bh.II.i.2)

(6) Since this beginningless and endless transmigration is painful by nature, and is connected with all continuously, like the unbroken flow of a river, all living beings ought to desire to be rid of it. The cessation of transmigration is liberation, the province of the higher (metaphysical) knowledge. Liberation is beginningless and endless, not subject to decay and death, immortal, beyond danger, pure, clear, consisting in establishment in one's own Self, supreme bliss, non-dual. (Muṇḍ.Bh.I.ii.1)

(7) When the true nature of the soul is not yet discriminated from the body and other apparent conditioning adjuncts, the cognition arising from the Veda that effects this discrimination constitutes 'transcending the body'. And the 'attainment of the soul's true nature' is nothing other than the direct intuition of the true nature of the Self resulting from the discriminating cognition. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19)

(8) This is the state of realization of the Absolute, O descendant of Pṛthu. No one who attains this state falls into error again. (Bh.G.II.72)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: This is the state of realization of the Absolute. It means renunciation of all action and remaining established as the Absolute.

(9) Just as the slough of a snake lies dead, cast off on the top of an ant-hill, so lies this body. (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: In the case of the liberated person, illustrated by the snake which sheds its slough, the body may be said to lie as if dead, because it has been rejected as not-self. Though the case of the liberated person is parallel with that of the snake that has cast off its skin, it is not completely parallel. He has become the Self of all. He is like the snake in point of being at present without a body. But, unlike the snake, he does not later re-assume a body. Previously he identified himself with a body brought on by desire and action, and so was embodied and mortal. But now he has lost desire and action and is therefore verily bodiless and immortal.

(10) Therefore, since being embodied is the result of false notions, it is proved that the enlightened person is not embodied even when still alive. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, M.V.25,1)

(11) The state of liberation is verily identity with the Absolute. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.52, cp. M.V.61,4)

(12) He who thinks that liberation is something that has to be literally 'produced' has in mind a 'liberation' that would

depend on action of body, speech or mind. The same is true of those who think that the soul has to undergo transformation to *become* the Absolute. Liberation as conceived in both these views would inevitably be impermanent. For we find in the world that nothing is permanent which can only come into being through a transformation, like curds (which are a transformation of milk), or which has to be produced, like a pot. Nor can it be said that liberation is dependent on action in the sense of needing to be obtained. For, as being the true nature of one's own Self, it is not subject to being 'obtained'.... Nor does liberation depend on action in the form of purification (saṃskāra). Purification is brought about either through conferring some new attribute on the thing to be purified, or else removing a defect. But in the case of liberation it is not possible to confer a new attribute. For liberation is the Absolute in its true nature, to which nothing can be superadded. Nor can there be purification through removal of defects. For liberation is the Absolute in its true nature, eternally pure and free from defects. (B.S.Bh. I.i.4, cp. M.V.50,1)

(13) Liberation is said figuratively to be a result produced by knowledge because knowledge puts an end to the obstruction caused by Ignorance. But Ignorance cannot be brought to an end by any form of action. Nor can one conceive of any other obstruction to liberation apart from Ignorance, of a kind that might be removed by action. For liberation is eternal, and is nothing other than the true nature of the seeker himself. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.)

(14) The villager we are considering, who was counting the numbers of the party, failed, through his own Ignorance, to 'attain to' himself (to include himself in the number, cp. M.V.59, intro.). But when he was afterwards reminded by someone 'You are the tenth' he 'attained to himself' through his own knowledge. In the same way, one who fails, through metaphysical Ignorance, to attain to his own true nature as the Absolute may very well attain to it later when instructed by the Vedic texts, through enlightenment in the form of direct intuition that he is the Absolute, the Self of all. (Taitt.Bh.II.1, cp. M.V.206,8)

(15) Awakening, through cancellation of wrong knowledge, to the fact that one is not an individual able to perform action, puts an end to action. But wrong knowledge, though cancelled, may continue for a time through the force of impressions (saṃskāra), as in the case of double vision of the moon (where the patient, even after he has been cured, may occasionally be haunted by recurring double vision of the moon, which he does not take seriously). (B.S.Bh.IV.i.15; cp. M.V. 203,7, note; 254,2, note)

(16) No wrong notion arises for the enlightened person. For in his case there is no reason for it. An erroneous notion arises and becomes manifest on the basis of the general form of an object when its particular nature has not been determined. As, for example, there may be the notion of silver where there is in fact a piece of shell, when the shell has been perceived in a general way (as a 'this') but not determinately perceived as a piece of shell. In the case of one who has determinate knowledge of an object, the basis of erroneous cognition has been destroyed and it cannot occur. When a correct idea about the shell has once arisen, erroneous notions about it are no longer found. Sometimes, however, memories which appear like erroneous cognitions may arise from latent impressions left by erroneous notions that had arisen previously, and may occasionally produce the appearance of erroneous cognition. It is the same as when one who has correctly learned the directions of the quarters is (even afterwards) occasionally visited by a wrong notion of them (which does not seriously affect his correct conviction). (Bṛhad.Bh. I.iv.10, cp. M.V.231,7, note)

(17) (Even the liberated person, says the objector, has to act, and his actions will involve merit and demerit and rebirth.) If you try to avoid this consequence, he continues, by saying that the acts of him who acquires enlightenment through mere knowledge are forthwith destroyed, then it would follow that, because knowledge of the Absolute is the cause of attainment of pure Being at the very moment of its rise, to say 'There is liberation' would imply immediate death. From this it would follow that there could never be a (person liberated while alive and so there could never be a) Teacher. And this would contradict the text 'One who has a Teacher acquires knowledge', and would imply that liberation could not arise from knowledge. Or else it would imply that knowledge did not invariably produce its expected result, as, for instance, when a person knows the way to another country but does not put his knowledge into practice by actually going there.

All this objection, however, is wrong, because it neglects the distinction between works which have and works which have not actually begun to work out their fruits in the life in which liberation is attained. (Chānd.Bh.VI.xiv.2)

There cannot be action in conformity to what has been cancelled and known to be false (hence the reference to 'rest' in the nine-gated city of the body at M.V.59,18, immediately below). This also refutes the criticism that, on the Advaitin's doctrine, there cannot be an enlightened Teacher.

(18) For actions pertain to the body, and it is through Ignorance that they are falsely superimposed onto the Self, which

is other than the body. And they can be 'renounced' through discriminative knowledge that the Self is different from the body and its actions. He in whom this discriminative knowledge has arisen, who has renounced all action, continues nevertheless to rest in the body as if in a house, to rest in the nine-gated city of the body, undergoing experiences conforming to the unexhausted remainder of the impressions of that fraction of his total merit and demerit which initiated his present birth. For it is only in the body that particular cognition is possible. The text therefore introduced a meaningful qualification when it said 'rests in the body'. For the meaning is '*only* rests in the body', (and does not suppose that he is acting when it acts), and this implies a distinction between the experience of the enlightened person and the unenlightened one. (Bh.G.Bh.V.13)

Here it is said that when all a person's action has ceased he may rest in the body, conforming to what has been cancelled and known to be false. From this we see that it is quite intelligible that such a person should continue to feel 'I am not doing anything' even in the act of giving teaching.

60 THE TWO FORMS OF LIBERATION, AND HOW LIBERATION IN LIFE IS SUPERIOR

The liberation that is brought by enlightenment is called by the experts 'immediate liberation' (sadyo-mukti), because it comes simultaneously with metaphysical knowledge. It is also called 'liberation while yet alive' (jīvan-mukti) because, from the empirical standpoint, it appears to be acquired by someone still living, and to last as long as his life does. His remaining in the Absolute as the Absolute on the death of the body is referred to by various figurative expressions such as final release (vimukti), dissolution in the Absolute (brahmaṇy-apyaya, brahma-nirvāṇa), realization of the Absolute (brahma-bhūya), attainment of the Absolute (brahma-sampatti), final peace (kṣema) and the state of non-return (apunar-āvṛtti). These terms draw attention to the absence of any remnant of merit or demerit which might occasion another body. But liberation in the strict sense is 'immediate liberation' only.

(1) For there is no going or returning on the part of those who enjoy immediate liberation and are established in right metaphysical knowledge. For we have the Vedic text 'His vital energies do not depart' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6). Their vital energies are dissolved in the Absolute. Verily, they have become the Absolute, they are the Absolute. (Bh.G.Bh.VIII.24, cp. M.V. 61,2)

(2) Being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute. (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: In fact, the enlightened one is already the Absolute here on earth. Though he appears to have a body, yet (as the text puts it) 'being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute'. It is because he has no desires to cause the limitation of feeling that he is not the Absolute that one can say of him 'being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute', while he is still in this world, not after the death of the body. For when the enlightened person passes away he does not enter any new state different from the one he had while alive. The phrase 'he dissolves in the Absolute' only means that he does not pass to any other body.

(3) Having done spiritual practice, he no longer grieves. Though already liberated, he acquires final liberation. (Kaṭha II.ii.1)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: 'Having done spiritual practice' means 'having practised meditation'. His spiritual practice is meditation associated with the metaphysical insight that goes with immediate experience of the real.... Even here in this world he is finally released from the bondage of desire and action, which are figments of Ignorance. 'Though already released, he acquires final release' means that he does not acquire a body again.

(4) Such a yogi becomes the Absolute and attains dissolution in the Absolute. (Bh.G.V.24)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: He who is such a person, he is a yogi. He attains dissolution in the Absolute, which is liberation, while still alive here below, being himself already the Absolute.

(5) Those who know the Self attain total dissolution in the Absolute. (Bh.G.V.26)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Liberation is dissolution in the Absolute, both when it occurs to the living and when it occurs to the dead.

(6) Supreme joy falls to this yogi whose mind is utterly at peace, whose passionate tendencies (rajas) have subsided, who has become the Absolute, stainless. (Bh.G.VI.27)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: 'Who has become the Absolute' means 'liberated while alive' (jīvan-mukta). It means one who has the conviction 'All is verily the Absolute'.

(7) One who has relinquished egoism, strength, pride, desire, anger and acquisitiveness, who is peaceful and without sense of possession — he becomes fit for absorption in the Absolute. (Bh.G.XVIII.53)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Absorption in the Absolute means becoming the Absolute. He becomes fit for that, capable of it.

(8) When a person sees the creatures in all their variety as standing in the One and as an evolution from that alone, then he attains to the Absolute. (Bh.G.XIII.30)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: 'A person sees' means 'Having pondered on the Vedic texts and the teachings of the Ācārya, he sees (the creatures, etc.,) with the direct perception that they are his own Self, as proclaimed in the text "All this is the Self alone"' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2). When a person sees (them as) an outgrowth from or expansion of the Self in such ways as proclaimed in the text 'The vital energy is from the Self, hope is from the Self, memory is from the Self, the ether is from the Self, fire is from the Self, water is from the Self, appearance and disappearance are from the Self, food is from the Self...' (Chānd.VII.xxvi.1), then a person attains the Absolute, that is, verily he becomes the Absolute.

(9) With their minds on that, identified with that, absorbed in that, intent on that, they go to the state of non-return, their sins dispelled by knowledge. (Bh.G.V.17)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Those whose minds have attained to the Absolute, who accept the Absolute as their own Self, who are absorbed in the Absolute, that is, who are established in the Self alone, having abandoned all action — that is the meaning of 'absorption'. 'Intent on that' means regarding that as their highest goal, that is, having their joy in the Self alone. Those whose Ignorance of the Self has thus been removed by knowledge are never again linked with a body. Their sins are dispelled or removed by the knowledge just mentioned. The reference is to those whose sins and other defects which lead to further transmigration have been dispelled by knowledge; that is to say, to ascetics(yati).

Here the phrase 'absorbed in that' refers to liberation in life; however, a reference to liberation after the death of the body (videha-mukti) is also included, through the phrase 'the state of non-return'.

(10) Good and bad deeds are extinguished on the rise of metaphysical knowledge if they were committed in previous births and their results have not begun to mature in the present one, or if they were committed in the present life before

enlightenment. But the good and bad deeds that initiated the present life as the vehicle for knowledge of the Absolute, and whose results have only been partly experienced, are not extinguished.

How do we know this? Because of the text 'The delay will only last till he is free from the body, then he will attain union' (Chānd.VI.xiv.2). This text shows that final peace comes at the time of the fall of the body. If it were not for the distinction between action of which the effects have begun to fructify and action of which the effects have not yet begun to fructify, all action without exception would be destroyed by knowledge of the Absolute.. And in that case there would be nothing further that could sustain the empirical existence of the enlightened person, and he would enter the final peace forthwith. But then the Veda would not have spoken of the need to wait for the death of the body. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.15)

Here it is accepted that, from the empirical standpoint, the enlightened one has a body. From this standpoint, it is accepted that he must experience the remnants of that portion of his total merit and demerit that occasioned the body in which he obtained enlightenment. And because 'attainment of the final peace' is mentioned as occurring after the death of the body, it is clear that the phrase 'final peace' refers to the final transcendence that comes with absolute freedom from the body at death (videha-kaivalya).

61 NO DISTINCTIONS OF KIND ARE FOUND IN LIBERATION AS THE RESULT OF METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE

It is true that works on Vedanta speak of three different kinds of liberation. They speak of 'liberation by stages' (krama-mukti), where those who have practised prescribed symbolic meditations go to the World of Brahmā, and attain right intuitive knowledge of the Absolute there, in company with Brahmā, when that world dissolves at the end of the cosmic period (M.V.49,7; 56,2). They speak of 'immediate liberation' (sadyo-mukti), which is obtained here below in the course of the present life on earth or a later one, and which is simultaneous with the enlightenment that comes when the practice of the means to enlightenment reaches full maturity (M.V.60, intro.). And they speak of 'liberation after death' (videha-mukti), which will occur on the death of the body, when the portion of merit and demerit that brought into existence the body in which enlightenment is attained has been experienced and thereby exhausted (M.V.60,10).

Nevertheless, no distinctions can possibly apply to liberation in its true nature. For liberation in its true nature is ever already attained, and there is no difference in the

knowledge whereby it is attained. Liberation is not anything that arises through production, transformation, obtainment or purification (M.V.59,12). So it is not anything which could be attained and which could therefore vary in kind according to the means by which it was attained. It is of the nature of the Self, which is always already attained. And the Self is partless, and eternally raised above change, and is incapable of receiving any further increase, and cannot be the object of any action. The notion 'Liberation occurs at the death of the body' merely refers to the fact that there will not be assumption of another body (cp. M.V.60,2). So it should not be supposed that the results of metaphysical knowledge of the Absolute vary in different cases. For liberation, being nothing other than the true nature of the Self, is ever uniform. That is the sole truth.

(1) When (towards the beginning of a new world-period) the dissolution of that effect called the World of Brahmā is at hand, the souls who have attained to right knowledge in that world, proceed, together with Hiraṇyagarbha (Brahmā), its overseer, to 'something higher'. And that 'something higher' is the supremely pure highest abode of Viṣṇu.

Thus a 'liberation by stages' has to be assumed, on account of the mention of non-return and other circumstances in certain Vedic texts. For we have already explained how attainment of the Absolute in its supreme form is not strictly possible by a method that involves a journey. (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.10)

(2) Those who approach the Absolute by the route of prescribed meditations, meditators on the Absolute (as associated with form), go to the Absolute on this path after they are dead. The phrase (go) 'by stages' has to be supplied. For there is no going or returning on the part of those who enjoy immediate liberation and are established in right metaphysical knowledge. (Bh.G.Bh.VIII.24, cp. M.V.60,1)

(3) Merit and demerit are the causes of bondage. And it has been shown (at B.S.IV.i.13-4) that, in the case of one liberated in life, metaphysical knowledge severs the connection both with merit and demerit and destroys them, so that the enlightened one is of necessity liberated at the death of his body. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.14)

(4) We have seen, then, that there is a law in the case of the one desiring liberation, and pursuing the discipline which leads to it, which states that the question whether his enlightenment occurs in the present life or a future one is decided by the intensity of his effort and the aptness of the means to which he resorts. This might suggest that there could be laws about distinctions of better or worse in regard to liberation itself.

To dispel this idea, the author of the Sūtras says, 'Thus there are no rules about different results in the case of liberation'. Why not? Because there is no variation in the account of liberation in any of the upanishadic texts. For the state of liberation is verily identity with the Absolute, and the Absolute cannot assume different forms, as it has been shown that its essential nature is always the same. (B.S.Bh. III.iv.52)

(5) (Now, there can be no such thing as a special high degree of liberation.) This is also true because right metaphysical knowledge is always and everywhere identical, so that there can be no rules about its different results in different cases, as there can be in regard to rituals, which differ among themselves. For the one and only means to liberation is right metaphysical knowledge, and there are no differences in that as there are in rituals. With meditations on the Absolute associated with attributes, such as 'Made up of mind, having the vital energy as its body' (Chānd.III.xiv.2), the case is different. Here there can be rules about different results in different individual cases, just as there are in regard to different rituals. This is rendered possible through the addition or subtraction of attributes in the meditation.... But this is not possible in the case of attributeless knowledge, as no attributes are present. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.52)

(6) You will perhaps object that the bodiless state comes as a result of meritorious acts. But this is wrong. For it is the natural state. On this there are such Vedic texts as, 'Having known the Self, the great one, all-pervading, Him who, dwelling in all bodies, is not Himself embodied, the stable within the unstable — the wise person does not grieve' (Kaṭha I.ii.22). (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

This passage states that liberation, which means not being embodied, is the natural state.

(7) Therefore, since being embodied is the result of false notions, it is proved that the enlightened person is not embodied even while alive. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.25,1; 59,10)

The remark that being embodied is the result of false notions shows that statements about having to wait for the death of the body for liberation are only made in the context of empirical experience as set up by Ignorance.

(8) But this state of not being embodied called liberation is true from the highest standpoint, it is constant and eternal and raised above change, it is all-pervading like the ether, it is void of any modification, ever overflowing with contentment, partless and of the nature of self-luminous

light. Neither merit and demerit and their results, nor time, past, present and future, can approach it. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(9) He who thinks that liberation is something that has to be literally 'produced' has in mind a 'liberation' that would depend on action of body, speech or mind. The same is true of those who think that the soul has to undergo transformation to *become* the Absolute. Liberation as conceived in both these views would inevitably be impermanent. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(10) Nor does liberation depend on action in the form of purification (saṃskāra). Purification is brought about either through conferring some new attribute on the thing to be purified, or else removing a defect. But in the case of liberation it is not possible to confer a new attribute. For liberation is the Absolute in its true nature, to which nothing can be superadded. Nor can there be purification through removal of defects. For liberation is the Absolute in its true nature, eternally pure and free from defects. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

CHAPTER IV
PRE-ŚAṄKARA SCHOOLS

62 HOW THE PRESENT CHAPTER RELATES WITH WHAT PRECEDES AND FOLLOWS

We now take up the study of some schools which existed before the time of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. These theories are considered and refuted at various places in Śrī Gauḍapāda's Kārikās, in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentaries and in the Vārtika of Śrī Sureśvara. Here they will be quoted and examined relying on these sources, no other source being available. The result of the examination will be to confirm our opinion that the method of interpretation of the Upanishads followed by the holy Commentator is the best.

63 THE VIEW THAT THE ENTIRE VEDA TEACHES THAT ACTION ALONE IS THE MEANS TO LIBERATION

The early (pre-Śaṅkara) founders of schools can be divided into two classes. There are those who cling to the ritualistic section of the Veda and are opponents of the Upanishads; and there are those who accept the Upanishads as authoritative, but are over-attached to the view that authority depends on command.

Amongst those who specialized in the ritualistic section of the Veda, some thought that only actions could be the means to human welfare. They said, 'Since the Veda exists only to promote action, the texts which do not deal with that are useless' (Jaimini, P.M.S. I.ii.1), and meant it literally. On this basis, they dismissed the Upanishads as useless, because those texts are not concerned with action. They held that they would have a purifying effect if recited, but that was all. Since they took the notion of 'heaven', conceived as unsurpassable joy, to be but a synonym for liberation, they held

that liberation arose from the performance of ritual. Behind their view was the idea that only he who knew the meaning of the whole Veda was qualified to perform rituals, that the whole Veda was concerned with rituals, and that if one did not accept that liberation arose from the performance of rituals, one would be condemning the Veda as useless.

This view is not tenable. Against it, the Teachers have maintained that all who propound a doctrine of liberation accept that liberation is eternal, while any result that is brought about by action is bound to be transient. It is true that knowledge of the Veda is necessary for the performance of ritual. But the meditations taught in the Veda (which come under the rules for ritual), though referred to as 'knowledge', are not the same thing as the metaphysical knowledge that arises directly from hearing. In reality, knowledge of the Self is not required as a qualification for performing ritual, since ritual can be performed by one who merely has knowledge of the texts. The knowledge of the Self taught in the Upanishads actually blots out all duality, and after that there cannot be qualification for the performance of ritual.

(1) The doctrine that, because the unsurpassable joy called heaven comes from the performance of ritual, liberation comes from ritual alone, is wrong. For liberation is eternal. Nothing in the world that has a beginning is eternal. We have the maxim, 'Whatever has a beginning is transient'. (Taitt.Bh. I.1, intro.)

(2) The statement, 'If a man knows the whole Veda, that only qualifies him to perform rituals', was nc better. For enjoined meditations cannot just be dismissed as mere knowledge of the Vedic texts by heart. A person qualifies to perform rituals through mere knowledge of the texts by heart, and rituals do not depend on prescribed meditations. The latter, therefore, must be prescribed for some other purpose, and that purpose is well known to be liberation. This is confirmed by the Veda itself. For after saying that the Self has to be heard about, the text goes on to enjoin two further different activities, in the words, 'It must be pondered over, it must be subjected to sustained meditation'. And it is well known that pondering and sustained meditation are quite different from mere knowledge derived simply from hearing the texts from the Teacher when learning them by heart. (Taitt.Bh.I.11)

In this passage there is mention of the fact that a person qualifies to perform rituals through mere knowledge of the texts by heart. From this we conclude that the 'hearing' spoken of later in the passage only means hearing of the texts from the Teacher for purposes of learning them by heart.

(3) We have the text 'Having studied the Veda, he should

leave his Teacher's house...' (Chānd.VIII.xv.1). From this we conclude that the ritualistic injunctions apply to one who has merely studied the Vedic texts and learned them by heart, without necessarily having knowledge of their meaning. But, if this were so, would it not follow that, because he was still ignorant, he would not be qualified to perform ritual? No, there is no such defect in the argument here. For we do not in any way deny that knowledge about the rituals may arise as a result of learning the texts by heart and that this knowledge may qualify one to perform the rituals. All we say is that the metaphysical knowledge of the Self taught in the Upanishads, which is seen to have a different independent purpose of its own, cannot also be for the purpose of qualifying anyone to perform ritual. A person's knowledge of one ritual has nothing to do with his qualification to perform another one, and the same principle (that knowledge of one matter does not produce qualifications for another) holds good here too. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.12)

(4) Furthermore, there are texts like 'But when all has become his own Self, then what could a person see and with what, what could a person smell and with what?' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14) which speak of the destruction of this whole phenomenal world of plurality through knowledge — this phenomenal world, which is set up by Ignorance, which is of the nature of action, its factors and results, and which is the necessary condition for action. But anyone who hoped to couple qualification for ritualistic action with that direct knowledge of the Self which arises from the upanishadic discipline would find, instead, that his qualification for ritualistic action had in fact been undermined. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.16)

This was said to refute the view that would concede that the texts of the Upanishads were meaningful, while claiming that the knowledge arising from them qualified one for ritual.

64 VIEW THAT THE UPANISHADS RELATE TO RITUAL BY EXPLAINING THE NATURE OF THE SOUL AND SO ON

It is claimed by the ritualists that knowledge derived from the Upanishads relates to ritual only, and does so by giving teaching about the Self, conceived by them as the one performing the ritual, and also by giving information about the nature of the deity presiding over the ritual, in this case the Absolute (brahman). They say that the rewards promised in the Veda for knowing the Self are no more than fanciful eulogies, as is the case with such texts as 'He who performs sacrifices using a ladle made of palāśa-wood will hear no evil sound' (T.S.III.v.7.2). Or else, according to another

view, the upanishadic texts exist simply to teach the prescribed meditations found in their texts. They cannot be concerned with communicating information about anything truly existent. For an already complete and existent reality would have to be the object of some other means of knowledge, (and not of the Veda, which, according to the ritualists, is exclusively concerned with things at present incomplete which have to be done). The Veda is not an authoritative source of knowledge except in relation to commands, and commands are concerned exclusively with action. It cannot be concerned with proclaiming the nature of what is already existent, as there would be no reason for it to do so (since perception and inference are available for the practical affairs of the world, while no good comes out of the mere satisfaction of idle speculative curiosity).

This view of the Mīmāṃsaka ritualists is refuted by the Teachers of our school as follows. The sole purpose of the Upanishads is to teach the existence of the Absolute as the chief thing which has to be known, and which is bereft of action and of all its factors such as the performer of the act, his instruments and so forth. Neither the Absolute itself nor knowledge of the Absolute can be conceived as subsidiaries of action. The ultimate aim of the Upanishads is to proclaim that the true nature of one's Self is the Absolute. This being so, the mention of deities and so forth which comes in their texts refers to the latter for subordinate purposes, and in a particular context only, and should not be supposed to be the ultimate purport of the upanishadic teaching (M.V.52,2). But the fact, taught in the Upanishads, that the true nature of one's Self is the Absolute, (is the chief topic being taught, since it) is not to be known from any other source. It cannot be objected that the Upanishads are useless, since metaphysical knowledge yields (in the permanent removal of suffering) an incontestable gain. Nor can it be argued that the Upanishads constitute mere eulogies, or that they are inauthoritative because not connected with commands. The doctrine that they must really be injunctions to act, whether for liberation or worldly well-being, is refuted in the Commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara and the Vārtika of Sureśvara on these lines.

(1) If, indeed, all that was taught in the Upanishads was the existence of the Self as the transmigrating soul, the embodied one, the one performing acts and undergoing experiences, 'transcendent' only in the sense of being distinct from the body, then the texts specifying some reward for knowledge of the Self might well be mere eulogies in the way that the opponent has described. But, as the author of the Sūtras here points out, the Self is taught in the Upanishads as being 'something more' than the embodied self. It is the Lord, not the transmigrant soul. The Self taught in the Upanishads does not have the illusion that it is a performer of action or that

it has the other typical characteristics of the transmigrant soul. It is the supreme Self. It has superhuman attributes such as freedom from sin. This is the Self which the Upanishads teach, and they teach it (not as anything which has to be done but) as 'what has to be *known*'. Nor does such knowledge have anything to do with inspiring one to perform rituals (in the manner suggested by the opponent). On the contrary, it destroys actions once and for all. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.8)

(2) There is no contradiction if accounts of the deities and so forth occur (in the Upanishads) for the sake of the meditations which their texts teach. But it does not follow from this that the Absolute could possibly be subsidiary to injunctions to meditate. For when all has become one and there is no longer anything to reject or acquire, all knowledge of duality in the form of action, its factors and results is effaced. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(3) For the texts in all the Upanishads co-operate to teach this subject (the Absolute) as their ultimate topic.... And when it is known to have been established that their words co-operate to teach the true nature of the Absolute, it is not right to suppose that they have any other purpose. For that would be to contradict what the Veda does teach and introduce what it does not teach. Nor can it be made out (with the Ritualists) that the texts in the Upanishads proclaiming the existence and true nature of the Absolute are really concerned with explaining the nature of one performing an act. For there are texts such as 'What should he then see and with what?' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14) which deny the existence of action, its factors and results. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, M.V.50,2)

(4) And though the Absolute is an already-existent reality, it is nevertheless not a possible object of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge. For one cannot come to know that the Absolute is one's own true Self as proclaimed by the text 'That thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7) without the Vedic teaching. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(5) We ask you, therefore, 'Do the texts which proclaim the true nature of the Self produce certain and fruitful knowledge or do they not?' If they do, how can they help being authoritative? Have you not seen examples of the fact that metaphysical knowledge of the Self results in the benefits of the cessation of Ignorance, grief, delusion and fear and all the other defects which cause continuation of transmigratory life? There are hundreds of upanishadic texts proclaiming that this is the case, such as 'What delusion, what grief, can there be for one who sees the unity of all?' (Īśa 7) and 'I am only a knower of the texts, my lord, not a knower of the Self.... Hence I am subject to grief. Take me beyond grief, my lord'

(Chānd.VII.i.3). Have you not heard them? Now, we ask of you, do we find the same certain and fruitful knowledge in texts like 'He wept' (T.S. I.v.1)? If we do not, then let them be inauthoritative. But how could the fact of *their* being inauthoritative render texts which produce certain and fruitful knowledge inauthoritative? (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7,M.V.50,6)

(6) Even if other Vedic texts are inauthoritative as means of knowledge if they are unconnected with commands, it cannot be denied that the Vedic texts which culminate in metaphysical knowledge of the Self are authoritative. And the authenticity of the Veda does not require to be proved by inference, and so does not require (to be established indirectly by a universal rule derived from) evidence perceived elsewhere. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(7) Knowledge of the ritualistic section of the Veda has for its aim temporary welfare in the after-life and in lives to come, and that depends on carrying out its instructions. Metaphysical knowledge of the Absolute has for its aim supreme (and eternal) beatitude, and does not depend on carrying out any later course of action for the achievement of this. When one has to enquire into the karmic merit that would follow upon a particular action, that merit lies in the future. At the time one comes to hear of it from the Vedic text, it does not yet exist. For it depends for its existence on human activity. The prompting provided by the text is also different in the two cases. A text prompting to meritorious action 'enlightens' a person in the sense of urging him to carry out its content. A text prompting a person to acquire metaphysical knowledge of the Absolute itself grants him metaphysical enlightenment, without the need of anything further to be done. Since the enlightenment arises from the prompting itself, the person is not prompted to *do* anything for enlightenment. Such enlightenment arises automatically and without action, as in the case of perception of an object which comes within the range of the senses. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1)

(8) But is not liberation, just like welfare in the after-life, something that has to be sought through active pursuit of means, since it is something one does not already have in one's possession? Not so. It has to be sought, indeed, but not in the same way that welfare in the after-life has to be sought.... Just as one stricken by illness 'becomes himself' through medical treatment, so is transcendence of all plurality (which constitutes one's own true nature) 'reached' (not through activity of any kind) but through the destruction of metaphysical Ignorance of the Self through enlightenment.... What would be the use of an injunction here, since the existence of that which is sought does not depend on human activity? Even if an injunction on this subject were to occur in the Veda it would be meaningless, for injunction has no scope

in the context. (Sureśvara, S.V. 26,28,30)

65 THE VIEW THAT LIBERATION COMES THROUGH THE AVOIDANCE OF OPTIONAL RITUAL AND FORBIDDEN ACTS

Others held that liberation does not depend on knowledge. It depends on not performing any optional ritual or committing any forbidden acts, on exhausting the merit and demerit already in force by experiencing it and on performing the daily obligatory ritual to avoid the harmful consequences of omitting it. And while holding all this, they also held that liberation was to be sought through giving up action, in the sense that the very nature of liberation consisted in resting in the Self.

This doctrine is just a piece of empty hypothetical reasoning. It takes no account of the Vedic maxim 'Transcendence of all plurality comes from knowledge'. The Ācāryas of our school have therefore refuted it on its own chosen ground, by logical argumentation duly supported by Vedic quotation. It is impossible to exhaust all merit and demerit, because our actions (from beginningless time) are infinite in number. The performance of the obligatory rituals must bring some future karmic merit that will have to be experienced. The idea that harmful consequences will be incurred by its omission is untenable (cp. M.V.65,6). Thus the whole description of this path for attaining liberation is incorrect. The path as described would always imply a remnant of merit and demerit, and it would be impossible to prevent further embodiment in transmigratory life to experience it. The whole doctrine is set out and refuted in the Taittirīya Upanishad Commentary, in the Gītā Commentary and in the Brahma Sūtra Commentary. The matter is also explained in the Sambandha Vārtika of Sureśvara.

(1) No, for actions are many and of different kinds. There may be many deeds of merit and demerit that have been committed in previous lives which will have mutually contradictory karmic results. Of these deeds, some will have begun their karmic fructification in the present life, others not. It is impossible that those which have not begun to fructify in a given life should be exhausted through having their karmic consequences experienced in that very life. It follows that a further body will have to be brought into being so that the remaining unexhausted merit and demerit can be duly experienced. And the existence of a remnant of unexhausted merit and demerit is proved by such texts from the Veda and Smṛti as, 'Those whose conduct in this life has been good (will soon obtain a favourable rebirth)' (Chānd.V.x.7) and 'Through the remnant (of its deeds the soul will acquire a future body)' (Ā.D.S. II.ii.2.3). (Taitt.Bh.I.1, intro.)

(2) No. For we have the Vedic text, 'Only through knowing Him does one pass beyond death. There is no other path for reaching the highest state' (Śvet.III.8). And we have the further Vedic text saying that liberation is as impossible for one who does not have enlightenment as folding up the sky like a piece of leather (Śvet.VI.20), and the text from the Purāṇa, 'One reaches transcendence of all plurality through knowledge'. Also, it is impossible for the meritorious (as well as the sinful) deeds of previous lives that have not begun to fructify in the present life to be exhausted (in the present life) through experience. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.67, intro.)

(3) There is not a single Vedic text that says 'The one who desires liberation should proceed like this' (see above, M.V. 59,4, note). Our opponents have just thought it up through their own private conjecture, on the principle 'Because merit and demerit are the cause of further transmigration, if merit and demerit are removed transmigration will cease'. But it will not hold even on the basis of reason, as it is impossible to show logically that the occasion for rebirth would not remain. (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.14)

(4) And there is no proof that the performance of the obligatory daily and occasional ritual will only have the effect of removing the harmful consequences of their omission, and, that they will not produce any karmic merit (that will have to be experienced in a new life). That new merit, too, would be likely to produce further merit (from actions in the new life, which would have to be experienced in further lives to come). For the Smṛti says, 'Just as, when a mango tree has been planted for the sake of its fruit, shade and pleasant odour follow of their own accord, so advantageous results accrue automatically to him who performs meritorious acts' (Ā.D.S. I.vii.20.3). Nor can anyone who does not have right intuitive knowledge of himself as the Self of all claim to be able to avoid all optional ritual and forbidden acts from birth to the funeral pyre. For even the cleverest people make slips occasionally. And since there will thus always have to be a doubt, it is, as we said, impossible to show how (on this method) merit and demerit could be totally eradicated. (B.S. Bh.IV.iii.14)

(5) The non-performance of the obligatory ritual is not in itself anything positively existent. This being so, it cannot be the cause of positive harmful consequences. But the phrase 'Not carrying out the prescribed ritual' (Manu XI.44) is intelligible if it is taken to imply non-performance of the obligatory ritual, and this in turn is taken as a sign pointing to the evil consequences of previous sins that should have been warded off by the performance of the obligatory ritual but were not. (Taitt.Bh.I.1, intro.)

(6) Nor is it right to object that the daily obligatory rituals must always be fulfilled to avoid the harmful consequences of their omission. For omission of the obligatory rituals only has harmful consequences for one who is not a renunciate. A renunciate cannot incur a penalty for not tending the sacrificial fires, which is the duty of celibate students, who are not renunciates and who have the duty of performing rituals. Nor can any positive result, such as a harmful consequence, arise from the mere non-performance of obligatory rituals, as we know from the Vedic text 'How could being arise from non-being?' (Chānd.VI.ii.2), which teaches that being cannot arise from non-being. (Bh.G.Bh.III.1, intro.)

(7) The natural reward for the proper performance of these enjoined caste duties is attainment of heaven. For there are such texts from the Smṛti as 'The members of the various castes and stages of life who have applied themselves to their special duties enjoy the rewards of their deeds after death, and then, through the remnant of their merit and demerit, are reborn in favourable circumstances from the point of view of place of birth, caste, family, spiritual life, length of days, learning, career, happiness and intellect' (Ā.D.S. II.ii.2.3). And in the Purāṇas, too, we find that different 'worlds' and different other rewards are specified for the members of different castes and stages of life (whose duties have been well performed). (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.45)

The idea of what is meant by 'through the remnant' here is explained at B.S.Bh.III.i.8. When the merit to be experienced in heaven, derived from the actions of the previous life, has been exhausted through enjoyment, there remains a remnant of merit and demerit derived from other actions which leads to rebirth in this world and which is known by the term 'what clings' (anuśaya).

A full statement and refutation of the doctrine of liberation here under review in the present section is given in Sureśvara's Sambandha Vārtika, verses 47-101.

66 THE DOCTRINE THAT LIBERATION IS ACHIEVED BY A COMBINATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

There are some who hold that performance of rituals cannot bring liberation on its own, but it can if combined with knowledge. For we see that poison leads to death, and curds to fever, if they are taken on their own, but that the results are different if they are taken combined with recitation of mantras and an accompanying dose of sugar respectively. And the people who think thus quote as their proof the Vedic text 'Whatever one does with knowledge, faith and

meditation is more potent' (Chānd.I.i.10, cp. M.V.53,5). Some argue that knowledge and action have this extra power when they are combined on a basis of equality, taking their stand on the Vedic text 'His knowledge and his actions take hold of him' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.2). And they point out that the Veda contains examples of householders founding traditions in which metaphysical knowledge is taught, and regard this as a sign in favour of their view.

But both these points are wrong. Action only produces results in the realm of manifest name and form, as experience teaches and the Veda proclaims. It cannot be supposed to have any effect on liberation, which is the very negation of name and form. For whatever is the result of action is inevitably impermanent. And if liberation were the result of action, it would naturally be one of those impermanent results. So texts like 'Whatever he does with knowledge, faith and meditation' and the examples of householders founding traditions in which metaphysical knowledge is taught will have to be understood in another way. Otherwise there will be a contradiction with basic upanishadic teaching, as explained. In any case, liberation cannot be regarded as a possible result of action, as it is something (already existent and) merely hidden by Ignorance. Only knowledge can put an end to Ignorance, since anything else is, precisely, the result of metaphysical Ignorance! Darkness does not put an end to darkness.

There is an argument that runs as follows. No special reward is mentioned in the Veda for the performance of the obligatory daily ritual. But, since it has been prescribed, it must be assumed to bring a reward of some sort, and that reward must be liberation. But this argument is wrong. For the only results of action in the context of ritual are production, obtaining, transformation and purification (M.V.50,1). Only that can be enjoined which could be conceived as producing these results.

Nor can metaphysical knowledge and action co-exist, that one could imagine their being combined. For they are contradictory by very nature. And one also deduces that a combination of knowledge and action cannot be the means to liberation from the fact that the seeker of liberation is enjoined to give up all action. There can, of course, be a combination of knowledge with action in the case of meditations on the Absolute as associated with finite forms. For when one is carrying out meditations of this kind one still has the idea of oneself as an individual capable of action. Action is an auxiliary even for knowledge of the Absolute in its attributeless form, but only an indirect one; so that if there is a combination of action and knowledge at all, it must be in successive stages. The doctrine that liberation comes through a combination of knowledge and action is combated in Śaṅkara's commentaries and in the Sambandha Vārtika of Sureśvara (verses 357-77) on these lines.

(1) Ritualistic action as enhanced by 'knowledge' (i.e. by prescribed meditations on the symbolic significance of some factor in the ritual) can only take one up to a certain point (i.e. to identity with the creator-deity, Hiraṇyagarbha). For both action and its results depend on the world of manifest name and form. But action cannot affect the Absolute. For the Absolute is not an effect. It is constant, changeless and eternal. It has no manifest attributes. It does not consist of name and form. It is by nature free from action, its factors and results. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.)

(2) Scrutinizing the worlds (realms of experience in the after-life) won through action, the Brahmin should come to view them with indifference. Everything here is the result of action and is impermanent. Why indulge in action any more? (Muṇḍ.I.ii.12)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: All such worlds are won through action, and since they are produced by action they are impermanent. It means that nothing (in the empirical realm) is eternal. All action results in the impermanent.

(3) The Vedic text 'Whatever he does with knowledge...' (vidyā, Chānd.I.i.10) does not refer to knowledge in all senses. It only refers to the 'knowledge' (meditation) which is the subject of the topic, which is expressed in the text 'He should meditate on the Udgītha, which is this syllable Om' (Chānd.I.i.1). (B.S.Bh.III.iv.10)

Here, meditation on the Udgītha is a mere auxiliary to the ritual. We have already seen that knowledge (meditation) is combined with ritualistic action in order to enhance the effect of the latter. The revered Commentator is saying that metaphysical knowledge of reality is not the subject under discussion.

(4) The opponent also claimed (B.S.Bh.III.iv.5) that the text 'His knowledge and his action accompany him' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.2) was an indication that knowledge produced no results on its own (without the help of action). Against this we reply that it is necessary here to make a distinction. What the text means is that knowledge follows one man, action another man. The phrase 'his knowledge and his action' has to be taken distributively, like the words 'a hundred' in 'give a hundred between them both', which means fifty to one and fifty to the other. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.11)

The ensuing part of the commentary shows that this is hypothetical teaching, based on a voluntary concession to the opponent's standpoint. For the passage continues:

Nor could the text about the 'accompanying' on the part of knowledge and action have reference to the one desirous of liberation. For the passage ends by saying 'This is for the man who desires' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6), and thereby reveals that it is for the benefit of the one concerned with further transmigratory existence, while the separate appearance of the phrase 'as for the one who has no desires' shows that the intention is to deal with one who desires liberation separately. In the case of teaching for the sake of the one concerned with further transmigratory experience, one may understand by 'knowledge' both prescribed knowledge (here = merit from prescribed Vedic meditations) and forbidden knowledge (improper meditations in Tāntrika cults, etc.), there being no difference between the two in that context. The text refers equally to both prescribed and prohibited actions wherever found. If it is taken in this way (i.e. as pertaining to transmigratory life), the text about 'accompanying' on the part of knowledge and action need not be understood distributively in the sense mentioned above (and the merit from knowledge and action, meditation and ritual, will belong to the same person). (B.S. Bh.III.iv.11)

(5) (Liberation is said figuratively to be the 'result' of knowledge, because metaphysical knowledge puts an end to the obstruction wrought by Ignorance, while Ignorance cannot be destroyed by action.) Nor can one conceive of any other obstruction to liberation apart from Ignorance, of a kind that might be removed by action. For liberation is eternal, and is nothing other than the true nature of the seeker himself. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.)

(6) Nor does metaphysical knowledge require the support of action to yield its result of transcendence of all plurality (kaivalya). For the presence of action would actually be contradictory to the cessation of Ignorance. Darkness does not remove darkness. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.67, intro.)

(7) (One cannot accept the contention of some Ritualists that the reward for the performance of the obligatory ritual must be liberation — since no other reward is mentioned.) For such ritual (cp. M.V.50,1) could only effect production, transformation, obtaining or purification (none of which would encompass liberation). And that is as far as reasoning on the data of Vedic revelation allows us to go. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.)

(8) The notions of difference and non-difference being mutually contradictory, the notion 'All this is but the Self' cannot arise without destroying the natural notion of Ignorance that the various factors of an action and its results are all mutually distinct. But it is only when one is conscious of

mutual differences between the various factors of an action, and between the action and its results, that an injunction to perform an action (for an end) is intelligible. For when the disease of double-vision has been cured, the representation of the moon as one only cannot arise without effacing the notion based on the disease that there were two moons — and it is the same with other illusions of the same kind. For knowledge and Ignorance are contradictories. (Chānd.Bh.II.xxiii.1)

(9) Have we not proved, then, that knowledge and action should be combined for liberation by members of all stages of life? No, you have not proved it. For the seeker of liberation is ordered to abstain from all action. (Bh.G.Bh.III.1, intro.)

(10) And knowledge (without action) is available to the celibate orders. For so it stands in the Vedic texts. (B.S.III. iv.17)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The Vedic texts speak of metaphysical knowledge for the celibate orders. And knowledge cannot in their case be subordinate to action. For they do not have to perform any Vedic ritual like the daily Agnihotra at all.

(11) It is only knowledge that actually brings liberation, but action is an indirect aid and is spoken of as a cause figuratively. And when it is said that action co-operates with knowledge, the reference is to past (preparatory) actions performed before metaphysical knowledge arose. For once the knower of the Absolute has obtained enlightenment he is no longer able to perform the Agnihotra or any other ritual. For when there is knowledge that one's own Self is that Absolute which is beyond the reach of injunctions, one passes beyond the realm of Vedic commands. But in the case of knowledge arising from meditations on themes involving form and attributes, the sense of being an individual performing an action is not brought to an end. In such a case, therefore, the Agnihotra and other ritualistic action can still follow. For when such ritualistic action is performed by one who is without desire for any personal advantages it can contribute to knowledge (by purification of the mind), as it has no other function to perform. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.16)

67 KNOWLEDGE IDENTIFIED WITH MEDITATION: THE ABSOLUTE MADE SUBORDINATE TO INJUNCTIONS TO MEDITATE

There were other theorists who identified knowledge of the Absolute with a form of meditation. They quoted texts which they deemed to prescribe meditations, such as 'It is the Self

that should be seen' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5), 'He (the Self) it is who should be investigated' (Chānd.VIII.vii.1) and 'One should meditate only on "It is the Self"' (Bṛhad.I.iv.7). And they held that the texts of the Upanishads, too, only gave information about already-existent entities through mentioning particulars of the forms under which they had to be conceived in meditation. They treated them on the same footing as texts giving information about sacred objects needed as auxiliaries for the ritualistic injunctions, like the sacrificial post and the āhavanīya fire and so forth (objects in regard to which action is prescribed). And they treated liberation as a distant future reward of the after-life, arising from the merit of practising prescribed meditations, like heaven and other occult rewards (which flow mysteriously from the practice of the ritual and supervene after the death of the body). Or, according to another theory, it may be accepted that the reward for practising prescribed meditation is itself the cessation of Ignorance.

The Teachers of our line combat this theory as follows. Vision of the Self can be shown to arise from merely hearing the Vedic texts which communicate the Absolute as the true Self and as reality. This being so, nothing further remains to be done in response to such commands as 'It should be seen' and so on. The Vedic texts teach that liberation supervenes immediately on metaphysical knowledge. They do not leave any room for anything else to be done afterwards. It must be taken that liberation is the state of being without a body, and is not attainable through meritorious action. For we have texts denying that there is any contact either with the pleasant or the unpleasant in liberation (e.g. Chānd.VIII.xii.1), and others proclaiming that liberation is our true natural state. Another reason why liberation is not attainable through action is that it is eternal and raised above all change, and not subject to any of the four characteristic modes of action dealt with in the Veda (M.V.50,1). In this respect liberation differs radically from the sacrificial post and other material objects which, unlike liberation, are not identical with the Absolute, and so depend on action for their existence.

Nor is it correct to identify knowledge with meditation. It has already been shown (M.V.52,1) that, on the Vedic view, the function of knowledge is merely to illumine the real. Its only role (in the present context) is to put to an end that metaphysical Ignorance which is the impediment to liberation. Nor is this knowledge of which we are speaking, namely the metaphysical knowledge of the identity of one's true Self with the Absolute, a meditation like the prescribed symbolic meditations (sampat, meditations in which the attributes of a higher entity are superimposed onto a lower entity, so that the higher entity is seen in the lower entity, its symbol). For the texts proclaiming the identity of one's true Self

with the Absolute fulfil their entire function in expounding it alone (and are not also concerned with enjoining an action of any kind). Nor is it right to say that metaphysical Ignorance can be brought to an end through prescribed meditations. For meditations performed in obedience to injunctions are actions, and, being thus themselves effects of metaphysical Ignorance, are unable to bring it to an end.

(1) But do not these supreme metaphysical texts of the Upanishads supply the subject-matter for obedience to injunctions such as 'The Self should be known'? No. For we have already explained that these supreme metaphysical texts leave nothing over that has to be done. Texts like 'That thou art', which communicate the true nature of the Self, cause vision of the Self at the very time they are heard. So one does not have to go on afterwards to obey an injunction to see the Self, as if this were a separate duty. We have already given this answer before. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

(2) Nor is the text 'One should meditate only on "It is the Self"' an originating injunction (utpatti-vidhi, from active obedience to which a reward would follow). Why not? Because, apart from acquiring metaphysical knowledge from the texts that state the true nature of the Self and negate the not-self, there is nothing further that has to be done, either mentally or physically. But the Ritualists hold that an injunction has only performed its office when there is the idea of some human activity that has to be performed over and above the mere reception of knowledge from hearing the text containing the injunction. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

(3) There are many Vedic texts which exhibit liberation as following immediately upon metaphysical knowledge of the Absolute and thereby deny that anything further has to be done. Consider, for instance, 'He who knows the Absolute, that supreme principle, verily becomes the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.III.ii.9), 'All a person's merit and demerit (the cause of his rebirth) is destroyed, when the Absolute has been known, the Absolute that is both the transcendent and the manifest' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.8), 'He who knows the bliss of the Absolute experiences fear from no quarter' (Taitt.II.9), 'O Janaka, you have attained the fearless state' (Bṛhad.IV.ii.4), 'Then the Absolute knew itself alone as "I am the Absolute". Therefore it became the all' (Bṛhad.I.iv.1) and 'What delusion, what grief, can there be for him who sees the unity of all?' (Īśa 7). (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(4) The Vedic text describes transmigratory experience in the same way as we have done when it says, 'Verily, there can be no end to pleasure and pain for the one who remains associated with a body' (Chānd.VIII.xii.1). However, it

continues later, 'Him who is without a body, pleasure and pain verily do not touch'. Because it says that pleasure and pain do not touch such a person, we conclude that it denies that any acts of merit have to be performed in obedience to Vedic injunctions when there is the state of freedom from the body called liberation.... If you say that the state of being free from the body itself has to be gained through acts of merit, we reply that it is not so, since freedom from the body is the natural state. For we have such Vedic texts as, '(Having known)... Him who, dwelling in all bodies, is not Himself embodied, the stable within the unstable' (Kaṭha I.ii.22). (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.60,2)

(5) For we find in the world that nothing is permanent which can only come into being through a transformation, like curds (which are a transformation of milk), or which has to be produced, like a pot. Nor can it be said that liberation is dependent on action in the sense of needing to be obtained. For, as being the true nature of one's own Self, it is not subject to being 'obtained'.... Nor does liberation depend upon action in the form of purification. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.50,1; 59,12)

(6) The Vedic text 'He carves the sacrificial post' can stand as a subordinate injunction which brings the sacrificial post into being, as the latter is something which has to be brought into being or it would not exist at all. But there cannot be any such injunction to bring into being the unity of all as the Self, since this is already a self-established fact. (S.V. 657)

(7) Meditation is dwelling on something mentally. Though mental, it depends on human will, and can either be done or not done or done in a different way. Knowledge, on the other hand, is the result of the application of a means of valid cognition, and bears on the true nature of an already-existent object. Knowledge, therefore, does not fall within the province of what can be done, not done or done differently. It is conditioned neither by a command nor by the human will, but by the nature of an already-existent entity. (B.S.Bh. I.i.4, cp. M.V.52,1)

(8) There are Vedic texts which show that the sole result of metaphysical knowledge that the true nature of one's Self is the Absolute is to put an end to the impediment that prevents liberation. For instance we have, 'You, indeed, are our father. You take us beyond Ignorance' (Praśna VI.8), 'Master, I have heard from people like yourself that he who knows the Self crosses beyond grief. My lord, I am in grief. Take me, my lord, beyond grief' (Chānd.VII.i.3) and 'To him whose sins had been obliterated, the venerable Sanatkumāra showed what

lies beyond Ignorance' (Chānd.VII.xxvi.2). (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(9) If knowledge of the identity of one's true Self with the Absolute were taken as resting on an injunction to perform meditation on the attributes of a higher entity as present in a lower one (sampat), this would do violence to the grammar of the texts in which it is taught (which are in the indicative, not the imperative mood). (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

(10) Whether Ignorance be understood as absence of knowledge, as doubt, or as positive wrong knowledge, in any case it can only be eliminated through knowledge and not through action. For action is not contradictory to any of them. (Bṛhad.Bh. III.iii.1)

(11) All practical experience of the Absolute as an object of meditation, or as the one performing meditation, takes place in the state of Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.i.12)

68 THE VIEW OF THOSE WHO ACCEPT AN INJUNCTION IN THE CONTEXT OF METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE

Some held that there must be an injunction even for metaphysical knowledge. Otherwise, they said, if it were not duly enjoined, it could not be part of what the Veda intended to teach.

But this view will not stand examination. For knowledge derived from words does not depend on the presence of an injunction in the sentence heard. A Vedic text affirming the existence of the Absolute only informs the person hearing it. It does not at the same time order him to understand its own content. For knowledge arises at the very moment the text is heard. If the text is a means of knowledge at all, it cannot depend on an injunction to perform its function of communicating information. For other means of knowledge (perception, inference, etc.) do not depend on an injunction in any such way.

What then of the expressions in imperative form found in the Veda, such as 'You should seek to know that' (Taitt.III.1) and 'It should be seen' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5)? They have to be understood in some different sense, either positively, as promoting knowledge of the Self by turning the hearer's mind towards the inmost Self, or else negatively, as turning his mind away from the not-self. For knowledge cannot be the subject of an injunction. And the true Self, as the Absolute, the object of right knowledge, is not anything that can be either rejected or acquired (that one would try to act on it). Nor is there any evidence that anything can act on its own Self. And again, to accept that there should be an injunction even

for verbal knowledge about matters of fact would take us altogether too far, as it would make all knowledge derived from words dependent on an injunction (which would lead to infinite regress, M.V. 68,6). On these grounds the revered Commentator refuted the view in question.

(1) An injunction which gives information about the nature and results of an act of merit only gives a person this information incidentally in the course of enjoining him to do the act. A text affirming the existence of the Absolute, on the other hand, only gives a person information. As immediate apprehension (of the Absolute) arises directly from (hearing) the (affirmation contained in the) text, the person hearing it cannot be enjoined to carry the immediate apprehension out (as if it were the result of some subsequent act). On the contrary, the knowledge just springs up automatically, as in the case of an object standing before one's eyes. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1)

(2) The idea of fire, when one is in the presence of that well known object, is not dependent on an injunction, nor is it a mere creation of the human mind. It is in fact a piece of *knowledge*, conditioned by the nature of the object perceived. It is not an act. And it is the same with all objects of the various means of knowledge (such as perception, inference, etc.). This being so, knowledge of the Self in its true form as the Absolute cannot be dependent on an injunction to act. Imperative and similar forms applied to it, even in Vedic texts, lose their imperative force and become blunted, as razors become blunted if used against hard objects like stones. For here the object to which they are applied is something not subject to rejection or acquisition. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.125,1)

(3) But what do these apparent injunctions mean — texts like 'The Self, verily, should be seen, heard about...' (Bṛhad. II.iv.5), which have the appearance of injunctions? Their purpose, we say, is to turn the hearer away from the objects of his natural instinctive activity. The extraverted person, who thinks 'Let me have what is desirable and avoid what is not desirable', does not achieve life's highest goal. But when such a person comes to desire the supreme human goal, texts like 'The Self, verily, should be seen' and so on turn him away from the natural concern with the psycho-physical organism and its interests, and engage him in continuous remembrance of the inmost Self. Then finally the true principle, the Self, not subject to rejection or acquisition, is taught to such a person, when he is sincerely engaged in investigating the true nature of the Self. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.125, intro.; 125,1, note)

(4) Texts in the form of a command such as 'The Self should be

seen', which are found in the sections dealing with the highest knowledge, are fundamentally for the purpose of turning the hearer in the direction of the knowledge of the Self, and are not primarily to be regarded as injunctions to become aware of the real. Even in the world, when people give a command and say 'Look here' or 'Listen to this', the meaning of such phrases really is 'Pay attention', and not 'Acquire a piece of direct knowledge'. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21, cp. M.V.125,2)

(5) When one speaks of the individual soul, the individual able to act and undergo experiences, one is in fact referring to the Absolute, but associating the latter with particulars brought into being by apparent conditioning adjuncts such as the intellect. There is no contradiction with such texts as 'He should not aim to know speech, he should know the speaker' (Kauṣītaki III.8), which give teaching designed to turn the hearer towards his inmost Self so as to exhibit the Absolute in its true state, free from the particulars brought in by apparent limiting adjuncts. (B.S.Bh.I.i.31)

(6) Perhaps you will object that, confronted by a mere statement of the true nature of the Self, a person would not actually go on to know the Self without some injunction. But this would not be right. For knowledge of the true nature of the Self arises simply from hearing the words of the person declaring it. What would be the good of repeating what had already been done?

Do you object that he would not even hear the text without an injunction? But this objection is wrong, as it would lead to infinite regress. If he would not proceed to hear the content of the words spoken by the one declaring the true nature of the Self without an injunction, he would not proceed to hear the content of the text containing the injunction without a previous injunction. And he would not proceed to hear that injunction without a previous one, and so to infinity. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

(7) The Self does not require to be prompted by one of the means of knowledge (perception, inference, etc.,) to know itself, because here the object is nothing but its own Self. Moreover, when the Self is known, the authoritativeness of all authoritative means of knowledge comes to an end. Once the Self is intuitively known in its true nature, the interplay of means of knowledge and objects of knowledge can no longer continue. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69, cp. M.V.46,11)

69 KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF ONLY COMES THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF REPEATED AFFIRMATION (PRASAṄKHYĀNA VĀDA)

The doctrine of the Prasaṅkhyāna Vādins was as follows. It is true (they said) that there can be no injunction bearing directly on knowledge. But injunctions are needed in the Upanishads for the practice of repeated affirmation. For there cannot be knowledge of the Self simply from hearing the relevant texts once. Again, there cannot be knowledge of the Self simply through the texts without reasoning over them, so there must be repeated practice at that too. Or again, since hearing the texts and reasoning over them will only yield general (abstract) knowledge of the Self, the practice of repeated affirmation (abhyāsa) is needed for particular concrete experience. Or again, we may admit that metaphysical Ignorance is removed when metaphysical knowledge once arises. Nevertheless, metaphysical Ignorance persists spontaneously, without regard to cause and effect. It cannot be definitively eliminated, any more than the ordinary ignorance that keeps on cropping up with regard to new objects (in ordinary life) can be eliminated. On the contrary, it is certain to arise again, on account of the impressions accumulated during many previous lives. So there has to be the practice of repeated affirmations of the truth (throughout life) to keep metaphysical Ignorance at bay. For we have the upaṅishadic text, 'Once the wise Brahmin has acquired knowledge, he should practise repeated affirmation' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.21).

Or the theory may take another form. It may argue that the knowledge derived from a sentence must consist in a synthesis of the meanings of the separate words, and cannot itself fail to be synthetic. And so repeated spiritual practice must follow in order to obtain a simple spiritual intuition (eliminating the element of synthesis of a manifold). Thus a fourfold means of knowledge is required to know that all is one as the Self, consisting of revelation, reason, repeated affirmation of the results so attained and realization of the Self, as expressed in the verse, 'Seekers of liberation come to see their own Self as liberated through the fourfold means of knowledge, consisting of revelation, reason, repeated practice and "the Self"' (quoted by Ānandagiri at S.V. 810).

But all this is wrong. If metaphysical knowledge did not arise directly from the texts, the latter would stand exposed as inauthoritative. For independent reason has no authority in this sphere. It would be absurd to expect that, if knowledge did not arise after revelation and reason had been resorted to once, it would arise through repeated affirmation of the inadequate knowledge so far obtained. No formal injunction for repeated affirmation, called Prasaṅkhyāna, is found anywhere in the Veda. Repeated affirmation of what had been heard and reflected over once could not give rise to any

new concrete metaphysical intuition that had not arisen in the first place. The theory results in the further difficulty that, if it were followed, the meaning of the Vedic texts in view would in fact never be ascertained; for a series of deliberately repeated affirmations would be limitless. The opponent's notion that even after metaphysical Ignorance had been destroyed by metaphysical knowledge it could return again later is unfounded. Equally unfounded is the expectation that, if it was capable of returning, it could be finally eradicated by repeated affirmation.

Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara refuted the doctrine of those who believed in the necessity of repeated affirmation througout life on other counts too. For instance, if the texts are an authoritative source of knowledge (as they are), then if they only gave rise to abstract and synthetic knowledge (which is not in fact the case, cp. M.V.67,3), such knowledge would have to be accepted as the final truth. Authoritative means of knowledge are not like the factors of a piece of action; they cannot be intensified through repetition to produce different degrees of knowledge. Whether the Absolute had or had not been known through some other means of knowledge, it would not in fact be susceptible to any form of synthesis, and in any case there could be no injunction to know it. And finally, repeated affirmation of wrong knowledge would not produce right knowledge, but would confirm and strengthen the wrong knowledge.

(1) If the Veda were to depend on reasoning and other factors even in a matter for which it was the sole authority, it would lose its status as an independent authority all round, and become dependent on external confirmation (like casual human speech). (S.V. 809)

(2) If each of the four means of knowledge (alleged on your theory to be) involved (cp. M.V. p.187) produced a single resultant-cognition only through co-operating together (as you now claim), that would stand in contradiction with your original doctrine that each of them separately brought *some* knowledge, which was enhanced by the next means mentioned in the series. (So the 'co-operation' theory must be rejected.) (S.V. 812, ed. Mahadevan 813)

According to these theorists, knowledge of the Self was gradually improved successively by each of the four factors of the means of knowledge.

(3) If the means for knowledge of the Absolute were purely secular reasoning, such as a critical examination of the implications of dream and the other states of consciousness, then reality would be accessible to the empirical means of knowledge, and so not the content of Vedic teaching. And the

Vedic teaching on this head would be rendered inauthoritative by being reduced to a mere reproduction of what was already known through reason. But if the arguments were taken (not as secular but) as based on the Veda, on the ground that they exist merely to explain Vedic tradition, then they themselves would be mere reproductions of what was already known from another source. Consequently they would have no independent authority and would not be a separate means of knowledge distinct from Vedic revelation (and this would undermine the opponent's doctrine of four separate means of knowledge). (S.V. 816-7)

And so reason could not support Vedic revelation either.

(4) If texts like 'That thou art' do not give rise to the idea of one's identity with the Absolute when heard once, what hope is there that they will do so if they are heard repeatedly? To this it might be replied that no text can promote immediate intuitive knowledge of anything on its own. The text is dependent on reasoning to promote a concrete intuition of one's identity with the Absolute. But even so repetition would still be useless (as the reasoning would do its work, if it did it at all, when performed once). (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

(5) Prasaṅkhyāna is repetition. How can that enhance knowledge? Nothing new is added to the object to be known by repeated application to the means of knowledge. (S.V. 818)

(6) If the Self is understood in the empirical sense as the knower in ordinary experience, it cannot at the same time be part of the means of knowledge (as the Prasaṅkhyāna Vādins claim, cp. M.V. p.187). Nor could it be part of the means of knowledge if it were understood as the supreme Self, as then it would be the object to be known. And if the whole theory of a fourfold means of knowledge is wrong, how could direct experience of the Self be the result of resort to these means? (S.V. 824)

So on either theory the Self cannot be one of the means of knowledge (as the Prasaṅkhyāna Vādins claim it to be).

(7) Suppose one objects that text and reasoning would yield only general (abstract) knowledge, not particular (concrete) knowledge.... And concrete experience is needed to put an end to metaphysical Ignorance (which is itself evident in concrete experience). So repetition is needed to gain that. But this is wrong. For if hearing a text and reasoning over it do not give rise to concrete experience the first time, it is impossible that they should do so merely through being repeated. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2, cp. M.V.206,6, note, section 3)

(8) Perhaps you will object that there is no such thing as a constant stream of ideas communicating knowledge of the Self, as in fact we (invariably) find wrong ideas about the Self and their results. Hence it is only the last cognition of the Self before death that ends metaphysical Ignorance, and not an earlier one. But this idea, too, is wrong. For if the first cognition of the Self proved erroneous (as the theory demands), this would undermine the authority of all the others. If the first idea of the Self did not remove metaphysical Ignorance, the last would not either, as its content would be the same.

To this you might reply that it is the whole series of cognitions of the Self that removes metaphysical Ignorance, not any single cognition in isolation. But this also is wrong. For there cannot be a continuous series of cognitions of the Self if one has to carry on with the business of living. For a continuous stream of cognitions of the Self and ideas to do with the business of living are contradictory.

Perhaps you will say that there can be a continuous stream of cognitions of the Self right up to the death of the body, obtained by ignoring ideas connected with the business of living. But this again is wrong. For it is impossible to determine in advance how many cognitions there will be, and the theory will have the fault of attributing uncertainty to the Vedic teaching. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

(9) If metaphysical Ignorance could return as before during the life-time of the liberated person, even after the metaphysical reality had been rightly known, what proof is there that it would not return again after his death? Knowledge and Ignorance, therefore, can have no other relation but that of contradictories (i.e. can only be knowledge and absence of knowledge), like fire and what it burns. Ignorance is subject to cancellation. How could it cancel knowledge, which is what cancels it? Fire, the burner, cannot be burnt by what it burns. Metaphysical Ignorance, though it still existed at the time, could not (in the case of the enlightened person) prevail against metaphysical knowledge when the latter arose. How can you possibly show that, even after it has itself already been destroyed, Ignorance could cancel metaphysical knowledge? (B.B.V. IV.iv.914-7)

(10) That which has been known through an authoritative means of knowledge cannot be questioned. This statement applies to the Absolute as known through the Veda, whether it is known as a synthesis of diverse elements or otherwise.... Because means of knowledge relate to their object as illuminator (and therefore do not create or modify it but conform passively to its nature), they cannot supply variable degrees of knowledge according to the intensity with which they are applied; in this they differ from the factors of creative action, which produce more or less of their effect according to the amount

of energy and perseverance put into the act. No man of true learning could say that the abstract and synthetic knowledge of the Absolute derived from merely hearing the words of the Vedic texts was inexact (and therefore required to be corrected through Prasaṅkhyāna) unless he already knew the Absolute through other means of knowledge: for he would not have any evidence for the claim. He could not even make such a claim if he *did* have knowledge of the Absolute through other means, knowledge which contradicted the Vedic revelation. For his own preferred means of knowledge and the Vedic revelation would both equally be authoritative means of knowledge, and there would be no evidence for accepting one rather than the other. Indeed, if the Absolute could be known in its simple (true) form through some means of knowledge other than the Veda (which is not in fact the case), there would be no need for upanishadic meditation, and the apparent injunction invoked in favour of it ('Once the wise man has acquired knowledge, he should practise repeated affirmation', Bṛhad.IV.iv.21) would be useless....

Morever, the opponent lays claim to a strange kind of omniscience when he says that knowledge derived from the Veda, which is a certified means of knowledge, is incorrect and has to be corrected by something that is not even a means of knowledge.... And again, the impression that arises from meditating on a wrong idea (which is the discipline that the opponent recommends) would in fact impede the dawn of right knowledge and not give rise to it.... Even in the world it is seen that repetition is a strengthening force. One should see that here also, in the context of the metaphysical teaching of the Veda, repetition of a wrong idea will only strengthen it. (B.B.V. IV.iv.813,15-18,20,23,30)

70 THE DOCTRINE OF THE ELIMINATION OF THE UNIVERSE

There were some who thought that the heart of the teaching of the Veda was the elimination of the universe. The purpose of every text was to enjoin on the hearer the elimination of one or other of the distinctions or other elements that make up his world of experience. A text like 'He who desires heaven should offer sacrifices' (T.S. II.v.5) is meant for elimination of the identification of the body with the soul. A text like 'He should fetch water in the milk-pail for the one who desires cattle' (Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra I.xvi.3) is for the elimination of personal desire for pleasures like food. The negative texts are for the elimination of action arising from passions like attachment. Texts enjoining the obligatory ritual, daily and occasional, are for the elimination of action based on the ordinary natural instincts. And so they held that the texts of the ritualistic portion of the Veda had the function of

preparing a person for true knowledge of the Self through eliminating distinctions. In the same way, texts attributing form to the Absolute were held to have no different purpose, and to have been introduced to demonstrate that the Absolute was without form, through gradual elimination of the universe. That the texts affirming the reality of the Absolute were for the purpose of eliminating the universe of plurality was regarded as obvious. And thus the whole Veda was seen as concerned with eliminating the universe of plurality.

But there are many reasons why this theory is wrong and why there cannot be an injunction to eliminate the universe. To begin with, in the texts affirming the existence of the Absolute, (there is only affirmation and) no genuine injunctions are found. Then again, the universe of plurality, superimposed through Ignorance, is eliminated automatically (and without need of an injunction) simply by the texts that communicate the true nature of the Absolute. And if the true nature of the Absolute has not been communicated, it is impossible to eliminate the universe of plurality through a mere act of obedience to an injunction. The theory also involves the difficulty that, since the soul falls within the universe of plurality, the soul, too, would be eliminated with the latter. Or again, if the individual soul were considered to be in truth the Absolute, it would be known from the texts communicating the true nature of the Absolute that the soul, in its true nature, was not subject to commands.

Nor should anyone suppose that when forms involving plurality are attributed to the Absolute for purposes of meditation, in such texts as 'made up of mind' (Chānd.III.xiv.2), there is any purpose of eliminating distinctions. For these forms are only connected with the relevant injunction to meditate. No injunctions to eliminate them are found. Nor is there any indication that the texts concerned with the Absolute, either with or without form, are included under any injunction to eliminate the universe on the ground of being a subordinate element in it, as the injunctions to perform the fore-sacrifices are a subordinate element in the latter (cp. M.V.70,1).

As for the texts of the ritualistic section of the Veda, there is no place whatever amongst them for an injunction to destroy the universe. One cannot suppose that texts like 'He who desires the possession of villages should offer sacrifices' are given for the sake of release through elimination of the universe of plurality. For such rewards as villages and the like are clearly perceived to belong to the universe. And texts concerned with ritual could not be for the sake of the elimination of the world of plurality; for, if they were, the whole world of transmigratory experience would by now have been obliterated. And if the purpose of rituals really had been liberation, then the whole conception (found in the Veda) that they lead to the possession of villages and other worldly

ends would have been without warrant. Nor can it be supposed that the rituals exist for the sake of a form of liberation that one reaches gradually by passing through heaven and other stages, as one climbs gradually up the stairs to the roof of a house. For the example cited is not a true parallel. The stairs are but instruments, whereas heaven and other such rewards are themselves genuine human goals pursued for their own sake. Nor can it be said that the texts have both purposes, as actions like digging a canal may serve different purposes at the same time, (such as irrigation and hygiene). For there is nothing to support this, while action and cessation from action (implied by liberation) are contradictory.

Again, the texts expressing metaphysical negations ('neither this nor that', etc.) admittedly help in the suppression of attachment and other passions. But there is nothing to show that the positive injunctions have a similar role. For activity of any kind is naturally directed towards the world of plurality. And the negative texts like 'not gross...' and so on effect the elimination of the body directly (in liberation, without need of the help of ritualistic injunctions). And ritualistic acts do not depend on each other mutually; each is exhausted in producing its own result. As for the fact that they can gradually fit a person to become a candidate for metaphysical knowledge (by purifying his mind to an ever greater degree) that is acceptable.

There is the additional difficulty that, if the Veda were exclusively concerned with injunction, this would make it difficult to accept the identity of the individual soul with the Absolute, as the Absolute is beyond the sphere of injunctions, and this would render the metaphysical texts of the Veda inauthoritative. And other faults would follow, such as making liberation the occult result of the performance of ritual and hence rendering it impermanent. On such grounds as these the doctrine is refuted at length in Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary III.ii.21 and in Sureśvara's Sambandha Vārtika 384-423.

(1) The texts promising rewards for meditations on presribed themes have aims that are different from those of the texts concerned with affirmation of the existence and sole reality of the Absolute. The two classes of texts cannot be treated as parts of one and the same topic. How, indeed, can you suppose them to form one topic? If you say that they all depend on one injunction, like the injunctions to perform the fore-sacrifices, which depend on the main injunction to perform the Full Moon Sacrifice which the fore-sacrifices precede, that is wrong. For the texts proclaiming the existence and sole reality of the Absolute are not associated with any injunction at all. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

(2) Let us suppose we receive the reply that this world-appearance, comprehending the microcosm such as the body and

its organs, and the macrocosm such as the five great cosmic elements like earth, and the objects into which they are transformed, is real and has to be eliminated. In that case, since the universe cannot be eliminated by an individual through his own activity, the teaching that it had to be eliminated would be a command to perform the impossible. And as the great elements like earth and the rest would all have been eliminated by the first single person who obtained liberation, the universe would now be without them (which is absurd).

Perhaps the opponent will contend that the Absolute is one, and that this universe of plurality is a false appearance superimposed on it which has to be eliminated through metaphysical knowledge. But in that case the correct course would be that knowledge of the Absolute should be conveyed by the negation of the illusory universe of plurality that had been superimposed on it through Ignorance. (This, however, could not occur through injunctions, but only) through (purely metaphysical) texts like 'One only, without a second' (Chānd. VI.ii.1) and 'That is the real, that is the Self, that thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7). When knowledge of the Absolute has been thus conveyed, enlightenment will arise automatically, and metaphysical Ignorance will stand abolished. Then this whole universe of name and form superimposed through Ignorance will be dissolved like a dream. Unless metaphysical knowledge of the Absolute has been attained in this way, injunctive texts saying 'Realize the Absolute' and 'Eliminate the universe' will not effect those ends even if repeated hundreds of times over. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

(3) And in regard to the individual soul, to whom the injunction is supposed to be addressed, we would ask whether he is to be considered as part of the world-appearance, or whether he is to be considered in his true nature as the Absolute. If he is to be considered as part of the world-appearance, then, since the doctrine teaches that the Absolute in its true nature is void of all plurality, the individual soul will have been reduced to nothing along with earth and the other great elements. To whom, then, will the injunction have been addressed? And who will there be to obtain liberation by obeying it?

On the alternative view, the soul would be considered in its true nature as the Absolute. But the Absolute is by nature incapable of receiving an injunction. As soon as the Absolute was known, the conviction would arise that the notion of individuality had been due to Ignorance. Since there would then no longer be anyone capable of receiving an injunction, there could not be an injunction. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

(4) On the other hand, when forms implying plurality are mentioned as themes for prescribed meditations in sections devoted to that subject, in such texts as 'Made up of mind, having the vital energy as its body, luminous in nature' (Chānd.III.xiv.2),

such texts should not be regarded as having been introduced for the sake of effecting eliminations. For they are connected with positive injunctions to perform the meditations concerned, such as 'He should frame some purpose' (Chānd.III.xiv.1). (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

(5) It is intelligible that attributes of this kind should have been imputed to the Absolute for purposes of those prescribed meditations that are to be followed by specific future rewards. But it is evidently incorrect to interpret them in a figurative sense and say that they are introduced for purposes of elimination of the universe of plurality. (B.S.Bh. III.ii.21)

(6) In regard to the fore-sacrifices (prayāja) and the New and Full Moon Sacrifices, unity of topic is defensible, as here the qualification of the sacrificer for both, arising from the fact that they co-operate to produce the same reward, which he desires, furnishes an element of unity. But in the present context, as between texts dealing with the Absolute associated with attributes, texts dealing with the Absolute unassociated with attributes and texts conveying commands, no element of unity is yielded by the qualifications of the people addressed (as they are all quite different). Attributes like 'luminous in nature' do not promote elimination of the world-appearance. Nor would elimination of the world-appearance promote attributes such as 'luminous in nature', as the two are mutually contradictory. For it is not right to burden one and the same text with the aim of total elimination of the world-appearance and continued respect for part of it. (B.S.Bh. III.ii.21)

(7) Perhaps you (who hold that *all* the texts of the Veda are concerned with liberation) will ask whether attaining identity with all is not liberation, quoting 'Therefore it became the all' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10). Yes, it is liberation. But Vedic texts like 'He who desires villages should offer sacrifices, he who desires cattle should offer sacrifices' do not have the goal of liberation in view. If the purpose of such injunctions had been realization of the non-dual Absolute it would not have been attainment of villages, cattle, heaven and the like — and then villages, cattle, heaven and the like would never have been mentioned. But they are mentioned, as particular rewards for different kinds of rituals. And if the purpose of Vedic rituals really was realization of the Absolute in its true non-dual form, the world of transmigration would not now exist. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.ii.1, intro.)

(8) Perhaps you will say that the injunctions to perform rituals for rewards, though their main aim is the elimination of the universe, do also have the secondary function of

promoting further transmigration (for those who want rewards in that realm). A light may be brought for the purpose of ascertaining the colour of a particular object, and yet it may also illumine everything else that stands within its rays. But this view is wrong, as it cannot be supported by any evidence. If the rituals and meditations enjoined by the Veda are intended to promote realization of the Absolute in its true non-dual form, it cannot be shown that they have the secondary function of effecting something completely different (namely, further experience in the realm of bondage). There is no evidence for it, either through perception, inference or revelation. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.ii.1, intro.)

(9) Perhaps you will claim that one becomes gradually fitted for knowledge of the Self through the performance of all the rituals which lead to heaven and other desirable goals, starting with the simplest and going on to the most elaborate. The process would be like one climbing up to the top of a house, passing up the stairs one by one.... But this is wrong. For heaven and the rest are not steps on the path to anything else. They are genuine human goals, pursued for their own sake. (S.V. 400,402)

(10) Perhaps you will say that one text can have both functions at the same time, just as a canal or a light can be useful in different ways at the same time. But this is not correct, for, according to the rules of Vedic exegesis, a text cannot mean more than one thing at the same time in this way.* Nor can one and the same text mean action and non-action at the same time. Canals and a light may be useful in different ways at the same time because they are perceived to be so in worldly experience; so in their case there is no difficulty. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.ii.1, intro.)

**(See Jaimini, P.M.S. II.i.46, quoted and discussed at Devasthali, 1959, p.186 ff. T.N.)*

(11) Ritualistic action, with its five factors comprising the sacrificer's wife, son, wealth, merit from meditation and merit from previous ritual, along with the sacrificer himself, belongs to the realm of metaphysical Ignorance. Hence it is not a means to attainment of the Self. If a person pursues one goal with the means appropriate to another the results are adverse. Running and walking about are not the right way to appease hunger and thirst. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.1, intro.)

(12) It is only reasonable to hold that what is a cause of action cannot at the same time be a cause of non-action. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.ii.1, intro.)

(13) We grant that the prohibitions contained in the Veda

are auxiliaries to cessation from action, inasmuch as they prohibit action for the sake of objects brought to mind by attachment and other passions. But how can the 'original' injunctions inhibit attachment? They do not even have the negative force of the 'excluding' or the 'restricting' injunctions*.... There is no difference between action for visible ends in the world and action for the sake of unseen ends to be enjoyed after death. Both are means to desired pleasures, motivated by attachment and other passions. Both promote attachment to the world equally. What is the difference between the two kinds of action that enables you to say that one promotes liberation while the other does not? (S.V. 411-2,418-9)

**(Vedic injunctions, as opposed to prohibitions, have positive grammatical form. They may be divided into three classes, however, where the last two classes, despite their positive grammatical form, imply negation, either through 'restriction' or 'exclusion'. The first class, original injunctions (apūrva-vidhi), enjoin actions to which one would not have been prompted without that particular injunction (vidhi). The term 'original injunction' (apūrva-vidhi) must be distinguished from the term 'originating injunction' (utpatti-vidhi, M.V. 67,2); the originating injunctions, small in number, form the most important sub-class within the ritualistic injunctions as a whole; they are the fundamental injunctions which direct one to perform a sacrifice for an end, and are contrasted with 'injunctions of application' (viniyoga-vidhi), most of which are themselves original injunctions (apūrva-vidhi), which tell you how to do it.*

In the threefold classification of injunctions as original, restrictive and exclusive, restrictive injunctions (niyama-vidhi) complete the specification of what has to be done. When it is known that rice must be husked, a niyama-vidhi specifying pounding the paddy restricts the sacrificer to that method of husking, so that he will not, for instance, gouge it out with his nails. This is not an original injunction, because he already knows that he has to husk the rice. Though its grammatical form is positive, its force is restrictive (negative).

Here there is no explicit injunction to gouge that has to be excluded. But where there is an injunction to seize a bridle, and the ritual includes both a horse and a donkey, the injunction might, so far, refer explicitly to the bridle of either animal. If a further injunction is added to seize the reins of the horse, this excludes not just the sacrificer's idea to seize the bridle of the donkey, but the explicit injunction to do so too. This is called an excluding injunction (parisaṅkhyā-vidhi). For more precise information, see Mahadevan on S.V. 412-3 and Keith 1921, p.86. T.N.)

(14) Perhaps you will suggest that where the Vedic texts

appear, at face value, to be concerned with heaven, we must infer that they are really concerned with elimination. But this is wrong. For their concern with the elimination of the body and the rest is openly established by their direct teaching at some points (i.e. in the metaphysical as opposed to the ritualistic texts: hence elimination of the body and so on need not and should not be indirectly inferred from texts speaking of other matters). When the whole of an elephant is perceived standing in front of you, you cannot infer its presence from perception of its leg. Negative texts like 'not gross' and so on directly negate the body and other features of the universe, (so there is no justification for an inference that positive texts must be artificially interpreted to perform this negative function). (S.V. 425-6)

(15) The injunctions to perform rituals and the texts affirming the existence of the (actionless) Absolute are each limited to their own task. How could they both apply to the same person at the same time when (unlike the chief and auxiliary injunctions for a ritual) they are not mutually dependent? (S.V. 398)

(16) And there is another point. If the Veda were really limited to injunction (as the opponent believes), then the teaching that the true Self of the individual soul was the Absolute, beyond the sphere of injunction, would be rendered inauthoritative. So the opponent is driven to say that the Veda teaches that one's true Self is the Absolute and also enjoins this knowledge on the hearer. But this would mean that the body of Vedic texts dealing with the Absolute, though forming a single science, would be teaching two different and mutually contradictory subjects (namely, realization of the actionless Absolute and performance of a duty).

In short, no one can save the doctrine that the Veda is concerned solely with injunction from a great many defects — such as contradiction of what the Veda actually teaches, affirmation of points that it does not teach, making liberation into a distant occult result of action like the occult results of ritual and thereby rendering it impermanent, and other faults besides. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21)

It is true that in our own doctrine we maintain that the world-appearance consisting of action, its factors and results, set up by metaphysical Ignorance, is eliminated through knowledge. Nevertheless, these criticisms which we have levelled at those who believe that the whole Veda consists of injunctions designed to eliminate the world-appearance have their purpose. We wish to show that, as pointed out by Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary to Brahma Sūtra I.i.4 (M.V.52,1), the section of the Veda devoted to metaphysical knowledge merely proclaims reality to be what it is (without any injunction being

implied), while the texts concerned with rituals and the texts concerned with prescribed meditations give their various injunctions to perform actions of various kinds.

71 THE DOCTRINE OF LIBERATION THROUGH ELIMINATION OF PLEASURE-DESIRE

There were others who held that those whose minds were sullied by pleasure-desire did not have the right to be candidates for knowledge of the supreme non-dual principle. Such people, they maintained, could attain to the state of Prajāpati through performance of ritual combined with meditation on unity in duality. One who had done this, they held, might then later attain the state of supreme non-duality, when all his desires had been eliminated.

But this doctrine also is without foundation. Pleasure-desire cannot be assuaged by the enjoyment of pleasures. If pleasure-desire is not killed out, then, even if one comes to hear the Vedic teaching about the bliss of the Absolute, it will not blunt the desire for sense-objects. And in these circumstances it will not be possible to attain the highest human end by meditation on unity in duality combined with performance of ritual. For rituals (ultimately yield pleasure and thereby) increase desire. Nor is attainment of the realm of Prajāpati necessarily a means to liberation. Indeed, the supreme bliss of the Absolute is present equally in everything. It is not any different under the apparent conditioning adjunct called 'Prajāpati' from what it is anywhere else. Nor is there any Vedic text that says that only he who has attained to the realm of Prajāpati first can attain liberation.

Sureśvara's Vārtika refutes the doctrine on these lines. Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda points out in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary that the means employed to attain the realm of Prajāpati cannot be the same as those required for the attainment of the virtue of non-attachment.

(1) Not so. For pleasure-desire is not eliminated through enjoyment of pleasures even for hundreds of years. By indulging one's pleasure-desire one greatly increases it. It is brought to an end by perception of the defects inherent in objects of pleasure.... If the bliss of the Absolute is merely heard about from the Vedic texts and not made the object of direct experience, this will not be enough to blunt the edge of the desire for joy from sense-objects. The way to end pleasure-desire, therefore, is to meditate on the pain-giving and impermanent character of sense-objects. Obeying injunctions to perform rituals for rewards results, not in the suppression of pleasure-desire, but in the opposite.

Attaining the state of Prajāpati is not a guaranteed means to liberation. From the standpoint of the highest truth, there

is no difference of rank between any of the apparent conditioning adjuncts of the real.... The reality is the same in Prajāpati and the meanest insect. This is clear both from reason and from such texts as 'And whichever of the gods awakened to his true nature as the Self became the Absolute. It is the same in the case of the Ṛṣis, it is the same in the case of men' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10). (S.V. 345,348-50,354)

(2) The course of discipline that leads to attainment of identity with Hiraṇyagarbha (= Prajāpati) cannot be the same as the course of discipline that leads to withdrawal from all empirical experience. Neither can the course of discipline that leads the one intent on the supreme Self to withdraw from all empirical experience be the same as that which leads to the state of identity with Hiraṇyagarbha. For you cannot derive the power to reach a particular state from a discipline which puts an end to reaching any state.

Perhaps you (Bhartṛprapañca) will claim that a person may attain the state of Hiraṇyagarbha after death, and then, with his organs dissolved, with only his name remaining, become fit to attain knowledge of the supreme Self. But that (would be self-condemned as an explanation of Vedic texts since it) would render useless the Vedic teachings about knowledge of the supreme Self given for ordinary people living in the world like ourselves. For texts like 'And whichever of the gods.... It is the same in the case of the Ṛṣis, it is the same in the case of men' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10) show that knowledge of the Absolute is taught as a goal available to *everyone*. (Bṛhad.Bh. III.ii.13)

72 THE VIEW THAT LIBERATION COMES FROM HALTING THE IMPRESSIONS OF THE THREE STATES OF WAKING, DREAM AND DREAMLESS SLEEP

There were some who thought that the Self was an object capable of being signified by a word and that it must therefore be knowable through one or other of the recognized means of empirical knowledge. And they maintained that, as the Self could be recognized through discriminating it from waking, dream and dreamless sleep through the method of agreement and difference,* there was no need to resort to the Veda as a means of knowledge in this context. The function of the Veda, rather, was to enjoin as a command the halting of the impressions of waking and the other states. Since the Self was self-luminous, it would naturally manifest of its own accord when the impressions had been halted. So they held that the upanishadic texts, like the texts laying down the ritual, were authoritative because they promoted action,not because, like perception and the other means of valid cognition, they revealed reality.

They therefore maintained that liberation would only come from the halting of impressions, whether other measures were taken or not.

This is wrong. It is self-contradictory to say that our Self is self-manifest, and also that, because it is an object capable of being signified by a word, it is knowable through the recognized means of knowledge. Awakening to this reality in fact results from *negating* distinctions like the notion that it is an object capable of being signified by a word. It is neither the meaning of a word nor of a sentence. And if means of knowledge other than the Veda were admitted in this context, and if it were through them that one knew about evil, and about the impressions as cause of evil, and about putting an end to evil through their destruction, then the texts of the Veda would certainly be rendered useless. For the final goal of life would be obtained without Vedic injunctions.

Again, it is impossible to believe that impressions accumulated over many lives could be brought to a halt in one single life. And if an impression cannot be destroyed by immediate knowledge that is antagonistic to it, how could it be shown to be subject to destruction merely through dwelling on the idea of such knowledge? So their doctrine that man is enjoined to dwell upon the idea of knowledge is also incorrect. Moreover, in dreamless sleep and kindred states (swoon, coma, trance) there are no impressions, and yet liberation does not supervene. Nor is there immediate intuition of the Self in those states, as there is no opportunity in them for the operation of the Veda as an authoritative means of knowledge. So the view that liberation follows merely from the halting of impressions is incorrect.

Further, the Self is the Witness both of Ignorance and of the means of knowledge. When it is already their Witness, the question of whether it is established or not established by the means of knowledge simply does not arise. And the idea that it requires an injunction and other further conditions before the existence of the Self can be established is merely ridiculous. Nor is it correct to think that if the Self is self-established, the texts which give knowledge of it are inauthoritative because they only repeat what is already known from some other source. For we know from experience that things that are at first not known become known only when some definite increment in knowledge has been sought and obtained, and what is a matter of common experience cannot be questioned.

As for what was said about the texts of the Upanishads only being authoritative when they laid down injunctions, like the ritualistic texts, that was simply wrong. Injunctions are appropriate when one has to learn that, for a given end, something has to be done which one will then go on to do. But here the highest end open to man is realized simply from knowledge. There is nothing remaining to be done, so the case

is quite different.

And there is another point. It is said that the Veda promotes action when it apprises one of the previously unknown means to some desired end. And the Veda does not promote action in any other way except this. So even in this context the authoritativeness of the Veda lies in the fact that *it conveys true information about reality*, not in the fact that it promotes action. This is further confirmed by the fact that the authority and validity of perception and the other means of knowledge also lie in their power to give information about the real.

Again, it is only Ignorance that renders the impressions evil. Our true Self, which is relationless, could not be connected with impressions but for metaphysical Ignorance. Further, if the Self is only known indirectly through inference arising from the sign 'different from the three states', it will not be known as identical with the Absolute. And so that is another reason why one needs to remove Ignorance. It is only Ignorance that obstructs the abolition of transmigratory life, although the non-existence of the latter is an eternally established truth. Only Ignorance obstructs realization of the Absolute, which is in truth eternally realized. This being so, it follows that Ignorance is abolished by knowledge arising from 'That thou art' and other Vedic texts and not by the halting of impressions.

And one should not raise the objection, 'How can one know that the Witness of the three states is the Absolute even from the Veda?' For the Witness of all means of knowledge (such as perception), and of the presence or absence of all states (such as waking, dream and dreamless sleep), is the Self in its true nature, Consciousness bereft of all plurality, not existing for the sake of another. It is only called a Witness (figuratively) relative to what it witnesses (which are but empty illusions). The only veil hiding it is Ignorance. Hence it can be communicated as the Absolute only by the removal of this veil through texts like 'That thou art'. The doctrine of liberation through the halting of impressions is refuted by Sureśvara on these lines in his Vārtika.

**(If one reviews one's experience reflectively, one sees that an identical Self is present constantly, while the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep pass away and give way to one another. One's Self, therefore, must be different from those three states. T.N.)*

(1) This Self is not, in truth, the meaning either of a word or of a sentence. It is known in its true nature, therefore, only through the negative texts. (S.V. 462)

(2) Therefore, since the reason for being caught in transmigration is supposed to be known through mere inference (to be

the psychic impressions), evil (on this theory) ceases for the soul when those impressions are destroyed. Liberation, the true goal of man, would thus be secured without recourse to the Veda, as in the view of the Buddhists and other anti-Vedic theorists. The Veda would thus be rendered useless. (S.V. 457-8)

(3) Because the impressions have arisen from many past lives, they are infinite in number. Man cannot bring all of them to an end in the same place in one life. (S.V. 459)

(4) If direct concrete knowledge of the Self, which destroys Ignorance, does not destroy those impressions of suffering, how will mere dwelling on such knowledge do so, when the latter will inevitably be broken by contradictory thoughts of pain and the like? (S.V. 460)

(5) Though there are no impressions in dreamless sleep, swoon and trance, yet there is no liberation either. Nor is the Self as ultimate knower manifest in these states, because of the absence of the operation of any means of knowledge. (S.V. 463)

(6) The Self is the principle of immediate experience. Ignorance (distorts but) does not obscure it; no means of knowledge reveals it (as if it were totally unknown before). How could it depend on anything (such as an injunction) to be known? (S.V. 467)

(7) Perhaps you will object that the Self must be self-established because none of the ordinary means of knowledge can reveal it, and that this renders the Vedic texts proclaiming it inauthoritative, as they are only informing one of what is already known. But this is wrong. For it is a matter of experience that metaphysical reality is not fully known without the discipline of hearing, pondering and sustained meditation. There is no direct awakening to truth without resort to this discipline. (S.V. 546-7)

Ignorance is immediately evident in experience. Knowledge arising from the authoritative means (the Veda) reveals the Self in its true nature as self-manifest by removal of metaphysical Ignorance. So the Veda does not here merely repeat what was known before from another source.

(8) Knowledge and Ignorance are both directly perceived in experience. What conceivable authority could one have for declaring impossible that which had actually been perceived? (S.V.548)

We have beginningless Ignorance and also knowledge that supervenes at a certain time — this is asserted on the basis of

experience. The appeal is to the rule 'Nothing that is perceived can be impossible'.

(9) An injunction is appropriate when a person first learns that something has to be done to attain a particular end, and then has to do something to accomplish it. But here, in the case of the texts proclaiming the true nature of the Self, the highest human end is gained immediately, simply by becoming awake to the reality proclaimed. We do not see the accomplishment of any end through action here. (S.V.586-7)

(10) And so, even when the Veda incites one to action, it only does so by giving information about previously unknown matters which would be the means to a desirable end. Its power to incite action only consists in its power to communicate knowledge. Thus the authoritativeness of the Veda lies in its power to convey true knowledge, not in its power to incite action. In this respect it is the same as the other authoritative means of knowledge, such as perception, where power to incite action is not found. (S.V. 637-8)

(11) Metaphysical Ignorance is the sole cause of connection with any evil. Even connection with the impressions depends solely on metaphysical Ignorance.... Even if logical analysis were to show that the Self was distinct from the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, as the genus 'cowhood' is distinct from the individuals in which it resides, how would that show (without the help of the Veda) that it was identical with the Absolute? (S.V. 464,856)

(12) In this special case, where the difference between having or losing depends on metaphysical Ignorance, nothing but correct metaphysical knowledge can secure this highest interest of man. He who desires the destruction of all evil from the Veda, overcomes all suffering when he hears from the Vedic texts 'Thou art the Absolute'. For his Ignorance is then destroyed. (S.V. 888-9)

(13) From hearing the texts one may acquire the following conviction, namely: I am the Absolute, from which proceed all the means of right knowledge, the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep and the distinction between being and non-being. The Absolute is that whereby all things not yet established become established, that on which being and non-being depend, that which does not exist for the sake of anything else and for the sake of which all else exists, and which never (in truth) has anything but itself to illumine. The triad of knower, knowledge and known, each mutually distinct, proceed from it. It is the real, and must be accepted as the Witness. The lotus of Consciousness must be seen as expanded (i.e. present) in dreamless sleep as well as in

waking, for the Veda says that there is no break in the seeing of the seer (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23). But, in its true nature, the lotus of Consciousness is not expanded (i.e. differentiated) in dream and waking any more than it is in dreamless sleep (as the Veda denies that there is true contact between the Self and the organs of empirical knowledge, Bṛhad.IV.iii.15). The Self is not a Witness in itself; it is a Witness only in relation to the (illusory objects that come before its light to be) witnessed. Being nothing but the inmost vision, it is not accessible to thought or speech.... Even though this inmost Self is thus immediately knowable, because it is self-luminous, and though it is the Witness of all metaphysical Ignorance and its effects, nevertheless it remains unknown until the advent of some definite increment in knowledge has been sought and obtained. Therefore it is only from hearing Vedic texts like 'That thou art', and not from any other source (such as obedience to injunctions or halting of impressions) that unshakable knowledge of reality as the one Self results. (S.V. 1082-6,1090-1)

73 THE VIEW THAT LIBERATION RESULTS FROM OBEDIENCE TO AN INJUNCTION TO SUSTAIN REMEMBRANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

Others held the following doctrine. The highest goal of human life cannot be fulfilled merely through hearing the kind of knowledge that one obtains through hearing. One has to sustain remembrance of that knowledge in addition. And from this one attains the highest goal of human life.

The revered Commentator refuted this doctrine on the ground that, once genuine knowledge of the Self had arisen, remembrance of it would be sustained automatically, and would not have to be enjoined as a duty. But he also offered an alternative view, purely as a concession to the ways of thinking of other people, through which an injunction could be accepted. If so, it must be accepted as a 'restrictive' injunction (cp. M.V. p.197) applicable on the assumption (made only as a concession) that knowledge had weakened with time, under the force of the merit and demerit that had initiated the life in which enlightenment was obtained. The revered Commentator altogether rejected and refuted the possibility of an 'original' injunction (cp. M.V. p.197) in this context.

(1) Perhaps you will say that something else to be done *is* implied after the mere knowledge arising from hearing the text, namely sustained remembrance of the knowledge of the Self that arose from the text. But this is wrong, as sustained remembrance is already implied as an automatic consequence. The moment that knowledge of the Self arises from the texts that proclaim the Self, it necessarily puts an end to all wrong

notions about the Self. When wrong notions of the Self have ceased, the natural memories that arise from them and bear on various aspects of the not-self no longer arise.

Moreover, everything other than the Self is then seen to be an evil. For when the Self has once been known, everything else is seen as evil. For all this realm of the not-self is transient and painful and impure, and has many other defects, while the Self, the reality, is the opposite. Hence memories based on experience of the not-self cease when the Self is known. Sustained remembrance of the knowledge of one's identity with the Self of all must follow automatically as (when all other memories have been obliterated) this is the only alternative left. And because such remembrance follows implicitly, it cannot be the subject of an injunction.

Further, it is on account of this sustained automatic remembrance of the knowledge of the Self that the defect of pain arising from grief, delusion, fear and fatigue ceases in the case of the enlightened person. Defects like grief and delusion proceed from wrong knowledge. And in support of this we have such Vedic texts as 'What delusion?' (Īśa 7), 'He who knows the bliss of the Absolute experiences fear from no quarter' (Taitt.II.9), 'O Janaka, verily you have attained the fearless state' (Bṛhad.IV.ii.4) and 'The knot of the heart is broken' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.9). (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

(2) As for the opponent's earlier statement that texts like 'Once the wise man has acquired knowledge of the Self alone, he should practise repeated affirmation' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.21) referred to acts of meditation over and above the mere understanding of the meaning of the words of the text, we agree that it is true. But such texts do not constitute original injunctions (cp. M.V. p.197). They only constitute restrictive injunctions, as they merely specify one already-known alternative.

Perhaps you will now ask how we can say that meditation is already known as one possible alternative among others, seeing that we have said earlier that sustained remembrance of the knowledge of the Self was regular, as it was the *only* alternative left. Quite right. But the merit and demerit that brought into being the body in which enlightenment was attained must nevertheless be fully worked out. Even after enlightenment has been attained, thought, word and deed inevitably continue. For merit and demerit that are already under way are more powerful (than knowledge), like an arrow that is already in flight and must run its course.

Therefore the stream of remembrance of knowledge of the Self is liable to be overpowered by the merit and demerit that occasioned the present life, and hence activity to strengthen it is already known as a possible alternative. Sustained remembrance of the knowledge of the Self gained from the upanishadic texts, therefore, has to be supported by renunciation

and dispassion and other characteristic disciplines of the spiritual life.

But this duty is not to be taken as resting on an original injunction, because it can be seen to be a duty without one. Therefore texts like 'Once the wise man has acquired knowledge of the Self alone, he should practise repeated affirmation' must be taken as restrictive injunctions, prompting one to adhere strictly to sustained remembrance of the knowledge of the Self which one has already gained. For no other way of interpreting the text is possible. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

The same point is made in the Commentary on Brahma Sūtra III.iv.47.

74 THE VIEW THAT LIBERATION ARISES FROM AN INJUNCTION TO SUPPRESS ALL MOVEMENT OF THE MIND

There were some who held that it was something else that the Upanishads enjoined over and above the mere knowledge derived from hearing the texts, namely suppression of all movement of the mind. For yoga is found enjoined in the Upanishads. Other schools also accept suppression of all movement of the mind as a method for attaining vision of truth. And the evidence for the claim that yogic vision is a part of Vedic doctrine finds indirect support in the upanishadic text, 'Having known this deity, the cause of all, through the disciplines of Sāṅkhya and Yoga, one is liberated from all bonds' (Śvet.VI.13).

This doctrine also is refuted by the revered Teacher Śrī Śaṅkara. For we do not find any other means to liberation except knowledge that one's true Self is the Absolute. The phrase 'having known... through the disciplines of Sāṅkhya and Yoga' really refers to the disciplines of knowledge and meditation as conceived in the Vedic tradition. And total cessation of all movement of the mind cannot be achieved through sustaining remembrance of knowledge.

(1) For the Veda denies that there is any other means to final beatitude apart from the knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Self derived from the Veda. This it does in the text, 'Only through knowing Him does one pass beyond death. There is no other path for reaching the highest state' (Śvet. III.8). (B.S.Bh.II.i.3)

(2) (The Yoga discipline of Patañjali is not a means to liberation.) For we do not find any means recognized in the Upanishads for obtaining the highest goal of life apart from knowledge that one's true Self is the Absolute. This is illustrated by such texts as, 'Then the Absolute knew itself alone (as "I am the Absolute"). Through that it became the all' (Bṛhad.

I.iv.10), 'He who knows the Absolute attains the supreme Being' (Taitt.II.1) and 'He who knows the Absolute, that supreme principle, verily becomes the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.III.ii.9). (Bṛhad. Bh.I.iv.7)

(3) It is true that the passage quoted from the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad spoke of metaphysical vision coming through Sāṅkhya and Yoga when it said, 'This... (the) cause of all, which is known through the disciplines of Sāṅkhya and Yoga' (Śvet.VI.13). But we have to understand here that it is only the knowledge and meditation taught in the Veda that is meant in this context, and that they are referred to by the words 'Sāṅkhya' and 'Yoga' because the latter are convenient approximate terms. (B.S.Bh.II.i.3)

(4) And (we also deny that the discipline of the Yoga School can lead to liberation), because there is no other way (except that of the Vedic discipline) to suppress the movements of the mind. For there is no way to stop the movements of the mind except through knowledge of the Self. There is, in fact, no discipline that will suppress all movements of the mind: there is only the automatic stream of remembrance that follows after metaphysical knowledge of the Self has arisen. (Bṛhad.Bh. I.iv.7)

75 THE DOCTRINE OF THE BHĀGAVATAS

The followers of the Bhāgavata tradition held the following views. The Absolute is the cause of the world. It is by nature eternally pure, conscious and liberated. Because it is taught that the individual soul is created by the Absolute, and that, as subject to transmigration, its nature is the opposite of that of the Absolute, the individual soul cannot have the conviction 'I am the Absolute'. If it did, it would mean that the Absolute would be sullied with the defects of the soul. So no one should suppose that the Absolute can be identified with the individual soul undergoing transmigration. The Absolute has to be worshipped through offering of flowers, water cupped in the hands, hymns, inclinations of the head, oblations, recitation of appointed texts, yoga practices and so forth. When he has come to know it through worship, the disciple will *become* the Absolute, the controller of all.

This view is characterized by Gauḍapāda as 'the doctrine that the Absolute undergoes birth', and he refutes it. It is denounced as being in contradiction with Vedic tradition in Śrī Śaṅkara's Gītā Commentary. The texts found in the verses and prose passages of the Veda exhibit the Creator Himself entering into the bodies He has created. Throughout all the Vedic texts the word 'Self' is used to mean the Absolute, and the individual soul is taught to be identical (in its true

nature) with the non-dual Absolute. And the identity of the true Self of the hearer with the Absolute is taught as being an established fact in the text 'That thou art'. The notion of a (real) distinction between the individual soul and the Lord is also decried. If there are texts which speak of the creation of the individual souls, they are introduced only as part of the process of bringing home the unity of all. It is a figurative notion introduced with a view to suggest something else, like the equally figurative notion that separate parcels of the ether of space are created within separate pots.

As for worship, the revered Ācārya accepts this, following the injunctions for meditation and worship that apply to students of low or medium powers of vision.

(1) The soul that resorts to worship remains within that form of the Absolute which (apparently) undergoes birth as the world. Before the (apparent) creation of the world, all was (one as) the unborn supreme principle. Therefore a worshipper of this kind is deemed pitiable. (G.K.III.1)

(2) But I am the one subject to transmigratory experience, the one who enjoys pleasure and suffers pain. The halting of transmigratory experience is a task that I have to achieve. I shall do so by knowledge of the Field and the Knower of the Field (M.V. p.40), by meditation, and by *becoming* established in the very nature of the Lord, the Knower of the Field, after having acquired direct knowledge of Him first.

He who thinks or teaches thus cannot himself be the Knower of the Field. And the miserable 'sage' who holds such a view thinks that he is bringing out the true meaning of transmigratory experience and of liberation from it, and also the true meaning of the Vedic teaching as a whole. But in fact he is a 'slayer of the Self', confused himself and leading others into confusion. Because he is bereft of the true tradition for interpreting the meaning of the Veda, he contradicts what the Veda does teach and reads into it what it does not teach. One who does not know the true tradition for interpreting the Veda is therefore to be ignored as an ignoramus, be he learned in all the sciences. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2)

(3) No. For both the verse and prose texts of the Veda teach that it was verily the Self who entered the bodies He had created. The text which begins 'He made the bodies (lit. "cities", pur)' goes on 'The Spirit (puruṣa) entered those "cities" (pur)' (Bṛhad.II.v.18), 'He assumed a form corresponding to each form; that "assuming a form" was to make Himself known' (Bṛhad.II.v.19) and 'The Wise One, who, after projecting all forms, names them, and goes on uttering those names' (Taitt.Ār.III.xii.7). There are many verses in all the different Vedic schools which proclaim that it was the transcendent Self and not the transmigrating individual soul who

projected the world and entered into the body. And there are many prose passages, such as, 'Having created it, verily, He entered into it' (Taitt.II.6), 'Having slit the suture of the skull, He entered through that gate' (Ait.I.iii.12), 'This deity thought, "Let me enter into these three deities (great elements) as the living soul"' (Chānd.VI.iii.2), 'Hidden in all these beings, He is not manifest' (Kaṭha I.iii.12) and many others. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20)

(4) Throughout the Veda, the term 'the Self' is found used to mean the Absolute. And this term also means 'the inmost Self'. Hence it is only right to conclude 'I am the Absolute', as we know from the text 'He is the inner Self of all beings' (Muṇḍ. II.i.4), and also from the fact that there is no transmigrating soul *other than* the supreme Self, as is shown by such texts as 'One only, without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1), 'All this is verily but the Absolute alone' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12), 'All this is but the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2) and others. (Bṛhad.Bh. II.i.20)

(5) Verily, this is that great unborn Self, beyond decay, death and fear. Verily, the Absolute is fearless. He who knows the Absolute as fearless verily becomes the Absolute. (Bṛhad.IV.iv.25, cp. M.V.46,7)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Verily, the Absolute is fearless. It is well known in the world that the Absolute is fearless. Therefore it is but true to say that the Self, which has the same constitution, is the Absolute.

(6) But it would not be right to say that this absence of individual empirical experience (in enlightenment) is conditional on the attainment of any particular state. For the text 'That thou *art*' (Chānd.VI.viii.7) shows that the fact of one's true Self being the Absolute is not conditional upon any state. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.46,6; 169,15)

(7) But the reward of knowledge of the Absolute is immediately evident, for the Veda speaks of 'the Absolute which is immediately and directly evident' (Bṛhad.III.iv.1) and teaches 'That thou art' as an already accomplished fact. (B.S.Bh.III.iii.32)

(8) The non-difference of the individual soul and the supreme Self is celebrated in the Vedas, Purāṇas and Epics, while the notion of their difference is decried. And (despite the way things appear to crude common-sense and despite the elaborate theories of the realist Logicians) this view turns out to be correct in the end. (G.K.III.13)

(9) The Self appears to undergo birth through the multiplicity of souls, just as the ether of space appears to undergo

birth through the multiplicity of new forms into which it appears to be enclosed through the production of pots (cp. M.V. 27,4). The ether is also the example to explain the apparent rise of new objects like pots through the compounding of the elements (since the elements are taught to proceed from the ether and the effect is nothing over and above the material cause). (G.K.III.3)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: When the Veda occasionally speaks of the birth of the individual souls (e.g. Muṇḍ.II.i.2) in order to help instruct the dull pupils, then, if birth is to be admitted at all, this is the example according to which it should be understood, namely the example of the 'production' of apparently isolated units of the ether of space through the production of pots.

(10) When creation is mentioned in the Veda, and taught in various ways, through such examples as clay, gold and sparks, this is only a device for introduction (of the doctrine of the sole metaphysical reality of the Self). In truth, there is no differentiation of any kind. (G.K.III.15)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Therefore the Vedic texts speaking of creation and so on are only intended to introduce the idea of the unity and sole reality of the Self. It is not right to imagine that they have any other purpose. So no differentiation introduced by production and so on exists in any way.

(11) In this connection (i.e. following on from the passage at M.V.169,6) it must be observed that the words 'You have come out of the Absolute like a spark from fire' serve to strengthen the soul's conviction that it is the Absolute, like (the parallel phrases such as 'You were cast forth at birth from the palace' serving to strengthen) the conviction of the prince that he was a king.* For, until it flies out, a spark is one with the fire from which it proceeds. Hence the references to examples like gold, iron and sparks of fire are not concerned with teaching the creation, maintenance and dissolution of a differentiated universe, but rather with strengthening the conviction that all is one. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20)

**(Draviḍācārya cited the example of a prince cast out from the palace as an infant and brought up by foresters, believing himself to be a forester. Later, on the king's death, a minister found him and told him, 'You are not a forester but the king'. As the prince then recognized himself to be the king, so the soul can recognize itself to be the Absolute when told 'That thou art'. T.N.)*

(12) The individual soul under the name of Saṅkarṣaṇa cannot emanate from the supreme Self called Vāsudeva, or it would

suffer from impermanence and other defects. In that case, too, its attainment of Bhagavān would not constitute liberation. It would merely be a case of the destruction of an effect through dissolving back into its material cause. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.42)

(13) Nor do we see anything wrong if anyone is inclined to worship Bhagavān vehemently and one-pointedly by visits to his temple and the rest. For adoration of the Lord is well known to be prescribed in the Veda and Smṛti. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.42)

(14) Students on the path are of three grades, those, namely, of weak, medium and excellent vision. This meditation is taught to them for their benefit in a spirit of compassion. (G.K.III.16)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Meditations of this kind are taught for their benefit — that is, prescribed meditations and rituals are taught for the benefit of those of weak and medium vision. They are not taught for the benefit of those of excellent vision who have the settled conviction 'The Self is one only, without a second'. They are taught by the Veda in a spirit of compassion — that is, with the idea, 'They are on the right path. How can they come to the supreme vision of unity?'

CHAPTER V
BHARTṚPRAPAÑCA

76 THE NEED FOR EXAMINING THE SYSTEM OF BHARTṚPRAPAÑCA

The various schools of Vedanta teaching that were current in Śrī Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara's day can be grouped for consideration under three headings, according to the way in which they explained the relation of the individual soul to the Absolute. They can then be labelled as doctrines of difference, of non-difference and of difference in identity.

The doctrine of difference was attributed by Bādarayāṇa Ācārya to Auḍulomi, in the words 'Because it (the individual soul) *will become* so (i.e. will become one with the Absolute) when it departs (from the body at death', B.S.I.iv.21). In general, those who maintain this doctrine hold that the individual soul is literally sullied by contact with the complex of conditioning adjuncts consisting of the body, the senses and the mind in its lower and higher forms. But they say it can purify itself through spiritual learning and meditation and other disciplines, and that it will then emerge from the complex of the body and the rest (at the time of death) and attain identity with the supreme Self. On this criterion, the doctrine of the Bhāgavatas is also clearly a doctrine of difference: for they hold that through a hundred years of worship of the supreme Lord Bhagavān by visits to the temple and so on, the soul may rid itself of its passions and attain to Him (on the death of the body).

Some of the other doctrines reviewed above support a theory of difference, since they make liberation a result to be achieved in the after-life as a reward for recourse to enjoined action. To this group belong those who hold that liberation is achieved by a combination of knowledge and action (M.V.66), those who maintain that enjoined meditations are the path to liberation (M.V.67) and those who teach that liberation comes through elimination of pleasure-desire (M.V.71).

Other theorists reviewed above hold that liberation occurs in life, but they also make attainment of the highest goal of life dependent on carrying out injunctions laid down in the Veda, just like those who say that final beatitude only comes in the after-life. In the end their doctrines, too, only affirm in a different way the same teaching, namely, that before liberation the individual soul and the Lord are different. To this group belong those who accept an injunction in the context of metaphysical knowledge (M.V.68), those who preach the practice of affirmation (M.V.69), those who preach the elimination of the universe (M.V.70), those who preach halting the impressions (M.V.72), those who preach sustained remembrance of knowledge (M.V.73) and those who preach the suppression of all movement of the mind (M.V.74).

On the other hand a doctrine of identity is attributed to Kāśakṛtsna in Brahma Sūtra I.iv.22 in the words 'Kāśakṛtsna (held that the individual soul and the Absolute were identical) on the ground that it was the Absolute itself that assumed the form of the soul'. The teaching of this school was that, as viewed from the empirical standpoint, the supreme Self assumes the illusory appearance of being the individual soul. This was the doctrine followed by Gauḍapāda and other early Ācāryas. The revered Bhagavatpāda says that it is this doctrine alone that follows the true Vedantic method, and this is in fact the doctrine that we have expounded in detail in Chapter III above.

Then there is the third doctrine, that of difference in identity, attributed to Āśmarathya at Brahma Sūtra I.iv.20 in the words 'We have a sign (that the supreme Self is non-different from, as well as different from, the individual soul), as is shown by the promise (that when the supreme Self is known, all is known) — such was the view of Āśmarathya'. As a representative of this doctrine one might cite Bhartṛprapañca, who was probably a near-contemporary of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. Nobody has yet discovered any earlier exponent of the doctrine of difference in identity than these two Teachers.

Bhartṛprapañca's commentaries have not survived in complete form. However, fortunately for all serious enquirers into the true method of interpretation in Vedanta, his views are examined in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, in Sureśvara's Vārtika on that, and in the glosses on these two works by Ānandagiri. In these works, phrases from the commentaries of Bhartṛprapañca are quoted, and from a consideration of these it is possible to get some light on the philosophy of difference in identity in its oldest form. I have accordingly reconstructed the doctrine of this school as far as was necessary, by collecting the relevant texts and filling out the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara here and there with my own reasoning. When this school has been examined, we will have been over almost all the available ancient examples of Vedantic method. And this will enable us to say without fear of contradiction, 'The method followed in

the Vedanta is what we have described it to be'.

77 CAUSE AND EFFECT IN THE SCHOOL OF DIFFERENCE IN IDENTITY

We now proceed to describe briefly the method of teaching about cause and effect used by Bhartṛprapañca. According to him, the first section of the fifth Book of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad has to be understood as teaching that the Absolute is both dualistic and non-dualistic; it is not either purely dualistic or purely non-dualistic. If the truth had been that it was purely non-dualistic, then duality would be unreal like the water in a mirage, and then the ritualistic section of the Veda would be useless. The descriptions of the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the universe would be vain, as would the practical injunction to hear about the Self, ponder over it and subject it to sustained meditation. On the other hand if duality were real exactly as it stands, the philosophy of non-duality (taught at places in the Upanishads) would prove false.

Starting from this dilemma, the topic is taken up in the sub-section beginning 'That is infinite' (Bṛhad.V.v.1), with a view to dispel the doubt. The upanishadic phrase 'That is infinite' is explained as saying that the (Absolute as) cause is the supreme reality, while the phrase 'This is infinite' affirms that the (Absolute as) effect (in the form of the world) is the supreme reality. The effect is infinite because, even when produced, it is non-different from its material cause, and at the time of the Cosmic Dissolution, it will again remain infinite *as* the cause. Thus cause and effect should both be seen to be ever infinite, in past, present and future. It is this one infinity that is taught as undergoing distinction as cause and effect.

In the same way, the Absolute is both dualistic and non-dualistic. The sea consists of water, waves, foam, bubbles and so forth. And the waves, foam, bubbles and the rest, that arise from the water, are just as much the nature of the sea as the water is. True, they come and go; but they are perfectly real for all that. And all this world of duality is perfectly real too, comparable to the water and the waves in the illustration. The Absolute in its supreme form is comparable to the water of the sea.

Since duality is thus real, they say, the texts of the ritualistic section of the Veda are authoritative. And this method of teaching the metaphysics of cause and effect is summarized and reproduced by Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara in the Commentary and the Vārtika on the sub-section of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad beginning 'That is infinite' (Bṛhad.V.i.1).

It is also summarized by Śrī Śaṅkara in his Commentary to Brahma Sūtra II.i.14, in the words: 'Perhaps you will disagree, and argue that the Absolute is pluralistic by nature. Just as

a tree has many different branches, you will say, so the Absolute has many powers and performs many functions. The tree is one as a tree, but many as to its branches. What is one as the sea is many as waves and foam.... Since the Absolute has a unitary aspect, the teachings about liberation arising from knowledge are perfectly intelligible. And the practical teachings of the ritualistic section of the Veda about worldly life and ritual are equally intelligible, since the Absolute has its aspect as a real plurality'.

But this theory is not right. When it comes to metaphysical knowledge of reality, there is no room, as there is in teaching about religious duty, for general rules qualified by exceptions and alternatives. Duality and non-duality are contradictories. The theory would therefore be in danger of undermining the Vedic texts which speak of Consciousness as a single homogeneous mass. If the Absolute were of both dualistic and non-dualistic nature, like the sea or the tree, it would have parts, and so would inevitably be impermanent. A being that was supposed to be dualistic and non-dualistic at the same time would not be a possible object of meditation. And the theory would destroy the authority both of the texts which decry vision of difference and also of those which affirm the reality of the cause alone. The notion that one is the body can be cancelled once and for all by direct knowledge that one's true Self is the ever self-established Absolute taught in the Veda. When this knowledge is acquired there is then no longer any scope or need for the idea that the Absolute has an aspect under which it is many. And yet before knowledge that the Absolute is one's true Self has arisen, all practical experience can be accepted as real, and plurality must be assumed to be real to accommodate it. Thus pure Advaita can admit duality and non-duality for the Absolute (though duality is only admitted from the standpoint of metaphysical Ignorance), and the doctrine, when understood in this sense, does not contradict the Vedic teaching. But the teaching of Bhartṛprapañca that the Absolute is both dualistic and non-dualistic on the same real footing is refuted by Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara.

(1) Exceptions apply in the domain of ritualistic activity. When a general rule would have prescribed such and such an action, the force of exceptions is to rescind part of the general rule. Take, for example, the formula 'Not harming any creature except (for sacrificial purposes) on consecrated ground' (Chānd.VIII.xv.1). Here we have a general law prohibiting injury to any living creature, but with a restriction permitting it on consecrated ground on the occasion of a large sacrifice. In the present context, however, no general proposition affirming the existence of the non-dual Absolute can be rescinded in any particular area, because the Absolute, being non-dual, cannot have particular areas.

Alternatives, too, are inapplicable in the case of the

Absolute, for the same reason. For example, the ritualistic section of the Vedas covers the two alternatives 'He grasps' and, 'He does not grasp the ṣoḍaśin cup in the course of the Atirātra ceremony'. It is a conceivable alternative, because grasping and not grasping are merely potential processes, dependent for their actualization on the will of man. But in the case of the affirmation of the existence of the Absolute, there cannot be any such alternative as 'either dual or non-dual'. For the Self is an existent reality, and hence not dependent on the will of man; and it is moreover contradictory to say that one and the same thing can be both dual and non-dual. (Bṛhad. Bh.V.v.1)

(2) The theory also conflicts with Vedic teaching and with reason. There are Vedic texts of clearly established truth, beyond doubt or suspicion of error, which would all have to be jettisoned as useless on the present theory. We should lose, for example, those which speak of the Absolute as a single mass of Consciousness, homogeneous like a lump of salt (Bṛhad.IV.v. 13), 'with no gaps or interstices, without a before (cause) or an after (effect), without anything inside it or outside it in space' (Bṛhad.II.v.19); and we should also lose the text which speaks of the Spirit as 'He alone exists, within and without, unborn' (Muṇḍ.II.i.12), and those which say 'neither this nor that' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6), and such negative texts as 'Not gross, not subtle, not short' (Bṛhad.III.viii.8) and 'Unborn, beyond decay, death and fear' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.25).

Similarly, there would also be a contradiction with reason. For that which is many and has parts and activity cannot be eternal and constantly self-identical, whereas the fact of memory, etc., shows that the Self *is* eternal and constantly self-identical, so that contradiction results from a theory that would imply that it was not such. (Bṛhad.Bh.V.i.1)

(3) Moreover, the opponent's theory would render the Veda senseless. So far from safeguarding the ritualistic portion of the Veda, it would clearly undermine its validity, for it would imply both experience of the fruits of deeds that one had not performed, and also annihilation of the fruits of deeds one had performed. (Bṛhad.Bh.V.i.1)

(4) Perhaps the opponent will reply that there are perfectly good examples of things, such as the sea, that are both dual and non-dual, and ask how, in the face of these, we can say that it is contradictory to claim that one thing can be both dual and non-dual. But this defence is of no avail, as the example cited is not relevant to the case in hand. It was in regard to the eternal, partless, existent reality that we said that duality-cum-non-duality was contradictory. We do not maintain that it is contradictory in the realm of effects, where everything has parts. Hence this whole theory is to be

rejected on the ground that it is contradictory to the Veda, Smṛti and reason alike. (Bṛhad.Bh.V.i.1)

(5) And there is another reason why it cannot be the doctrine intended by the Veda. It does not yield any conception of the Absolute that would be fit to meditate on. The Veda never presents, either as an object of meditation or of knowledge, an Absolute that is variegated in the manner of (such earthly objects as) the sea or a forest, and which brims over with hundreds and thousands of distinctions implying birth, death and evil. On the contrary, it expressly speaks of the Absolute as a homogeneous mass of Consciousness, saying 'Verily it is to be seen everywhere as one and homogeneous' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.20). And it actually condemns vision of the Absolute as anything but homogeneous in the words 'He goes from death to death who sees the appearance of plurality here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19). And it is agreed that one should not do what the Veda condemns. (Bṛhad. Bh.V.i.1)

(6) For even supposing that we admitted for argument's sake that the Absolute could remain one and the same thing and yet be both dual and non-dual at the same time, like the sea, we still would not escape from that conflict with the Veda to which you yourselves have drawn attention. You ask how? Well, there would be one supreme Absolute, both dual and non-dual in nature. Being beyond grief and delusion and other defects, it would not seek spiritual teaching. Nor could there be any Teacher for it, as no Teacher could exist other than itself, the dual-cum-non-dual Absolute being recognized as the sole existent....

And if the Absolute were taken as one mass of Consciousness, as the sea is one mass of water, then the whole conception of anyone *other* than the Absolute either receiving or imparting instruction would become impossible. One may take the individual, Devadatta, as consisting of duality and non-duality and as constituted by his various organs and limbs. But it is inconceivable that his voice and ears, considered as parts of him, should function respectively as Teacher and receiver of teaching, while he himself was neither Teacher nor taught. For Devadatta is but one consciousness, as the sea is but one mass of water. Hence it follows that the opponent's theory involves conflict with the Veda and reason, and fails to establish what it aims to establish. (Bṛhad.Bh.V.i.1)

(7) And so when the identity of one's own true Self with the Absolute has been apprehended through the Veda, it contradicts and cancels the previous natural conviction of one's identity with the body, as the ideas of the rope and the like contradict and cancel the (illusory) notions of the snake and the like. But when the notion of one's identity with the body has been contradicted and cancelled, all empirical experience based

on it stands contradicted and cancelled too, so that there is no longer any need to assume a lower aspect of the Absolute, characterized by plurality and variety, in order to explain it. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

(8) Nor would the teaching 'Liberation comes through knowledge' be explicable on this theory (of Bhartṛprapañca). For those who uphold it do not admit erroneous knowledge, removable through right knowledge, to be the cause of transmigratory life. If *both* knowledge of the Absolute as one *and* knowledge of the Absolute as many were true, how could one then say that the knowledge of unity removed the knowledge of plurality? (B.S. Bh.II.i.14)

(9) Hence the word 'that' (in 'That is infinite') refers to the infinite Absolute. And that same infinite Absolute is also this infinite Absolute present in the (universe as its) effect, brought into manifestation by Ignorance and having the apparent limiting adjuncts of name and form, thus appearing to be different from its own true nature. But when (at the time of liberation) one has known that supreme infinite Absolute to be one's own true Self through the conviction 'I am that infinite Absolute', one thus 'takes the infinite' through this knowledge of the Absolute, and rejects the notion that one is not infinite, a notion arising from metaphysical Ignorance and from association with the apparent conditioning adjuncts of name and form. Then only the infinite remains. (Bṛhad.Bh.V.i.1)

78 THE EIGHT CONDITIONS OF THE ABSOLUTE

If the Absolute in its highest form is considered as a great ocean, then its motionless condition is called (by Bhartṛprapañca) the Indestructible (akṣara), its condition when first fractionally beginning to move is called the Inner Ruler (antaryāmin), and its condition when totally in motion is called (in this system) 'the Knower of the Field' (kṣetrajña). These are the first three states, and there are five others, given by Ānandagiri as the individual bodies (piṇḍa), types (jāti), the Cosmic Body (virāṭ), the Cosmic Soul (sūtra) and the Divine Cosmic Powers (daiva). (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. I.iii.314) Thus the Absolute has eight conditions (avasthā).. Some spoke of them as powers (śakti), others as modifications (vikāra). This doctrine is refuted in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary.

(1) Well, we can say at once that neither conditions nor powers are intelligible in the case of the Indestructible. For there is the text saying that it is beyond all worldly characteristics like hunger, etc., (Bṛhad.III.v.1). And one and the same thing cannot both have conditions like hunger, etc., and

at the same time stand above them and not have them. The same difficulty applies if we say that the Absolute has powers. And the errors in supposing it could have modifications and parts have already been pointed out in our commentary on Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.i.20 (trans. Mādhavānanda p.300). So all these assumptions are quite false. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.viii.12)

And the doctrine of the Eight Conditions has been refuted at various places by the author of the Vārtika (Śrī Sureśvara).

(2) (It is not the case that the Absolute really assumes eight conditions to make up the universe. On the contrary, it is merely that) a false notion arises from the darkness of metaphysical Ignorance of the real, like the appearance of a snake arising through Ignorance of the rope, and this false notion assumes the form of being (the universe) differentiated into eight conditions. (B.B.V. I.iii.314)

(3) The Lord, the Undeveloped Cosmic Principle (avyākṛta), the Cosmic Vital Energy, the Cosmic Body, the Elements, the Divine Cosmic Powers and so forth — none of these would be possible in the inmost Self except on the basis of metaphysical Ignorance. (B.B.V. I.iv.487)

(4) Bhartṛprapañca wishes, likewise, to claim that being 'innermost' is common to all the eight conditions of the Self (said in the Upanishad to be the dearest thing of all). But he cannot explain the term 'innermost' (Bṛhad.I.iv.8) on the principles of his system (for he lacks a transcendent principle on which all else would depend while it was dependent on nothing else). (B.B.V. I.iv.1043)

This is a piece of reflection over the upanishadic text 'That Self is innermost' (Bṛhad.I.iv.8). Ānandagiri's gloss runs: 'Having shown that the term "innermost" is explicable on his own system, he (Sureśvara) goes on to show that it would not be explicable on the theory of Bhartṛprapañca. The individual body, the type, the Cosmic Body, the Cosmic Soul, the Divine Cosmic Powers, the Undeveloped Cosmic Principle, the Inner Ruler and the Knower of the Field — these eight conditions of the Absolute do not exist one within the other on Bhartṛprapañca's theory. His view is that, just as, amongst pots and dishes made of clay, the clay alone is the reality, so in the eight conditions, "being the Self" is a common feature (like the clay), and in this sense "being the innermost" is common to all of them. But this is not enough to prove that the Self is the innermost thing (for which the not-self would have to have non-reciprocal dependence on the innermost Self, as the Vārtika's preceding verses show)'.

(5) (If the real modifications assumed by Bhartṛprapañca are

rejected), how then do we explain the differentiation that they occasion in ordinary experience? It is all due to apparent conditioning adjuncts, we say. Neither distinction nor non-distinction pertains to them in themselves, for in their true nature they are massed Consciousness, homogeneous like a lump of salt. For we have the texts, 'Without a before (cause) or an after (effect), without anything inside it or outside it in space' (Bṛhad.II.v.15) and 'This Self, in its true nature, is the Absolute' *(ibid.)*. And it is said in the Atharva Veda 'He alone exists, within and without, unborn' (Muṇḍ.II.i.2).

Hence the Self without adjuncts, being indescribable, void of all distinctions, one and unique, can only be taught by saying 'neither this nor that'. When the Self has the adjunct of the complex of bodies and organs characterized by Ignorance, desire and action, it is called 'the transmigrant' and 'the individual soul'. When the Self has the adjunct of eternal and infinite knowledge and power it is called 'the Inner Ruler' and 'the Lord'.

That same Self, when void of all adjuncts, solitary, pure, standing in its own true nature, is called 'the Indestructible' and 'the Supreme'. And then as qualified by such adjuncts as the Cosmic Soul, the Cosmic Undeveloped Principle, the Divine Cosmic Powers, types, individual bodies, and the bodies and organs of men, animals and departed spirits, He assumes their name and form.... Hence the distinction between the Indestructible Principle, the Inner Ruler and all beings is due to apparent conditioning adjuncts and nothing else. (Bṛhad.Bh. III.viii.12)

79 THE CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUAL AS MODIFICATION OF THE ABSOLUTE

Bhartṛprapañca held the view that the supreme Self did not enter the objects of His creation directly in His own true form. (Contrast Śrī Śaṅkara, M.V.75,3.) He assumed a modification called 'the conscious individual' (cp. M.V.30, intro.). This conscious individual was regarded as both different from and non-different from the supreme Self. Since, in Bhartṛprapañca's system it was different, it could be, and was, connected with transmigration; since it was also non-different, it was capable of the conviction 'I am the Absolute'. And Bhartṛprapañca thought this would eliminate all contradictions (Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20).

The name of Bhartṛprapañca is admittedly not connected with this teaching in Sureśvara's Vārtika on this passage, or in Ānandagiri's gloss. Yet it must be his teaching, because there are other points which go with the doctrines attributed to him by name elsewhere. For instance, there is the doctrine that the cause and effect are both real, enforced through the example of the sea, and the description of the Absolute as

having eight conditions.

Similarly, Bhartṛprapañca's explanation of the two aspects of the Absolute, perceptible and imperceptible (Bṛhad.II.iii.1), are summarized in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary with the sarcastic introduction 'Some who regard themselves as great experts on the Upanishads devise a theory...'.

(1) The objective realm of gross and subtle elements,* they say, makes one category (rāśi), the lowest. The supreme Self forms another category, the highest. And between these two extremes, they claim, there lies a third or middle category, different from either, consisting in the entire mass of a person's merit and demerit, arising from prescribed meditation, ritual and skills acquired in previous lives, together with the 'self with intellect predominating', the one awoken by Ajātaśatru (Bṛhad.II.i.15), who is the one able to act and undergo experience. The category of merit and demerit prompts action. The category of the gross and subtle elements is the result of action, and includes also the bodies and organs that are the means to it.

Here they try to reconcile their views with those of the Logicians. Having first boldly affirmed that the whole category of merit and demerit resides in the subtle body, afraid that (with their teaching about a permanent subtle body) they will seem to fall into the doctrine of the Sāṅkhyas, they draw back. They now say that the whole category of merit and demerit can become displaced from the subtle body and lodged in a particular part of the supreme Self, where it can exist even in the absence of the subtle body, just as the scent of flowers can be extracted from its seat in the flowers and transferred to a cup in a distilled essence (i.e. as scent) and preserved even in the absence of the flowers. This alleged 'portion' of the supreme Self, though in itself without attributes, receives attributes from outside, which come to it through the category of merit and demerit. This portion of the supreme Self is the conscious individual, the one who acts and has experiences, who is bound and (eventually) liberated. Here they take after the view of the Vaiśeṣikas (who likewise regard merit and demerit as being stored not in the subtle body but in the Self itself, regarded as individual). And this category of merit and demerit accrues to the Self (in their view) from the side of the objective realm of the elements; for even the individual self is regarded by them as *per se* without attributes, since it is but a portion of the supreme Self. (Bṛhad.Bh. II.iii.6)

**(On this classification, ether and wind (air) count as subtle elements; fire, water and earth count as gross elements. T.N.)*

Then again we have the text '"Which is the Self?" asked King Janaka. Śrī Yājñavalkya replied, "This self with intellect

predominating, lying within the sense-organs..."' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.7). Bhartṛprapañca, as reported by Ānandagiri, here explains the phrase 'vijñāna-maya' confidently (but wrongly, cp. M.V.79,3,4) in the words 'The Absolute in its highest form is Consciousness (vijñāna), and the individual soul (jīva) is called "the one made up of Consciousness" (vijñāna-maya) because he is of the nature of Consciousness' (ṭīkā on Bṛhad.Bh. IV.iii.7, *ad init.*). Śrī Śaṅkara also alludes to the same point in Bhartṛprapañca's teaching in the words, 'Those who explain the soul to be a *modification* of the supreme Self as Consciousness...' (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.7, see Mādhavānanda p.611).

The assumption that the supreme Self undergoes modification to assume the form of the individual soul may be represented in three different ways. It may be regarded as similar to the transformation of one part of a whole to produce a number of new objects of the same class, as pots and the like are modifications of clay. Or it may be taken that the whole, in this case the supreme Self, remains essentially unchanged, through changes that occur in a few parts, as when hair springs up in a few parts of the body or certain portions of the earth's surface turn to desert (cp. M.V.110, intro.). Or, thirdly, it may be taken that the whole undergoes total transformation, as when milk is transformed into curds.

On the first alternative, the identity of the individual with the whole would only amount to that similarity possessed by separate members of the same class; it would only be a figurative identity and not a real one, and that would contradict both the Veda and Bhartṛprapañca's own system. On the second alternative, the virtues or defects of the part would infallibly affect the whole (since the whole pervades the parts — and this, too, would contradict the Veda). The third alternative would contradict the Vedic texts that declare that the Absolute has no parts (since transformation is inconceivable without parts). And on these lines Śrī Śaṅkara argues that the soul as the conscious individual (vijñāna-ātman) cannot be a modification of the supreme Self (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20).

The theory of the three categories, of which the whole realm of the perceptible and the imperceptible forms the first, he refutes as follows.

(2) We have already explained the defects of the theory (e.g. at Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20, just quoted). If parts are attributed to the supreme Self, then it will have to be regarded as undergoing transformation. It will have to be regarded as being 'rent' (contradicting Īśa 8). And there are other insuperable difficulties, such as that of explaining how there could be translation to various realms after death in accordance with one's deeds (as taught in the Veda). Moreover, the theory takes the individual soul as (in one sense) ever distinct from the supreme Self; and, in that case, how could it also be one with it (as the theory requires)?

Suppose it be contended that the subtle body is figuratively attributed to the supreme Self, as one figuratively attributes to the ether of space the shapes of the pots and jars and cavities in the earth in which it appears to be enclosed? Even so, all this will result in the unacceptable consequence of affirming that the subtle impressions reside in the supreme Self when the subtle body is absent (as in dreamless sleep). And the theory would involve the untenable assumption that metaphysical Ignorance could arise of its own accord, like a desert appearing on the surface of the earth.

The notion that an impression could be transferred from its seat to some other receptacle, without there being any intermediary capable of carrying the impressions, is in any case quite inconceivable. Nor is it countenanced by the Vedic texts themselves. The latter (deny that the impressions lie anywhere but in the heart and mind and) say, for instance, 'Desire, determination, doubt... (are all mind)' (Bṛhad.I.v.3), 'It is through the heart (mind) that one knows all forms' (Bṛhad. III.ix.20), 'It only seems to think, it only seems to move' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7), 'Those desires of his which lie in the heart' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7) and 'Then (in dreamless sleep) he has passed beyond all sorrows of the heart' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.22)....

Perhaps it will be claimed that there could be an analysis into the perceptible and the imperceptible as the only two manifestations of the supreme Self, while the impressions belong solely to the individual soul. But that would undermine the maxim of the school, 'The supreme Self undergoes modification into the individual soul'. For this latter maxim implies that the supreme Self, too, is affected by the impressions through the medium of the individual soul. In any case, one cannot even conceive how one thing could undergo modification into another, if the expression were taken literally (i.e. to mean that what is actually one thing really becomes a different thing). Nor can the individual soul be taken as a separate entity distinct from the supreme Self without doing violence to the principles of the system. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iii.6)

The idea that the suffix '-maya' in the phrase 'vijñāna-maya' implies a modification is refuted as follows.

(3) Some hold that there are modifications of the supreme Self as Consciousness. But in thus interpreting the phrase '(viewed under adjuncts) with intellect predominating (vijñāna-maya), with mind predominating (mano-maya)' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.5), they misconceive the term 'with intellect predominating' and end up with a doctrine other than that intended by the Veda.... And it is clear from the reading later on in the other (Mādhyandina) school 'sa-dhīḥ', meaning 'within the heart (or intellect)', that what is meant by the phrase 'vijñāna-maya' is (not 'a modification of Consciousness' but) only 'with intellect (vijñāna) predominating'. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.7)

And we find the following in Sureśvara's Vārtika.

(4) But that great intellect (Bhartṛprapañca), who explains the suffix '-maya' of 'vijñāna-maya' here as meaning a modification, contradicts the explanation he gives elsewhere (Bṛhad. IV.iv.5) of 'vijñāna-maya' as 'consisting of intellect', and he also attributes to the Absolute the evils that in fact only belong to the soul. Indeed, all modifications have been specifically denied of the Self in the Vedic verse 'The eternal conscious principle is never born and never dies...' (Kaṭha I.ii.18). The truth is that if the individual soul were a modification of the Self it would have a beginning and therefore an end and so would not be eternal: it would therefore be incapable of liberation. And so the correct interpretation of the suffix '-maya' here is not 'modification', but 'predominating' (so that the compound 'vijñāna-maya' means 'with intellect predominating'). (B.B.V. IV.iii.318-20)

These quotations show that for Bhartṛprapañca the individual soul was a modification of the Absolute as Consciousness.

80 THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SEER AND HIS SEEING

When asked by Uṣasta 'O Yājñavalkya, which self is the Self within all?', Yājñavalkya replied 'You cannot see the seer of seeing, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking, you cannot know the knower of knowing' (Bṛhad.III.iv.2).

According to Ānandagiri, Bhartṛprapañca explained this idea as follows: Seeing is an action. The colour it perceives is its object, as that is the goal of the act. Eye, lower (wavering) mind and higher (decisive) mind are the instruments of the action. The conscious individual is the one that does the action. The result of the action of seeing on the part of the individual soul is perception of the colour. The person who does the act is prompted to do it because it will be the means to something else; after the action has been completed, a result will accrue to someone at some later time. In evaluating an action, one should keep one's eye on this result rather than on the person doing the action (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. III.iv.171-4).

This view of Bhartṛprapañca is refuted in the Bṛhadaraṇyaka Commentary as follows.

(1) (If, as Bhartṛprapañca supposed, the 'seer of seeing' mentioned in the upanishadic text was the seer conceived as one acting), then, since the participial suffix '-er' (in 'seer') would already imply someone doing the act of seeing, the subsequent phrase 'of seeing' would be redundant. 'You

cannot see the seer' is all that would have been needed to have been said. For the suffix '-er' is added to the verbal root 'see' in that text. And the suffix '-er' is said to refer to the one performing the act denoted by the verbal root to which it is added as a suffix. We can only say, for instance, 'He conducts the one who is going', or 'The one who is cutting...'. We cannot speak of the goer of going or the cutter of cutting, when (because the going already implies a goer and the cutting a cutter) there is no distinction of meaning between the two verbal forms. Nor should anyone be allowed to dismiss the words 'of seeing' as mere embroidery if there is a way of taking them literally and making them significant (— and we have shown in our own explanation that there is a way, cp. M.V.38,2). Nor is it a mere wrong reading, for both schools (Kāṇva and Mādhyandina) have it. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iv.2)

And Sureśvara says in his Vārtika:

(2) Nor does Bhartṛprapañca's explanation agree with the question (raised by Uṣasta at Bṛhadāraṇyaka III.iv.2). The whole question has specifications which are incompatible with a reply referring to a person performing the act of seeing. For Uṣasta said 'Explain to me that Absolute which is immediately and directly evident'. The specification that he went on to add ('the Self within all') is not in any way compatible with an answer pointing to the one performing an act of seeing. (B.B.V. III.iv.177-8)

Bhartṛprapañca held the view that Uṣasta's question concerned the nature of the individual soul, while Kahola's question concerned the supreme Self. For, according to Ānandagiri, he wrote in the following terms explaining the Mādhyandina version of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka text:

'The previous question referred to the supreme Self, this one refers to the individual soul. For the dissolution of the individual soul in the supreme Self has to be explained. When the supreme Self and the individual soul are both the principal subjects of the same section, then, if the supreme Self is said to be the inmost principle, that will hold good for the individual soul too.... And since the individual soul, as bare Consciousness, is beyond grief and delusion, this will hold good of the supreme Self too. In the remainder of Bṛhadāraṇyaka III.v. there will be a description of the supreme Self; in Bṛhadāraṇyaka IV.iii.1 ff. there will be a description of the individual soul. The second question, we must assume, deals with a subject not touched on before'. (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. III.v.5-15, explaining Bhartṛprapañca's wrong view.)

We have already explained above at M.V.38,2 the meaning accepted for 'the seer of seeing' in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. He refuted Bhartṛprapañca's theory that the questions of Uṣasta and Kahola referred to different subjects as follows:

(3) No, (the two questions are not about two different 'selves'). For the reply to each of them contains the assertion 'your'. The reply to each of them contains the same assertion, 'This is your Self, the Self within all'. No individual personality can have two selves. The individual as the complex of the soul and its bodies and organs, derives his existence from having one Self. Nor (in the context of the metaphysical teaching of the text) can there be one separate Self for Uṣasta and an essentially different one for Kahola. For what is referred to as 'the Self' in the primary sense of the words, and spoken of as 'within all', cannot be two. If one of the two were the Self in the primary sense of the word as 'the Absolute', then the other (since it was different) could only be the Self in a figurative sense, and its 'selfhood' and 'being within all' would also be figurative. If the words were all taken in their primary senses, their meanings would be contradictory. If one of the two 'selves' was the Absolute, present within all, then the other would have to be not-self, not 'present within all' and not referred to by the word 'self' in its primary meaning. Therefore, what we have in the text is two references to the same Self, given with a view to convey some particular point about it. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1)

The charge of unnecessary repetition is rebutted as follows:

(4) In the first question there was mention of a Self different from the complex of bodies and organs, to whom this bondage, together with its cause (metaphysical Ignorance), was said to pertain. In the second question a new particular is mentioned. It is declared that (in its true nature) the Self is beyond hunger and other characteristics of transmigratory life. From knowledge of this particular, together with renunciation, there is release from the previously mentioned bondage. Therefore the two questions and answers, which both end with the idea 'This is your Self', refer to the same entity (in the first case associated with metaphysical Ignorance, in the second not). (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1)

81 EXPLANATION OF THE CLASS OF TEXTS LIKE 'THOUGH SEEING, YET HE DOES NOT SEE'

There is a passage in the Veda on dreamless sleep which begins: 'Verily, when there (in the state of dreamless sleep) he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, though he does not see. For there is no break in the seeing of the seer, which is indestructible' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23). It ends, 'He does not then know anything...' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.30). Bhartṛprapañca replies to the objection 'If the Self is self-luminous by nature, why does it not see in the state of dreamless sleep?' in the following way.

(1) The sleeper is seeing at that time. But no determinate knowledge arises. This Spirit (puruṣa) is the seer. It performs the act of seeing. It performs the act of knowing colours and shapes manifested through the power of sight and brought before it by the mind. Here again, it acts as the seer in that final act of apperception that occurs after the mental idea and the pot, or whatever else is being represented, have become related as subject and object. And this power of seeing colour and form, which belongs to the soul, pertains to a being that acts. For attributes exist where their substances do, as heat exists where there is fire. Therefore, as long as the seer is present there is no break in the seeing. And the seer is constant and eternal. He cannot undergo destruction because He is the Self of all, and because no second thing exists over against Him. There could be no other second thing that could work his destruction, as there can be nothing separate from Him. Nor does He destroy Himself. Being indestructible, He is eternal and constant.

Seeing is a constant and eternal attribute of the constant and eternal seer. So the seer remains seeing (even in dreamless sleep) with his unbroken sight. But if He remains seeing, in what sense is it that He does not see? Listen to how He sees and also does not see. There is not then (in dreamless sleep) any second thing whereby any determinate cognition could arise. Perhaps you will say that, if the object of vision is difference in identity, there must be something separate to be seen. Yes, there must be something separate, but not separate in the sense of being other. If there were anything separate and *other* than Himself, He would see it; but there is no second thing other than He. Therefore, since in dreamless sleep the power of sight persists and yet does not find anything to see, it cannot be said to perceive. It is like the case of fire which may be burning, but will not burn anything that is not close to it. (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1540-65)

Here it is clear that Bhartṛprapañca interpreted the upanishadic texts on seeing, hearing and the other faculties as implying that the individual soul consisted of a substance separate from its attributes. On this theme, the revered Teacher Śaṅkara summarizes the doctrine of separate attributes as follows.

(2) Is it, then, that seeing, smelling, tasting and so on are different attributes of the soul, as heat, illumining and burning up are different attributes of fire? Or is it that there is only one 'attribute' (consciousness), itself not different from the Self but appearing to have different attributes of its own on account of different conditioning adjuncts that do not really belong to it?

On this, some say as follows. The Self, which is reality, has identity and difference by very nature, just as a cow is

one as a substance, but has mutually different characteristics, such as having a dewlap and so on. We must infer by analogy that subtle, partless substances are characterized by identity and difference just as gross perceptible ones are. (Bṛhad.Bh. IV.iii.30)

The refutation runs as follows.

(3) Such an interpretation is wrong, as the text is concerned with something else. For this text (beginning 'There where He is in dreamless sleep', Bṛhad.IV.iii.24) is not concerned with affirming that attributes of the Self such as seeing, smelling, tasting and so on are different from one another. It is concerned with answering the question why it is that the Self does not have any knowledge in dreamless sleep, if it is the light of Consciousness by nature. The passage 'There where (He is in dreamless sleep)' is begun to rebut the objection that the Self cannot be the light of Consciousness by nature (if it does not shine in dreamless sleep)....

The assumption that seeing and the rest are different attributes of the Self is made through ignorance of the meaning of the text. And it contradicts the texts saying that the Self is a mass of Consciousness, homogeneous like a lump of salt (Bṛhad.IV.v.13).

Nor can heterogeneous nature be attributed to partless entities, for there are no examples of such a thing. It is true that certain people attribute different characteristics such as all-pervasiveness and power to relay sound to the partless ether of space, and also attribute taste and odour to partless atoms. But it must be seen that this, too, is a case of attributing to things adjuncts that do not really belong to them. (For the ether of space is subtle and transcends perception: it is not limited by or touched by illusory adjuncts, and therefore does not pervade them. And the atoms, if they were truly partless, would have no dimensions, and so would not be able to enter into contact or relation with sensible attributes of any kind.)... There is therefore no instance of any partless thing having attributes. This is also enough to refute the notion that the supreme Self undergoes distinctions and transformation through the different powers of perception that it has in the eyes and so on (since only that which has parts is capable of transformation). (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.30)

The revered Commentator's views on this topic have already been developed at M.V.38 above, to which the reader is referred.

In Sureśvara's Vārtika, too, this doctrine of Bhartṛprapañca is refuted at length. The gist of the refutation given there is as follows. If the word 'seeing' (in the phrase 'seeing, He does not see') had referred to 'seeing' understood (not as a participle but) as (a noun meaning) the seer in his true

nature, then the text could not have gone on afterwards to speak of his act of seeing, (in the phrase 'there is no break in the seeing of the seer'). And if seeing were taken as an action, there would come a break in it, from the mere fact of its being an action. To say that seeing is an action performed by a seer and that it has no break is a contradiction, and such an interpretation of the Veda would bring its authority into disrepute. It would also contradict inference, which tells us that whatever is performed is impermanent.

The phrase 'He does not see' (following after 'although seeing' in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka text) is a mere recapitulation of (and concession to) human experience, and does not imply an assertion of the existence of any new attribute in the Self. And that which is eternal and raised above all change cannot be regarded as performing the act of seeing or of knowing a colour or form. Nor is there any rule that attributes (in this case that of seeing) persist as long as the substances in which they inhere, as is shown by such examples as that of black hair turning white. But if we did admit this principle, the act of seeing would still not persist as long as the Self, as it is not an attribute of the Self!

The argument, 'Because the seer has no internal distinctions, there is no break in its attribute' is also wrong. For if the seer were in any sense active it could not be constant and eternal. It is also wrong to argue that (we only know that) there is no action of seeing in dreamless sleep because there is no object to see. For in dreamless sleep we directly apprehend the absence both of the individual seer and his sight. If they really existed, they would be experienced in that state.

It is also wrong to say that in dreamless sleep an object is present but that one does not see it because it does not come from anything totally other than one's Self. This is wrong because, if difference in identity were true, the object of perception would not be totally different from the Self even in the waking state. In fact, on this theory there is nothing totally other, nothing totally separate, nothing that is purely objective, and the expressions 'other', 'separate' and 'objective' are tautologous.

But on our view these expressions have clear and distinct meanings. The *objective* is whatever is illumined by the Witness (including the individual perceiver and his body and organs). The complex of seer, seeing and seen (as it appears from the empirical standpoint) is *other* than the Self in the sense that the complex is imagined while the Self is not. And seer, seeing and seen are mutually *separate*. So the defect of tautology does not arise. It is on these lines that the doctrine of difference in identity is refuted in Sureśvara's Vārtika (B.B.V. IV.iii.1566-1620).

82 THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ABSOLUTE

There is a passage in the Veda where the text epitomizes knowledge of the Absolute by saying 'One should meditate only on "It is the Self"' (Bṛhad.I.iv.7). Later the text raises the question 'What was it that that Absolute knew whereby it became all?' (Bṛhad.I.iv.9) and says finally 'In the beginning, verily, this (the world) was (only) the Absolute. Then it knew itself alone as "I am the Absolute". Through that it became all' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10). Here Bhartṛprapañca explains the word 'Brahman' (the Absolute) as referring to the Brāhmaṇa, the man who attains (i.e. who will in future become) the Absolute. Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary summarizes Bhartṛprapañca's position as follows. 'First one performs meditation associated with ritual bearing on the Absolute in its lower form as difference in identity, and thereby attains to the Absolute in that form, having turned away from all objects of enjoyment. In this state one attains the great Whole, and the bonds of desire and self-interested action are cut. One then attains the Absolute in its supreme form through knowledge of it in that form, and in this sense one is referred to in the text as 'the Absolute'.

This view is then refuted in the following words. 'That is wrong. For *attaining* unity with the 'Whole' would imply the defect of impermanence (since it was an act). We do not find any true example in the world of anything that attains the nature of something else through some cause and itself (despite undergoing change) remains eternal. So to maintain that one attained the great 'Whole', the change being caused by knowledge of the Absolute, and that this result was permanent, would be a contradiction'.

The notion that one is not the Absolute, and that one is not the Whole, arises through metaphysical Ignorance, and ceases through knowledge of the Absolute. It is not that one ever really has the characteristic of not being the Absolute. It emerges later that this is the revered Commentator's own position. Here again, therefore, we find that there has to be resort to the method of false attribution followed by subsequent denial.

In Sureśvara's Vārtika, Bhartṛprapañca's introductory commentary is described as follows.

(1) When people have experienced the reward of ritual and meditation (through attaining the Absolute in its form) as difference in identity, they want to know about a yet higher form of discipline, and ask 'What did the Absolute know whereby it became all?' The Absolute in its supreme form as the unity of all is the supreme Self, and that is our true Self. It is through and as this Self that the creatures have their existence. Hiraṇyagarbha, product of metaphysical Ignorance, is the common Self of all who have fallen from their nature

as the Absolute. It is through this (lower manifestation of the) Self that all creatures have their existence. Whatever else there may be, such as the Cosmic Body (virāṭ, cp. M.V. p.102) or the Divine Cosmic Powers (devatā), is the product of metaphysical Ignorance. The various conditions of the Self are experienced at different times in different ways by the various ignorant individual souls, each according to its lights. These states are the results of their merit and demerit accumulated from the past, and those results themselves proceed from acts committed in those states. One who identifies himself with the individual body will retain this sense of identity after death. He who meditates on the Divine Cosmic Powers will find unity with them after death, and the same result will follow in the case of meditation on the Cosmic Body or the Cosmic Mind (Hiraṇyagarbha, M.V.43,6). In the same way, a sense of identity with the supreme Self is achieved through meditation on that.

The Self is constant and eternal. But individual consciousness is not constant and eternal. Sometimes it is obscured by Ignorance. Ignorance is not being awake to the truth 'All this universe is nothing but my own Self'. This conviction is constant and eternal in the supreme Self, but it is not constant and eternal in the individual soul undergoing transmigration, whose knowledge has been obscured. One who becomes less than the 'all' through Ignorance may regain his status as the 'all' through knowledge in the form of the conviction that he is the Self of all. Such an one was never anything but the Absolute formerly, so it is through an awakening (and not through any change of state) that he 'attains to' the Absolute. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. I.iv.1124-62)

Here Bhartṛprapañca's words as quoted by Ānandagiri have been reproduced almost as they stood, occasionally eked out from Sureśvara's verses. The question arises whether Bhartṛprapañca holds with ŚrI Bhagavatpāda that duality is superimposed through Ignorance and removed through knowledge, as Sureśvara says he does, or whether he holds that the one who falls to the state of an individual soul through Ignorance *first* brings that state to an end through meditation on the Absolute and *then* attains to the Absolute. Sureśvara says, 'The term "knowledge of the Absolute" (Brahma-vidyā) implies an awakening to the identity of all. For the truth of duality is non-duality, even as the rope is the truth of the imagined snake' (B.B.V. I.iv.1138). If this were taken to make Bhartṛprapañca agree that everything is superimposed on the Absolute through Ignorance, it would conflict with the explanations of Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine given elsewhere, where he is said to have explained the text 'That is infinite' as implying the reality (of the Absolute) both as cause and as effect, and it would also conflict with the description of the Absolute as duality in identity given throughout. Hence we think it probable that it is only by Sureśvara that Bhartṛprapañca's commentary is

explained in this way. This would agree with another verse in Sureśvara's Vārtika, 'Bhartṛprapañca's position was (illusionist) as we have explained; his commentary makes the same point at other places' (B.B.V. I.iv.1164). On this we have Ānandagiri's gloss: 'An opponent might ask, "Why do you explain Bhartṛprapañca's commentary on this introductory passage (Bṛhad. I.iv.9) as if he were an illusionist, when elsewhere his commentary speaks of a real transformation of the Absolute?" The argument "His commentary makes the same point (affirming that the world is illusory) at other places" is a reply to this possible objection'.

But is it not the case that in another verse Sureśvara openly says that Śrī Śaṅkara is here refuting, not Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine, but only those who misunderstood it, in the words: 'The revered Guru (Śaṅkara) clearly introduced this reasoning to correct those who heard the words (of Bhartṛprapañca) "will become the Absolute" and interpreted them wrongly'? (B.B.V. I.iv.1135) Ānandagiri adds in his gloss: 'The revered Commentator introduced the reasoning to correct the errors of those who wrongly supposed that he (Bhartṛprapañca) did not support a doctrine of illusion'.

If you ask how a doctrine of illusion can be made to harmonize with Bhartṛprapañca's teaching, we have to reply by introducing a distinction. Here he is saying, 'Metaphysical Ignorance is not being awake to the conviction "All this universe is in truth nothing but my own Self"'. Again, explaining 'In the beginning, all this was the Absolute' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10), he wrote, 'By "this" is meant the world, manifested as name and form. He (Prajāpati) identified himself with this world through Ignorance. Having transcended it, he knew his own Self' (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. I.iv.1176). So Bhartṛprapañca's commentary could be intrepreted to mean: 'He appeared to identify himself with the universe of name and form. And then he became all, through realizing that his Self was the Absolute'. On this basis, our case would stand.

Consider, however, the passage which runs as follows. 'These states are the results of merit and demerit accumulated from the past, and those results themselves proceed from acts committed in those states.... As with identification with the individual body, or with the Divine Cosmic Powers or with the Cosmic Body or the Cosmic Mind... in the same way, a sense of identity with the supreme Self is achieved through meditation on that'. Here it is clear from the language of his commentary that he accepts that the state of being the supreme Self is something that has to be *achieved* through 'knowledge', understood in the sense of the *act* of meditation (upāsanā). Here the criticism made by the revered Commentator (Śaṅkara) applies, namely that the *attainment* of any state (through activity of any kind, including meditation), always implies the defect of impermanence. So the meaning of Sureśvara's Vārtika quoted above was, '*When Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine is*

thus understood, it agrees with the Veda and reason'. That is why he wrote later, 'This version of Bhartṛprapañca's commentary has been set forth to make it agree with the words of the Veda and with direct experience of truth' (B.B.V. I.iv.1188). Ānandagiri's gloss says, '"Version" means "mode of interpretation following the doctrine that the world is an illusion". If you ask Sureśvara why he did that with Bhartṛprapañca's commentary, he replies "To make it agree with the words of the Veda and with direct experience of truth"'.

In explaining the topic of the two forms of the Absolute as gross and subtle, Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara are at one in refuting Bhartṛprapañca's conception, expressed by Śrī Śaṅkara in the words 'Ignorance is not (supposed on this theory to be) a property of the Self. It manifests spontaneously and is beginningless (in the manner of the Nature of the Sāṅkhyas; it does not afflict the Self as a whole, but only the individual mind), like desert places (which cover only a part of the earth's surface)' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iii.6). In this context, Śrī Śaṅkara also has the following to say:

(2) And if (attaining the Absolute is something for the future and so implies that) there is impermanence, then there results the fault of your contradicting your own doctrine, as we have already explained. For such a result (being impermanent) is the same as that which could be obtained through action (so that your theory that a *combination* of knowledge and action was required for liberation would be contradicted). And if you reply that the effect of knowledge of the Absolute is the cessation of the notion, produced by Ignorance, 'I am not the all', and consequent attainment of the state of being all, then your theory of a person 'about to become the Absolute' would be contradicted (since everyone would *already* be the Absolute).... On this basis it is only right to suppose that, from the standpoint of the final truth, in the text 'Verily, this (world) was the Absolute in the beginning' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10), the term 'the Absolute' was used in its primary sense (and not in a secondary sense, as imagined by Bhartṛprapañca, to mean 'the Brāhmaṇa or one about to *become* the Absolute'). For the Veda reports things as they are. The notion that the term 'the Absolute' means 'a person about to *become* the Absolute' is a total distortion of the meaning of the term. It is not right to abandon what the Veda does teach and invent things that it does not teach. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

And one could quote more to show that there was nothing wrong in our claim (that Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara both refuted the doctrine of Bhartṛprapañca as diverging from the true tradition, although Sureśvara sometimes deliberately interpreted it to accord with that tradition).

83 EXAMINATION OF THE THREE STATES

In the present section a few of the scattered texts quoted in Ānandagiri's gloss on Sureśvara's Vārtika will be collected together for the sake of those who wish to know the place held by the practice of examining the states of waking and dream, etc., in the system of Bhartṛprapañca.

Bhartṛprapañca's connecting-commentary to the conversation between Gārgya and Ajātaśatru, which includes a discussion of the state of a person in dreamless sleep, makes the following points.

(1) There is a short account of the 'conscious individual' (the soul) in the text on the entry of the Absolute into His creation. Here the concept is explained with the help of a story, (the story of the conversation between Gārgya and Ajātaśatru, Bṛhad.II.i.1 ff.). The question is raised, 'If the gods are the real experiencers and the controllers of the organs of knowledge and action, why assume a conscious individual over and above them, seeing that it would have nothing to do?' In Bhartṛprapañca's system, Gārgya is represented as the exponent of the tentative view, while the Veda states the finally accepted conclusion through the person of Ajātaśatru, King of Kāśī. (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. II.i.21-4)

According to Sureśvara, this connecting-commentary introduced by Bhartṛprapañca is wrong. For it does not accord with the context, which is the doctrine that liberation arises from knowledge of the Self. There was no point in troubling to refute the presence of the gods. And even when their presence is admitted, the existence and utility of a conscious individual over and above the body is accepted doctrine anyway (B.B.V. II.i.24-5).

Ajātaśatru asks the following question about the person awoken from sleep. 'This soul, the conscious individual, who was asleep — where was he when he was asleep? From whence has he come?' (Bṛhad.II.i.16) Bhartṛprapañca answers this question as follows.

(2) Asking this question implies raising an objection. If the experiencer was of the very nature of knowledge and his organs were continuously present, how could he suddenly awaken at some particular moment? If, on the other hand, the soul left the body in sleep and went far away, or was destroyed, how could it ever return? (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. II.i.196-7)

Sureśvara refutes this explanation as follows. It is wrong to explain the question as asking how there could be an awakening at some particular point in time if the experiencer were knowledge by nature. For it would contradict the answer given

later, 'He was in the inmost Self and nowhere else, and came back from there'. Nor would the question have made any sense if it had asked how the soul could return if it left the body and went far away. For the means of movement belong exclusively to the physical body. How could the experiencer himself move to another place? And it is wrong to suppose that in dreamless sleep he could be destroyed. For he is of the very nature of knowledge, and (even if things are viewed from the empirical standpoint he cannot be destroyed since) he goes on to wake up (B.B.V. II.i.203-4).

(3) When he has gone to sleep, the Self viewed under adjuncts with intellect predominating (vijñāna-maya, M.V.79,3) absorbs into himself, through the intellect, the consciousness pertaining to the sense-organs, and lies within the ether of the heart. When this Self thus holds back the sense-organs in his grasp, it is said of him 'He sleeps (svapiti = svam apīti = he dissolves into himself)'. (Bṛhad.II.i.17)

This upanishadic passage and its implications were explained by Bhartṛprapañca as follows.

(4) Withdrawing consciousness in the form of speech and other faculties through consciousness in the form of intellect, he lies in the ether of the heart. Having emerged (a little) from the heart along the subtle canals (nāḍī), he sees dreams. When the text says 'withdrawing consciousness' and 'through consciousness', the word 'consciousness' means the organ or faculty itself in each case.... The self-luminous consciousness of this conscious individual undergoes modification (as dream). Its special home is the heart, because it is through the heart that it passes out (into the subtle canals for dream). Because it is especially there in the heart that the consciousness of latent mental impressions manifests, it is said that he lies there (even in dream). (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. II.i.248-54)

In considering these views of Bhartṛprapañca Sureśvara expresses himself as follows. When the text in summing up afterwards says 'The mind is restrained' (Bṛhad.II.i.17), the implication is that the mind and its latent impressions are withdrawn. So Bhartṛprapañca's idea that consciousness in the form of speech, etc., is withdrawn *through* consciousness in the form of the intellect is wrong. The correct explanation is that this Spirit Himself absorbs speech and the rest, and then it is said of Him 'He goes to sleep (svapiti)'. 'He goes to sleep' (svapiti) means that he has become one with his own Self (svam apīto, Chānd.VI.viii.1, cp. M.V.39,5), as the etymology of the word shows. And the upanishadic text gives further reasons for viewing the matter in this way when it says that the sense of smell (prāṇa = ghrāṇa, B.B.V. II.i.259) and so on are absorbed.* (B.B.V. II.i.256-9)

(Ānandagiri explains: In dreamless sleep all the faculties are withdrawn and there is no adjunct to produce any distinction. The soul then stands as the Self or Absolute, and is not the transmigrating individual. (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. II.i.259). T.N.)

And Śrī Śaṅkara speaks in his Commentary as follows. 'And if you accept that etymology (i.e. the etymology 'svapiti = svam apīti') suggests that in sleep the soul has a form that transcends the attributes of the world of transmigration, but ask for a proof, the text goes on to supply one.... From this we conclude that, when speech and all the other organs are withdrawn, the Self remains established in its own true nature, free from all division into action and the factors and results of action'.(Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.17)

We have already recounted and considered (M.V.81) how Bhartṛprapañca dealt with the question 'How is it that the Self does not see anything over against itself as a second thing in dreamless sleep?' That passage is relevant here also, and should be borne in mind.

In the section of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka where Janaka rose from his seat of honour to greet Yājñavalkya (IV.ii.1 ff.), Yājñavalkya asked Janaka 'Where will you go when you are released?' Janaka replied, 'Revered sir, I do not know where I shall go'. Bhartṛprapañca explains this passage as follows.

(5) Janaka knew the truth (abstractly), but he did not know the path for realizing it. He had to be educated by having this shown to him. Although knowing the supreme Self, he said 'My lord, I do not know', because he did not know the path of direct vision. (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.ii.16)

The refutation of this is found in Sureśvara's Vārtika. Nothing was said in the earlier sections of the Upanishad about Janaka knowing the Self, so we do not have any proof that the king yet had knowledge of the Absolute. Nor is the question 'Where will you go?' a question about a path — it is a question about a destination. When one has become convinced of one's identity with that Self which is 'immediately evident as the Absolute' (Bṛhad.III.iv.1), there is no possibility of going anywhere on a path. And Bhartṛprapañca's whole conception is in conflict with such texts as 'Being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6), 'There is no going thither' (Kaṭha I.ii.8), 'All this is but the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2) and 'All this is verily but the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12). The idea of attaining liberation through going on a path is also wrong because the only obstacle preventing liberation is metaphysical Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.ii.20-9).

From this we infer that Bhartṛprapañca thought that all that

is taught, beginning with Vaiśvānara (Bṛhad.I.i.1) and ending with 'Salutations to Thee, the Fourth' (turīya, Bṛhad.V.xiv.7), is taught for the sake of meditation (as a result of which one will go to some desirable state after death). But Sureśvara wrote: 'Metaphysical knowledge is the only means to attain the Self, as Yājñavalkya said to King Janaka "You *have* attained". If the means had been anything other than metaphysical knowledge, he would have said "You *will* attain"' (B.B.V. IV.ii.95). He was commenting here on the upanishadic text '"O Janaka, you have attained the fearless state" said Yājñavalkya' (Bṛhad. IV.ii.4).

In a later section of the Upanishad an examination of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is set out. Here there is a text which says 'The Spirit, being similar (to the intellect), appears to conform to the conditions of the two worlds of waking and dream' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7).

Bhartṛprapañca explains this as follows:

(6) The various sense-faculties, such as sight and the rest, are mutually different and yet also similar, since they belong to the same body. In the same way, there is similarity between the intellect and the Self (which produces a false sense of identity), while the power to have individual experience is distinct from the Self and is a property of the intellect alone.

Why do we argue that the Self must be separate? Well, the two worlds of waking and dream are both compounded of the elements. If the Self were not different from them (and from the intellect which belongs to them) they would both manifest simultaneously. But this is not found to be the case. We must assume, therefore, that the Self is some separate being who enters the waking world and the dream-world successively, and, when it is present in one of those worlds, that world appears, and when it is absent that world disappears. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.424-9)

This teaching is approved by Sureśvara.

(7) There are only two dwelling-places of this Spirit, this world and the next. (Bṛhad.IV.iii.9)

Bhartṛprapañca explains the context of this passage and its continuation as follows.

(8) Three topics have been raised in the immediately preceding passages. 'Which is the Self? It is this Spirit (viewed under adjuncts) with intellect predominating, present within the sense-organs, the inner light illumining the heart...' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.7), 'The Spirit, being similar to the intellect, appears to conform...' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7), 'This Spirit... discards those evils at death' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.8). Their explanation has to be

given through the example of dream. (B.B.V. IV.iii.831-2)

Sureśvara does not criticize this, and the gloss says 'He approves Bhartṛprapañca's introduction to the context' (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.833).

We find at Bṛhadāraṇyaka IV.iii.16 a text, 'Whatever he sees there (i.e. in the dream-state), he is unaffected. For this Spirit is unattached'. What do 'unaffected' and 'unattached' mean here? On this topic Bhartṛprapañca expresses himself as follows.

(9) 'Unaffected' implies freedom from merit and demerit; 'unattached' implies release from desire. And here you might raise an objection. Even in the waking world, you might say, action is not the true cause of accumulating merit and demerit (and consequent rebirth). The true cause is desire. And in dream this root cause of the accumulation of merit and demerit is not itself uprooted! So merit and demerit are bound to be accumulated in dream.

Not so. The purpose of this upanishadic text in saying 'This Spirit is unattached' is to show that, at the time of dream, the Spirit is free from that mode of the mind, called desire or attachment, which causes the accumulation of merit and demerit. In fact the mind itself (together with desire) is under eclipse in dream, and only the play of subtle impressions from the past is left. All desires, which are forms of death (Bṛhad. IV.iii.7), are related directly to the body. And in dream the Spirit is separated from the body (Bṛhad.IV.iii.12). Just as the dream-creation of chariots and other external objects is unreal, so equally is the creation of the dream-body and its organs. All creations in a dream, and everything seen in it, are unreal. The experience in dream of attachment for a body and its organs is also experience of the unreal. Hence it is said that this Spirit is without attachment and pure.

Longing prompts the soul to act. But it is itself a subordinate element in action. When the scent of flowers perfumes the basket in which they are placed, the scent is that of the flowers, not that of the basket. In the same way, longing is an element in the activity of the mind and other factors of action; it does not pertain to the Self. When the consciousness of the individual is coloured by longing, we speak figuratively of the soul as 'acting'. Action needs the prompting force of that colouring of longing, both in order to arise and to bring its karmic reward later. All action depends on motive. It is therefore connected with mind, body and organs, but never with the Self. Even in the absence of mind, body and organs after death, action remains in being, dependent for realizing itself on motive in the mind, surviving in subtle form. It does not depend on the Self. The latter, therefore, is the Witness of attachment in dream, attachment being a subordinate

phase of action. As witness, the Self is separate from attachment and free from it. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1015-54)

Since Sureśvara states this explanation of Bhartṛprapañca's without refuting it, it appears that he accepted it. Elsewhere, however, he refutes as follows the view that the attribute of one thing can be passed to another like the scent of flowers perfuming a basket, when the two things are of different nature.

(10) The scent of flowers, and so forth, can only be passed to a thing of like character, such as a cloth with which it may come into contact. This cannot happen in the case of unlike substances. On account of its subtlety, the ether cannot be affected by impressions, even though it is a substance. All the less can impressions affect pure Consciousness, which is different in kind, and which is not even a substance. If Consciousness were taken to assume the form of the impressions, as clay assumes the form of cups, then the impressions would be useless. They would never be anything other than Consciousness (and so would add nothing new). Hearing is not coloured by sight, even though both are objects. Even less can pure Consciousness be coloured by impressions, as it is relationless and unattached. (B.B.V. II.iii.105-8)

There is an upanishadic text as follows: 'As a great fish now follows the eastern and now the western bank of a river, so does this Spirit now enjoy dream, now waking experience.... That (dreamless sleep) is his form beyond desire, evil or fear. When a man is embraced by his beloved wife he is not aware of anything, within or without. In the same way, when (in dreamless sleep) this Spirit is embraced by the Self as massed Consciousness, he is not aware of anything, within or without. This is the form in which he has realized all his desires, in which his desires are only for his own Self, in which he has no desires, in which he is not afflicted by grief' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.18 and 21). Here is Bhartṛprapañca's explanation of the context of this passage.

(11) The external activity of this Spirit depends on the activity of the intellect and other instruments.... Desire arises from action and infects the Spirit, but desire and the Spirit are explained as being separate.... On the other hand metaphysical Ignorance has the Self's Consciousness for its seat.... It distorts that Consciousness and conditions it for erroneous perception.... Consciousness in this form passes successively through the intellect and other organs, assuming progressively grosser forms, and finally becomes apt for empirical experience.... Insofar as the relationship between action and the Spirit is caused by attachment, the fact that they are really distinct has already been explained; insofar as the relation is

caused by Ignorance, the fact that they are really distinct still remains to be explained....

Attachment enters the Self from the outside, coming from the objects and the sense-organs. Under the pull of attachment, Consciousness seeps out from the Self and operates in the realm of the external.... The connection of the Self with action rests on metaphysical Ignorance, and hence brings harm.... Therefore only he who is free from attachment and Ignorance attains liberation. Liberation is like regaining one's true state (of health) when there is no longer any connection with illness. So it is worth disowning Ignorance. In dreamless sleep one is free from Ignorance, desire and action, and hence healthy in one's own true nature. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1089-1100)

This doctrine is refuted by Sureśvara in the Vārtika as follows. When once it is admitted that nothing exists over and above the Self, then no objects or sense-organs can exist apart from Ignorance. The theory that attachment comes in from the objects through the sense-organs then becomes untenable. Nor could it be summoned by Ignorance. For Ignorance produces wrong knowledge and does nothing else. Nor is it correct to say that Ignorance has the Self for its seat. For the whole notion that Ignorance rests in the Self itself depends on Ignorance! Ignorance cannot be conceived as resting in the Self either by its own power or by the power of another. The doctrine that Ignorance disturbs the Consciousness of the Self and makes it apt for erroneous perception is no better, because there are Vedic texts which deny all modification of the Absolute. So we have to accept in the end that the whole notion of Ignorance permeated by a reflection of Consciousness rests on arguments devoid of critical reflection (B.B.V. IV.iii. 1105-11).

Bhartṛprapañca interprets the example of the great fish as follows.

(12) The materialists say that, just as in the external sphere, particularized consciousness (sensation) arises from the inter-relation of the eye with light and the object of vision, even so mental knowledge arises from the inter-relation of the intellect with the sense-organs. This accounts for mental knowledge, and we do not need to assume a knower over and above it. But this is wrong. If there were no separate knower, then consciousness in dream would be material light just like waking consciousness (according to the terms of the materialist's theory). The onset of dream would not then introduce any change; the stuff of which the waking world and the dream-world was composed would be the same; and the two worlds would be perceived simultaneously. But in practice this does not occur. That is why (the Upanishad speaks of a

great fish and) says that there is an observer of these two 'nests' of waking and dream who (perceives them successively and) is (therefore) different from them (as the fish is different from the two river-banks which it visits alternately).

It will be objected by some that, since the soul is all-pervading, it would always be in contact with the worlds of waking and dream and would perceive them simultaneously. The cause of the fact that they are perceived in alternation is not the presence of a separate knower, but the presence of presiding deities. The latter can well enter into operation successively.... But this theory is also wrong. Since the deities are all-pervading, their activity, also, ought (on this theory) to be simultaneous. But the cognitions of the soul (as knower separate from his knowledge) are successive. And it is in any case impossible that the deities who preside over the sense-organs should be present in dream (as the sense-organs are then in abeyance). But the soul may be present as the witness of dreams brought on by merit and demerit and by other causes. The existence of a knower different from the act of knowing is thus proved by the evidence of activity in two successive spheres (waking and dream), which must be the work of a single perceiver (himself different from the cognitions in both states). The same perceiver is present throughout both waking and dream. But his work as perceiver of them cannot be simultaneous (as they are successive). The fact that he acts to perceive them successively is thus well explained.... And the fact that they are not perceived simultaneously is a sign of the existence of a soul (separate from and additional to the stream of cognitions, for the latter do not overlap one another successively in time)....

As for the deities, they do not perform their normal function in dream. For in the case of one dying or going to sleep, they leave their work in the individual body (at the time of death or sleep) and go to their own proper stations, as we know from such Vedic texts as 'Speech enters Agni' (Bṛhad.III.ii.13). The deities leave one about to enter on dream in the same way.... It is true that the deities do not leave Hiraṇyagarbha. But as Hiraṇyagarbha is not manifest to perception, their presence in Hiraṇyagarbha is not enough to produce any effects in dream.... The perceiver transcends both waking-time and dream-time. Hence knowledge cannot be categorized as material, and is not brought about by the deities. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1120-46)

Here, Sureśvara does not go on to criticize Bhartṛprapañca's refutation of the materiality of knowledge. But he does remark that the whole argument for refuting the presence of the deities was pointless, whether the deities be taken as different from or non-different from the elements (B.B.V. IV.iii.1147).* Ānandagiri, too, in his gloss, says 'Bhartṛprapañca's interpretation of the illustration of the great fish has been

explained. Sureśvara accepts that Bhartṛprapañca's procedure is a method of refuting the materialist. But he says that the whole procedure of raising the possibility that the deities might be responsible for alternations of states of consciousness from waking to dream and back to waking was wrongly conceived (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1147).

******(It is useless to appeal to deities rather than to a separate knower to account for the alternation of waking and dream, whether the deities be conceived as different or non-different from what they control. If they are conceived as different, it would be better to accept the simpler hypothesis of a knower separate from the cognitions he knows. If the deities are taken as non-different from what they control they will be non-different from the body, and the need for a knower separate from the cognitions he knows in order to account for the alternation between waking and dream will already have been established in the course of refuting the materialist. If the whole appeal to deities was meaningless, the mention and refutation of the theory was also meaningless. See Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1147. T.N.)*

The Veda gives an example to illustrate the soul's entry into the state of dreamless sleep. 'As a hawk or an eagle after flying about in the sky becomes tired, folds its wings and is borne down to the nest, so does this Spirit hasten to that state where He has no desires and sees no dreams' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.19). Bhartṛprapañca introduces this passage as follows.

(13) The Self's determinate knowledge in the realm of duality sheds light in all directions in the waking state, like the sun's rays beaming.... Desire springs from action, and the subtle impressions of future tendencies (vāsanā), too, arise from action alone.... The soul acts according to its impressions and receives rewards according to its action.... The impression becomes one with the reward it promotes. Coloured by the impressions, the soul conceives desires.... Desire manifests the creations of dream, with their joys and sorrows.... Determinate knowledge modifies desire, for the development and course of action are governed by knowledge.... Determinate knowledge here is equivalent to wrong knowledge (viparīta-darśana) or Ignorance (avidyā).... Even when there is something to apprehend, empirical knowledge apprehends it wrongly.... Desire is external to the soul.... Desire prompts the soul to action, and action causes modifications (of pleasure and pain in the soul).... Desire, action, impressions and empirical consciousness, being mutually dependent, are all one complex.... The soul desires on account of the impressions and sees the objects of duality through empirical consciousness.... But in dreamless sleep, the realm of non-duality, action breaks off, as there is nothing external to prompt it

into movement, and desire also, now coalescing with the soul, lies at peace for lack of anything to do.... Even Consciousness cannot assume the form of determinate empirical knowledge, since there is nothing different from it in nature or separate from it for it to perceive.... It is like a fire when all its fuel is burnt.... It is with this in mind that the Veda says 'He desires no desires and sees no dream', thereby declaring that the true nature of the soul is free from desire, action and so forth. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1188-1201)

Sureśvara does not explicitly condemn this teaching. All he says is, 'The question whether or where this interpretation is right or wrong must be examined by scholars with an open mind' (B.B.V. IV.iii.1203-4). But Ānandagiri makes the following observation. 'It is wrong to make a distinction between waking and dream on the one hand, conceived as the realm of duality, and dreamless sleep on the other, conceived as the realm of non-duality. It is wrong, whether the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep are taken as real or as unreal. If they were real, duality would be real. If they were unreal, non-duality would be the truth, and all distinctions would have been refuted (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1204).

There is a Vedic text which explains the absence of empirical seeing, seer and seen in dreamless sleep. 'Verily, when there (in dreamless sleep) he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, though he does not see. For there is no break in the seeing of the seer' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23).

Sureśvara's exposition and refutation of Bhartṛprapañca's interpretation of this passage and its continuation has already been given above at M.V.81,1, and should be consulted there. The introduction to the passage, explaining the context, runs as follows in Bhartṛprapañca's words, summarized:

(14) It has been said that in dreamless sleep there is no pain within. At that time the soul remains in its own true nature as pure spiritual light.... It means *its own* light, as the sun and other external luminaries are absent.... But have we not said that all determinate knowledge falls under the heading of Ignorance? And will it not follow that there will be a feeling 'I am all this' in dreamless sleep which will fall into the category of Ignorance? No. Though the conviction 'I am all' is determinate knowledge, it does not come under the category of Ignorance. For we have explained that metaphysical Ignorance is the fear that arises from vision of plurality. 'I am all this' is the contrary conviction, betokening metaphysical knowledge. When this vision of unity is kindled it is always pure and clear. But because no empirical knowledge arises, the soul does not feel it knows anything. Yet it is shining brightly with its own Consciousness.

It is not right to raise the objection, 'If there is

Consciousness, how can there be the feeling of not knowing anything?' This has been answered by the example of the man embraced by his beloved wife and not aware of anything, within or without. Perhaps it will be objected that the example is not parallel with the thing it is used to illustrate. The man embraced by his wife has his sense-organs intact and capable of particular empirical knowledge, yet he has no sense of distinctions, because his organs, though present, are closed. This is not the case in dreamless sleep. So there should be an explanation of how there can be the feeling of not knowing anything, even though knowledge is present. Should we, perhaps, say that it is darkness that is present and not light? Not so. For much effort has been expended in establishing that the nature of the soul is spiritual light. And the theory propounded by our own school will stand. For when a person awakens from sleep he recognizes himself as 'I am that same'. Therefore in dreamless sleep the soul persists through its own true nature as spiritual light. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1387-1400)

Sureśvara does not criticize this doctrine here. So we can only infer what part of it he did not accept from his later examination of Bhartṛprapañca's interpretation of the passage as a whole, already cited above at M.V.81,1. Ānandagiri also says in his gloss, 'The context as viewed by the other party has been stated. Sureśvara will refute the part with which he disagrees later on' (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.iii.1408).

84 DISCUSSION OF LIBERATION

Taking Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña and Turīya (M.V.43), and dissolving each in its successor, Yājñavalkya taught Turīya by saying 'This Self is "neither this nor that"'. Then he said, 'O Janaka, you have attained the fearless state' (Bṛhad.IV.ii.4). And Janaka replied, 'May the fearless state come to you, O Yājñavalkya'.

Here the objection would occur, 'The Guru has evidently himself attained the fearless state. Why is his blessing returned?' Bhartṛprapañca replies to this objection as follows.

(1) Yājñavalkya had attained the fearless state. It was not that he had not attained it. But he did not have immediate experience of it. Still he was, after all, liberated. Or again, we might put it otherwise and say that there are two forms of liberation. The one who has immediate intuition (sākṣāt-kāra) of the Absolute while still alive in the body is said to be liberated, even though he is not dissolved in the Absolute. He will have a second liberation in the form of dissolution in the Absolute on the death of the body. Even while enjoying the first kind of liberation he can be given a

blessing for the second. (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. IV.ii.101-2)

This view is refuted by Sureśvara as follows. Yājñavalkya simply referred to knowledge of the Self when he said 'You have attained the fearless state'. So we conclude that nothing further was needed, in the way either of any new intuition of the Absolute or of dissolution in it. Nor is there any such thing as a competent Guru who has not himself realized the Absolute. Nor would the king have uttered the words 'May the fearless state come to you, O Yājñavalkya, to you, O revered one, who have enabled us to know the fearless state' if the Guru's knowledge were supposed to be no more than verbal. Nor would there be any need or desire for dissolution in the Absolute on the part of one who had attained immediate knowledge, that a 'blessing' of this kind would have been appropriate (if taken literally). So the explanation of King Janaka's words given by Bhartṛprapañca is not correct. (B.B.V. IV.ii.95-109)

From this it is clear that Sureśvara did not express agreement in his Vārtika with Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine of two kinds of liberation, liberation while yet alive (jīvanmukti), and liberation as release after death (videha-mukti). Sureśvara held that only liberation while alive was liberation in the true sense. This was also the view of Ācārya Bhagavatpāda, as has already been shown at M.V.60.

85 THE INTERMEDIATE STAGE

The following text occurs in the Veda on the occasion of a question asked by Ārtabhāga. '"O Yājñavalkya", he said, "when a man dies, what is it that does not leave him?" "Name", replied Yājñavalkya. "Infinite is name, infinite are the Viśvadevas. He who knows this verily wins thereby an infinite realm (loka)"' (Bṛhad.III.ii.12). '"O Yājñavalkya", he said, "when a man has died and his voice has dissolved in fire, his vital energies in wind, his power of sight in the sun, his mind in the moon, his power of hearing into the quarters of space, his body into earth, his soul into the ether, the hairs of his body into the plants, the hairs on his head into the trees, his blood and seed into water — where then is that man?" "Artabhāga, my dear one", said Yājñavalkya, "take my hand. We will find out about this on our own. This is not something we can discuss in public". Then the two of them went out and discussed it together. Action was what they spoke of, action was what they praised. Verily, a man becomes virtuous by virtuous action, vicious by vicious action. Thereupon Ārtabhāga of the line of Jaratkāru became silent' (Bṛhad.III.ii.13).

This is how the revered Commentator explains the context of this passage introducing Bṛhadāraṇyaka III.ii.13.

(1) The bondage of the sense-organs and objects, of the nature

of death, has already been described at the passage ending at Bṛahāraṇyaka III.ii.9. Liberation is possible because there can be the death (end) of this form of death, as was mentioned at Bṛhadāraṇyaka III.ii.10. This liberation means the dissolution of the sense-organs and objects here in this life, like the extinction of a lamp (Bṛhad.III.ii.11). It was to teach the true nature of the deathlike bondage of the sense-organs and objects, and to uncover its true cause that this new section is started beginning 'O Yājñavalkya...'. (Bṛhad.Bh. III.ii.13)

How Bhartṛprapañca viewed the context is summarized by the holy Commentator (Śaṅkara) himself.

(2) Here some (i.e. Bhartṛprapañca) propound the following theory. They say that even when the organs and objects of experience and their causes such as desire, merit and demerit, have all disappeared, even then a person is not liberated. He remains with only his name left, cut off from the supreme Self by that Ignorance which arises from the Self and yet does not conceal all of it, in the manner of desert places arising spontaneously and spoiling parts only of the earth's surface. In this state such a person remains quite turned away from the world as an object of enjoyment. Desire and action are at an end. He occupies an intermediate stage. His task is to put an end to vision of duality once and for all through vision of his identity with the supreme Self. Hence (thinks Bhartṛprapañca) the next stage in the teaching must be the introduction of the subject of the supreme Self. In this way the thinkers of this school excogitate an 'intermediate stage' called 'apavarga' or 'exemption' (from further transmigration). And they establish their transition to the next portion of the text in the light of this fancy. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.ii.13, cp. M.V.71,2)

Here are Bhartṛprapañca's words on this subject, extracted from Ānandagiri's gloss on Sureśvara's Vārtika.

(3) The following objection to our (Bhartṛprapañca's) position may be raised. Simply through a combination of ritual and meditation, practised in the context of vision of duality, (attachment along with) the whole of duality will have been uprooted. No seed will remain that might produce the material elements that could constitute a future body. Through this, a person will have achieved his end, and will have no more use for the Veda. He will have no motive for proceeding on to a vision of non-duality. How do you explain the further teaching?

We (i.e. Bhartṛprapañca) reply as follows. Ritual and meditation practised in combination in the context of vision of duality destroy the effect of attachment. Attachment is

what produces the materials for further existence in the world. This desire-element is uprooted. And if desire is uprooted, the whole element of action, to which it belongs, is uprooted with it.

What then is left of the soul? Determinate knowledge in the form of Ignorance is left. As to what is initiated by Ignorance and action respectively, action is only effective in modification when changes of form or state occur. It is Ignorance that imposes apparent limits on Consciousness. It is this Ignorance that constitutes empirical cognition imposing limits.

The soul (in the state of 'exemption' — apavarga), being (still) subject to the limiting force of Ignorance, remains separated from the supreme Self. It still belongs to the realm of transmigration and partakes of duality. Its dissolution in the Absolute is a goal that has yet to be achieved. The phrase 'its dissolution has to be achieved' is a reference to something that has not yet been achieved, and the injunction will remain in force until the dissolution takes place. This shows how the Vedic teachings on duality and non-duality interrelate. For, when Ignorance is uprooted, empirical cognition, imposing limits, comes to an end; but attachment, and the power of action to produce modifications, do not. As attachment and action are not yet at an end, they bring further empirical cognition imposing limits. For the forces of attachment, action and Ignorance are inseparable. And there cannot be vision of non-duality as long as impure duality is present. (From Ānandagiri on B.B.V. III.ii.47-61)

The teaching about the uprooting of duality here is in contradiction with the Veda and with Bhartṛprapañca's own explanations of it. There are Vedic texts teaching the indestructibility of the world of duality, such as 'The Spirit is indestructible.... If He did not (continually produce new food through His thought and action) this world would collapse' (Bṛhad.I.v.2) and 'Through the power of the Self alone, the meditator on the Self creates whatever he desires' (Bṛhad. I.iv.15). 'This world was then unmanifest' (Bṛhad.I.iv.7) teaches that this world of duality is indestructible by predicating of it an unmanifest and a manifest state. So one cannot uproot desire and action through attaining the state of Hiraṇyagarbha (as Bhartṛprapañca's theory demands). As for attaining the Absolute in its unmanifest state, that occurs even in dreamless sleep; but it is not enough for the realization of the final goal of life.

Ignorance may be considered either as absence of knowledge or as erroneous knowledge. In either case it has no power to impose limits. If it is absence of knowledge, it is merely a concealing force (and not a limiting one). And erroneous knowledge, such as the erroneous notion that the ether of the sky is blue, imposes no limitation on the ether. Again,

Bhartṛprapañca himself said, 'Ignorance springs up spontaneously here and there in the Self, like desert places appearing on the surface of the earth. On the other hand desire and action, together with their subtle impressions, are repeatedly produced in the inmost Self by previous desire and action, and do not arise from Ignorance'. So Ignorance is not the material cause of the world.

Nor was it right to claim that, even after Ignorance had been destroyed, desire and action could bring it back in the form of empirical cognition imposing limits. For they are not its cause. And even if they were, they could not bring it back from non-existence once it had been destroyed. In the absence of earth to grow from, even the most refreshing showers will not bring forth a lotus-bed from the empty sky. Nor can the Absolute be the cause of Ignorance. For if it were, Ignorance would be ineradicable. Or, if Ignorance were caused by the Absolute and nevertheless underwent destruction, (it would do so because it was its inalienable nature to undergo destruction, and) there would be no need to have recourse to special means to destroy it (which is absurd, as it would render the supreme texts of the Veda useless). And again, if desire and action did not even have the power to keep Ignorance in being, how could they have the power to recreate if from nothing once it had been destroyed?

Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine that, when desire and action have been destroyed through a combination of meditation and ritual, Ignorance remains, contradicts his own explanation of the text 'neither this nor that'. He declared that 'neither this' negated the whole realm of the gross and subtle objects, while 'nor that' negated the desires that brought it into being. When desire and all particularities are at an end, what is left is the partless Absolute - such was his explanation of the phrase 'neither this nor that'.

How could the statement 'Even when there is knowledge through the text "neither this not that" Ignorance does not dissolve in the Absolute' fail to be contradictory? And what about the statement 'there cannot be knowledge of non-duality till duality has been purified?' What kind of purification of duality is here meant? Does it mean separating it from non-duality? Or does it imply its total destruction? As, in Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine, reality is one, being a whole articulated into parts, duality cannot be separated from non-duality. And if duality were destroyed there could not be a whole articulated into parts, and that would contradict the specific teaching of the school.

In fact, the entire notion of a whole articulated into parts is unintelligible, since the whole and the parts would be mutually contradictory, like cold and hot. (Nothing can be one and at the same time non-one or many.) And it is a notion which contradicts the negative upanishadic texts like 'Without a before (cause) or an after (effect)' (Bṛhad.II.v.19).

And if knowledge of the Absolute as a whole did not include knowledge of it articulated into parts, the texts saying that, when the Absolute is known, all is known, would stand contradicted. Nor would anything further remain to be known (as the doctrine of 'exemption' implies it would) when the whole was known. When the rope is known, no snake or other imagined form remains over. Nor can anyone perceive all the different forms of duality. And if (we were to grant for argument's sake that) all the distinctions *were* perceived, the Absolute could not be accounted infinite. Moreover, vision of the Self (which is infinite) and vision of the not-self (which is finite) are mutually contradictory. That is why the Veda said, 'The sense-organs are turned outwards,... (a certain wise person turned his gaze inwards and beheld the Self within)' (Kaṭha II.i.1).

On these lines Sureśvara refuted the doctrine of Bhartṛprapañca at length in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika (B.B.V. III.ii. 63-120). And there is a further refutation by Śrī Śaṅkara himself in his commentary on Bṛhadāraṇyaka III.ii.13, which runs as follows.

(4) What they do not tell us, however, is how there can be attention to, hearing of, pondering over and sustained meditation on the supreme Self on the part of a bodiless being who has lost all his organs and vital energy. They tell us that his sense-organs have dissolved, and that only his name is left. And they connect this state with the words 'lies dead' which occurred earlier in the text (Bṛhad.III.ii.11). They cannot support this idea with even the dream of an argument.

If, to avoid these absurdities, they were to say that, even while still alive, the student came to the point where he was associated with Ignorance alone, completely withdrawn from all objects of enjoyment, then they would have to explain how that state arose. If they were to say that it arose through his attaining identity with the whole realm of duality (through meditating on Hiraṇyagarbha), then this has already been refuted (at Bṛhad.Bh.I.v.2).

One might, as one alternative, suppose that the enlightened one, endowed with his karmic merit and demerit and with his vision of the Self as duality in unity, might become dead, with his organs and vital energy dissolved, and might in this condition attain identity with the universe as Hiraṇyagarbha. Alternatively one might suppose that he remained alive, with his organs and vital energy, not dissolved, withdrawn from experience of objects, intent on meditation on the supreme Self. But these two (alternative) states could not *both* be produced by the same course of discipline. If there were the course of discipline that leads to attainment of identity with Hiraṇyagarbha, it would not be the course of discipline that leads to withdrawal from all experience of objects. And if there were the course of discipline that leads the one intent on the supreme Self to withdrawal from all empirical experience,

then it would not be what leads to identity with Hiraṇyagarbha. For that which promotes the attainment of an end cannot also promote withdrawal from all attainment.

Perhaps it will be said that the enlightened man attains Hiraṇyagarbha after death, and then, with his organs and vital energy dissolved, with only his name remaining, becomes a candidate for knowledge of the supreme Self. But in that case the instruction (found in the Veda) for the knowledge of the supreme Self, which is addressed to living beings like ourselves, would be useless (which is absurd). For knowledge of the Absolute is taught as an attainable end for *everyone*, as texts like 'And whichever of the gods...' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10) show. So this is all an utterly contemptible theory, foreign to the Vedic teaching. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.ii.13)

86 HEARING, PONDERING AND SUSTAINED MEDITATION

Thus Bhartṛprapañca espoused a doctrine of duality in non-duality in regard to the nature of the Absolute. And he also followed a different line from that of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda in his teaching on the subject of the means to liberation.

For consider. At Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.iv.5 there is a text, 'O Maitreyī! The Self, verily, is to be seen, heard about, pondered over, subjected to sustained meditation', which mentions various ways through which the Absolute is apprehended. As Śrī Śaṅkara remarks in his Commentary to Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.v.1, 'to be heard about' implies listening to the Teacher and the traditional texts. 'To be pondered over' implies logical reflection. The kind of reasoning there mentioned might have 'All this is the Self' as the proposition to be proved, and the proof might be that the Self was the sole universal principle present in all this, the sole source from which it arose, and the sole reality into which it will finally dissolve. The doubt might arise that the proposition advanced as proof was itself unfounded, and it is to settle this doubt that the section of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad called the Madhu Brāhmaṇa (Bṛhad.II.v.1 ff.) was composed. Or else we might say (he adds) that the reason for the initial proposition has been stated, and the Upanishad is now going on to draw the final conclusion.

Bhartṛprapañca's explanation, however, is different. He says:

(1) Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad II.iv.5-6 explains what is traditionally meant by 'hearing' in 'it should be heard about' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5). Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad II.iv.7-14 explains what is meant by 'pondering' in 'it should be pondered over' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5). The function of the Madhu Brāhmaṇa beginning at II.v.1 is to enjoin sustained meditation. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.v.1,

intro.)

On this the revered Commentator observes:

(2) In any case, logical reasoning must follow the lines laid down by the Veda. And there can be no need for a separate injunction to say that sustained meditation must be brought to bear on what had been thought out logically and established through Vedic revelation and reason. Therefore we reject as wrongly conceived Bhartṛprapañca's idea that hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are expounded in separate portions of the Upanishad. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.v.1, intro.)

Here it seems that the revered Commentator is only concerned to deny that there is a separate injunction to perform sustained meditation, not to deny that the teachings about hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are separate in themselves. Otherwise one might conclude that Śrī Gauḍapāda Ācārya's division of the teaching was wrong. For in the first Book of his Kārikās he explains the revealed Vedic teaching (i.e. explains hearing). In the second he explains the unreality of the world through rational argument (i.e. explains pondering). In the third he first teaches the attainment of the state in which the mind becomes virtually 'no-mind', a state attained by the highest class of enquirers through realization of the sole reality of the Self (G.K.III.32, cp. M.V.265,4). Then he goes on to speak of the restraint of the mind that has to be practised by students of weak or medium powers of vision for the attainment of that state (G.K.III.40-6, cp. M.V.55,8; 56,7; 259,17).

Here in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, too, there are similar divisions. What is taught in the Madhu Kāṇḍa (interpreted broadly as Bṛhad.I.i.1-II.vi.3) primarily as revealed doctrine is expounded over again in the Muni Kāṇḍa (Bṛhad.III.i.1-IV.vi.3) primarily through logical argumentation, and is afterwards set forth yet again (in the Khila Kāṇḍa, Bṛhad.V.i.1-VI.v.4) primarily from the point of view of meditation, as being the highest reward of meditative practice. All this, too, would be wrong if the teachings about hearing, pondering and sustained meditation (cp. M.V.56) were in in no way separate. So it is only Bhartṛprapañca's mention of a separate *injunction* to sustained meditation that is condemned here by the revered Commentator. One also has to infer that the author of the Vṛtti on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka must have insisted that the present short section of the Upanishad (II.v.1 ff.) contained a separate injunction to sustained meditation.

(3) This Self is the overseer of all, the king ruling over all beings. As all the spokes of a wheel are affixed both to the hub and the felly, so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all organs and all these individual souls affixed to this Self.

(Bṛhad.II.v.15)

Bhartṛprapañca's explanation of this section is reported as follows in Sureśvara's Vārtika.

(4) The student should identify himself with the Indestructible, the supreme Self, and he should imagine the body as the hub of a wheel, and the whole world beginning with the deities as the spokes centred there, and should become penetrated with this conviction, and should subject it to sustained meditation. One who continually meditates thus attains an identity with the Self from which there is no turning back, as a molten ball of iron becomes one with the fire pervading it. The meditator disappears as such, and becomes one with the object of his meditation. This 'Wheel of the Absolute' (brahma-cakra) is present in all beings, but because they are not awake to it they are not aware of it. (B.B.V. II.v.68-73)

This explanation is not correct. It contradicts the maxim 'What is a statement of fact should not be taken as a command'. The whole theory is constructed on the basis of an example. But the image of the wheel as set forth by Bhartṛprapañca cannot be derived from the literal meaning of the upanishadic text, nor is there any injunction in that section of the Upanishad saying 'He should subject it to sustained meditation'. All that the upanishadic text actually says is that everything must be referred to the Self according to the example of hub and felly. Anyone who imagined that there was an injunction here would be guilty of putting forward what the Veda does not teach and contradicting what it does teach. Even in the course of this very topic in the Upanishad any distinction of inner and outer, or cause and effect, is denied in the words, 'This Absolute is without a "before" (cause) or an "after" (effect), without anything inside it or outside it in space. This Self, the Witness of all from within, is the Absolute' (Bṛhad. II.v.19). Vision of any kind of distinction has already been denounced in the text 'He who meditates on a deity as "I am one and he is another" does not have true knowledge' (Bṛhad. I.iv.10). And the view that the Absolute can be the object of an act of meditation is denied in the text 'Not this which people here worship' (Kena I.5). The text 'It is seen by those of subtle vision through the sharpest tip of their minds' (Kaṭha I.iii.12) inculcates vision of the Self, not meditation on it. Its meaning is that the Absolute can only be known by a purified mind. Or this text may also be taken to mean that there was awareness of the Self before connection with the not-self arose. So the notion of a wheel, introduced by Bhartṛprapañca here to substantiate his metaphysical views about a whole articulated into parts, is unwarranted. It was therefore refuted on these lines by Sureśvara in his Vārtika (B.B.V. II.v.74-89).

From this we conclude that for Bhartṛprapañca 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) was a certain form of meditation (laid down in a Vedic injunction). We have seen at M.V.56 what it was for the revered Commentator. What it meant for Sureśvara will be shown below at its proper place, M.V.125.

87 THE DOCTRINE OF LIBERATION THROUGH A COMBINATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND RITUAL

Like other proponents of the doctrine that knowledge of the Absolute rested on an injunction, Bhartṛprapañca identified the word 'knowledge' in this context with meditation, and held that a combination of meditation and ritual was the means to liberation. Accordingly we find his doctrine that ritualistic activity was included in the means to liberation refuted here and there by Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara. Thus at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad I.iv.15 we find the following.

(1) This very principle is Brahminhood, Kshatriyahood, Vaishyahood and Shūdrahood. He became a Brahmin as Agni (fire) amongst the gods. He is (especially) the Brahmin amongst men. He becomes the Kshatriya through the divine power of Kshatriyahood, the Vaishya through the divine power of Vaishyahood, the Shūdra through the divine power of Shūdrahood. Therefore people desire a place amongst the gods as Agni and a place amongst men as a Brahmin. For the Absolute was pre-eminently present in these two forms. If anyone departs from this world without having seen his destination, the Self, then the Self, being unknown, does not protect him, even as the Vedas do not protect one who does not recite and know them, any more than unperformed ritual protects the one who does not perform it. Even if one who does not know the Self performs many holy deeds, that merit is finally exhausted. One should meditate on the Self alone as one's true realm (loka). He who meditates on the Self alone as his true realm finds that his merit is not exhausted. What he desires he is able to create, through the power of this Self. (Bṛhad.I.iv.15)

Bhartṛprapañca introduces this passage as follows.

(2) Well, action, at any rate, cannot be the cause of liberation. For if it were, liberation would be impermanent. Nor can the gods. For they are in charge of action, and restrict a person to that realm. Nor can a person attain vision of the Self if he abandon the gods. Nor can one realize the Self without actually *seeing* the Self. Obedience to the commands of the gods, implying action and sacrifice, would actually be in contradiction with knowledge of the Absolute. So liberation cannot come either from a combination of knowledge and action or from either of them taken separately. Nor can one

abandon action before one has fulfilled the three debts (to men, gods and the ancestors). And so, to repeat, one ends up at the position that liberation is unattainable either by action alone, or by knowledge alone, or by a combination of the two.

It is to combat this conclusion that the next section of the Upanishad is introduced. Realization of identity in difference is attainable through a combination of knowledge and action in the form of meditation on Hiraṇyagarbha allied to performance of the obligatory daily ritual. That state is impermanent from the very fact of its including duality. But the state beyond distinctions, which is unmanifest, and which is in fact the state of realization of the supreme Self, is indestructible. This being so, one who meditates on Hiraṇyagarbha reaches an impermanent realm (loka). But if anyone attains that (superior) unmanifest state and meditates upon it, then his very Self becomes action and his action is never exhausted. Thus in his case action (all ritualistic duty) is fulfilled, and there is knowledge in the form of meditation on the Absolute. The first stage of the discipline is a combination of meditation on Hiraṇyagarbha with meritorious action. The second is a combination of meditation on the Absolute in its manifest form as Hiraṇyagarbha with meditation on the Absolute in its unmanifest form. (B.B.V. I.iv.1692-1709)

Here the doctrine of Bhartṛprapañca is refuted by the revered Commentator as follows.

(3) Here some (i.e. Bhartṛprapañca) say that people make oblations into the sacred fire and offerings of charity to Brahmins hoping to realize the supreme Self as their world. But this is wrong. We know this for two reasons. First, the distinction into four castes is mentioned (not in any direct connection with the goal of realizing one's own Self but) to establish rights and duties in relation to ritual within the realm of Ignorance. And secondly, a specification is introduced a little later in the texts which shows that Bhartṛprapañca's view that those offering oblations did so for a world that was their own Self must be wrong. (For if in the context of the present teaching the term 'world' had meant 'the supreme Self', the specification 'his own Self' in the later phrase 'If anyone depart without having realized his own Self as his world' would have been meaningless. But if it be taken that the world for the sake of which one makes oblations and offers prayers is a world other than one's own Self and dependent on Agni, then the introduction of the specification 'his own Self' in the later part of the text will be meaningful; its purpose will be to specify that the world now being spoken of in the later part of the text is not any world other than one's own Self)....

Then there is the view (cp. M.V.87,2) that the action of

the enlightened man is never exhausted because it is always accompanied by meditation (on the Absolute).... This is a charming conception, but not that of the Veda. For it is the supreme Self, the main subject of the section, that the text refers to under the phrase 'His own realm'. (There is no reference to any form of the realm of action.) The text first refers to the Self as 'one's own realm'; then it drops the words 'one's own' and introduces the term 'the Self', and again refers to 'the Self alone' in the sentence 'One should meditate on the realm of the Self'....

In that context, there is no occasion for introducing the idea of a realm permeated by action. Moreover, a later text specifically points out that the topic is the supreme Self, pertaining solely to knowledge and not to action, in the words 'What have we to do with progeny, we whose realm (loka) is the Self?' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22) The phrase (that follows) 'this Self is our realm' shows that their realm is different from the realm attained through sons, rituals and symbolic meditations. Witness also such texts as 'His realm (loka) is not diminished by action' (Kauṣītaki III.1) and 'This is his highest realm (loka)' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.32). These texts should be taken as constituting one single affirmation, along with their various specifications. Here we have the specification 'his own realm, the Self'....

The use of the term 'Self' in the phrase 'From his very Self he (who meditates on the Self alone as his realm) creates whatever he desires' (Bṛhad.I.iv.15) is only appropriate where the meditator has realized his identity with the supreme Self. The meaning is, 'He procures it from himself, from the realm of the Self that is the topic under discussion'. Otherwise, the text would have made a specification and said that he obtained it from the (as yet) unmanifest world constituted by the future rewards for ritual, showing that the source from which he obtained his desires was neither the realm of the highest Self, the topic under discussion, nor any manifest source. Indeed, the Self has been made the topic of the present teaching (in the phrase 'If anyone depart without having realized the Self as his realm', *ibid.*). And it has been further specified (in the phrase 'He should meditate on the Self alone as his realm', *ibid.*). In these circumstances, the reference cannot be to an 'intermediary realm, neither the higher Self nor the lower Self' (as Bhartṛprapañca supposes). For this is not taught (here or anywhere else) in the Veda. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.15)

88 RISING ABOVE THE DIVINE WEALTH

It is clear that Bhartṛprapañca would not accept total renunciation of action as a means to liberation, simply because he accepted a combination of action with knowledge as the means.

Accordingly we find the following in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary.

(1) But there are some who would connect even the enlightened person with desire. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.1)

(2) Some say it is impossible to rise above the divine wealth* For they say that one could only rise above it in dependence on it. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1)

**(The Divine Wealth (daiva vitta), in this context, is the attainment of the realm of the gods, especially the realm of Hiraṇyagarbha, through rituals associated with prescribed Vedic meditations on elements in the ritual. Cp. Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1, intro., trans. Mādhavānanda p.481. T.N.)*

(3) Perhaps the opponent will say that, because the present Upanishad is concerned with knowledge of the Self, this text apparently implying withdrawal from action is not an injunction but a mere explanatory passage (artha-vāda, not authoritative because it might be rhetorical).... There are rules in the Veda and Smṛti for houseless monks about attending upon the Guru, daily repetition of prescribed Vedic texts, regulations about eating, rinsing the mouth and so forth. And since the wearing of the sacred thread is laid down as part of such ceremonies as honouring the Guru, one cannot suppose that there is any intention to teach the abandonment of the sacred thread.

It is true that rising above desires is apparently ordained in the present passage. But it is only rising above the three desires for a son, for wealth and for a high realm (loka) in the after-life. It does not imply rising above all action and above all resort to the instruments of action. If all action and ritual were to be abandoned, then one would be imagining something never taught in the Veda and failing to perform what is laid down in the Veda, such as the wearing of the sacred thread and so on. Thus one would be causing the non-performance of what is laid down and the performance of what is forbidden, which would be a great sin. So the abandonment of the sacred thread and other emblems is a false tradition, a case of the blind leading the blind. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1)

And we may surmise that it is the same commentator whose views against renunciation are being examined in other passages, too, such as the one beginning:

(4) But those who (wrongly) imagine that the knower of the Absolute has to perform action to guard against obstacles arising from the sin of omission... (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iv.6)

These are the people who only accept that (limited) form of renunciation found in the 'three-staff' tradition. Of them the

revered Commentator wrote:

(5) That (supreme) form of houseless mendicancy which is characterized by rising above all desires is an auxiliary to knowledge of the Self, as it consists in giving up desire, and desire is opposed to knowledge of the Self and pertains to the realm of metaphysical Ignorance. But there is another (lower) form of houseless mendicancy which consists in the adoption of a certain regulated mode of life, and is a means to the attainment of the World of Brahmā and other spiritually desirable ends. In this sphere, there are Vedic injunctions about wearing the sacred thread and carrying other emblems. (Bṛhad.Bh. III.v.1)

(6) Verily, there are three realms — the realm of men, the realm of the ancestors and the realm of the gods. This realm of men is won by begetting a son alone and by no other act. The realm of the ancestors is won by ritual, the realm of the gods by meditation. The realm of the gods is the best realm. Therefore they praise meditation. (Bṛhad.Up.I.v.16)

Introducing this passage, Bhartṛprapañca said:

(7) It has been said earlier, 'That, verily, which is the year is Prajāpati, having sixteen equal parts. He who knows Prajāpati thus becomes Prajāpati'. It might be claimed that one reaches the state of Prajāpati by this knowledge *alone*, and not by begetting a son and performing ritual, or by the sacrifice with its five factors (wife, son, meditation, wealth, physical performance of the ritual). It is to refute this idea and to state the true view, which is that a combination of begetting a son, creation of wealth and performance of meditation is required for realization that one is the Self of all, that the Upanishad goes on to say 'Verily, there are three realms...'

Here one might raise a doubt. There cannot be a combination for a single end between things that effect their own ends independently. One does not combine cotton threads with fragrant grasses to produce a cloth. And if the three activities of begetting a son and the rest were mutually dependent, they would really constitute facets of one activity, namely ritual, and would not be a genuine combination of three different activities. Since a combination is thus impossible, should we not conclude that all three realms are obtained by meditation alone, as through this one obtains a sense of one's identity with all?

But this is not right, as the mode of causation is different in the three cases. Begetting a son and so on are each mentioned as having a different result. When the text says 'This realm of men is won by getting a son *alone*' it denies that there can be resort to any other means for this end.

Perhaps you will say that this is contradicted by such a text as 'One conquers this realm (of men) through performance of the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice'. But this is wrong, as that text is concerned with something different. One cannot conquer (attain to) the realm of men in any other way except by begetting a son. But is this not contradicted by the words 'One conquers this realm of men by means of the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice'? No. The text about begetting a son speaks of conquering this realm in the sense of attaining to it. The text about the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice speaks about conquering this realm (this world) in the sense of rising above it. (B.B.V. I.v.218-38)

Thus Bhartṛprapañca here expounds a discipline for rising above the three realms of men, the ancestors and the gods, through *successively* combining knowledge with begetting a son, ritual and meditation.

It is perhaps worth drawing attention to two other doctrines, one a combination of action with knowledge, that are mentioned and refuted in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary, and which appear to have been maintained by some other commentator, as they do not agree with Bhartṛprapañca's version of the doctrine. He describes the first view as follows. 'Some hold that all ritual leads to the cessation of bondage. As one is liberated successively from each 'death', meaning from each new body, so one attains a new one, not for the sake of attaining it but for the sake of getting rid of it. Thus until duality is finally destroyed, all (as the Upanishad says) is death. But when duality is finally destroyed, then one is truly released from the prospect of undergoing further death. Before that, one can only speak of liberation in a relative or secondary sense (Bṛhad.Bh.III.ii.1, intro.).

In describing the second, he refers to what is said by 'Some who teach how disinterested ritual performed to the accompaniment of prescribed meditations has different effects (from ritual not accompanied by meditation), as poison and curds have different effects when taken to the accompaniment of mantras and sugar respectively...' (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.). The final truth about whose views are represented in these texts must be left to the further investigations of experts in historical criticism and textual analysis.

CHAPTER VI
MAṆḌANA

89 THE NEED FOR EXAMINING THE POSITIONS OF THE VARIOUS INTERPRETERS

We now take up the study of the different positions adopted by the interpreters of Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries. A very general indication has already been given at the beginning of the book of the way in which the positions of the interpreters conflict with one another and also with Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary. The idea was to show that everywhere there were clear differences of method to be found. It should not be supposed that my aim is to show that the various interpretations are of no help whatever for understanding the meaning of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The interpreters have brought out many points in the Commentary that are there only hinted at and would not easily have been understood by the less gifted students. The introduction by the interpretative works of topics not considered in the Commentary also helps to clarify the mind of the student, as is generally admitted.

Nevertheless, the interpretations do here and there appear to depart from the path accepted in the Commentary as the right method. Sometimes they even seem to espouse a contradictory method, and sometimes the different schools accept assumptions which put them at odds one with another. Where this appears to be so, one has to examine the context in each case, to see clearly whether the works are really at one or not. In this respect, there are many border-line cases. Hence the need for a detailed examination of the position of each of the main interpretative works.

90 THE PRE-EMINENCE OF SUREŚVARA AMONG THE INTERPRETERS

The first position that should be examined is that of Śrī

Sureśvara Ācārya, definitely known to have been a direct pupil of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara. It was he who, with a view to protect the tradition of Śrī Bhagavatpāda, refuted all the previous methods of interpretation of the Vedanta in the introductory Sambandha Vārtika portion of his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya Vārtika, on the basis of Vedic revelation, reason and his own direct experience. On this account, all students are greatly in his debt. And then he went on to complete the Vārtika on Śrī Śaṅkara's actual Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary, a work that is equal in rank with the famous Vārtika written by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa on the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Commentary of Śabara.

91 WHY THE POSITION OF MAṆḌANA HAS TO BE EXAMINED FIRST

Before entering on an examination of the system expounded in Sureśvara's Vārtika, it is necessary to begin first with an examination of the system of the Brahma Siddhi (of Maṇḍana),* to help the reader in his approach. Sometimes the lines of argument found in the Brahma Siddhi are followed in Sureśvara's Vārtika just as they stand; sometimes the actual words, phrases and arguments are reproduced. Two questions, in particular, arise here. Do the two authors follow one method of interpretation, or are their methods different? If the two methods are different, then which of them is it that borrows the words and arguments of the other to support his own method, and why does he do so?

Some say that Maṇḍana Miśra, pupil of Bhaṭṭa Kumārila and author of the Brahma Siddhi, was defeated in a public debate by Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda and became the latter's pupil, taking the order of a renunciate under the name of Sureśvarācārya. Others say that it was another person called Viśvarūpa who was defeated by the revered Ācārya in debate and later became Sureśvarācārya. We shall leave this contentious problem alone here, as it is the province of historians. But we may observe that it does not appear easy to accept the identity of Maṇḍana and Sureśvara, given the differences in literary style and philosophic method in the books attributed to them. The style of the Brahma Siddhi, which is in mixed prose and verse, appears to be more literary than that of the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi of Sureśvara, also in mixed prose and verse. In regard to philosophic method, an examination of the means that they advocate for the realization of the non-dual Self will strongly suggest difference.

Whether it should finally be ascertained that Sureśvarācārya originally was Maṇḍana after all, or whether it should turn out that they were different people and it had to be assumed that the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi and the Vārtika were composed by the same person, who came after the author of the Brahma Siddhi in time, in either case the main points in Maṇḍana's doctrine

that were in contradiction with that of Bhagavatpāda ought to have been refuted by Sureśvarācārya. But they are not. If, to explain this, we assume that the Brahma Siddhi must have been composed after the Vārtika of Sureśvara, then, in turn, it becomes difficult to explain why Maṇḍana does not bestow even a glance on the peculiar doctrines of the Vārtika, and the whole problem is complicated, from whichever side it is approached, and we must turn it over to the hands of the philologists and experts in literary history. Here we shall accept the traditional view that Maṇḍana wrote before Sureśvarācārya, and proceed to examine his position now. A sympathetic student will surely understand that this is the right course for the purposes of the present work.

(References to the Brahma Siddhi are given here by pages to Kuppuswami's edition, the only one extant. Besides the complete French translation by M. Biardeau, there is also an able and fairly full summary in English in Potter, 1981, made, as a special instalment of the work, by Allen W. Thrasher. Both these works have page-references to the Sanskrit text. See Bibliography under Biardeau and Potter. T.N.)

92 THE NATURE OF METAPHYSICAL IGNORANCE IN MAṆḌANA'S SYSTEM

It appears that the Brahma Siddhi was composed in order to show that the Absolute could only be known through the Upanishads. But Maṇḍanācārya's view was that knowledge of the Absolute consisted in immediate vision arising *from meditation on* the (merely abstract) knowledge arising from the upanishadic texts. This will be examined further below (at M.V.100).

The nature of the Absolute is defined in the opening benedictory verse of the Brahma Siddhi. It runs: 'We offer reverence to Prajāpati, who is bliss, one, deathless, birthless, immutable, who is all and yet who transcends all, beyond fear'.

An examination of the nature of metaphysical Ignorance is undertaken to show that it is through metaphysical Ignorance that the Absolute, which is really of the nature described above, appears to assume the form of an individual soul. Maṇḍana nowhere gives a clear definition of Ignorance as such. He does, however, in several places (B.Sid. p.9,20,32,33,122) speak of two forms of metaphysical Ignorance, respectively non-perception and wrong perception. But for Maṇḍana Ignorance more particularly means positive error. This emerges, for instance, from the passage: 'Non-apprehension, being a non-entity, cannot be the cause of anything. It cannot be the cause of erroneous vision, or it would cause it in coma and dreamless sleep. What then is the cause of erroneous vision? Not non-perception, but, as we have already said, beginningless, purposeless Ignorance. It is useless to ask for a cause

of beginningless Ignorance. Because erroneous vision and the impressions it leaves act on each other mutually as cause and effect our theory can stand' (B.Sid. p.33). (That is to say, erroneous vision leaves impressions which in turn beget new erroneous visions which in turn beget new impressions and so on: one may imagine the series of causes stretching back endlessly.)

Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara declared in the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary that metaphysical Ignorance was of the nature of a superimposition of Self on not-self, the real on the unreal, and *vice versa*. And he explained the matter further in his Gītā and Bṛhadāraṇyaka commentaries. Why the author of the Brahma Siddhi did not even bestow a glance on these passages is not clear. It seems impossible that Ācārya Maṇḍana had never heard of the view that Ignorance is essentially superimposition. For elsewhere he himself wrote, 'It is only something existent that, when not manifesting in its true form, can manifest in a superimposed form that does not truly exist. How could there be superimpostion on the empty Void (that total non-existence of anything declared by the Mādhyamika Buddhists to be the final truth)? What could there be to manifest? There would be nothing to be a cause of anything' (B.Sid. p.20).

93 THE INDETERMINABILITY OF METAPHYSICAL IGNORANCE

On the question 'Is metaphysical Ignorance real or unreal?' The author of the Brahma Siddhi expresses himself as follows:

(1) Ignorance is not the true nature of the Absolute, nor is it anything different. It is not totally unreal, nor yet real. That is precisely why it is spoken of as 'Ignorance', 'the power of illusion' (māyā) and 'wrong knowledge'. If it had been the true nature of anything, then, whether it had been different or non-different from that thing, it would have been perfectly real and so would not have been Ignorance. If it had been totally unreal, it would have been like a flower appearing to bloom in the sky, and could not have entered into experience. So it is indeterminable (as either real or unreal)....

Very well, says the objector, let us admit that the form that manifests is not real. But the fact of manifestation is certainly real, and *that* is what is called Ignorance. But the objector's argument is unsound. If the form that manifests is not real, the manifestation cannot be made out to be real either. It would be a mere false appearance. Even the notion that the unreal entity was undergoing manifestation would itself be an error. So Ignorance is not real, although it is not unreal either. It is for this very reason that it can

come to an end, for its nature is unstable. It is a mere illusory appearance. Otherwise, if it had a fixed nature, how could anything so firmly established suffer any change? What has a fixed nature cannot be destroyed. And if its true nature were to be an empty void, it would automatically be non-existent. And so (on our theory of the nature of Ignorance) there is nothing to infringe non-duality, nor are we left without anything requiring to be brought to a halt (which would have rendered the highest teachings of the Upanishads redundant). (B.Sid. p.9 f.)

On this we would comment as follows. If the Absolute is taken as real, it is not clear how anyone could arrive at the conviction that there was something else outside it labelled unreal. All reference to real and unreal occurs within the realm of Ignorance only. Of the ultimate reality in itself, one cannot say either that it is real or that it is unreal. This is the settled conclusion, pointed out at Gītā XIII.12. That is why, since the final metaphysical principle is without distinctions, it is communicated in the Upanishads only by negating what is foreign to it. So the teaching 'This metaphysical Ignorance is indeterminable either as real or as unreal' is not correct.

Nor does the teaching 'This Ignorance is also called "the power of illusion" (māyā) and "false appearance"' agree with the right method of interpretation in the Vedanta. The author himself says, 'Ignorance is superimposition, it is erroneous vision'. But the cosmic power of illusion (māyā) is Nature (prakṛti), the seed of name and form, superimposed through Ignorance. The Veda says, 'One should know that Nature (prakṛti) is Māyā' (Śvet.IV.10). In its manifest form, Māyā is, to speak from the standpoint of empirical experience, indeterminable as identical with or different from the supreme Self (B.S.Bh.II.i.14). If it were identical with the Self, it would be indestructible by nature and could never be brought to a halt. If it were different, it would be an independent reality and could not have been imagined through Ignorance. From the standpoint of the highest truth, however, name and form are non-different from the supreme Self, so non-duality is not infringed. One must accept the view of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara here. He wrote: 'But when name and form are examined from the highest standpoint by the followers of the Upanishads to see whether they are or are not anything other than the supreme Self, then it is found that they do not truly exist as separate entities, any more than modifications of clay and other substances exist as entities separate from the substances from which they are made, as is the case with all modifications like foam arising from water or pots coming from clay. And it is on this basis that one can see how texts like 'One only, without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1) and 'There is no plurality here' (Kaṭha II.i.11) apply to vision of the highest

reality (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1)

94 THE SEAT OF IGNORANCE

You may ask, 'What is the seat of Ignorance?' To this the Brahma Siddhi replies as follows:

(1) As for the question, 'To whom does Ignorance belong? — we reply, 'It belongs to the individual souls'. You will say: But are not the individual souls identical with the Absolute? That is why it says in the Veda, 'This deity thought "Let me enter into these three deities (great elements) as this living soul"...' (Chānd.VI.iii.2). We reply: Yes, this is so from the standpoint of the highest truth. But the souls are falsely imagined as different.

You may say: But whose false imagination is it that introduces differences? It cannot be the false imagination of the Absolute. For the Absolute is of the nature of knowledge, and hence free from false imagination. Nor can it be the false imagination of the individual souls. For they depend on false imagination for their existence. The argument would be circular. The distinction required to form an individual soul would depend on false imagination, while false imagination would be supposed to have its seat in the individual soul!

In answer to this difficulty some say: This would only be a problem in the case of a demonstrable reality. What cannot be established as a reality cannot produce something else that is a reality. But it is not a problem for what is merely an illusion (māyā). Nothing is impossible for the power of illusion. An illusion (māyā) is something inexplicable. If it had been something explicable, there would have been a reality and not an illusion.

Others explain the matter differently. They say, 'Ignorance and the individual soul are both beginningless like the seed and sprout. So the question of circular argument does not arise'. And those who claim that Ignorance is (a power, śakti, and) the material cause of all distinctions say, 'Ignorance is beginningless and purposeless'. On this latter view, the fault of circular argument does not arise, as Ignorance is described as beginningless. And as it is described as purposeless, there is no occasion to raise difficulties about the purpose of the creation of the universe with its distinctions. (B.Sid. p.10)

When it is here said that Ignorance belongs to the individual souls, that is correct, as it agrees with experience. However, Maṇḍana goes on to raise the objection 'To whom does the false imagination which produces difference belong?', and to object further that if the answer 'It belongs to the individual souls' were given this would imply circular argument. Both these objections, and also the attempted answer, should be ignored

as mere logic-chopping based on unproved hypotheses. For the real existence either of false imagination itself or of the distinction of the Absolute into individual souls has not been proved. Hence it is impossible to accept sequence in time and say either that distinction into souls, itself based on false imagination, occurs first, while the false imaginations occurring to the souls come afterwards, or that the false imaginations occurring to the souls come first. In the absence of any proof of the real existence of imagination or of distinction into souls or of time, the whole objection can never be raised. For metaphysical Ignorance is the prior condition for all empirical experience. And all empirical experience occurs through Ignorance alone, including experience of Ignorance (M.V.29). So what objection is there to be raised, and on what grounds?

This also refutes the suggestion that metaphysical Ignorance and the individual soul should both be regarded as beginningless in the same sense that the succession of seed and sprout is beginningless. For it is not admitted that the soul and its Ignorance are under the jurisdiction of time, as the seed and sprout are. So one should not raise an objection of this kind about the seat of Ignorance. If one admits the non-dual principle as the final reality there is no place for any objections. One cannot impute even a trace of Ignorance or of any other defect to the non-dual reality. For the Veda says, 'What could a person see then, and with what?' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14) In empirical experience, on the other hand, wherever and in whatever way Ignorance is experienced, it must be accepted there in that way. There are no objections to be raised or answered. This is illustrated in the following way in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary. '"To whom does this Ignorance belong?" We reply, "To you who ask this question". If you then ask, "But does not the Veda say that I am the Lord?" we reply, "If you are awake to this (you will see that) there is no Ignorance for anybody"' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.3). A similar idea is found in the Gītā Commentary (XIII.2). 'Here the question is raised, "Whose is this Ignorance?" We reply, "It belongs to him to whom it appears to belong".... "But does not Ignorance belong to me?" "If you really know that, then you know both Ignorance and the Self to whom it belongs"'. And there are other similar passages.

95 THE CESSATION OF NATURAL IGNORANCE

One might raise an objection in the following form. Ignorance though natural, could be brought to an end by the advent of some different (and contradictory) idea. But he who holds that all is one as the Self cannot admit the advent of any new factor. So how could Ignorance, on his theory, come to an end? The Brahma Siddhi raises this question (quoting Kumārila,

Ś.V. Sambandhākṣepa Parihāra 85-6) and then continues:

(1) It is the individual souls, as we have said, who are afflicted by the impurity of Ignorance, not the Absolute. The Absolute is eternal, pure and constant light. It cannot accept any new adventitious factor. If it could, then not even the Ignorance of one who had attained to the Absolute would come to an end. This would render liberation impossible. Or if you maintained that it was the Absolute which underwent transmigration and the Absolute which was liberated, then, when one person was liberated, all would be liberated — which is absurd.... Therefore it is the individual souls who undergo transmigration through Ignorance, and the individual souls who are liberated. And, though afflicted by the impurity of natural Ignorance, their Ignorance can very well be brought to an end through the advent of some contradictory factor called knowledge. For metaphysical knowledge is not natural to the individual soul; it is metaphysical Ignorance that is natural. And the metaphysical Ignorance of the individual soul can be dissolved by metaphysical knowledge, the latter being adventitious (*from the standpoint of the ignorant soul*). And though the individual souls are not anything other than the Absolute, the fact that some are bound and others liberated is explained on the analogy of the reflection and its original... (where reflections may come and go with the coming or going of the reflecting media, without the fate of one reflection affecting any of the others or the original, B.Sid. p.12).

Knowledge, verily, is the cessation of Ignorance, if Ignorance be taken as non-apprehension. For it is the existence of something (i.e. of knowledge) which is, precisely, the cessation of its non-existence (i.e. the cessation of non-apprehension). But what if Ignorance be taken as positive erroneous cognition? Even so, it would be the rise of the knowledge of truth that would bring Ignorance to an end, as it would contradict and cancel it. The cessation of the idea of silver erroneously perceived in a shell simply consists in the rise of the knowledge of the shell. The cessation of the silver-idea is not a goal that has to be achieved through the rise of the knowledge of the shell or through further effort of any kind. For the rise of knowledge of the shell and the cessation of the idea of silver are simultaneous and do not depend on any further activity. (B.Sid. p.121-2)

Here Maṇḍana says that it is only the individual souls who are afflicted with the impurity of Ignorance, not the Absolute. If by this he means that in ordinary experience the individual soul is only a false appearance of the supreme Self, and that the Ignorance and other defects of the imaginary individual soul can no more be found in the supreme Self, which is eternal, pure, conscious and liberated by nature, than the impurities of the reflected images of the sun can be found in the

true sun — then we say 'Yes'. For it agrees with the words of Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, as in the following cases. 'One should understand that the individual soul stands to the supreme Self as the little image of the sun reflected in water stands to the real sun. The individual soul (as such) is not identical with the Self. Yet it is not a separate entity either' (B.S.Bh.II.iii.50, cp. M.V.144,7;244,6) and 'The reflection of the sun in water expands and contracts with the motion of the water, moves when the water moves, multiplies when the water is divided. Thus it conforms to the condition of the water. But these changes do not affect the real sun' (B.S.Bh.III.ii.20, cp. M.V.244,8, note).

But when Maṇḍana goes on to insist that, whereas the Absolute is ever free from transmigration, Ignorance and transmigration belong to the individual soul alone — that is not correct. For even in the state of transmigration the individual soul is not anything other than the Absolute. The false notion of being an individual soul is superimposed on nothing other than the Absolute. For it is impossible to suppose that any experience, including that of Ignorance, could occur anywhere else except in the Absolute. Thus we have the following text in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary. 'If the supreme Self is without suffering and there is no sufferer other than it, would not that mean that the whole initiative of the Veda to remove pain was useless? No, for its purpose is to remove the erroneous notion, superimposed through Ignorance, that one is a sufferer. It is like removing the error of the rustic who forgot to count himself when counting up the number (cp. M.V.59, intro.; 59,14). And we admit the existence of an *imaginary* self undergoing suffering' (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7).

Maṇḍana also says, 'If it were the Absolute alone that underwent transmigration and achieved liberation, then, when one person was liberated, all would be liberated' (B.Sid. p.12). That is not sound either. For in truth neither the Absolute nor the individual soul undergoes either transmigration or liberation. Maṇḍana himself admits the point when he says, 'Transmigration and liberation from it belong to the realm of the imaginary only. They do not exist in the supreme principle from the standpoint of the highest truth' (B.Sid. p.15). Perhaps it will be said, 'Well, transmigration and liberation do pertain to me as imaginary individual soul, just as dark hue and the like may pertain to the reflected image (without affecting the original). Our opponent is trying to make out that they pertain to the Absolute, and that is a very different position'. Oh, what a short memory! Is not the whole notion of being an individual soul just a way of imagining the Absolute? No other reality except the Absolute exists that could stand as the substratum of the false imagination that one was an individual soul and so on. It follows inexorably that, while a thing can only be *imagined* to be the substratum of Ignorance, it is only the Absolute that can be so imagined.

Thus we find in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary: 'We have the text "Then the Absolute knew itself alone (as "I am the Absolute"): through that it became the all" (Bṛhad.I.iv.10). It is wrong to suppose that this text shows that the Absolute could not be a spiritual enquirer like us. For (there is nothing wrong in supposing that the Absolute could appear to be such from the standpoint of Ignorance, and) this is what we hear from the Veda. It is not my personal fancy. It is the Vedic teaching' (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10, cp. M.V.232,10).

Nor would this teaching imply that if one person were liberated all would be liberated. For we find at the level of practical experience that only he whose Ignorance comes to an end is liberated, not anyone else. From the standpoint of the final truth, the Absolute is neither bound nor liberated. How could one speak of everyone being liberated when there is no plurality in the Absolute? As an expert has put it, 'There is no one bound and there is no one undergoing spiritual discipline. There is no one seeking liberation and no one who has attained liberation' (G.K.II.32). And we have the remark of Śrī Śaṅkara in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary (I.iv.10), 'It is true that the Absolute is neither the author of Ignorance nor the one deluded by it. And yet there is no one (no real being) other than the Absolute who is the author of Ignorance, and there is no conscious being other than the Absolute who is deluded by it' (cp. M.V.46,5). So we must conclude that when Maṇḍana denied that either Ignorance or bondage and liberation were to be found in the Absolute he was denying an assertion that had not actually been made.

96 DOCTRINE OF THE CANCELLATION OF ILLUSION

In the Section on Command (Niyoga-Kāṇḍa) of Maṇḍana's Brahma Siddhi we find the following: 'The proper apprehension of a cognition determined by an object does not guarantee the reality of that object. For it is always possible that something may be determined as such-and-such through false superimposition when its nature is really different, as when a sacrificial fire is visualized in heaven, in accordance with the text "O Gautama, that world is verily the sacrificial fire" (Chānd. V.iv.10), whereas the sacrificial fire is not really found (read anagni-dṛṣṭeḥ) in heaven or in rain or in woman or in the other places mentioned in this text' (B.Sid. p.136).

In this context, the exponent of the doctrine that the authority of the Veda lies solely in its commands (the Mīmāṃsaka Prabhākara) rejects the doctrine that a thing can be misperceived as other than it is. In the case of the error whereby shell is taken as silver, he does not accept that the shell is perceived as silver; he holds that there is just a memory of silver (not recognized as a memory). When those who are unable

to distinguish between a perception and a memory fail to do so, there is failure to perceive a distinction accompanied by the conviction that one is perceiving non-difference.

This theory is wrong, because it fails to explain how the one who desires silver may (under illusion) direct his activity towards shell (since error, on this analysis, is a non-apprehension, a mere negation, incapable of causing or explaining anything — B.Sid. p.137, cp. M.V.115,1 and 2). It is also wrong because it would prevent explanation of the cancellation and correction of an erroneous cognition (in that it is only a *positive* misapprehension that can be cancelled and corrected — B.Sid. p.142). Further, if the failure-to-perceive-a-distinction theory of error (the akhyāti-vāda attributed to Prabhākara) were applied universally, it would also be impossible to account for the two aspects of Ignorance, the dissolution of dreamless sleep and the false projection of dream and waking (B.Sid. p.149-50). And so, says the author of the Brahma Siddhi, we have to accept the theory that error is positive misconception (viparīta-khyāti).

On this we may make the following observations. The same author, Maṇḍana Miśra, also refutes three theories of error in his Vibhrama Viveka. (They are, the theory that what appears as external to consciousness is really immanent within it (ātmakhyāti), the theory that the error is a sheer appearance having no objective basis (asat-khyāti), and the theory that error arises from failure to perceive a distinction between a memory and a perception — akhyāti.) He then establishes the theory that error consists in positive misconception (viparīta-khyāti). Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara, too, when referring to superimposition as wrong knowledge says, 'But in all these views the common point is that one thing appears with the attributes of another', thereby establishing that superimposition as he defined it is accepted in all schools.

Thus both Ācāryas (Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara) appear at first sight to agree that error consists in positive misconception. But Ācārya Maṇḍana does not bring out how the exponent of the theory that error arises from the failure to perceive a distinction accepts positive misconception against his own will when he speaks of the failure to perceive a distinction accompanied by the conviction (positive!) that one is perceiving non-difference (read abheda-grahaṇābhimāna), so that the opponent contradicts his own position; the revered Ācārya Śaṅkara, on the other hand, does bring out this contradiction (as he says that the common point in all the theories of error is that one thing appears with the attributes of another). And again, Maṇḍana did not attain to that direct experience of the Self in the light of which Śrī Śaṅkara was able to affirm the total absence of transmigratory experience in the Self. Śrī Śaṅkara draws attention to the total absence of silver in the shell in the words, 'One merely imagines silver, although no silver is present in fact' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.5, cp. M.V.46,10). This

being the case with the example, he describes the thing to be illustrated by it, the total absence of the universe of plurality in the Self, in many passages — witness, for instance, 'As there are no distinctions in natural states like dreamless sleep and samādhi...' (B.S.Bh.II.i.9) — and also describes clearly the absence of transmigration in the Self in such texts as 'That form which is directly perceived in dreamless sleep, free from Ignorance, desire and action' (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.22). As for Maṇḍana, he quotes Gauḍapāda's Kārikā I.11 correctly when he says, 'Viśva (Consciousness associated with the waking state) and Taijasa (Consciousness associated with the dream-state) are both accepted as being conditioned as cause (non-perception of the Self) and as effect (wrong perception of the Self). Prājña (Consciousness associated with dreamless sleep) is conditioned solely as cause. Neither cause nor effect (neither non-perception of the Self nor wrong perception of the Self) are found in Turīya (pure Consciousness as such, transcending all states' (B.Sid. p.150, quoting G.K.I.11, cp. M.V. 23). But his remarks on dreamless sleep contradict the Veda, experience and reason alike in other parts of his work. He says, for instance: 'In dreamless sleep, only the power of projection ceases. The impressions left from previous projection do not come to an end, and neither does non-perception. Otherwise there would be no difference between dreamless sleep and Turīya. Dreamless sleep is referred to (figuratively) as attainment of the Absolute just because there is no projection' (B.Sid. p.22). This is wrong, because Turīya is simply the Self in its true nature, free from the alternation of states like waking and the rest; it is not an extra state over and above them. Maṇḍana forgot this point in the traditional teaching. Nor did he take into account the following profound point made by Gauḍapāda: 'Dream (svapna) is the state of one who perceives wrongly; sleep (nidrā) is our word for the state of one who does not know the truth. When the delusion of these two states no longer occurs, one reaches the plane of Turīya' (G.K.I.15, cp. M.V.23).

97 EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE MEANS OF VALID KNOWLEDGE

By what means of knowledge do we come to know the Self? The Brahma Siddhi presents an objector's arguments as follows. Not through perception, for perception has for its object distinctions, which are the very opposite of the Self. Not through inference, as inference depends on perception. Not through comparison, since comparison observes similarity (read sādṛśya-viṣayatvāt), and similarity depends on difference. Not through common-sense presumption, as this would lead us to difference, the very opposite of the Self, as no experience is possible except on the basis of difference. Indeed, absence of

difference could not itself be known without the distinction of knower, knowing and known, which implies difference! Nor could anything that did not exist (here, the non-existence of difference,) be enough to establish a non-existence (such as the non-existence of difference) as a metaphysical truth, (for that would require some positive means of proof). Nor could the various means of knowledge taken together establish the non-existence of the world of plurality, for their own very existence would be incompatible with the non-existence of plurality. Tradition, if of human origin, could not take us to the Self, as its content could only be what could be known through other means of knowledge. Nor could the superhuman revelation of the Veda do so, as it is confined to injunctions and prohibitions (concerning future duties and so on) which could not apply to an already existent reality. Nor could revelation be an independent authority if it bore on existent entities instead of conveying injunctions and prohibitions. For it would require to conform to reality, and this would imply dependence on other means of knowledge. And the passage adds further arguments of this kind (B.Sid. p.22-3). In reply, there is the verse, 'Sages say that the Self is to be known from the Veda, and that it is communicated through the elimination of all distinctions' (B.Sid. verse I.2, p.23).

Again, the Section on Dialectic (Tarka Kāṇḍa) in the Brahma Siddhi begins by raising the following objection. 'Perception and the other empirical means of cognition yield knowledge of objects that are mutually distinct in nature. Verbal revelation, therefore, cannot be an authority for the sole existence of one non-dual principle. For this would conflict with perception and the other means of valid empirical knowledge, like the statement "Stones float"' (B.Sid. p.39). The answer is given on the basis of two possible suppositions — first on the supposition that if Vedic revelation conflicts with perception and the rest of the empirical means of knowledge it is a weaker authority, and secondly on the supposition that the Veda is of equal authority with perception and the rest.

(1) Where there is a contradiction between revelation and the empirical means of knowledge, it is revelation which is more authoritative. 'When contradictory instructions come, one earlier, one later, the earlier one is superseded by the later, just as the instructions for the derivative form of a ritual supersede those of the original form' (P.M.S.VI.v.54), and 'A later contradictory thesis cannot be established without cancelling the earlier (but now contradicted) thesis' (Ś.V., Codanā Sūtra 57). Determination of distinct entities arises for everyone through the natural means of empirical knowledge such as perception and the rest. Knowledge of the non-dual principle is something (not natural but) adventitious that occurs in the case of a few people only. It is not natural, and depends upon and presupposes the natural means of knowledge

like perception and the rest. When it arises it cancels empirical knowledge, as it cannot arise without doing so. We may be sure of this for the further reason that perception and the other means of empirical knowledge are liable to various forms of error, whereas Vedic revelation is beyond any possible reproach. The fallibility that characterizes humans is absent from the Veda precisely because it is not of human origin. For example, it is only through Vedic revelation that it is possible first to suspect and later to become convinced of the beginningless impressions of Ignorance that are the cause of error in perception and the other means of empirical knowledge, errors like the conviction that one is identical with the body. But Vedic revelation is not of human origin, and is not marked by any defects of this kind. And if it were, it would not be a valid means of knowledge. Perception and the other means of empirical knowledge are authoritative on the plane of empirical experience. Empirical experience does not contradict itself because of the fixed and regular character of the impressions of Ignorance. Nothing that contradicts experience is authoritative....

But as long as perception and the other means of empirical knowledge agree with experience one cannot accuse them of the fault of contradicting it. They could only be charged with that if they did contradict it. And yet they are in contradiction with the vision of metaphysical reality that comes from the texts of the Upanishads. We must therefore take them to be under the sway of that beginningless metaphysical Ignorance that militates against knowledge of reality. In the case of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge, therefore, authoritativeness (within their own sphere) is compatible with being under the sway of a defect. (B.Sid. p.40)

Here we have an objection, attributed to the opponent as a provisional view, that the Absolute is not an object of perception or of any other means of empirical knowledge. And we have a doctrine, proclaimed by Ācārya Maṇḍana as the established teaching of the school, that the Absolute can only be realized through Vedic revelation. Both the objection and the view given as the established teaching of the school are correct. For we have a statement in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, fully supported by reasoning, which runs as follows.

'All empirical experiences that occur before one has realized that one's Self is the Absolute are taken as real, like the experiences of a dream before awakening.... Ordinary people, when asleep, see beings of high and low degree in dreams. And this knowledge is felt to be genuine perception until awakening, and there is no notion during the dream that only an appearance of perception is in play. It is the same with waking perception before realization of the Self' (B.S. Bh.II.i.14).

But when Maṇḍana went on to say that, in case of conflict between the empirical means of knowledge and Vedic revelation, Vedic revelation was the stronger authority because it was not of (fallible) human origin — that was wrong. For the various means of knowledge (including Vedic revelation) have different spheres of operation, and cannot conflict. Śrī Śaṅkara says, 'The various means of knowledge, like hearing, each have their separate sphere' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20). We can admit that if there had been any contradiction between Vedic revelation and the empirical means of knowledge, then Vedic revelation would have been a stronger authority, because it is not of fallible human origin. And the knowledge that Vedic revelation produces, because it does not spring from natural (human and fallible) sources, can be without defects, while we know from that very revelation that perception and the other empirical means of knowledge may be infected with errors deriving from beginningless Ignorance. But this is not the right way to explain the matter, as it is only playing with hypotheses that will never be verified. Indulgence in such hypotheses may inspire faith in the hearts of Vedic believers: but it cannot demonstrate the necessary superiority of Vedic revelation as an authority in every case. Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara has shown in the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary that all the play of authoritative knowledge and its objects depends on, and is invariably accompanied by, metaphysical Ignorance, a point which he supports by appeal to universal experience.

He says there: 'But in what sense do we mean that perception and the other means of knowledge, together with Vedic tradition, belong to those in the realm of Ignorance? What we say here is this. Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in feelings of "I" and "mine" there can be no empirical knower and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.).

We have already explained this point above (M.V.24 and 25). It is not clear why Maṇḍana paid no attention to it. The traditional texts dealing with liberation, though associated with Ignorance, are a special case because they are 'the final means of knowledge'. This also has been explained above (M.V. 28 and 29).

And when knowledge of non-duality has once arisen from the Veda, the play of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge. They no longer remain at all, so that one cannot then speculate on whether they are a stronger or a weaker authority. For the Veda says, 'When there is an appearance of duality, a subject who is one sees an object which is another... but when all has become his own Self, then what could a person see and with what?' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15)

98 OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING THE AUTHORITY OF THE VEDA

Ācārya Maṇḍana summarizes various objections to the authority of the Veda as a means for knowing the Absolute and then answers them. Most of them are also referred to by Sureśvara in his Vārtika and collected together for refutation. So we shall only take a few of them up for discussion here.

(1) (The objection is: The Veda depends on perception and the other means of empirical knowledge to make itself known. Awakening to the non-dual Absolute, by cancelling perception and the other means of empirical knowledge, renders the Veda inauthoritative — Maṇḍana answers:) Vedic revelation does not depend on perception and the other means of empirical knowledge in order to be an authoritative source of knowledge; it only depends on them to make itself known. Otherwise it would not *be* a means of knowledge. As it does not depend on any other factor in the performance of its own function, it cannot be undermined by perception and the rest. (B.Sid. p.40)

(2) (Objection:) 'Non-difference cannot be known without the help of difference. Knowledge of it depends on the authoritative means of knowledge, and the existence of such means of knowledge implies the existence of difference. To say that non-difference can only be known through the medium of differences is a contradiction'. To this Maṇḍana replies, '...Knowledge implies a means, but not the reality of that means. A reality is sometimes known through an error'. (B.Sid. p.41)

(Maṇḍana supplies an example to show what he means. A person may mistake a clump of trees, standing in the distance, for an elephant, and then, through surprise at the elephant, be stimulated to gaze harder, so that he perceives the trees, which would otherwise have escaped his attention. T.N.)

(3) (The objection is: The ritualistic injunctions in the Veda imply the existence of difference, the highest teachings of the Upanishads imply non-difference, so these two parts of the Veda contradict one another. Maṇḍana replies:) There would have been a contradiction if the purpose of the ritualistic injunctions of the Veda had been to teach the existence of difference as a metaphysical fact. But their main purpose is to give help to man by taking difference for granted (according to common-sense experience based on metaphysical Ignorance) and then saying 'One may effect such-an-such an end by such-an-such means'. (B.Sid. p.43)

(4) (The opponent's objection (B.Sid. p.74) runs:) The whole Veda is authoritative only in regard to things that have to be done. Its injunctions only inform one about existent entities,

past, present or future, incidentally in the course of explaining what has to be done.... For, as an expert on the ritualistic section of the Veda has said, 'Injunctions may refer to past, present, future, hidden, remote or remarkable matters' (Śabara's Commentary on P.M.S. I.i.2). But they are not necessarily an authoritative means of knowledge for the already-existent, as on that topic they may be no more than restatements of what is primarily known from another source.

(Maṇḍana replies:) That knowledge which can only come from revelation cannot be enjoined. It arises without an injunction, just like knowledge from the Veda about merit and demerit (where there may be injunctions to perform certain acts for certain ends, but where there is no injunction to acquire knowledge about them — B.Sid. p.74). Nor need all Vedic statements of fact be dismissed as mere restatements of what is primarily known from another source. For the Absolute can only be known from the texts of the Veda, which are not of human origin, so that it cannot have been previously known through any other means of knowledge (B.Sid. p.79).... Nor does there have to be an injunction for the acquisition of immediate knowledge of the Absolute. For such knowledge is an end in itself. There is no scope for a scriptural injunction to work for a known human end; one strives for it spontaneously (B.Sid. p.116)....

(Objection:) But could there not be an injunction to sustain through protracted meditation knowledge that had already arisen from the texts? To this objection Maṇḍana replies: Very well, if you wish; there would be no contradiction.... Or, alternatively, it could be maintained that an injunction would be useless here, as the desirable end which it promised would already be attained. Prolonged brooding on something in one's mind may give rise to immediate apprehension of it, and that is a result already attainable in this very life. It is the final goal of life, which implies no further goal beyond. We have already explained how immortality is nothing other than the emergence of one's own true nature. However, it is seen in the world that constant re-affirmation leads to the further clarification of right knowledge. Even a non-existent entity can give rise to an experience if one meditates on it with sufficient intensity, what to say of an entity that actually exists (B.Sid. p.154).

Here, it was correct to say that the dependence of the text on being perceived was not a defect, as apprehension of reality can arise from erroneous knowledge. And it was correct to say that the texts enjoining rituals do not have the function of proclaiming the reality of difference, but are concerned with teaching the means to desired human ends. For both these points are corroborated by experience. We may also agree with the contention that knowledge of the real, knowledge of the Absolute as our own true Self, can arise from an upanishadic

text, even though the latter, in the last analysis, will not be a reality. The revered Commentator has said: 'For we see that results such as death do in fact flow from merely mental causes, such as grief and despair. And we also see that a dream snake-bite and a dream bath in water produce their due results in the dream'(B.S.Bh.II.i.14). And Maṇḍana himself says: 'There is no rule that the unreal can produce no effects. A mere illusion can evoke joy or fear. And (in symbolism) what is not the reality can give knowledge of the reality, as in the case of the drawing of a wild ox (to give someone a first idea of what the animal is like), or in the case of the writing of letters (to represent sounds, B.Sid. p.13-4).* Here the empirical reality of both the symbol and the symbolized is assumed, though, from the standpoint of the ultimate truth, both would be the non-dual reality and nothing else. Maṇḍana himself says: 'Even the means to the vision of non-duality (hearing, pondering, etc.,) are not unreal in their true nature, for their true nature is the Absolute. The means for attaining the Absolute is the Absolute itself, associated with certain forms of Ignorance' (B.Sid. p.14). And the further point that Maṇḍana made in this passage, saying that knowledge cannot be enjoined, was also correct. For we see this to be the case in worldly experience.

**(A school-teacher might trace in the dust the figure of the rare wild ox and of the letter 'k', and might say 'This is a wild ox and that is the sound "ka"'. The statements would not be true and would imply erroneous knowledge if taken literally — but they would lead to right knowledge. T.N.)* .

But the view that there could be an injunction to practise repeated affirmation of the metaphysical knowledge acquired from the texts, in order to convert it into direct vision, is not acceptable. We have already refuted the view that there should be repeated affirmation of the knowledge derived from the texts in order to convert it into concrete experience (M.V.69,7). And there is the further reason that the error of not realizing that the Absolute is immediately evident is removed by verbal knowledge on its own, as in the case of the rustic's coming to know that he himself was the tenth person (cp. M.V.59,14). As for the idea, 'Prolonged brooding gives rise to immediate knowledge of its various objects; and we see in the world that repeated affirmation is a cause of the advantage of right knowledge' — that may be correct for knowledge of the not-self in the world. For we see this phenomenon in such matters as the understanding of the musical scale, where perception arises from traditional instruction (allied to subsequent practice). But this is not so in the present case. Here, the Absolute is not different from the Self of the hearer, nor is it capable of being made an object, nor is it unknown. The Veda speaks of 'the Absolute that is imme-

diately evident' (Bṛhad.III.iv.1). Since the Absolute is constantly and eternally evident, examples of learning taken from worldly experience are not relevant.

It may be that it is found in the world that a certain kind of meditation can lead to immediate experience even of something that does not exist. But that is not a relevant example either, as it would be a mere private hallucination, and not knowledge corresponding to reality.

Perhaps you will say that immediate acquaintance is sometimes attained through practice based on injunctions. We can admit this. But the practice here involved is not affirmation of right knowledge derived from an authoritative means of knowledge; it is only the mental activity of repeated meditation. Nor can we admit an injunction for knowledge corresponding to reality. Nor is repeated resort to a means of correct knowledge ever found to have any effect on the object to be known. This should suffice to dispose of the incorrect theory that repeated affirmation leads to immediate knowledge of the Absolute.

99 OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE WORDS OF THE VEDA COMMUNICATING THE ABSOLUTE

Maṇḍana Miśra considers the question of whether or not the words of the Veda can communicate the Absolute, and does so through an examination of the nature of a sentence. He raises and answers three objections.

(1) Verbs denoting activity are not found in Vedic texts dealing with the existence and nature of the Absolute. The meanings of nouns cannot be brought into connection with one another without the help of a verb denoting something to be done. Without this connection, the Veda will not be able to establish any meaning for words like 'the Absolute' which stand for already-existent realities — for the mention of an already-existent reality is not significant on its own, but requires completion by the further mention of something that has to be done (B.Sid. p.85)....

A verb, however, may easily be assumed anywhere, even when it is not openly expressed, as in the case of supplying (the unexpressed verb) 'is' and so on. We know this from the rule, 'The third person singular of the root "as", meaning "it is", may be assumed even when it is not expressed' (Patañjali on Pāṇini II.iii.1.4). In the same way, a phrase defining the nature of the Absolute is really intent on proclaiming 'It is', and it is this implicit reference to the act of existing that makes possible the association of the various word-meanings in such a phrase to form a meaningful sentence. And since, when existence is communicated at all, it is by nature the main

thing being communicated (and so the predicate and most important element in the sentence), its presence (explicit or implicit) in a Vedic text is enough to establish a real entity qualified by existence (viśiṣṭa = tad-viśiṣṭa = sattā-viśiṣṭa, Citsukha comm. *ad loc.*). (B.Sid. p.85)....

Some object that the meanings of the separate words of a phrase cannot be brought into association without a verb implying action. But this is not correct. For we have phrases like 'this, the king's representative' or 'these, the fruit-laden trees' where the meanings of the different words are apprehended in association without a verb implying action (B.Sid. p.99).... Even if you insist on maintaining that there can be no sentences without a verb denoting action, and that revealed texts having 'to be' as their verb are not an authoritative means of knowledge, since they depend on other means of knowledge for an understanding of their content — even then, the existence of the Absolute as cause of the world can be known from Vedic texts proclaiming the act of creation (B.Sid. p.99 f.; cp. M.V.148,8)....

Here the following objection could be raised. Verbal revelation cannot be an authority communicating knowledge of the Absolute. To begin with, mere single words like 'Brahman' (the Absolute) or 'Antaryāmin' (the Inner Ruler) cannot be such an authority. For they can only convey an idea when there is knowledge of their connection with something already established as existent by other means of knowledge. And if there can be no authoritative communication of the Absolute through single words, there can be no such communication through sentences either. For the meaning of a sentence is simply the meaning of its component words qualifying one another.... Now, in sentences supposed to convey authoritative knowledge of the Absolute and other entities quite beyond the range of perception, individual words which denote the entity in question either will or will not occur. If they do not occur, then (being absent) they cannot relate to other words in the sentence either by way of association or of exclusion of meaning (on association and exclusion, see Kunjunni Raja, p.191 ff.). But even if they do occur, they cannot be apprehended in relation with a known meaning (since the meanings, being beyond perception, cannot be known: read adhigata). And if not themselves so known, they cannot help to provide a properly qualified sentence-meaning (B.Sid. p.156, summarized).

To this objection Maṇḍana replies as follows. The concepts of 'cause' and of 'being' are known to all in a general way. Through texts like 'That from which these creatures are born' (Taitt.III.1) and 'Not gross, not subtle, not short...' (Bṛhad. III.viii.8) these general concepts assume a particular form not knowable through any other means of knowledge, and then stand as the meaning communicated by the sentence. The conditioning force is formed by the meanings of the individual words in the texts, modifying one another either by way of

association or exclusion. Thus the texts use word-meanings well known to the world at large, and by using these in conjunction are able to communicate knowledge not previously known. So they do not fail to convey information, neither do they merely repeat what is already known from other sources.

Or else one may argue differently as follows. The Absolute, one may say, is not altogether unknown in worldly experience. It is in fact what is known in all cognitions, as there is nothing else apart from it that can be known, and all particular cognitions have (as Consciousness) one common form. Also it is known that, when all distinctions are withdrawn, the Absolute remains left over as the real, as is illustrated by the example given in the text, 'A modification is a name, a suggestion of speech; the truth is, "it is only clay"' (Chānd. VI.i.4).

But if the Absolute is known in ordinary worldly experience, what is it that is communicated by Vedic revelation? It is the non-existence of the universe of plurality. The meaning of the term 'universe of plurality' is already known. And the meaning of 'non-existence' is also known. The non-existence of the universe is the new truth communicated by the association of these two word-meanings. The claim is that the Veda is the only possible source of this knowledge. For perception and the other empirical means of knowledge are inseparably linked with metaphysical Ignorance. They are not able to apprehend the Absolute, void of all distinctions. The non-existence of difference is known only through the Veda. (B.Sid. p.156-7)

Here, it was correct to reply that the word 'is' has to be supplied, where absent, to associate word-meanings with each other to form a meaningful sentence. For we find it said by Śrī Śaṅkara, 'What is there to prevent the texts proclaiming the existence of the supreme Self and the Lord from being proper sentences with subject and predicate if they are associated with the verb "to be"? There are other obvious examples of subject-predicate usage in the Upanishads, such as "I am the Absolute" and "That thou art"' (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iii.1). And Maṇḍana's statement that we find words interconnected without the overt expression of a verb was also correct, as we see from such examples as 'This Self (is) the Absolute' (Bṛhad. II.v.19). Nor should one raise the objection attributed to the opponent who said that all such interconnections were performed by supplying a verb with a meaning implying that something had to be done. For this view has been contradicted by Śrī Śaṅkara in his Brahma Sūtra Commentary as follows. 'If knowledge of the identity of one's true Self with the Absolute were taken as resting on an injunction to perform a symbolic meditation based on resemblance (sampat, cp. M.V.67, intro.), this would do violence to the grammar of the texts in which it is taught, which (are in the indicative, not the imperative, mood and) say 'That thou art', 'I am the Absolute' and 'This

Self is the Absolute' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.67,9).

But the statement that the existence of the Absolute can be known from the texts defining it as that which does the act of creating the world will not carry weight with those who really understand the Upanishads. For texts like 'That from which these creatures are born...' do not refer to an act of creation. They are concerned with explaining the nature of the Absolute, as is shown in this case by the connection with the words 'That is the Absolute'. Association and exclusion of word-meanings, which apply only within the realm of Ignorance, are not possible in the case of the Absolute, the Self, the non-dual principle beyond Ignorance and its effects, whose existence is known from such texts as 'In the beginning, my dear one, this was Being, alone, one only, without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1). The Absolute cannot be directly denoted either by a word or a sentence. It is neither a universal nor a particular, neither a cause nor an effect. It has no particular characteristics. It is that 'from which words fall back, together with the mind, without obtaining access' (Taitt. II.9). Since mind and speech cannot attain to it, it is inconceivable as the meaning either of a word or of a sentence.

Nor would it be right to argue (with Maṇḍana) that the Vedic texts confer a particular form on such universals as 'Cause' or 'Being' through the association and exclusion of word-meanings. Nor was it right to say that by association of the (already-known) meanings of 'universe of plurality' and 'non-existence' the Veda communicated (the new and not yet known idea of) the non-existence of the universe. And when Maṇḍana made the claim 'The Absolutists (Vedantins) teach the Absolute as a universal figuratively by denying all particulars of it' (B. Sid. p.38), then the Absolute so taught is not the meaning of any sentence.

Nor was it right to say 'The non-existence of the universe of plurality is found in the Absolute' (cp. B.Sid. p.15). For neither the non-existence of the universe, conceived as different from the latter, nor the character of being the seat of such a non-existence can exist in the Absolute. And this is enough to refute another passage in Maṇḍana, namely: 'In the Sūtra "But it is such through association of the meanings of words" (B.S.I.i.4, as interpreted by Maṇḍana), the Absolute is separated from the topic of merit and demerit as found in the injunctions and prohibitions of the Veda, and it is declared that the Absolute can be known from the meanings of the words in the Veda when associated so as to build sentence-meanings. Association here means association of the meanings of the words, their inter-relation. From this the Absolute is known' (B.Sid. p.155). For association of word-meanings makes no sense in the case of the Absolute. The Vedic texts do not denote the Absolute through a sentence where the meaning is formed by the mutual qualification of the meanings of the words, either by way of association or exclusion. They only

indicate it, and this by negating all the directly expressed meaning. As the revered Commentator put it: 'In this way the terms "Reality", "Knowledge", and "Infinity", placed next to one another, condition each other mutually and deny their own direct meanings of the Absolute, while at the same time serving to indicate it indirectly. Thus it is shown that the Absolute is not open to direct verbal designation, in agreement with such texts as "That from which words fall back, together with the mind" and "Undefined, without support" (Taitt.II.9 and II.7). Nor is the Absolute the meaning of any phrase (of subject-predicate type) like "The lotus (is) blue"' (Taitt.Bh. II.1).

Thus, although the Absolute is not accessible to words, it can only be approached through the Veda. It is not an object of the other means of knowledge, as it is their own inmost Self. And it is communicated by the Veda as the Self through removing all notions of difference which have been falsely imagined in it, one of which is the notion that it is something that can and should be known as an object. As it is said in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary: 'It should not be objected that if the Absolute were not an object it could not be revealed by the Vedic texts. For the purpose of the Veda is to negate distinctions that have been imagined through Ignorance. It does not purport to expound the Absolute as an object knowable as a "this". On the contrary, in revealing the Absolute as a non-object and as the inmost Self, it abolishes all distinctions including those between subject, object and act of knowledge' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4).

100 THE COMBINATION OF REPEATED MEDITATION AND RITUALISTIC ACTION AS THE MEANS TO LIBERATION

Ācārya Maṇḍana holds that (after attainment of metaphysical knowledge of the Self) the last impressions of erroneous knowledge are brought to an end by a discipline consisting in repeated meditation combined with ritualistic activity.

(1) This repeated practice, following on after hearing and pondering over the highest texts, of meditation on the Self in its form where differentiation has been negated through the text 'This Self is neither this nor that', is evidently what contradicts vision of difference and brings it to an end. This discipline, after first dissolving vision of difference in general, later dissolves itself also... as a medical potion first causes digestion of other liquids and then digests itself, or as a poison (used as a drug) first destroys other poisons and then destroys itself (B.Sid. p.12-3).

After something has been determined in its true nature by an authoritative means of knowledge, all false appearances of

it cease in principle, and yet they may continue if there is a special cause. For example, erroneous double-vision of the moon or a false sense of the direction of the quarters of the compass may persist even in those who know the truth about the moon or the direction of the quarters from a trustworthy person. In the same way, one who has known the true nature of the Self with the help of that indubitable authority, the Veda, may find that false appearances remain, through the power of the impressions of Ignorance strengthened by the accumulated force of a beginningless series of earlier erroneous cognitions. To put an end to these new false appearances, there has to be resort to a new measure. Experience shows that that new measure must be repeated meditation on the truth. And it must be accompanied by sacrifices and the other duties (charity and austerity, etc.) which the Veda teaches to be necessary on this path (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22). Meditation deepens the impression of truth already received. It inhibits the previous impressions of wrong knowledge and prolongs its own effects. There are others who hold that the point of the sacrifices is to remove in some occult way the demerit that is the obstacle to our attaining the highest goal, since the obligatory daily ritual is well known to destroy sin....

Even when vision of reality has arisen, it may not carry a powerful impression. In this case, if there is a strong impression arising from erroneous vision, what should be correct cognitions may turn out to have wrong objects. For example, we may see someone who has lost his sense of direction failing to remember the correction he had received from a trustworthy person and continuing on in the wrong direction. Similarly, we see the continuation of fear arising from the erroneous notion of a snake even in the case of a rope that has been correctly known as such, when that correct knowledge is forgotten.... Therefore even after vision of reality has arisen from the right authority, the Veda, the sages recommend repeated affirmation of the metaphysical truth to overcome or root out entirely that more powerful impression acquired naturally from the beginningless repetition of erroneous vision. That is why the Upanishads say, 'It should be pondered over, it should be subjected to sustained meditation', and they also lay down a series of practical measures such as inner and outer control, chastity, sacrifice and other disciplines. What did they give that teaching for if they did not mean it? (B.Sid. p.35)...

But the Absolute, you might object, is of the very nature of knowledge. Knowledge is not anything other than the Absolute. And the Absolute is eternal and not anything that can be produced through action. So how could anything need to be done? We answer that it is like the case of a transparent piece of crystal, the colour of which is concealed when it lies next to a brilliantly coloured object. One may need to remove the object before one can see the crystal in its true form. It is the same in the case of the Absolute; (one does

not and cannot act upon it in order to see it, but one has to act to remove what obscures it and prevents it from being seen in its true nature). (B.Sid. p.37)

The claim is made above that vision of difference and its impressions can be dissolved like medicinal liquids or poisons functioning as antidotes and so forth, through repeated medication. What is here overlooked is that meditation is an activity, and that its results are therefore inevitably temporary. The Veda also supplies a maxim well grounded in reason, 'There is nothing in the world that is not the result of action (and therefore impermanent). What is the good of action?' (Muṇḍ. I.ii.12).

Again, there was a reference to the continuation of false appearances after the truth had been ascertained in the case of such illusions as wrong sense of direction and the double-vision of the moon, and to the persistence of the snake-illusion, due to the strength of past impressions, even for those who had ascertained that the rope was in fact only a rope. But these visions are samples of the not-self, associated with conditioning defects (such as darkness, eye-disease, etc.) and with a continued sense of being an individual experiencer. In the Ignorance of transmigratory life such dangers are possible. But Maṇḍana does not perceive that they are absolutely impossible once vision of the constant and eternal and immediately evident Self has arisen from such texts as 'This Self can only be expressed as "neither this nor that"', 'That thou art' and 'The Absolute that is immediately evident and directly known'. All duality ceases immediately when every act of ideation is negated by 'neither this nor that'. But Maṇḍana did not ask himself what could be the need for resort to other means of knowledge after that. On this point the following passage from Śrī Śaṅkara is worthy of consideration.

(2) The Self is and remains one and identical. But it is imagined as having the three successive forms of internal consciousness (dream), external consciousness (waking) and massed consciousness (dreamless sleep), even as a rope may be falsely imagined in different ways as snake, stick or stream of water. But when, with the rise of correct knowledge negating the notion that the Self undergoes any of these states, one simultaneously achieves the cessation of the notion of plurality in the Self — which notion is the only source of suffering — then 'the Fourth' (turīya) is known once and for all, and no further proof or discipline is required. (Māṇḍ.Bh.7)

When it was said that metaphysical revelation through the Veda was instantaneous, that was correct. Once duality has ceased, the duality of knower, knowledge and known can no longer continue. For the revered Commentator says, 'Subject-object

knowledge cannot remain an instant after the cessation of duality. For to suppose that it could would entail a new suppression of duality and so lead to infinite regress, which would mean that duality could never cease' (Māṇḍ.Bh.7). In the case, however, of the person who is not able to realize in concrete experience that his true Self is the Absolute from merely hearing it stated once, we ourselves admit that for such a person reflection over the metaphysical teachings of the Veda and repeated meditation on them is required so that he may come to discern the true meaning of the words.

It is possible that Maṇḍana would have claimed that he himself had said this. He could say that he himself had advocated a course of spiritual discipline consisting of hearing, pondering and repeated meditation. Is it not the case, he could ask, that I have simply restated his own position in different words and with different arguments?

But this would be wrong. The discipline advocated by Maṇḍana consists in the prolongation of verbal knowledge in the form of meditation dependent on the activity of the meditator. Direct concrete experience could never arise from this mere prolongation of abstract verbal knowledge. And it would be impermanent even if it could, as it would be the result of an action. And Maṇḍana's doctrine that the re-affirmation of abstract knowledge somehow produces concrete knowledge contradicts ordinary worldly experience. The metaphysical knowledge that we (in Śrī Śaṅkara's school) teach, however, is conditioned by reality (and not by the will of a person meditating). Reflection over and repeated meditation on the knowledge gained from the Vedic texts is prescribed for the purpose of generating concrete knowledge through the removal of superimposed elements from our knowledge. We have already explained above (M.V.73) how, once metaphysical knowledge is attained, remembrance of that knowledge is implicitly guaranteed, and how it would be mere waste of effort to go into the question of further measures to overcome surviving wrong impressions. So it follows that once metaphysical knowledge has been attained, repeated meditation is no longer relevant.

Why, then, are sustained meditation, inner and outer control and so forth taught at all? We have earlier mentioned that hearing and repeated reflection are for the purpose of understanding the meaning of the words of the texts. Sustained meditation, however, is, according to the Vedic teaching, a special discipline for realization of one's own true Self. It is synonymous with Adhyātma Yoga and other kindred terms. This also has been explained above (M.V.56). As for inner and outer control, in which the 'yama' of Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra II.29 f. is the chief element, they contribute indirectly to the rise of metaphysical knowledge by promoting an attitude of introversion. For we have the upanishadic text, 'Therefore, possessed of inner and outer control, leaving off all action for personal ends, strengthening himself by voluntary resist-

tance to discomfort and concentrating his mind, he sees the Self in the Self within' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23, cp. M.V.53,7).

Perhaps you will suggest that the Veda must be able to communicate and convey information before its hearers have been through any special forms of discipline, and ask if the latter really have any purpose. In answer, we say that they do. In the case of an extraverted person, who identifies himself with his body, sense-organs and mind with the feeling 'me' and 'mine', knowledge of the meaning of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads can never arise *because such a person cannot understand the meaning of the word 'inmost'*. But it is clear enough that one whose mind has been disciplined by inner and outer control and the rest, and has become introvertive can understand the meaning of that word (and its synonyms) and thereby can have immediate experience of the transcendent principle that those texts proclaim. On this, we find in Śrī Śaṅkara's Gītā Commentary, 'The instrument for vision of the Self is the mind, purified and educated by inner and outer control, etc., and the Veda and the teachings of the Teacher' (Bh.G.Bh.II.21, cp. M.V.53,9).

As for the claim that sacrifices and the other duties taught by the Veda were necessary to uproot persistent false impressions even after metaphysical knowledge had been acquired, that was simply ridiculous. Performance of sacrifices and so on will merely strengthen the false idea that one is an individual able to carry out action. How could you hope to uproot all false notions through *that*? One does not abolish darkness with yet thicker darkness.

This is also enough to dispose of Maṇḍana's contention that, because of the text '... by sacrifice, by charity' (Bṛhad. IV.iv.22, M.V.55,1), even if metaphysical knowledge is regarded as accessible through repeated meditation it is still dependent on the performance of rituals, just as, although it is possible to get to a village without a horse, one gets to it quicker and with less trouble with one (B.Sid. p.37, cp. B.S.III.iv. 26). Putting fetters on the legs of a man already lame does not help him to move faster. Even the contention that sacrifice and the rest contributed in some occult way to the removal of persistent false impressions was unjustified and wrong. What brings metaphysical Ignorance to an end is metaphysical knowledge. But the impressions of Ignorance which persist after metaphysical knowledge, and the effects of such impressions, cannot be brought to an end by (sacrifice and the rest, which, as actions, are also) impressions of Ignorance. For impressions of Ignorance cannot contradict and cancel impressions of Ignorance. As it is said in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, 'When it is clear that Ignorance is brought to an end through knowledge, it is wrong to make a hypothesis that the occult power of ritual brings it to an end. When it is clear that the husks of the rice are destroyed by the act of pounding them, it is not right to make a hypothesis

that the husks are destroyed by an occult power emanating from the ritual. In the same way, there is no room for any hypothesis that Ignorance is brought to an end through the occult results of the obligatory ritual' (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.). Why, then, are rituals taught? The Veda itself answers this question in the words, 'Him the true Brahmins seek to know through repetition of the Veda, through sacrifice, through charity, through austerity and through extreme moderation in the enjoyment of sense-objects' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22, M.V.55,1). The function of ritual is to prepare for the rise of knowledge. Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Brahma Sūtra Commentary, 'Hence the *rise* of knowledge of the Self depends on sacrifice, charity and austerity and the rest, also on inner and outer control and the performance of the duties of one's caste and stage of life. A distinction, however, between the two kinds of means of knowledge should be drawn. Inner and outer control and the rest are more proximate means, because they are *directly* connected with knowledge of the Self through the phrase 'He who knows thus' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23). Ritual sacrifices, on the other hand, are only connected with promoting the *desire* to know, and hence are to be regarded as more remote aids (B.S.Bh. III.iv.27, M.V.53,7).

101 THE METHOD FOR OBTAINING LIBERATION

The author of the Brahma Siddhi clearly says that Ignorance is the only bondage and that its disappearance is liberation. And yet, in contradiction with this, he appears to accept that destruction of Ignorance and actions is itself a peculiar kind of reality. Let us look at some texts on the subject.

(1) Liberation is nothing but the disappearance of metaphysical Ignorance, for transmigration is nothing but Ignorance. But the disappearance of metaphysical Ignorance is nothing other than the rise of metaphysical knowledge (B.Sid. p.119)... Realization of the Absolute means manifestation in one's own true form, like the manifestation of the transparent crystal in its true form on the removal of the brilliantly coloured object close by that had been colouring it. For the Absolute is the true nature of the individual soul.... We say of a cloth that has always been white, 'It has become white' when, after having become dirty, it has been washed. In the same way, when the veil of Ignorance has been removed and the soul's true form manifests, the text says 'It has manifested in its own true form' (Chānd.VIII.iii.4). Thus we have the further text 'Being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6)....

The cessation of metaphysical Ignorance is (and can be) nothing but metaphysical knowledge. It is the same, even if

metaphysical Ignorance is conceived as non-apprehension. For the cessation of the non-existence of anything is simply the positive existence of that thing. And if metaphysical Ignorance is taken as positive erroneous apprehension, then the rise of correct knowledge of the truth which contradicts it is its cessation. Cessation of the silver-illusion is nothing but the rise of knowledge of the shell, and no further effort after knowledge of the shell is required to procure it. For the knowledge of the shell and the cessation of the silver-illusion are simultaneous. (B.Sid. p.121-2)

(2) One might raise the following objection. Action with its merit and demerit (leading to further birth) is uprooted along with the uprooting of metaphysical Ignorance, and not otherwise. Action is therefore included along with doubt and error when we speak of the uprooting of Ignorance, as implied in the upanishadic text 'All a person's merit and demerit is destroyed...' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.9). But it is not the case that liberation and the destruction of action occur immediately on vision of reality, otherwise there would be contradiction with the Vedic text 'The delay will only last till he is freed from the body' (Chānd.VI.xiv.2).

But this objection would not be correct. For the Chāndogya text should be taken as a figurative expression meaning that liberation will follow quickly, not as a literal statement meaning that liberation will be delayed till the death of the body. Or let us suppose that the text was saying, 'If the delay for one person was short, "shortness" would mean "until he was released (at death) from the body"'. This would imply that one person might be liberated immediately on attaining metaphysical knowledge, because the death of the body would occur then and there, while another person might have to wait a certain interval for final liberation. The second person would have to wait till the portion of merit and demerit that had initiated the current body had been exhausted through experience.

The first alternative would not undermine the concept of 'man of steady wisdom' (found at Gītā II.54). For that term refers to one who is still undergoing discipline and has reached a certain (advanced) stage. On the second alternative, the enlightened person sees himself as a mere 'apparent' experiencer, due to the impressions arising from the maturation of the merit and demerit that gave rise to his current life. He does not feel personal engagement in the manner of one who has not acquired metaphysical knowledge (B.Sid. p.130 f., summarized)....

These impressions of Ignorance are comparatively short-lived, and nothing else is needed to bring them to an end. They end through vision of reality, or else simply of their own accord. This state is called 'liberation in life' (jīvanmukti).... Even when the cause has gone, the effect may

remain through the force of impressions. It is through the force of impressions of merit and demerit that are already under way in the present life, or through further impressions arising as a consequence of these,that even an enlightened person who has attained metaphysical knowledge can continue to live in the body. (B.Sid. p.132, summarized)

Here, there is nothing to contradict in the statement that the rise of metaphysical knowledge and nothing else, constitutes the cessation of metaphysical Ignorance. This is known from such authoritative Vedic texts as 'He who knows the bliss of the Absolute has no fear' (Taitt.II.4) and 'What delusion, what grief, can there be for one who sees the unity of all?' (Īśa 7) And the revered Commentator has said: 'In worldly experience we find that colour manifests as soon as there is contact between the visual organ and light. In the same way, Ignorance of the Absolute disappears the moment that knowledge of it arises' (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10, cp. M.V.30,9).

There was also the statement that realization of the Absolute meant the manifestation of one's true nature that occurs when obstacles are removed, on the analogy of the transparent crystal manifesting its true nature after the colourful object lying near it, and seeming to colour it, had been removed. This, too, is correct, as long as the word for 'removal' in the illustration is understood to stand for 'cessation'. But if Ignorance and its effects are taken to be physically removed, like the colourful object mentioned in the example, then the conception is wrong.

Knowledge of the shell, Maṇḍana claimed, *constitutes* removal of the silver-error. This is correct, since it is found to be the case in experience. But if it is said that Self-knowledge perceives the Self, as knowledge of the shell perceives the shell, then that, we say, is wrong. For in the case of the crystal, it is not really removal of the colourful object that is required in order to be aware of its transparency. What is really required is a discriminative knowledge of the difference between the crystal and the colourful object. On this point we have the following passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary.

(3) Compare the case of a piece of transparent crystal, where before the introduction of a discriminating cognition the true nature of the crystal,which is really light and transparent, does not seem to be different from such external adjuncts as the red or blue colour of objects near which it is placed. But after the rise of a discriminating cognition, the crystal becomes distinct, and it is said to have 'attained' its true nature as light and transparent, although it was really exactly the same all along. In the same way, when the true nature of the soul does not yet appear to be discriminated from the body and external adjuncts, the knowledge arising from the Veda

that does effect this discrimination is what constitutes 'transcending the body'. And the 'attainment' of the soul's true nature is nothing other than direct knowledge of the true nature of the Self, the result of the discriminating cognition.

The question whether the soul 'has' or 'has not' a body depends simply on whether discrimination has or has not arisen. For the Vedic text says, 'Dwelling in all bodies, not Himself embodied' (Kaṭha I.ii.22). And the Smṛti, too, teaches that there is no real distinction between having a body and not having one, in the text, 'Though existing in the body, O son of Kuntī, He does not act and is in no way tainted' (Bh.G. XIII.31). (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19)

As for the state of being a person of steady wisdom, that was guaranteed by the Lord Himself, when he said 'O son of Kuntī, this is the state of fixity in the Absolute' (Gītā II.72). So the whole doctrine that the body dies immediately on the exhaustion of merit and demerit is wrong. It is the other doctrine that is to be preferred, namely, that the one liberated in life is the 'man of steady wisdom'. For there are Vedic texts to prove this, such as 'Having an eye, though appearing to be without an eye, etc.' (quoted at B.S.Bh.I.i.4 from an untraced text) and 'Verily, pleasure and pain do not touch one who is bodiless' (Chānd.VIII.xii.1). And if you claim that, from the standpoint of empirical experience, there appears to be retention of a body and persistence of impressions, we can accept that too. For it is admitted by the revered Commentator.

(4) And one should not raise the objection that the knower of the Absolute must either have a body for a certain time after his enlightenment or else not have one. For if anyone, even though he be only one person, nevertheless has the conviction in his own heart that he has immediate knowledge of the Absolute and is also possessed of a physical body at the same time, how can anyone else shake him from this conviction? And this very point is made by the Veda and the Smṛti when they describe the state of one of steady wisdom. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.15)

(5) But the negated erroneous knowledge continues on for a certain time owing to the force of latent impressions, as in the case of (a person cured of the eye-disease through which he saw) two moons. (*ibid.*)

We have already explained above (M.V.100) that, once the appearance of the world of plurality has been contradicted and cancelled by knowledge of the Self, it in no way touches the Self and does not constitute bondage. At the same time, we also said that this knowledge comes from Vedic revelation only, and that the whole conception that it had to be followed by repeated affirmation and meditation was wrong.

At another point in the Brahma Siddhi we find the following. 'Verbal knowledge is abstract, the world-appearance is concrete experience; therefore, because these two kinds of knowledge do not contradict one another, it is not true to say that (after knowledge of the Self derived from Vedic revelation) the false appearance of the world of plurality no longer touches the Self.... But when, through meditation and other such practices, immediate concrete experience of the Absolute is introduced, then the world-appearance *is* contradicted, and, though it remains in being, it does not touch the Self' (B.Sid. p.134). The cure for the sad malady of insisting on this totally unfounded doctrine has been mentioned above at M.V.100, so nothing remains to be added here. The revered Commentator observes:

(6) When the subject-matter of a Vedic passage is an injunction to act, such injunctions treat of something like the Agnihotra or other ritual, that has to be performed at a different time, after the meaning of the text has been understood, and with the help of various factors, such as the person doing the act along with his various materials and instruments. But when the subject of the texts is knowledge of the supreme principle, the case is different. The aim of the text is then fulfilled as soon as its meaning is properly understood. For there is nothing left over to do apart from merely understanding what is being conveyed by the text. (Muṇḍ.Bh.I.i.6,intro.)

Thus, from the empirical standpoint, the Veda can speak of the destruction of metaphysical Ignorance and its effects, in such texts as 'The knot of the heart is cut' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.9). It is assumed that the connection of the Self with Ignorance, desire and action itself holds only from the standpoint of Ignorance, just like the notion that the Self has a body, sense-organs and mind. From the standpoint of an enlightened person himself, however, his Self is, ever was, and ever will be free from Ignorance, desire and action. So, from the standpoint of the highest truth, the whole idea that Ignorance is only exhausted on the death of the body of the enlightened one, and that liberation after disembodiment (videha-mukti) then supervenes, is seen to be false. On this subject we find the following.

(7) If you suppose that there is any change in the Self afflicted with Ignorance according to whether Ignorance has or has not been brought to an end, the answer is that it is not so. We have already explained (cp. M.V.34,5 *ad fin.*) that the snake, mirage-water, silver, and appearance of contamination through dust or clouds that are erroneously perceived in the rope, desert, shell and the ether of the sky do not affect the latter, as they belong to the realm of imagination set up by Ignorance.

Perhaps you will object that there is a difference between

the Self when it is the author of Ignorance and the Self when it is not, just as there is a difference between sight that is and sight that is not afflicted by the disease of double-vision. But the objection would be wrong. For the text 'It only seems to think, it only seems to move' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7) denies that the Self could be, on its own, the victim of Ignorance. And the error called Ignorance arises from the collaboration of several different processes (and not from the Self alone — that is, when we speak of errors such as empirical experience which are products of Ignorance, though themselves also termed 'Ignorance'). And this (our denial that the Self is the victim of Ignorance) agrees with the fact that Ignorance stands over against the Self as an object which it witnesses. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iv.6, cp. M.V.46,9)

And so these also are points to be reckoned with.

102 SYMPATHY WITH OTHER ADVAITA THEORIES

The basic theory accepted in the Brahma Siddhi is that knowledge of the non-dual reality consists in immediate apprehension of the Absolute arising from repeated meditation on the verbal knowledge acquired from the Veda, combined with the continued performance of ritualistic and other duties. Connected with this, there is, on the question of giving the texts in all parts of the Veda their due weight, a partial adoption of the tenets of the school teaching that all Vedic texts combine to eliminate the universe. The method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction (adhyāropa-apavāda) is also accepted. On this we have the following texts.

(1) A thing can be described in words even when it is not known through any other means of knowledge apart from speech, and when there is no prior knowledge of its connection with its name. This description is done through the negation of other particulars. For the meanings of the words for the various negated particulars and the meaning of the word 'not' are already known. Thus the Absolute is taught in this way through the negation of all particulars in the text 'Not gross...' (Bṛhad.III.viii.8). That is what the verse above (B.Sid. verse I.2, M.V.97, intro.) meant when it said 'Through elimination of all distinctions'. (B.Sid. p.26)

(2) What is without particulars can be known through revelation. It is implanted in the mind verbally through the very negation of particulars. It is like the essence of gold. The essence of gold is never perceived unconcealed by some particular form, whether it be a natural lump or a fashioned artefact like a necklace. And these latter are not the essence of

gold. For when any of these forms are lost, the gold persists in another. But an entity that cannot be distinguished in perception from the particular forms concealing it can be known mentally through the negation of particulars and communicated to others. This method of communication is exemplified in the Veda in the text 'This Self is expressed as "neither this nor that"'. And it has been said by one of another school, 'When all universals have been eliminated, what remains over is the real' (Bhartṛhari, Vākya Padīya III.ii.21). Others again have said, 'That which has no plurality is communicated through attribution followed by retraction'. (B.Sid. p.26)

It should be noted that there is here a certain difference from the doctrine of false attribution followed by later retraction taught by Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara in that it is not taught that the attributions are false.

Again, in the course of expounding the true nature of the Absolute, certain deviations are here and there accepted from other traditions, the doctrines, namely, of Non-dualism of Word, Non-dualism of Being as a Universal, Non-dualism of Positive Being. In explaining these we shall give the texts of the Brahma Siddhi not literally but in summarized form. We begin with the doctrine of Non-dualism of Word.

(3) There are texts like 'The Absolute in its supreme and lower form (Puruṣa and Hiraṇyagarbha) is Om' in which no injunction to meditate is given. Instead of giving an injunction to meditate, such texts simply teach that the syllable Om is the Self of all. This information, since it is given only by the Veda, is inaccessible to perception and the other means of empirical knowledge, and so cannot be in contradiction with them. The forms that constitute the world-appearance are all entirely dependent on speech. It is revealed in the Ṛg Veda in the hymn to Speech (R.V.X.125) that Speech (as the deity Vāc) is the Self of all and the Lord of all. The world is only known through knowledge that is coloured by speech, since it is invariably known under the form of speech. And we find that, even when an object (like a blade of grass lying on the road) has been vaguely apprehended without verbal formulation, our awareness is intensified when linked with words, for when that link is not present, what has been noticed becomes as good as unnoticed. For all these reasons, consciousness, in order to *be* consciousness, depends on assuming the form of a word. Or, to express it differently, consciousness *is* the power called 'Speech'. In any case, every object that is known is known in association with speech, since it depends upon speech to be known. The object, therefore, has been shown to be either a modification or an illusory manifestation (vivarta) of speech. (B.Sid. p.17-9)

On the Non-dualism of Being as a Universal, we have:

(4) Because the Absolute is described in the Veda by negating all distinctions, it is said by some to be the universal called 'Being'. As for the Mīmāṃsakas who say that a universal without particulars would be a monstrosity that would no more exist than a hare's horn (Kumārila, Ś.V., Ākṛtivāda 10), to them one must point out that they have no universal law that what has no particulars does not exist, since particulars themselves (on which their argument depends) are indivisible into further particulars. (B.Sid. p.37)

On the subject of the Non-dualism of Positive Being we have the following:

(5) Some hold that attributes are of two kinds, positive and negative. Negative attributes do not undermine Non-duality. The Upanishads, however, speak of the Absolute as Consciousness and Bliss (Bṛhad.III.ix.28,7). If Bliss be taken here as a positive entity, then either it would be a substance with Consciousness for its attribute, or else Consciousness would be a substance with Bliss for its attribute. In that way there would be a distinction between substance and attribute, and this would undermine non-duality.... He who thinks that Consciousness and Bliss are two different forms possessed by a substance likewise contradicts the text, 'One only, without a second', (Chānd.VI.ii.1). This being so, the Absolute must in fact be taken to be of the nature of Consciousness, while the word 'Bliss' (according to the *prima facie* view) merely refers to the accidental circumstance of absence of pain. (B.Sid. p.4, cp. M.V.130,4, note)

Now, it is clear that the texts quoted by the exponent of Non-dualism of Word, and the arguments he advanced, may be accepted as not contradicting Advaita. For we find such texts in the Veda as 'Let me unfold name and form' (Chānd.VI.iii.2), 'All this world is but the syllable Om' (Māṇḍ.1) and 'All this is but the Absolute' (Māṇḍ.2) in which Om is taken as constituting name, and which identify name and the named, while alternately emphasizing one or the other. And if we include the text summing up the teaching (Māṇḍ.7), the Self as Turīya is seen to be identified with the syllable Om, both being the non-dual reality that remains over when the apparent universe of plurality has come to an end. So we conclude that the essence of both word and meaning is the Absolute. And this is experienced in dreamless sleep and other states (such as meditative trance).

If we turn to the theory of Non-dualism of Being as a Universal, we can say that there is nothing wrong if we speak of Being as a universal on the ground that the Absolute, as bare Being, is present in all distinctions. For we find Being present in all our representations — existent pot, existent

cloth, existent elephant, etc. Ācārya Maṇḍana himself said at one point 'The Absolute is spoken of figuratively as a universal by the Absolutists (brahma-vādin) because they describe it by denying particulars' (B.Sid. p.38).

But if what is being here spoken of is also regarded as identical with the universal called Being as propounded by the Vaiśeṣikas, then we cannot agree. Being as conceived by the followers of Kaṇāda is not connected through inherence with its effects before the latter are produced. As Śrī Śaṅkara has said, 'The Vaiśeṣikas do not admit that this world, as an effect, was verily Being before its production at the beginning of the world-period. For they hold that the effect is non-existent before being produced. And they do not admit that Being was one only without a second before the production of the world (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.1). We have given more of this passage at M.V.37,3 above.

In the last Section of the Brahma Siddhi (p.157) we find the words: 'What then is propounded by Vedic revelation? It is the non-existence of the world of plurality that is propounded'. Seeing this, some have affirmed (e.g. S.Kuppuswami, B.Sid., Eng.intro. p.xliii) that the author supported the doctrine of the Non-duality of Positive Being. But this does not appear to be correct. For after summarizing the doctrine of the Non-duality of Positive Being in the first Section of the work, Ācārya Maṇḍana goes on to state his own view as follows.

'(You ask how that which is expressed in the text "The Absolute is Consciousness and Bliss" by two terms which are not synonyms could be one thing — and suggest that "Bliss" means only "absence of suffering".) To this we reply that there is nothing wrong (if the two terms retained their positive meaning). The two words refer to a special light (Consciousness) of the nature of Bliss, just as one speaks of the light of the moon (as "the greatest" and also as "luminous", although only one special light is referred to). And he sums up, 'In the text "The Absolute is Consciousness and Bliss" the two words proclaim that the nature of the Absolute is a special form of Consciousness or (i.e. which is the same as) a special form of Bliss' (B.Sid. p.5).

As for the sentence in the last Section of the Brahma Siddhi saying that the Veda only taught the non-existence of the world of plurality (M.V.99,1, *ad fin.*), it must be remembered that the Section teaches that words united in sentences invariably convey a meaning that is a synthesis of a manifold. The highest end of man, the author thinks, can therefore only be attained through immediate vision arising from repeated meditation on verbal knowledge derived from the supreme Vedic texts (B.Sid. p.35-6;154). And Maṇḍana accepted that the appearance of a world of plurality remained even for one who had acquired immediate vision of the Self (B.Sid. p.134). So the question of whether or not the author of the Brahma Siddhi was a partisan of the doctrine of the Non-duality of Positive Being

still requires further investigation by scholars.

103 SUMMARY OF MAṆḌANA

Broadly speaking, there is hardly one of the schools of post-Śaṅkara Vedanta that is not affected by the thinking of Ācārya Maṇḍana, so erudite in matters of Vedic exegesis. Theory of illusion and of the correction of illusion, analysis of the means of knowledge, selection of the more trustworthy in cases where perception and revelation conflict, the truth about word-meanings and sentence-meanings, showing how the Veda could be an authority for the existence of the Absolute, examination of the methods whereby knowledge is gained, determination of the relation between knowledge and action, settling the question whether hearing and the rest were or were not the subjects of an injunction, consideration of the nature of metaphysical Ignorance, of its seat and of the object which it concealed, estimate of the role of dialectic in Vedanta, refutation of the possibility of differences existing anywhere, observations about meditation on knowledge aurally received, probing the nature of immediate knowledge of the Absolute, establishing a distinction between liberation in life and liberation after the death of the body — it would be no exaggeration to say that on all these topics of investigation the modes of enquiry adopted by Maṇḍana Miśra have found favour with the connoisseurs of Vedanta doctrine to this day.

Students who are mindful of the balance and length of the present work, and about the clarity of the subsequent exposition, will not take it amiss if I have dwelt at some length on the system of the Brahma Siddhi, since it furnishes the entry into all the later systems that followed.

CHAPTER VII
SUREŚVARA

104 THE WORKS OF THE AUTHOR OF THE VĀRTIKA

We now begin the examination of the Vārtika school. All critics agree that the Vārtikas on Śrī Śaṅkara's Taittirīya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentaries were composed by Śrī Sureśvara, as well as the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi. Our study here will therefore be confined to these works. The commentary on the Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra called the Mānasollāsa and the Bālakrīḍā Commentary on Yājñavalkya Smṛti, which are said to have been composed by a person called Viśvarūpa Ācārya, cannot be accepted as belonging to the Vārtika school, not only because scholars are divided about their authenticity, but also because they advance views in contradiction with the teaching of the Vārtikas. The Pañcīkaraṇa Vārtika is also left out of account for the same reasons. Therefore we shall try to determine the nature of the Vārtika teaching with the help of the earliest mentioned three works only. *(For translations of Sureśvara, see M.V. p.386)*

105 THE CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE BRAHMA SIDDHI AND THE SAMBANDHA VĀRTIKA

We have already mentioned at the beginning of the chapter on Maṇḍana (M.V.91) how, in the matter of the refutation of opponents' views, there is much similarity in the line of thought of the Brahma Siddhi and Sureśvara's Vārtika. This is especially true in the case of the Brahma Siddhi and the introductory portion of Sureśvara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika, called the Sambandha Vārtika. This theme will be developed a little further here to help those who would like to make a comparison of the two schools.

The first Section (Brahma Kāṇḍa) of the Brahma Siddhi, in

the course of trying to explain how the Absolute can only be known through the Veda, sketches in various theories of the relation between the ritual-section and the knowledge-section of the Veda and refutes them. Those same theories are also summarized for refutation in the same way in the Vārtika, mostly in the same words. For example:

(1) *The Doctrine of the Elimination of the Universe of Distinctions:* Everywhere in the Veda there is taught the elimination of some distinction somewhere. Thus the ritualistic injunctions are held to be auxiliaries towards aptitude for knowledge of the Self through the visible result of eliminating differences. B.Sid. p.27; S.V.(verses)378-83. The refutation: B.Sid. pp.28-30; S.V.384,398,424-6.

(2) *The Doctrine that Pleasure-desire is eliminated through Indulgence:* It is held that the ritualistic section of the Veda promotes aptitude for knowledge of the Self by making every pleasure-desire available. B.Sid. p.27; S.V.343-4. The refutation: B.Sid. p.30; S.V.345-54.

(3) *The Doctrine of the Discharge of the Three Debts:* It is held that ritualistic injunctions prepare one for knowledge of the Self through securing discharge of the three debts, beginning with that to the gods. Statement and refutation: B.Sid. p.36; S.V.436.

(4) *View that Knowledge of the Self enters the Sphere of Ritual through purifying the Performer of Ritual:* B.Sid. p.28. The refutation: B.Sid. p.31; S.V.427-35.

(5) *The Doctrine that the Whole Veda is concerned with Acts to be Done:* B.Sid. p.23 and the whole of Section Three (Niyoga Kāṇḍa); S.V.477-541. The refutation: B.Sid. pp.25-6; S.V. 542-760.

(6) *Doctrine that Ritual may help the Rise of Knowledge because its Results differ according to the Motive with which it is Performed:* B.Sid. p.27. Accepted S.V.322. Accepted with a qualification, B.Sid. p.36.

(7) *Two Views according to which Rituals are either for Purification or else Parts of the Discipline of Knowledge:* Accepted at B.Sid. pp.27-8,36. Doctrine that rituals are for awakening the desire for knowledge, but that they must be given up for the actual attainment of the Absolute: S.V.14,322. Acceptance of the doctrine that rituals are for purification: S.V. 87,192,301.

(8) *Refutation of Difference:* B.Sid. The whole of Section Two (Tarka Kāṇḍa): S.V.917-86.

In these, and in other places where rival schools are examined, the two works show a striking similarity, not only of meaning but even of words.

106 THE RIVAL DOCTRINES EXAMINED IN THE SAMBANDHA VĀRTIKA

The following is a list of some other views described for purposes of refutation in the Sambandha Vārtika which are not noticed in the Brahma Siddhi.

(1) The doctrine that symbolic meditations are enjoined for the sake of liberation. S.V.20. (2) The doctrine that liberation, understood as abiding in one's nature as individual soul, arises from ritualistic action. S.V.32. (3) Various forms of the doctrine that knowledge and action are to be combined in three ways for liberation. S.V.357. (4) Doctrine that there is an injunction to perform repeated meditation (prasaṅkhyāna). S.V.761. (5) The doctrine that knowledge is for the sake of meditation which will in turn lead to liberation. S.V.438. (6) Doctrine that knowledge that all is the one Self is only a piece of symbolic meditation. S.V.439. (7) Doctrine of suppression of the impressions of the waking and other states. S.V.441-2. (8) Doctrine of the suppression of the mind. S.V.443.

And there are other doctrines of the same kind. Why Maṇḍana does not refer to them while Sureśvara does is not clear.

107 REFUTATION OF MAṆḌANA'S POSITIONS IN THE VĀRTIKA

The question of whether Maṇḍana and Sureśvara were the same person is much discussed today. Even if they were different, it cannot be disputed that they were both Advaitins and that they each quoted for their own work the same arguments against the dualists that are to be found in the work of the other. It is also noticeable that in Maṇḍana's book one occasionally finds the arguments and even the words of the revered Commentator Śaṅkara. From this one may conjecture that the Advaitins had been using these same arguments with slight changes for a long time. Then came Sureśvara Ācarya, who accepted and borrowed the arguments used by Maṇḍana and other forerunners against other schools where such arguments did not contradict his own system. But he refuted the constructions even of members of his own school if they did contradict his own system. And it appears likely that he did so at the command of his Guru. This can be substantiated by a glance at his Naiṣkarmya Siddhi.

(1) It is in obedience to the command of my Guru that I expound the secret doctrine hidden in the heart of the Upanishads, which ends transmigration and takes one to immortality. I am aware that it has also been explained by others. (N.Sid. I.3)

This book is written neither to gain fame, nor wealth, nor deferential treatment, but in order to test the metal of my own knowledge at the touch-stone of the God-realized sages. (N.Sid. I.6)

From a consideration of these two verses one might conjecture that when Ācārya Maṇḍana's fame had spread wide Sureśvara Ācārya composed an independent treatise called the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi. Its name was a faithful reflection of its contents, since it was written to help people to establish themselves in the actionless Self through knowledge alone. It was composed also with a view to refute Maṇḍana, who counselled the one desirous of liberation to practise a combination of knowledge and action (in the form of repeated affirmation of knowledge through meditation, M.V.98,4, *ad fin.*). The refutation was accomplished by showing that knowledge and action were in total contradiction.

Typical of the teachings that Sureśvara combated in this context were the following two points. Knowledge derived from words is inevitably indirect, and only he attains liberation who has risen to immediate awareness of the Self through meditation and other active measures (M.V.101,5,note); the false appearances that persist even after knowledge of the Self can only be brought to an end by repeated meditation on one's vision of the reality allied to performance of sacrifices and other caste duties (B.Sid. p.35, M.V.100,1). This had already been contradicted by Śrī Śaṅkara, as the following text shows.

(2) The knowledge that one is (in truth) ever liberated comes from the holy texts and from no other source. And knowledge of the meaning of a text is not possible without first calling to mind the meaning of its component words. It is certain that the meaning of a word is called to mind on the basis of agreements and differences (in the way one has heard the word used and in the meanings for which it is made to stand). In this way one comes to know oneself as the pure transcendent Self, beyond pain and action. The clearest form of authoritative knowledge of the inmost Self (i.e. immediate awareness based on identity-feeling) arises from such texts as 'That thou art', just as it did from 'Thou art the tenth' (cp. M.V. 59,14). (U.S.(verse) XVIII.190-2)

It was by quoting these words of his Guru as his authority that Sureśvara refuted the doctrine of repeated meditation (Prasaṅkhyāna Vāda; N.Sid. IV.31-3; S.V.206-8) and also that of liberation through a combination of action and knowledge

in his Vārtika and Naiṣkarmya Siddhi. To refute this doctrine of combination he wrote some verses in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika, beginning with one saying that only he who was without attachment for the enjoyment of anything in this world or the next was a fit candidate for liberation.

(3) 'Children run after external pleasures...' (Kaṭha II.i.2) and again 'He who desires pleasures and dwells on them is reborn' (Muṇḍ.III.ii.2) and again 'He who has no desires... (being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute', Bṛhad.IV.iv.6). (Having thus declared that only he who is indifferent to the enjoyment of objects in this world and the next qualifies for metaphysical knowledge, Śrī Sureśvara continues:) To remove metaphysical Ignorance, nothing is required but metaphysical knowledge. And to give rise to such knowledge, nothing else is required except the virtues beginning with inner and outer control. In order to acquire these virtues, nothing is required but purification of the mind, and for purification of the mind nothing is required but the performance of the obligatory daily ritual as a duty. Since thought, word and bodily deed arise solely from ignorance of the Self (read ātma-ajñāna), when that has been cancelled by knowledge of the Self, how could there be dependence on action afterwards? (B.B.V. I.iii.97-100)

One may note two further doctrines of the Brahma Siddhi that were refuted by Sureśvara. Maṇḍana argues as follows. Every meaningful sentence communicates a particular not previously known to the hearer. In the Vedic texts proclaiming the Absolute, we find the universal notion 'cause' and the universal notion 'being' conveyed by phrases such as 'That from which (these creatures are born)' (Taitt.III.1) and 'Not gross...'. These ideas (in themselves universals) acquire a particular meaning not known through other means of knowledge when their universal meaning is narrowed down by the meaning of other words in the sentence, either by way of association or of exclusion; and this particular meaning is the burden of the text (B.Sid. p.157, cp. M.V.99,1). Or again the elimination of plurality may be effected through revelation. The meaning of the term 'plurality' (read prapañca-padārtha) is already known. And the meaning of 'non-existence' is also known. The non-existence of plurality is the new truth communicated as a sentence-meaning by the association of these two word-meanings (B.Sid. p.157, cp. M.V.99,1).

These two theories are refuted by Sureśvara. He remarks again and again that there is no association or exclusion of word-meanings in texts teaching the identity of the true Self with the Absolute, because the inmost non-dual Self cannot be the meaning expressed by any sentence (N.Sid. III.25,26;76. S.V.902,909-10; B.B.V. I.iv.1406-8,1431; III.iv.29,33,46; III.v.100,184,190). In explaining the text 'The Infinite,

verily, remains' (Bṛhad.V.i.1) he expresses himself thus:

(4) Reality, which does not admit of any distinction between God and the individual soul, appears through Ignorance to include this distinction. When Ignorance is abolished through the knowledge that says 'neither this nor that', only the Self remains. There is seen to be no association or exclusion of word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning, not even a negation — when Ignorance, the root of all these false notions, is abolished through authoritative knowledge derived from the Veda in the manner explained. (B.B.V. V.i.21-2)

108 THE TREATMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF BHARTṚPRAPAÑCA IN THE VĀRTIKA

We have spoken so far as if the principle doctrine to be refuted in the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi and the two Vārtikas was that of Maṇḍana Miśra. But it should be remembered that what has been described above could equally well have been intended to refute Bhartṛprapañca. And there are some strong reasons for supposing this to have actually been the case. Because Bhartṛprapañca was an exponent of the doctrine of Duality in Non-duality, he accepted the doctrine that the meaning even of the supreme texts of the Veda was based on the mutual association and exclusion of the word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning. When, in the passage just quoted above, the Vārtika said 'There is seen to be no association or exclusion of word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning, not even a negation' (B.B.V. V.i.22) — that occurred in the course of a refutation that followed a summary of Bhartṛprapañca's interpretation of the text 'That is infinite...' (Bṛhad.V.i.1).

Like Maṇḍana, Bhartṛprapañca advocated a combination of knowledge and action for liberation (M.V.87). Also like Maṇḍana, he accepted that for liberation there had to be a new form of immediate knowledge, different from that conveyed orally by the texts (M.V.84). Again, it is true that Sureśvara refers (as if speaking of Maṇḍana) to the doctrine of those who say 'The knowledge "I am the Absolute" arising from the upanishadic texts depends on the association of the meanings of its different component words and hence does not penetrate to the real (non-dual) nature of the Self' (N.Sid. I.67, prose intro.). Nevertheless, he attributes this teaching to those who set store on the injunction 'Once the wise man has acquired knowledge of the Self alone, he should practise repeated affirmation' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.21). And he does not anywhere take notice of the alternative to obedience to this text advocated by Maṇḍana in the words: 'Or alternatively it could be maintained that an injunction would be useless here, as the desirable end which it promised would already be attained. Prolonged brooding on something in one's mind may give rise to immediate apprehension

of it, and that is a result already attainable in this very life' (B.Sid. p.154, M.V.98,4).

And there is another point. The whole tenor of Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad is for him to establish his own method of interpretation while refuting that of Bhartṛprapañca. There is every reason to suspect that accomplishing this was the main reason for the composition both of the commentary and of Sureśvara's Vārtika explaining it. And we have described at length in Chapter V above on Bhartṛprapañca how both the commentary and the Vārtika establish their own view of the meaning of the text of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka after refuting that of Bhartṛprapañca at every step. But we find no elaborate refutation of Maṇḍana of this kind either in the commentary or the Vārtika. And we find the following remark in the commentary, referring to Bhartṛprapañca:'Therefore, all those who are clever at thinking up different interpretations of the Veda explain the meaning of the upanishadic text differently. Even so, I would accept anything that represented the true meaning of the Veda. I have nothing against them personally' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iii.6, cp. M.V.10,III,note,p.26).

(1) They say (that is, Bhartṛprapañca says,) 'One should always meditate intensely on the Absolute, the real, in its supreme form as the whole, both as a collective whole and as a system of inter-related parts'. Sometimes he speaks of the Absolute's constituting a whole as implying a series of states, along with a certain being assuming those states; sometimes he describes the Absolute in terms of a cause associated with its effects. Sometimes the great thinker describes it as a whole divided into different parts, as a wheel is divided into hub, felly and spokes. Did he learn *that*, I wonder, from the true tradition? (B.B.V. I.iv.948-50)...

There is a (so-called) great expert in the tradition who holds, forsooth, that plurality and unity are one and the same. He said that name, form and action are both different and non-different from the Absolute. (B.B.V. I.vi.46)...

And there are more passages in this vein, such as: 'There is another of these great luminaries (Bhartṛprapañca) who explained the relation as follows...' (B.B.V. II.i.21). 'Students must examine these two views (those of Śaṅkara and Bhartṛprapañca) and accept whichever seems to them best' (B.B.V. II.i.255). 'A certain person who regarded himself as a great expert in the Upanishads invented an interpretation of his own, with great ingenuity, and spoke as follows, quite without any understanding of what the Upanishads actually mean' (B.B.V. II.ii.90). 'There is another Absolutist (brahma-vādin) who explains the example (of the spokes, hub and felly of a wheel given at Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.v.15) differently in order to suit his own dogmas about the Self constituting a whole and so forth' (B.B.V. II.v.67, cp. M.V.86,4). 'Here, a certain great genius taught, as a special piece of

wisdom supplied free by Vaiśvānara, that a person is not finally liberated even when he has been liberated from his two bodies' (B.B.V. III.ii.41). 'Therefore the whole doctrine that the Absolute is both one as a collective unity and many as the differentiated parts is a mere superstition. It may be a special piece of wisdom supplied free by Vaiśvānara, but it does not obey the rules of reason' (B.B.V. IV.iii.1187). 'Depending (not on reason but) on a free donation of wisdom from Vaiśvānara...' (B.B.V. IV.iv.391). 'This was the explanation given by that august sage, the great Bhartṛprapañca, supported neither by the Veda nor by reason' (B.B.V. IV.iv.412). 'He explained it otherwise with marvellous ingenuity...' (B.B.V. V.i.28).

In these and other passages, the doctrine of Absolutism as infected with plurality, and the doctrine of liberation through a combination of knowledge and activity were tirelessly mocked and criticized in hundreds of ways. When Sureśvara repeatedly specified the true nature of the Self or Absolute as 'neither transcendent nor immanent' he probably had Bhartṛprapañca in mind — Bhartṛprapañca who held that the Absolute was a unity as a collective whole and a plurality as a system of interrelated parts (B.B.V. I.iv.529,656,1445; II.i.88,361; II.iii.12;II.iv.14; II.iv.411,473; III.ix.156; IV.iii.368; IV.iv.569, 846-7,1298; V.i.10).

Putting all this together, it seems more reasonable to suppose that Bhartṛprapañca was singled out as the chief opponent to be refuted. And there is another related point that requires investigation. If Bhartṛprapañca's Vṛtti on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka was so well known in Maṇḍana's day, why is it that that meticulous philosopher did not so much as vouchsafe it a glance? As I am not myself able to settle this doubtful question, I just raise it and offer it to philologists and historians, while we ourselves will carry on with the matter in hand.

109 BECAUSE THE UNITY AND SOLE REALITY OF THE SELF EXPRESSES ITSELF BY NATURE AS AWARENESS, IT IS SELF-EVIDENT

The revered Commentator pointed out that the Self was self-evident. He said, 'The Self is not a thing that *supersedes* anything else; for it is self-established and self-manifest. The means of knowledge belong to it. It does not depend on them to establish its existence'(B.S.Bh.II.iii.7, M.V.28,3). 'We do not base our doctrine of the unity and sole reality of the Self on the authoritative means of knowledge, since the Self is bare immediate awareness by very nature. So we shall show later that no means of knowledge apply to it. The means of knowledge themselves rest in and depend on awareness' —

this text of Sureśvara (N.Sid. I.89) shows that his teaching fully agreed with Śrī Śaṅkara on this point. In many places in the Vārtika it is pointed out that the presence and also the absence of means of knowledge can only be established by the Self as awareness, and that the Self is self-evident. For instance there is the verse 'Knower, knowledge, known and certitude all depend for their establishment on the presence of the Self. On what, then, could the Self depend for its own establishment?'(B.B.V. I.iv.870), and there are many other similar texts (e.g. B.B.V. II.i.552,III.iv.91,IV.iii.191-6, IV.iii.891...).

110 METAPHYSICAL IGNORANCE IN SUREŚVARA

The revered Commentator, it is well known, said: 'Superimposition thus defined the wise call Ignorance' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.,cp. M.V.p.19).Maṇḍana, for his part, spoke of 'natural (beginningless) metaphysical Ignorance' in the individual souls (B.Sid. p.12). But he posed the alternative, 'either non-apprehension or false apprehension' (B.Sid. p.9), and then expressed a preference by saying 'Ignorance is positive error' (B.Sid. p.11, cp. M.V.92). He also said, 'Because both Ignorance and the individual soul are beginningless,.like the cycle of seed and sprout, it follows that the question of circular argument does not arise' (B.Sid. p.10, cp. M.V.94,1). Bhartṛprapañca said, 'Ignorance is failure to realize "I am all"' (M.V.82). It arises of its own accord, like desert places on parts of the surface of the earth (M.V.79,1,note).

The sentences referred to in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary when he was considering Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine have been given in very summary form here. But they are clearly reported in Sureśvara's Vārtika and quoted in the sub-commentary there. 'Ignorance is a power of the Lord, even though "natural (uncaused)". Therefore, when it is manifest, it affects only a part of the Lord and has its seat in this individual soul' (Ānandagiri on B.B.V. II.iii.122). 'As deserts and the like occupy some places on the earth only, and are not universal attributes characterizing the whole surface of the earth everywhere, so Ignorance is not an attribute of the supreme Principle' (Ānandagiri on B.B.V.II.iii.124).

Sureśvara, however, says that metaphysical Ignorance is absence of knowledge and the effects of that. It is established through one's own direct experience, not through means of knowledge or proof. Since it is established through immediate experience alone, it escapes the grip of the various means of knowledge. For it is 'established only through lack of reflection'. Sureśvara says this repeatedly. 'Failure to

realize that one's own Self is the sole reality is called Ignorance. Its seat is the Self, as immediate experience. It is the seed of transmigration. Its destruction constitutes the liberation of the soul' (N.Sid. I.7). 'The effects of Ignorance are "established only through lack of reflection" even like Ignorance itself. Therefore, when Ignorance is destroyed, the whole world is destroyed and is turned into pure Consciousness' (B.B.V. I.iv.1329). 'As metaphysical Ignorance is established through immediate experience only, just like the immediate experience "I am the Absolute", so, when destroyed through the rise of an authoritative cognition, it dissolves and turns into the Self' (S.V.177). These texts show that Ignorance is occasionally declared by Sureśvara to be subject to cancellation through the authoritative means of knowledge. We shall here quote some further verses from the Vārtikas to throw light on this.

(1) The sole cause here is impermanent Ignorance, which means 'I do not know'. It is established (not by any authoritative means of knowledge but) only through one's own experience of it, like the owl's experience of night by day. (T.B.V. II.176)

The phrase 'cause here' means the cause of apparent delimitations superimposed on the Self.

(2) He who would wish to see Ignorance with the sight produced by the authoritative means of knowledge is like one hoping to see the darkness in the depths of a cave with a lamp. Whatever appears here in the world as 'not-self' is a result of Ignorance. Hence it is also called Ignorance. But knowledge has only one form, that of the Self. Ignorance has no other nature but failure to apprehend the Self. Ignorance is non-knowledge' in the sense of 'the opposite of knowledge', as a 'non-friend' is the opposite of a friend. The conception will always be intelligible in this sense. (T.B.V. II.177-9)

The nature of Ignorance as not-self is simply non-perception of the Self. Non-perception of the Self is called Ignorance (avidyā, literally non-knowledge) because it is the contradictory of knowledge (as 'non-cat', in logic, is the contradictory of 'cat').

(3) Nor can the theory that Ignorance arises spontaneously from the supreme Self, like desert places appearing here and there on the surface of the earth, be correct. If Ignorance arose from the supreme Self, it would mean that liberation would be impossible. Or if Ignorance were destroyed, then on this theory it would imply the destruction of the Self, the erroneous doctrine of the Buddhists. (B.B.V. II.iii.130-1)

These two verses were composed to refute Bhartṛprapañca.

111 OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE SUBJECT OF METAPHYSICAL IGNORANCE

In the course of reflecting on the topic of the cessation of Ignorance, the following hypothetical objection was raised in the Brahma Siddhi.

(1) Since the Absolute is eternal, its essence is indestructible. Ignorance, therefore, (which requires to be destroyed) cannot be of the nature of the Absolute. Ignorance must either be or not be different from the Absolute. If it is not different, what could there be in it that could be destroyed? So let us say that Ignorance is mere non-apprehension. It could not then be anything different from the Absolute.... But knowledge which puts an end to Ignorance, is eternally present in the Absolute. And nothing else apart from the Absolute exists.... If, on the other hand, metaphysical Ignorance were positive wrong apprehension, then how could it be brought to an end? For we have now pointed out how such a theory has defects, whether Ignorance be taken as being of the nature of the Absolute or not of its nature. (B.Sid. pp.8-9, summarized)

The answer given to this objection was as follows.

(2) Ignorance is not part of the nature of the Absolute, nor is it a second thing over against it, nor is it altogether unreal, nor is it real. That is why this Ignorance is called Māyā and a false appearance. If it were the nature of anything, then, whether different from that thing or not, it would be perfectly real and so would not be Ignorance. But if it were totally unreal, like a flower supposed to be growing in the sky, it would not enter into experience. So it is indeterminable (either as real or unreal, B.Sid. p.9).... If the matter is conceived thus, Ignorance may be taken as belonging to the individual souls, regarded as different from the Absolute, without the defects complained of by the opponent. (B.Sid. p.10, summarized)

On the same topic, an objection is quoted from the Śloka Vārtika of Kumārila.

(3) If Ignorance were the true nature of anything, it could not be extirpated ever. For what exists naturally can only be destroyed by the advent of some different external factor. But those who claim that all is the one Self cannot admit the advent of any different external factor. (Ś.V. Sambandhākṣepa Parihāra 85-6; cp. M.V.95, intro.)

The refutation of the objection by Maṇḍana is through appeal to the indeterminability of Ignorance. But Ignorance is never found referred to as indeterminable anywhere in Sureśvara's

Vārtika. It is there accepted as being of the nature of non-apprehension, expressed as the feeling 'I do not know'. So we must think how this objection would have been met by Sureśvara. In this connection, the following verses are worthy of consideration.

(4) Though this metaphysical Ignorance is natural, it is manifest only on account of the Self as immediate experience. It is ousted and destroyed by knowledge, as darkness is destroyed by the rise of the sun. Beginningless Ignorance is seen to be destroyed in an instant by metaphysical knowledge, which has a beginning in time. We do not accept that such knowledge requires re-affirmation. Though this our inmost Self is thus self-luminous and is the Witness of all Ignorance and its effects, yet it is not properly known before metaphysical knowledge has arisen through the upanishadic discipline, as our own immediate experience (of 'I do not know') indicates. (S.V. 1088-90)

Here is what the passage means. Ignorance is natural, for we have the immediate experience 'I do not know'. And we see everywhere in experience how prior absence of knowledge is removed once and for all through adventitious knowledge, without there being any question of the need for re-affirmation of such knowledge. Nor should one raise the objection 'How could there be Ignorance in the Absolute, which is knowledge by nature?' For before the rise of metaphysical knowledge through the upanishadic texts as administered by a Teacher, the Self can appear (through Ignorance) both as the ignorant one and as unknown, though itself the Witness of all knowledge and Ignorance. And so in this way our metaphysical Ignorance, even though natural (and so beginningless), is brought to an end by the adventitious metaphysical knowledge arising from the Vedic texts. Nor should one raise the objection, 'How can this be so, if nothing apart from the Absolute exists?' For we accept all experience as it comes before the rise of metaphysical knowledge.

Very well. But how do we explain how Ignorance could be established by immediate experience? And if it can be shown that it is so established, how could it be that defects are not introduced into the Absolute through contact with Ignorrance and its effects? And how could it, if established by immediate experience, be brought to an end? On this subject we have the following verses.

(5) Everyone, even children, will express their natural Ignorance based on experience when asked about something of which they have no knowledge. They will say, 'I do not know anything about it'.... In regard to things that are entirely beyond the range of experience, like things on the roof of the Himalayas, waking experience is thus no different from

dreamless sleep. There is no break here in experience itself, as we have the experience 'I do not know'. And when we see something that formerly we did not see, (there must have been experience of not seeing since) we know afterwards 'Formerly I did not know it'. (S.V.993,995-6)

In things that are totally beyond the range of experience, one knows from one's own experience of 'I do not know' that they are not known. This is established first, and then Sureśvara goes on to show how a person may say of something he now sees, 'Up to now, I did not know it'. The idea is to show that all Ignorance is established by experience.

(6) Ignorance is established by one's own experience, even though the Self is free from Ignorance. Before the rise of the knowledge that all is the one Self, we have the experience 'I do not know'. (B.B.V. I.iv.216)

In that in which, *because it is of the very nature of immediate awareness, there can be no Ignorance, there is nevertheless, before the rise of metaphysical knowledge of the Self, the notion established through immediate awareness 'I do not know myself'.*

(7) That principle (the Self) is self-revealed. Therefore it is ever free from Ignorance. That which is ever free from Ignorance is free also from the impurities that spring from the latter. (B.B.V. I.iv.213)

The meaning is that the Absolute is not touched by Ignorance or its effects because it is ever self-evident to itself.

(8) He who has known the Self in its true nature knows that its connection with Ignorance is impossible in past, present or future. It is then seen that the notion that the pure Self was connected with anything else was only established through lack of reflection. (B.B.V. I.iv.217)

The enlightened one who knows the Self in immediate experience has the conviction 'Ignorance is impossible in me in past, present or future'. The notion of connection with Ignorance was established only through lack of reflection — that is the meaning. The fact that Ignorance and its effects are established only through lack of reflection is often mentioned in the Vārtika, for example in such places as: B.B.V. I.iv.1170, 1329,1341; II.iii.192,224; III.iv.131; III.v.42; III.viii.31; IV.iv.307.

(9) Merely from the rise of the correct idea from the text 'That thou art', one finds that Ignorance, together with its effects, never existed in the past, does not exist now, and will

never exist in the future. And so it is not possible to show by authoritative means of knowledge that Ignorance belongs to the Self, or to explain its nature or indicate its source. For its sole existence is our experience of it. He who is afflicted with Ignorance cannot determine the truth about that Ignorance. It is only one who has experienced the final reality who can make the discovery, by reference to that, 'Ignorance does not exist'. (S.V.183-4,179)

The cessation of Ignorance is only intelligible if Ignorance is seen to be established only through lack of reflection. It is only through the vision of one who has known the Self that one can say, 'It does not exist', because only after such vision will one have seen that, unlike the Self, Ignorance is not self-established. And so, from the standpoint of vision of the final truth, questions such as 'What is the nature of Ignorance?' or 'Where did it come from?' are simply not raised (as it is known that Ignorance had no existence).

In the view of Sureśvara, lack of metaphysical knowledge is the cause of transmigratory experience. Therefore he lays it down: 'Failure to realize that one's own Self is the sole reality is called metaphysical Ignorance. Its seat is the Self as immediate experience. It is the seed of transmigration. Its destruction constitutes the liberation of the soul' (N.Sid. I.7).

On this point, the Mīmāṃsakas and others raise an objection. 'Absence of authoritative knowledge may assume one of three forms — wrong knowledge, absence of knowledge or doubt. Two of these, (wrong knowledge and doubt), being positive realities, are explicable as due to some defect in the factors of knowledge' (Kumārila, Ś.V. Codanā Sūtra 54). Basing themselves on this text from an acknowledged authority, they hold that erroneous knowledge, being a positive reality, can function as a cause, but that mere lack of knowledge cannot be regarded as the cause of transmigratory experience, because it is not a positive reality. This was probably the reason why Ācārya Maṇḍana laid the main emphasis on positive erroneous knowledge as the nature of Ignorance, remarking, 'Non-apprehension, being a non-entity (abhāva), cannot be the cause of anything' (M.V.92, intro.). Against this, Sureśvara argued as follows:

(10) Are you saying that, in the case of error, what is negated by an authoritative means of knowledge is *reality*? If reality were negated thus, what would be left for an authoritative means of knowledge to know?... How could false knowledge be reality? The false is not the real. To speak of knowledge being false and yet being reality — that could only come from a great genius like Kumārila. Even if the erroneous notion of a snake or the like in regard to a rope were taken

as a reality in itself, it would still be unreal appearance when identified with the rope, and, as such, would be contradicted and cancelled by knowledge of the latter. If erroneous knowledge had a cause, as it does in Kumārila's theory, then he ought to be able to state that cause. If he were to say it was a real effect but had no cause, that would be laughed out of court even by children.... The fact is that in the triad 'absence of knowledge', 'wrong knowledge' and 'doubt', 'absence of knowledge' is the cause and the other two are its effects. (B.B.V. I.iv.423,425-7,1368)

What is argued here is that erroneous knowledge is an unreality just like (that non-entity) absence of knowledge. That is why it can be contradicted and cancelled by authoritative knowledge. Since erroneous knowledge can only arise as a result of absence of knowledge, the Mīmāṃsakas' objection was incorrect.

112 THE TREATMENT OF IGNORANCE BY ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA AND SUREŚVARA COMPARED

In the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary, Śrī Śaṅkara declares that erroneous cognition is superimposition. He says: 'And yet, though these two principles (Self and not-self, pure subject and object) are utterly distinct in nature, there is a failure to distinguish one from the other, and each, together with its attributes, is superimposed on and identified with the other. And from that there results this natural worldly experience, based on erroneous knowledge and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as "I am this" and "This is mine"' (M.V.22,4). He also says, 'Superimposition is of the nature of a false idea' (B.S.Bh. I.i.1, intro. *ad fin.*). And he declares metaphysical Ignorance to be that very erroneous cognition, synonymous with superimposition.

In Sureśvara's Vārtika, however, metaphysical Ignorance is said to be non-discrimination, of the nature of lack of or absence of knowledge. For example, we have: 'The relation between the Self and Ignorance of the Self is held to be that between 'the Self' and 'being constituted by the Self without being aware of the fact'. This fundamental failure of discrimination, called Ignorance of one's true Self, is said to be the cause of (the apparent existence of all) the creatures of the world' (B.B.V. I.iv.381). A further verse was added to indicate that absence of knowledge was the one core of erroneous knowledge. 'Absence of knowledge, constantly present as it is, is identical with erroneous knowledge; as cause and effect, they are constant concomitants' (B.B.V. I.iv.386). And he makes his view clear with the verse, 'From doubt we deduce absence of knowledge. From wrong knowledge we deduce the same. If we are asked, 'What is the essence of doubt and wrong

knowledge?' we reply 'Their essence is absence of knowledge' (B.B.V. I.iv.440).

The revered Commentator Śaṅkara had declared openly that the sole purpose of the Upanishads was to put an end to superimposition, saying 'And the entire upanishadic teaching is begun to communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self, and thus to put an end to this superimposition, the cause of all evil' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro. *ad fin.*). But Sureśvara reversed this view and stated his own view very clearly as follows: 'When right knowledge arises it cancels and contradicts absence of knowledge. When *that* has been cancelled, there is no need for further efforts to cancel positive erroneous cognition. The fact that a false cognition can be cancelled is only so because it implies absence of knowledge. How can false cognition harm us when its root has been destroyed?' (B.B.V. I.iv.437-8) So the question arises which view is better, and I shall explain what appears to me to be the truth in this matter.

The revered Commentator said that failure to discriminate the Self and the not-self was the cause of their mutual superimposition. But in saying this he was only concerned with the mind functioning as the basis of empirical experience. For he says, 'Through the failure to distinguish one from the other (Self and not-self)... there results this worldly experience based on wrong knowledge' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.). In his Gītā Commentary, too, we find the words, 'a "conjunction" which is in fact (not a real conjunction but) a mere mutual superimposition of the Field and the Knower of the Field (M.V. p.35) together with their attributes, a superimpostion that is conditioned by a failure to discriminate two utterly distinct entities one from the other' (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.26, cp. M.V.251,6). In ordinary worldly experience, superimposition of silver onto a piece of shell occurs when there is failure to discriminate between the two phenomena, shell and silver. When the revered Commentator said that our mutual superimposition of Self and not-self was conditioned by a failure to distinguish between the two, he was assuming for purposes of exposition that the same thing that happens in the case of the shell-silver error happens also in the case of that superimposition of Self and not-self that conditions all empirical experience. But the two cases are not the same. In the case of the worldly example, the one who saw the silver was already established as an individual empirical experiencer before he saw it. In the case of the mutual superimposition of the Self and not-self, however, the Self is not already established as an individual experiencer before that superimposition is made. The Self, at that stage, is not (yet an individual experiencer and so not) yet in a position to 'fail to discriminate Self and not-self'. So we cannot speak of any such failure to discriminate as the cause of the mutual superimposition of Self and not-self. For the teaching is that becoming an individual

experiencer can only occur through the said superimposition. It follows that (in the case of this initial superimposition that makes all others possible) it was not intended to assert real temporal sequence between non-discrimination and superimposition, but only logical sequence according to the conceptions of the human mind — the *conception* of superimposition implies the *conception* of non-discrimination as its logically prior condition.

As for the objection that there are no exceptions to the rule that absence of knowledge is the cause of all empirical phenomena, because wrong knowledge is its effect — this objection may be answered on similar lines as follows. The whole notion of cause and effect, we may say, falls within superimposition. For until superimposition had itself already come into being, it could not set up temporal or causal sequence, which depend on superimposition.

Hence our own view is that, in relation to the Self, all appearance of non-apprehension, doubt and wrong-apprehension is itself superimposition, and that in this context there is no occasion to enquire into the nature of its material or efficient cause, as there might be in the case of the incidental superimpositions that occur in the course of empirical experience. For the revered Commentator says, 'Thus this natural (i.e. uncaused) beginningless and endless superimposition, which is of the nature of false supposition...' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro. *ad fin.*)

And Sureśvara accepts this same view, but expresses it in a different way by saying 'Absence of knowledge, constantly present as it is, is identical with erroneous knowledge' (B.B.V. I.iv.386, cp. M.V. p.311). So one should not suppose that there is any fundamental difference between the two systems on this head. When the matter is examined in this light, it is fair to see Sureśvara's treatment of non-apprehension and false apprehension as directed only to refuting a particular form of the theory that metaphysical Ignorance was erroneous cognition — the form in which that doctrine was advanced by another school (that of Maṇḍana). But wrong apprehension, non-apprehension and doubt can only occur in the case of an individual experiencer (i.e. *within* the realm of superimposition). Such is our own view of the matter.

113 ENQUIRY INTO THE SEAT OF IGNORANCE AND THE OBJECT WHICH IT CONCEALS

The Brahma Siddhi raises the question 'To whom does metaphysical Ignorance belong?' and answers 'We say "It belongs to the individual souls"' (B.Sid. p.10). We have already examined this view (M.V.94;95). Bhartṛprapañca held that metaphysical Ignorance springs spontaneously from the Absolute, and, modifying a portion of the latter, has its seat in the individual

soul. It is, however, a characteristic of the not-self. Listen now to the words of Sureśvara.

(1) Now, Ignorance cannot exist in the void. It must always be Ignorance *of* someone *about* something. Further, we have already established that two categories exist, and only two, the Self and the not-self. From this it follows that the seat of Ignorance (the conscious being which Ignorance affects) cannot be the not-self. For the very nature of the not-self is Ignorance, and Ignorance cannot affect Ignorance. Even if it could, what difference would the rise of Ignorance in Ignorance bring about (that we could say that it was an event at all)?

Nor is the attainment of knowledge possible in the not-self, that one could argue that there must have been some contradictory Ignorance in the not-self (for it to negate). Further, the not-self is born of Ignorance. It is absurd to suppose that that which is logically and causally prior can only exist supported by and dependent on its own effect. Nor, again, has the not-self any form independent of and different from Ignorance, whereby it could serve as its seat and support.

These arguments (which refute the possibility of the not-self serving as the seat of Ignorance) also show that it cannot be the object concealed by Ignorance either. Therefore the not-self is neither the seat of Ignorance nor the object concealed by Ignorance.

Hence we conclude, as the only remaining alternative, that it is the Self alone which is both the seat of and the object concealed by Ignorance. All of us have the experience 'I do not know', and in the Veda we hear 'I am only a knower of the mantras, my lord; I do not know the Self' (Chānd.VII.i.3).

(Nor do the arguments which tell against the not-self as seat of Ignorance apply to the Self.) The Self, indeed, is not identical with Ignorance, since its nature is pure Consciousness. Moreover, (the rise of) Ignorance in the Self produces a difference in the form of an obscuration of knowledge. And attainment of knowledge is possible because the Self is the source of knowledge. Nor has the Self the characteristic of being an effect of Ignorance, (which, as we have seen, prevented the not-self from functioning as its seat); for it is rock-firm and raised high above all change by nature. And finally, the conscious Self has a form and existence independent of those of Ignorance, whereby it can serve as a seat for the latter. Hence we conclude that it is the Self alone that is affected by Ignorance.

What, then, is the object concealed by this Ignorance pertaining to the Self? The Self is that object. But is it not a fact that Ignorance is incompatible with the Self, since the latter is of the very nature of knowledge, and is without differentiation (so that it cannot serve as a seat for Ignorance, which would imply a distinction between the seat and the thing seated)? And is it not the case that the Self gives

rise to knowledge, and is contradictory to Ignorance in other ways too?

To this objection we reply that Ignorance *is* compatible with the Self. For in reality the Self remains undifferentiated. It appears to become differentiated into knower, knowledge and known through mere Ignorance alone, just as it is through mere Ignorance that the rope appears to become a snake — the Self and the rope remaining in reality quite unaffected. Hence when Ignorance is shaken off there is complete absence of all the evils of duality. (N.Sid. III.1, intro.)

And Sureśvara's view is that from the standpoint of the highest truth there is no Ignorance for anyone.

(2) No. The notion that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute and belongs to it is itself only imagined in Ignorance. From the standpoint of the Absolute, Ignorance can in no way exist. (S.V.176)

What is here said is that there is no other metaphysical Ignorance, with its seat in the not-self, over and above the Ignorance seated in the Self that obscures the Self. But this does not mean that one can interpret Sureśvara to be saying that there is no other Ignorance at the empirical level, such as Ignorance of shell in the shell-silver error. That would disagree with his arguments mentioned several times in the previous section (M.V.112) and supported with the usual examples like the rope-snake, about absence of knowledge being a factor (and the fundamental factor) in error, over and above the erroneous cognition itself. But from the standpoint of the highest truth, there is only one Ignorance, which has the Self for its seat and also for the object which it conceals. There are not really two different kinds of Ignorance. And that is all he wished to say. This will be made clear at M.V.115 (where he denies all reality to the silver-error). We have already referred at M.V.69,9 to his refutation of the doctrine of two kinds of Ignorance. That was said in the course of introducing a refutation of the Prasaṅkhyāna Vādins (exponents of the doctrine that liberation comes through repeated meditation on the texts), whose doctrine was as follows:

(3) They (the Prasaṅkhyāna Vādins) hold that there are two kinds of Ignorance, natural and adventitious. The adventitious kind applies to worldly objects, the natural kind to the Self. Adventitious Ignorance disappears through the rise of knowledge occurring once, as in the case of the prince brought up as a forest-dweller and thinking himself to be such, and who remembered he was a prince when a minister came to tell him, 'You are not a forester, you are a prince'. Natural Ignorance, though it may be removed through the rise of knowledge occurring once, nevertheless returns, as we see from examples of

attachment and other defects arising from Ignorance once more, even in the case of those who have known the metaphysical truth. (B.B.V. IV.iv.881-3)

This confirms our thesis, as it shows that Sureśvara was aware of the doctrine of two kinds of Ignorance and rejected it.

In the same way, in the system of the revered Commentator himself, by whom Ignorance is identified with superimposition, the Self is the seat of Ignorance just as it is felt to be in practical experience (in the form 'I do not know'). But there is no occasion for subtle theories about it. For the whole notion of knowledge and Ignorance itself belongs to the sphere of Ignorance. On this we might quote the following.

(4) If you ask 'To whom does this Ignorance belong?' we reply 'To you who ask this question'. If you then ask, 'But does not the Veda say that I am the Lord?' we reply, 'If you are awake to this (you will see that) there is no Ignorance for anybody'. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.3)

(5) It may be asked, 'Whose is this Ignorance?' The reply is, 'It belongs to him to whom it appears to belong'. (Bh.G.Bh. XIII.2)

(6) The Teacher says: You take that which is the supreme Self and which is not subject to transmigration wrongly, and have the conviction 'I am subject to transmigration'. You take that which does not perform action as a performer of action, you take one who does not enjoy empirical experience as the empirical experiencer, you take that which alone really exists as if it were non-existent. That is metaphysical Ignorance. (U.S.(prose) section 50)

Here also we see that the teachings of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara are essentially the same. Both take absence of knowledge and erroneous superimpostion as fundamentally one.

114 THE OPERATION OF THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

The fact of objects being unknown is not established by the means of knowledge (perception, inference, revelation, etc.,), because it is the invariable pre-condition before a means of knowledge can be applied. If it could be established by a valid means of knowledge that an object was unknown, this would imply the absurd result that the state of a thing as unknown would persist for ever (whereas we know that things previously unknown sometimes come to be known, cp. M.V.114,2 and 3). For the same reason, it cannot be established by the valid means of knowledge that things are in doubt or

erroneously represented (since valid knowledge removes the doubt and misrepresentation, S.V.688). Indeed, the means of knowledge only apply to what is totally unknown (B.B.V. I.iv. 258). Perception and the rest are means of knowledge precisely because they put an end to ignorance of pots and other objects, which latter are themselves revealed as unknown only in and through (the Self as) immediate experience. Therefore the means of knowledge never bear on the not-self without also bearing on the supreme Self (S.V.1002). Pots and other worldly objects are known only through an authoritative means of knowledge, and do not lose their condition of being unknown without one. The Self, however, being the self-established reality, may be understood to lose its condition of being unknown directly through the means of valid knowledge (the Vedic text) and without an act of cognition producing a resultant-cognition. (S.V.1004)

Ānandagiri explains this verse of Sureśvara differently. He says: 'The Self cannot be known without the help of a cognition through the means of valid knowledge (i.e. the Veda), on account of its very nature as inmost Self and reality. For it is only consciousness in the form of a cognition through a means of valid knowledge (as opposed to the Self as pure Consciousness) that contradicts Ignorance. Consciousness in its pure form does not do so (since it co-exists with it as its Witness)'.

This is not in contradiction with the true teaching of the system. Nevertheless, I submit that what Sureśvara is really saying in the present verse is as follows. Pots and other worldly objects established by the empirical means of knowledge depend on the self-luminous cognition resulting from the means of valid knowledge to lose their state of being unknown. The Self, however, loses it directly through the Vedic text (M.V.116). It does not depend on a self-luminous 'resultant-cognition' from the application of one of the means of knowledge to lose its state of being unknown. For it is non-different from right-knowledge by nature.

In truth, however, what was really not-self could not even reach the stage of being unknown. The great philosophers of all schools hold that in practical experience objects like pots are unknown before the rise of the cognition through which they come to be known (B.B.V. IV.iii.158). However, there are no distinctions in reality. Hence the word 'being' can refer to only one entity, and it is that and that alone which is unknown. The individual experiencer and the means of knowledge at his disposal are both experienced as appearances of a self-luminous entity. And it is that entity which is Being, and (because it is the only reality) it is that and that alone which is unknown (N.Sid. III.7-8).

Again, a means of knowledge establishes an object, like a

piece of shell that is already existent before that means of knowledge is applied. It does not establish the existence of anything totally non-existent. But it would have been wrong to have said that the illusory silver for which the shell was mistaken was existent but unknown, like the shell was. And it would have been wrong to have said that the silver was eternally existent but unknown, like the Self. Therefore it is wrong, in the case of illusory silver, to say that a means of knowledge is applied to remove a special increment of Ignorance concealing the silver, over and above the Ignorance that conceals the Self (B.B.V. IV.iii.166-7). It is the unknown shell that is wrongly interpreted as silver. In the same way, the Self is wrongly interpreted as the not-self by those who have not gained metaphysical knowledge. In the example, knowledge of the illusory silver is not knowledge through a valid means of knowledge, as here the existence of silver independent of the illusory cognition is never established. Nor is the silver-illusion based on the application of a valid means of knowledge to the shell, as Ignorance of the shell is not removed (B.B.V. IV.iv.904).

In the case of erroneous knowledge of the Self, the phenomenon that the silver-illusion example was intended to illustrate, no cognitions bearing on the not-self are examples of the application of valid cognition. The not-self can neither be known nor unknown, any more than the illusory silver can (because it does not exist). Nor can the Self be known through a valid cognition bearing on the not-self; for a cognition bearing on the not-self will not destroy the Ignorance relating to the Self. From the empirical standpoint, however, the various means of knowledge give rise to valid knowledge in their respective spheres. The application of a valid means of knowledge results in cognition (pramā), which, because it is of the nature of immediate experience, is itself identical with the Self. Hence (from the empirical standpoint in which they have their play) all the means of valid cognition (appear to) communicate knowledge of that Self which is revealed in the Upanishads. But that, being self-established, neither comes nor goes. It does not stand in need of a valid means of knowledge to reveal it (T.B.V. II.526). We are familiar, however, in practical experience with the feeling 'I do not know' in relation to it. In this sense we are ignorant of it, and the valid means of cognition called the Veda liberates us from this Ignorance. Thus when the Ignorance that causes practical experience of an individual experiencer and his means of knowledge has been destroyed by the knowledge arising from the Veda, all the means of valid cognition cease to be such any longer. And this means the realization of man's true end (S.V.162,1007).

Here we subjoin a few verses from the Vārtikas illustrating Sureśvara's way of examining the valid means of knowledge.

(1) The means of valid knowledge do not produce 'unknownness' for the very reason that they produce 'knownness'. If they produced 'unknownness', what function would valid knowledge fulfil? (B.B.V. I.iv.295)

(2) Our ignorance of anything is a matter of immediate awareness, and invariably *precedes* valid cognition and ceases with it. It cannot, therefore, be established by the means of valid cognition. (S.V.686)

(3) If ignorance of a thing were accessible to the means of knowledge, like objects such as a pot, it would be real, and what was at any time unknown would be unknown for ever. (S.V.687)

(4) We have already stated the rule which shows that erroneous cognition and doubt can no more be known through valid cognition than ignorance can. (The rule, namely, that *what is brought to an end* by a valid cognition cannot be *an object revealed by* that valid cognition). (B.B.V.I.iv.257)

(5) Pots and other objects in the world are known only through the valid means of empirical knowledge such as perception, etc. Until they are so known, they remain unknown. But the Self, because it is a self-evident reality, must become known without the help of an act of cognition. (S.V.1004)

(6) That (the Self) without taking cognisance of which even the empirical means of knowledge could not rightly determine the not-self — how can the ritualists deny that the Upanishads can communicate knowledge of it? (S.V.551)

(7) Since every object is unknown before the idea of it first arises in our minds, and since (even as unknown), it exists by the power of the one reality (sat), it is that reality which is (ultimately) the thing that is unknown. The Self, which is the reality manifesting itself in both the knower and the means of knowledge when an empirical cognition is being sought, and which is revealed by its own power — that is (always) the entity concealed by Ignorance. (N.S.III.7,8)

(8) In the case of the illusory cognition of silver in what is really a piece of shell, the valid means of knowledge expresses its validity by revealing the shell and showing that the latter existed before the means of cognition was applied. But no valid means of knowledge bears on the silver, which is not shown to have existed at all. When illusory silver is erroneously perceived in a piece of shell, there is no silver being revealed by valid cognition to exist in the same way that the shell does. There is no silver as a reality at all, either previously unknown, like the shell, or previously known

(though imperfectly) like the Self, the real. (B.B.V. IV.iii. 166-7)

(9) The illusory silver is only known when the shell is not known. In the same way, the not-self can only be known when the Self, as immediate experience, is not known (in its true nature). Illusory silver cannot be the object of a valid cognition, as its existence, unlike that of the shell, cannot be established apart from the cognition by which it is known, since it is never established as known in other circumstances. Since the illusory silver-cognition does not reveal the shell as an object of valid cognition, it cannot be a means of valid cognition at all, for lack of an object. The illusory silver-cognition cannot be a means of valid cognition for the shell any more than it can for silver, as it does not cancel Ignorance of the shell or assume its form. And it should be understood that, as in the case of the illusory silver-cognition, all apparent means of valid cognition that bear on the not-self are not valid means of cognition at all (from the standpoint of the highest truth). The only exception is that (i.e. the supreme metaphysical texts of the Veda) which bears on the inmost Self. A person's inmost Consciousness is experienced here in the world as unknown until he is enlightened by the (appropriate) means of knowledge (the supreme Vedic texts). (B.B.V. IV.iv.901-6)

(10) But where the cognition is (not of the not-self but) of the form and nature of the Self, being pure Consciousness excluding all else, there is no dependence on any further means of cognition. Once this knowledge rises, it never sets. (T.B.II.526)

(11) It is not the case (that if the Upanishads taught the sole reality of the transcendent Self the Vedic texts enjoining rituals would be contradicted). All valid means of knowledge retain their validity till knowledge of the Self. For all culminate in, but end with, that. (S.V.162)

(12) The Ignorance that gives rise to the whole play of knower, knowledge and known is cancelled by enlightenment, which is of the nature of identity with the one infinite Self, arising from upanishadic texts like 'That thou art'. (S.V.1006)

(13) Therefore the Veda is a valid means of knowledge in that it destroys Ignorance of the Self. And this is man's highest goal. Such is the view of the wise. (S.V.1007)

115 CANCELLATION OF ILLUSION

In the course of refuting the (Mīmāṃsaka) theory that

perceptual errors arise from failure to perceive a distinction (akhyāti-vāda), Ācārya Maṇḍana goes on to state his own doctrine as follows:

(1) There could not be the correcting-cognition 'this is not silver' if error had been mere non-apprehension, since nothing positive can result from a non-apprehension; a non-apprehension cannot give rise to any idea, as it is a non-existence. On the other hand a positive erroneous cognition 'revealing' silver, that did not in fact exist, in a nearby perceptible object, or a cognition 'revealing' (distant) silver as if it were close, would give a positive result (in the form of an idea subject to cancellation).... We do not hold that the correcting-cognition 'this is not silver' merely negates the existence of silver or of an object in contact with the sense of sight. We hold that it either denies that the thing in contact with the sense of sight is silver, or else denies that it is silver that is in contact with the sense of sight. A non-apprehension cannot stand as the object of either of these negations, from the mere fact of being no more than a failure to apprehend. One must therefore necessarily resort to the theory of positive erroneous cognition (viparīta-khyāti) if one is to account for the fact that there is anything positive to negate. (B.Sid. p.143)

And Maṇḍana clearly says that the shell is the object of the erroneous silver-cognition.

(2) In erroneous cognition, it is not in its true form as shell that the shell stands as object of the silver-cognition, for the shell would prompt no activity in its true form. It stands in the form of silver, as there is an activity of picking up founded on that. (B.Sid. p.147)

In Sureśvara's Vārtika Ignorance is taken as a non-entity (abhāva). Nevertheless, the doctrine of erroneous perception as positive erroneous cognition is clearly approved under a different form, as is shown at the beginning of the verse quoted above, 'The illusory silver is only known when the shell is not known...' (B.B.V. IV.iv.901, M.V.114,9).

No clear statement is forthcoming from Maṇḍana on the question whether or not the illusory silver actually exists. But there are verses in the Vārtika clearly showing that the silver is a mere apparition which has no real existence anywhere.

(3) The notion 'this silver' does not refer to any real entity anywhere. It turns out that there was no genuine knowledge of silver existing in the shell and that the silver was not a genuine 'this' (not a genuine object existing in front of us). Some say that, in the silver-illusion, because neither 'silver' nor 'this' (as associated with silver) can be shown to exist

anywhere else they must exist in the Witness or in the mind. But this also we deny. There is no knowledge of any object at all here. There is a mere apparition caused by false knowledge. (B.B.V. I.iv.275-6)

The existence anywhere of a false notion or object cannot be proved by valid cognition. The illusory object, the illusory cognition, Ignorance itself, the individual experiencer and so on — all these are established not by valid means of cognition but by the immediate experience of changeless Consciousness.

(4) Therefore an appearance like a memory arises in the mind that bears the impressions of previous experiences of silver. But it manifests only through the eternal, changeless and unitary light of the supreme Self. In Ignorance there is only the individual experiencer and his experience — there is no real object of valid cognition beyond them. Hence Ignorance and its individual experiencer are objects of the immediate apprehension of the Witness. There could not even *be* an individual experiencer and his empirical experience without the support of pure Consciousness (saṃvit). For, in their true nature, the individual knower and his knowledge and its objects, which together constitute the not-self, are nothing but pure Consciousness. (B.B.V. I.iv.279-82)

Thus for Sureśvara the point of introducing the example of perceptual illusions like illusory silver was to show that the whole vision of the world was a mere illusion. The illusory appearance of the world rises up in the Self when the latter remains unknown. Even Ignorance cannot manifest except through the support of self-evident pure Consciousness. Such manifestation occurs in the absence of deep metaphysical reflection. On this point there are the following verses in the Vārtika.

(5) Therefore all our familiarity with valid empirical knowledge, with apparently valid empirical knowledge and with invalid knowledge (error) — as also with metaphysical Ignorance — is made possible by that special means of knowledge (the Self) which requires nothing else to illumine its object. This whole universe of objects that come into being and pass away can only be known through this special internal verifiable principle, which is self-evident and independent of any other means of knowledge. (B.B.V. I.iv.272-3)

The internal verifiable principle is the 'Self-not-yet-known'. 'Ananyamam' means 'self-established and independent of any other means of knowledge'.

(6) This erroneous cognition cannot be correct knowledge

corresponding to any object, as it does not relate to any object of valid cognition. Because it is known, it cannot be said not to exist at all. Because it is directly perceived as something actually present, it is not admitted to be a memory. (B.B.V. I.iv.274)

The erroneous cognition is not an idea corresponding to a real object, nor is it absence of knowledge, nor is it a memory. The teaching of this verse is like Śrī Śaṅkara's phrase 'the false appearance at one place of what had previously been seen at another place, of the nature of (but not identical with) memory' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.).

116 AUTHORITY OF THE VEDA: ROLE OF NEGATIVE TEXTS

In this way, because the Self has thus been shown to be the only entity that is unknown, it must undeniably be accepted as being the one thing that has to be known. Thus the Vedanta philosophy has a settled and well-demonstrated object of enquiry, while other philosophies do not. The fact that the Self as immediate experience is a verifiable reality is demonstrated by all the means of cognition. That very Consciousness which is accepted as the resultant-cognition following upon perception and the other valid means of knowledge being applied to external objects — that very Consciousness is accepted as the subject-matter of the Upanishads, which they communicate to the hearer with the authority of a valid means of knowledge.

It is for this reason that we do not accept the Vedic texts to be authoritative just because they are Vedic texts. They are accepted as authoritative because doubt and wrong knowledge and so forth are impossible in the Self as immediate experience, knowledge of which they effectively communicate. Since metaphysical Ignorance and its effects are only established 'through lack of deep metaphysical reflection', it can be removed solely by knowledge arising from the texts.

Nor should one raise the objection, 'Because the Self is of the nature of knowledge it can eliminate Ignorance on its own. What is the need of any further factor such as Vedic texts?' For what removes Ignorance? It is always a valid means of cognition, which provides a resultant-cognition which in turn removes the 'unknownness' of its object. But the Self is not contradictory to metaphysical Ignorance, for as constant and eternal awareness it remains in permanent co-existence with Ignorance. So what destroys metaphysical Ignorance — and it is the only thing that destroys it — is the Self when it has been immediately experienced in its true form through the Veda as means of cognition.

Nor should one think, 'The true nature of the Self has to

be settled through logical argumentation, employing the method of agreement and difference. Why appeal to the Veda?' For it is only in relation to Ignorance that the Self appears to manifest as cause and effect. Its true nature cannot be discovered in its manifestation either as effect or cause. So logical enquiry by the method of agreement and difference, which treats of effects and causes, will not awaken us to a knowledge of the true nature of the Self.

Again, the Self is the Absolute and the Absolute is the Self, their identity is the special theme of the upanishadic texts. That is not a subject that can be approached by any other means of knowledge apart from those texts. Nor should one raise the objection: 'If the meanings of the words "Absolute" and "Self" are within normal human comprehension it means that they must be known through some other means of knowledge apart from verbal revelation, and then verbal revelation could not be an authoritative means of knowledge — or else the meanings of the words must be beyond normal human comprehension, in which case the words "Absolute" and "Self" would be ineffective for lack of any acquaintance with their meaning. In either case their meaning cannot constitute the theme of the upanishadic teaching'. Such an objection is not right. For in fact the meaning of the word 'Self' is familiar as referring to the essence or true nature of anything, while the term Brahman (the Absolute) is familiar as expressing magnitude. A Vedic text can therefore very well employ those words to communicate a meaning that transcends normal human comprehension, namely the identity of the Absolute and the Self. We have knowledge of the deities and heaven and other supernatural matters through the texts of the Veda in just the same way.

In this connection we find texts like 'That thou art' and 'I am the Absolute' having pairs of words in subject-predicate relation. From this we conclude that the meanings of the words in each such pair stand as qualified and qualifier. By the process of qualification the element 'the sufferer' (the individual experiencer) is eliminated from the meaning of the word 'thou', and the element 'not directly known' is eliminated from the meaning of the word 'that'. Hence the properly prepared student acquires through these texts knowledge of the identity of the Self, indirectly indicated as the meaning of the word 'thou' through knowership and egohood (which point to the Consciousness of the hearer), with the Absolute, the indirectly indicated meaning of the word 'that'. This knowledge is immediate experience of that (transcendent principle) which is not the meaning of (i.e. which cannot be directly denoted by) any sentence; it is not communicated either by the exclusion or association of word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning. Here there is no need of the application of any further means of knowledge (once the text has been properly understood), since the reference is to Consciousness as the Real, and Consciousness in its true nature is super-terrestrial

(alaukika), and Reality is of the nature of absolute awareness. There can only be dependence on knowledge from some other quarter or on something other than the Vedic text in a case where the thing to be known is within the scope of some other means of knowledge. In this connection, the following verses from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika are relevant.

(1) That which has ultimately to be known, which is initially unknown and which transcends the individual knower and his knowledge and its objects — that can be known in this world from the Veda and from no other source. (B.B.V. I.iv.339)

(2) That which has to be known here, and known through the Upanishads as the means of valid cognition, is pure Consciousness, which manifests also as the resultant-cognition when the empirical means of cognition are applied to external objects. (S.V.159)

(3) Nor do we maintain that the reason for faith in the Veda is its own statement that it is of superhuman origin (at Bṛhad. II.iv.10); the reason is the impossibility of the usual causes of invalidity of statements (human origin, which implies fallibility, being accessible to other means of knowledge, etc.) in the statements of the Veda. (B.B.V. II.iv.325)

(4) Metaphysical Ignorance and its effects cannot be proved to exist, either if taken as identical with the Absolute or as different. Hence we say that it is only established at all 'for lack of reflection'. The notion that the ether of the sky is blue like a lotus-petal by day and then changes to become black like the belly of a bumble-bee at night is only accepted for lack of reflection. One should see that the whole notion of the existence of metaphysical Ignorance and its effects is an illusion of the same kind. (B.B.V. I.iv.332-3)

So we see that metaphysical Ignorance and its effects are indeterminable either as the real or as anything different, and they are established (accepted) only for lack of deep critical reflection.

(5) Though enlightened by nature, the Self accepts and tolerates not being known, being the only entity able to do so, since it is the only entity that is real. It does not destroy Ignorance without the aid of a valid cognition. The Self destroys its own Ignorance only when mounted on the pedestal of a means of valid knowledge, and not otherwise. The means of valid knowledge destroys Ignorance, in alliance with the Self, when it bears on reality. (B.B.V. IV.iii.181-2)

The Self as immediate experience is not of itself in contradiction with metaphysical Ignorance. Nor is a mere means of valid

cognition on its own able to contradict Ignorance, unless it is applied to its object and issues in a resultant-cognition (cp. M.V.29,5). That is the meaning.

(6) Because cause and effect owe their origin to mere relative cognition, one cannot find reality in either of them. Hence reasoning by agreement and difference, which operates in the realm of cause and effect, cannot throw light on the reality taught in the Upanishads. The final reality can be known only through the upanishadic texts, the sole means for knowing it. (B.B.V. IV.iii.400-1)

The Self is non-dual, so cause and effect are not real. Hence there cannot be knowledge of the Self through reasoning by the method of agreement and difference.

(7) The fact that the true Self is identical with the Absolute and the Absolute identical with the true Self is the special topic of the metaphysical texts in the Upanishads like 'That thou art'; and it cannot be known through any other means of knowledge.... The use of the word 'self' is current in the world and not restricted to that of the metaphysical term 'Self'. Equally, the idea of 'magnitude', conveyed by the term used for the Absolute (Brahman, from root bṛh, to swell), is familiar from current use. Thus the meanings of the individual words of the text 'I am the Absolute' are known from worldly experience. What, then, is the obstacle to the formation of a sentence-meaning that transcends sense-experience from these words as juxtaposed in a sentence in the Veda? Even the meanings of such technical terms used by the ritualists as 'unprecedented' (i.e. the occult power of the ritual), 'deity' and 'heaven' are known from worldly experience. But in their case, too, a special meaning that transcends sense-experience is learned from the Vedic texts. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1115, followed by S.V.861-3)

(8) On our view, that which is not the direct meaning of any sentence (*viz.* the Self or Absolute, which cannot be directly denoted by any sentence), is known through immediate apprehension as the meaning of 'that' and 'thou' through the exclusion (of the mutually contradictory parts of the word-meanings) that arises through the words being placed in subject-predicate relation. It is the same process as that which occurs in the sentence 'Verily, the ether in the pot is the same as the ether in the sky'. (N.Sid. III.9)

'The ether in the pot is the same as the ether in the sky'. In this sentence the words 'pot-ether' and 'sky-ether' are placed in subject-predicate relation, so that their meanings qualify one another and the mutually contradictory elements are eliminated. The sentence-meaning that results is a reference by

indirect indication to bare ether (not limited either as pot-ether or sky-ether). The text 'That thou art' should be understood in the same way. 'Not the direct meaning of any sentence' means that what the sentence indirectly indicates is (something infinite and) not a sentence-meaning that arises from exclusion or association and so on (among the word-meanings in the manner of normal speech dealing with finite objects).

(8) The fact that the meaning of the word 'thou' is not the individual soul (lit. 'the sufferer') is conveyed by its being qualified as the Absolute, which is the meaning of the word 'that'; and the fact that the (transcendent) Absolute, the meaning of the word 'that', is intimately known as one's inmost Self is conveyed by the presence of the word 'thou' next to it. (N.Sid. III.10)

Because of the mutual qualification of the meanings, the contradictory elements are eliminated.

(9) The Consciousness and interiority of the Self, raised high above all change like a fixed mountain peak, are not accidental characteristics introduced from without. They are what enables the soul to feel itself as an individual experiencer and an ego. Therefore the Self is indirectly indicated by appeal (through the use of the word 'thou') to the soul's sense of being an individual experiencer and an ego. (N.Sid. III.11)

EXPLANATION OF THE MECHANISM OF THE NEGATIVE TEXTS GIVEN IN THE VĀRTIKA

Here we may take up the explanation given in the Vārtika of the meaning of the words in the negative metaphysical texts of the Veda. Initially we have an account of a theme found in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, the theme, namely, that all this realm of name, form and action will have to be negated. And this is followed by its actual negation through the word 'not'. In this context, we should not suppose that once form, etc., have been negated of the Self they might persist elsewhere, as 'existence', for instance, when negated of 'pot' may persist in relation to 'cloth'. This agrees with worldly experience, too, where no form is found to subsist in separation from that of which it is a form. And when metaphysical Ignorance of the supreme Self has been negated, none of its effects are found to persist anywhere. Again, the things that have to be negated are not invariably present together with one another, whereas the presence of the inmost Self never fails. Hence it is first taught that all this world of name, form and action is erroneously superimposed on the Self, and then its existence in the Absolute is denied, the Absolute itself being (undeniable

because) self-established as immediate experience. The word 'not' can only negate what has to be negated on the basis of accepting the existence of the Self. For the Self as pure Consciousness is inseparable from any negation. All that has to be negated is dependent for its (apparent) existence on the Self, which cannot be negated. Negation, therefore, does not imply total non-existence of anything, as non-existence itself falls within the realm of that which has to be negated. The upanishadic negation 'neither this nor that', however, extends universally; it negates whatever is found, except the Absolute or Self, the Witness of all, which latter persists untouched (B.B.V. II.iii.183-207).

But the text 'neither this nor that' is also explained by Sureśvara in another way. On the second view, although this text has the form of a negation, it is not actually a negation. For before the occurrence of the text 'And so there is the teaching "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6), the Absolute had already been established as transcending the gross and subtle elements (the entire realm of the empirically knowable, cp. T.N. at M.V.79,1). And in the text 'There are two forms of the Absolute' (Bṛhad.II.iii.1), the word 'of' implies that the Absolute is different from (transcends) the two forms. From the mere fact that the not-self is not regularly present together with the Self (e.g. in dreamless sleep), its non-existence in the Self has already been proved (so that the purpose of the text 'neither this nor that' cannot be to repeat that proof, which would amount to a mere tautology). And there are other considerations which show that the text 'neither this nor that' need not and should not be taken as a negation. There is a sense in which the not-self, since it is established by perception and other means of valid cognition, cannot be negated. Even if we accept that in some sense it could be negated, a *mere* negation is in itself fruitless. If the text (Bṛhad.II.iii.6) were taken thus, it would not fulfil its promise of positive teaching (ādeśa), affirmation of the Absolute. So the correct way to analyse the meaning of 'neti' (= na + iti) is to take 'na' (not) as an indirect reference to the self-established Self (as that in which the empirical knower, knowledge and known are *not* present, B.B.V. II.iii. 229), and to take 'iti' as having the force of identifying the inmost Self with the Absolute (thereby bringing the Absolute within the scope of the possible experience of the hearer in the same way as 'That thou art', B.B.V. II.iii.233). This is Sureśvara's teaching at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika II.iii.214-34.

Here we quote a few more verses illustrating other points made in the Vārtika.

(10) That the Absolute is different from the gross and subtle aspects of the world (the 'two forms') has already been established before the promise of positive teaching (ādeśa, Bṛhad. II.iii.6). Therefore this teaching is given to enable the

hearer to have direct apprehension that he is the Absolute (B.B.V. II.iii.214).

The negative text 'neither this nor that' is not primarily concerned with negating what has to be negated (such as the gross and subtle aspects of the universe) but with an indirect method of communicating the true nature of the hearer. If the text merely negated the universe in its gross and subtle aspects, and the Absolute were not established by some other positive cognition, the result would be a void... (B.B.V. II.iii.215).

The element 'na' (not) in 'na + iti = neti' indicates indirectly that principle of Consciousness which is self-established without need of a separate means of cognition, in which the individual knower, his knowledge and its objects do *not* exist, and which is known through awakening to one's own true nature... (B.B.V. II.iii.229).

The word 'na' (not) indicates that that which has ultimately to be known (the Self) is self-established by its own power (it is that which is *not* known through the empirical processes). The word 'na' (not) is augmented by 'iti' (this) to form 'neti' to show that the Self is the Absolute. The Absolute is here indicated by the term 'iti' (because the term 'this' allied to 'not' negates the gross and subtle aspects of the world which appear to characterize the Absolute, leaving the Absolute in its pure form identical with the Witness — so Ānandagiri). (B.B.V. II.iii.233)

Here it might appear that an objection could be raised. If the two forms of the Absolute, the subtle and the gross aspects of the universe, are denied, why should that be thought to leave the Absolute a void? The mere fact that it is beyond the scope of all other means of knowledge would not render it a void, since it is self-revealed. Even though it is self-revealed, might we not wonder if the Vedic texts would not be needed to cancel metaphysical Ignorance? But the Vedic text 'neither this nor that', which negates all that is superimposed, exists precisely for this purpose.

But has not Ignorance been proved to be a distinct principle, the *cause* of what has been superimposed, so that it cannot be thus negated? No, we do not accept this. The method for expounding the Absolute is that of negating everything that has been imagined in regard to it. It is like communicating the true nature of the rope by negating the snake and all else that has been imagined in it. Knowledge of the true nature of the Absolute arises simultaneously with the understanding of the negations, so we cannot admit that anything further requires to be done for knowledge of the Absolute once the negations are understood. To us, therefore, it seems to be mere obstinacy to claim that there requires to be a special further negation of Ignorance over and above negation of wrong knowledge.

Or again, we could happily concur with Ānandagiri's gloss on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika II.iii.233, when he says, 'The expression "neti" is the proof to show that the Witness, indicated by the word "not" (i.e. not the individual knower or any factor in the empirical personality), is the Absolute'. But enough of all these subtleties! All the various ways here discussed for accounting for the validity of the supreme negative texts follow the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction, and hence are acceptable.

117 PERCEPTION, ETC., CANNOT CONTRADICT THE VEDA

We have already mentioned above (M.V.105) that, like Maṇḍana, Sureśvara refuted the notion of difference in order to answer the objection that the metaphysical texts of the Veda could not be an authoritative means of knowledge since they stood in contradiction with other valid means of cognition that conveyed a knowledge of duality. Our own view is that Sureśvara only raised this objection when arguing his position on the basis of deliberate concessions to the views of others. For elsewhere he refutes in clear terms the doctrine that the different means of knowledge could contradict one another (S.V. 1076-81; N.Sid. III.86). He also refutes the doctrine that the various means of knowledge could contradict one another on the topic of the unity and sole reality of the Self in the course of explaining Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary (B.B.V. II.i.588-94; cp. N.Sid. III.96).* Such an author could not seriously admit that the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads could stand in contradiction with the deliverances of other means of knowledge. He also held that even the Veda was an authoritative means of knowledge of the Self only through negating Ignorance, not that it could communicate it directly. For, as he explained at Sambandha Vārtika 999, his view was that the existence of the individual experiencer and his knowledge and its objects, along with time and other conditions, depended entirely on the immediate experience supplied by the Self. How could any of them affect the Self in any way?

(Cp. N.Sid. III.96, intro.: 'We speak thus (of the possibility of a conflict between Vedic revelation and perception) on the basis of a deliberate concession. Otherwise, we have more than once remarked that one means of cognition cannot be contradicted by another'. T.N.)

118 TREATMENT OF THE TOPIC OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

As in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, so in Sureśvara's

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika, the subject of cause and effect is introduced only in order to refute the whole notion of cause and effect. There are places in the Vārtika where Sureśvara *appears* to take Ignorance as the material cause of the world, but this is only a superficial view that might occur at first sight to one unable to give due consideration to what the Vārtikas and Naiṣkarmya Siddhi really intended to say. No real existence of cause and effect is in fact admitted, as a study of certain parts of Sureśvara's works would show. Indeed, he states it openly, and also refutes the whole conception of cause and effect.

(1) And the whole uncritically accepted world of duality is *per se* endless, in that it rests on bare Ignorance of the non-dual Self, as the fancied silver rests on Ignorance of the shell. Hence it is Ignorance of the Self which is ultimately the cause of all evil. (N.Sid. I.1, intro.)

Here it might appear at first glance as though Ignorance of the Self were being taken as the material cause of duality. In reality, however, it is clear from an examination of such texts as 'Ignorance, which means "I do not know"' (T.B.V. II.176, cp. M.V.110,1; 222,1, note) that Ignorance is a non-entity (abhāva) and could not possibly be a material cause.

(2) Further, the not-self is born of Ignorance. (N.Sid. III.1, intro., cp. M.V.113,1)

Here again, one might make the mistake of supposing that it was being said that Ignorance was the material cause of the not-self. But in fact the preceding sentence has clearly denied the existence of any Ignorance contradicting knowledge in the words, 'Nor is the attainment of knowledge possible in the not-self that one could argue that there must have been some contradictory Ignorance (in the not-self for such knowledge to negate', cp. M.V.113,1).

(3) For Ignorance is nothing but absence of knowledge, and, since the latter is a non-entity by nature, it cannot stand as the cause of transmigratory experience. The existent cannot spring from the non-existent. (N.Sid. III.7, intro.)

Here an objector suggests that Ignorance cannot be the cause of transmigration.

(4) Since every object is unknown before the idea of it arises in our minds, and since (even as unknown) it exists by the power of the one reality (sat), it is that reality which is ultimately the thing that is unknown. (N.Sid. III.7, cp. M.V. 114,7, *ad init.*)

This verse is composed to explain, against the previous objection, in what sense Ignorance is a cause, although it is a non-entity. The essence of the reply is that the objection is beside the point, because the actual cause is reality, the Absolute, as unknown. One should ignore the alternative explanation saying 'The Self is concealed by Ignorance as a positive force different from mere absence of knowledge' offered by the commentator Jñānottama because it contradicts Sureśvara's meaning.

(5) Ignorance of the Self is the precondition for the appearance of this magic show of duality, and the Absolute is called the cause mediately through that. (B.B.V. I.iv.371)

Duality is here taken as a magic show in the sense of being an erroneous superimposition. Ignorance is its cause only in the manner above explained. The Absolute alone is the cause, through the medium of Ignorance; that is the meaning. One should recall here what has been said earlier about the sense in which Ignorance is the cause of erroneous knowledge (M.V. 111,10; 112; 113,2,note; 113,3). It is clear that the explanation of this verse given by Anandagiri in his sub-commentary on this verse goes against the original meaning when he says, 'Duality, which, like a mass-hynotist's magic show, is accepted as real only for lack of reflection, must have for its cause something which is not a non-entity (as a non-entity cannot function as a cause). It requires a material cause corresponding to itself (in reality-grade, i.e. indeterminable reality-grade) and has one in metaphysical Ignorance. The Absolute stands as the cause (only) through resorting to that'.

(6) Thus cause and other such notions are set out only for the sake of proving the existence of the transcendent Self. They are a device to make the Self available, as one who knew the truth proclaimed (G.K.III.15, cp. M.V.33,4; 75,10). The negation of all notions such as cause does not suffice to establish non-duality. The negation itself requires to be negated by the awakening to the homogeneous unity and sole reality of the Self. First there is a thorough demonstration that all this appearance of plurality has Being for its true nature. Then it is taught how Being itself melts into infinity as pure Consciousness. (B.B.V. I.ii.27-9)

Cause and effect and so forth are only established provisionally with a view to establish the unborn non-dual Self, which is neither cause nor effect nor absence of cause and effect. It is not intended to establish cause and effect as real from the highest point of view. Nor is it intended to say that non-duality is simply the absence of cause and effect. For one becomes awake to the self-revealed principle which is different from any non-entity through negating negation itself,

by awakening to the self-established reality that is its opposite. First it is shown, by resorting to the hypothesis of causation, that the real (sat) is the cause of all. Then even the notion of reality (sattva) is eliminated in the non-dual homogeneous principle. So the teaching about cause and effect is not for the purpose of affirming the existence of cause and effect.

(7) Ignorance, merit and demerit and the impressions of past actions lying unevolved in the elements fire, water, earth and wind, and dissolved in ether, remaining as existent but not manifest — these, together with the Self, form 'The Undeveloped Principle'.... It is Ignorance that manifests in the form of the objective universe of material objects (viśva), as it is the nature of Ignorance to do so. Hence the Upanishad says, 'This universe was then (before the projection of the world) undifferentiated' (Bṛhad.I.iv.7). (B.B.V. I.iv.205-7)

First the nature of 'the Undeveloped' is explained. Then it is declared that it is Ignorance only that appears as the manifest and the unmanifest. Hence it is that the Undeveloped Principle is sometimes called Ignorance in the ancient texts and, when the word Ignorance is used in this special sense, *material causality can be found attributed to 'Ignorance'. The not-self, too, is another form assumed by Ignorance. But here the clue is given by the phrase 'Hence it (the not-self) is also* called *Ignorance (T.B.V. II.178, M.V.110,2). This also is only a metaphorical use of the term Ignorance.*

(8) If viewed from the standpoint of the final truth, Ignorance and its effects cannot be established as existing either through its own power or through that of another. From the standpoint of Ignorance it is sometimes referred to by the term 'the Undeveloped'. When we reflect on our experience on waking from dreamless sleep we say 'I knew nothing', which shows that Consciousness is reflected in Ignorance. The origin, maintenance and dissolution of the world take place in the Self as reflected in Ignorance. The Self, as associated with Ignorance, is the cause of bodies where Ignorance predominates, and of conscious beings where Consciousness predominates. All such distinctions are conditioned by past thought, meditation and activity. (B.B.V. I.iv.340-2)

(9) Ignorance is confusion and unconsciousness appearing in the reality, the Self, which is in truth ever enlightened. As confusion and unconsciousness are found in the not-self, this whole world is called 'death'. (B.B.V. IV.iii.457)

The text (at Bṛhad.IV.iii.7) has spoken of 'the forms of death', where 'death' means 'Ignorance'. Earlier it had said, 'Darkness (Ignorance) is death' (Bṛhad.I.iii.28). Sureśvara's

present verse follows on from that. Confusion and unconsciousness are the nature of Ignorance. And the fact that both of these appear even in the not-self is an expression of 'death'. The verse explains how the term 'Ignorance' comes to be applied to the not-self.

(10) The term 'Ignorance' does not mean anything but 'non-consciousness'. This is confirmed by the Veda (at Bṛhad.IV. iv.3 and 4) where the text runs 'having sent this body to 'Avidyā' (= unconsciousness)'. (B.B.V. I.iv.256)

In this verse Sureśvara declares that non-consciousness is the essential nature of Ignorance in order to bring out how enlightenment and Ignorance are contradictories as Consciousness and non-consciousness. His idea is that the Veda intended to teach that Ignorance was non-consciousness when it said, 'Having struck down its previous body and sent it to unconsciousness, the soul proceeds (after death) to a new body'. Here again, Ignorance is clearly identified with the not-self.

(11) Texts like 'Darkness (Ignorance) is death (light is immortal)' (Bṛhad.I.iii.28) and 'In the beginning, this universe was water' (Bṛhad.V.v.1) show that metaphysical Ignorance is continually at work, either in manifest or unmanifest form. (B.B.V. I.ii.136)

The text 'Darkness is death, light is immortal' (Bṛhad.I.iii. 28) refers to Ignorance, evolved and manifest as natural knowledge and action. In the text 'In the beginning, this universe was water' (Bṛhad.V.v.1), the word 'water' also refers to Ignorance, but this time the reference is to Ignorance in its unmanifest form. That is the meaning of the verse.

One cannot here accept the statement of Ānandagiri, 'It is Root Ignorance only that is referred to by the word "darkness" used to explain the term "death"'. For it is said that Ignorance displays itself either in manifest or in unmanifest form. This implies that Root Ignorance, identified with the Unmanifest Principle, is itself a creation of Ignorance. And the doctrine of Root Ignorance as accepted by other schools of Advaita is nowhere found in the Vārtika.

The word 'Root' in the phrase 'Root Ignorance displays itself' must have entered the received text through a mishearing on the part of someone in error, who was evidently introducing his own peculiar theory, paying no attention to the loud and clear statements elsewhere that Root Ignorance was but a particular form assumed by Ignorance, namely the Unmanifest Principle. Neither was any attention paid to the description of Ignorance given in the words 'Ignorance is the feeling "I do not know"' (cp. T.B.V. II.176).

We may pass this by as incidental. But the following should here be noted. Wherever in the Vārtika there is a reference to

Ignorance as a material cause, this is predicated of Ignorance considered as having assumed its form as the non-conscious Unmanifest Principle. It is not a reference to it in its own characteristic nature as confusion. For the whole conception of cause and effect is only mentioned in the Vārtika at all to show that it is created by Ignorance. From the standpoint of practical experience, on the other hand, causality can be accepted wherever it is found.

(12) This illusion (māyā) which, though utterly unreal, manifests as name, form and action — its subtlest form is called 'Death'. (B.B.V.I.iii.135)

Ignorance displays itself here in the world as name, form and action. Its subtlest form, which may also be called Māyā, is called 'Death'. It had been said earlier in the Vedic passage under comment, 'This was covered over by Death' (Bṛhad.I.ii.1). Here again, it is only Ignorance in its form as seed-state of the not-self consisting of name, form and action that is referred to by the word 'Māyā'. And this agrees with numerous texts in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, such as 'Name and form, imagined through Ignorance as if they were the very nature of the omniscient Lord, indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything different from it, the seed of transmigratory experience and the differentiated world, are spoken of in the Veda and Smṛti as "The Power of Māyā belonging to the Omniscient Lord"' (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.45,1). Ānandagiri's remark in his sub-commentary here, 'The word Māyā is introduced to refute those who distinguish between Ignorance and Māyā', was made without a proper understanding of the meaning of the verse on which he was commenting.

(13) In this context (of teaching that the world-appearance arises from absence of knowledge of the Absolute) we find the clear verse of Gauḍapāda, which begins, well supported by analogies, 'As a rope imperfectly perceived... (in the dark is variously imagined as a snake or a stream of water or in other ways, so is the Self wrongly imagined as this and that' (G.K. II.17, cp. M.V.23). That which has no name or form manifested (at the beginning of the world-period) through bare Ignorance. (B.B.V. I.iv.389-90)

What the author is saying is: 'On the topic of manifestation proceeding from the Undeveloped Principle, one should see from the explanation of creation given by Gauḍapāda, with examples, that the notion of the world and the Absolute as effect and cause must be interpreted as agreeing in every way with the analogy of the illusory snake misperceived in the rope'. In the same way, the author later (B.B.V. I.iv.443) quotes Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara's Upadeśa Sāhasrī XVIII.46: 'Just as the rope-snake, (though unreal), possesses being by virtue of the rope until

discriminated from it, so also does the complex of the Self, the reflecting medium and the reflection possess being by virtue of the changeless Self, (until it is discriminated from it', cp. M.V.144,10).

(14) Transmigratory experience is taught to be an erroneous superimposition on the Self. And, according to the general worldly view, there cannot be erroneous superimposition without a cause. Therefore, to explain what is the cause, Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary 'That (Self) which is the cause of the whole universe...'. But has not the cause already been declared to have been the superimposition on the Self, through natural Ignorance, of the notions of being one who acts, along with action and its results? Yes. But the teaching is repeated in a special form intended to refute the Sāṅkhya doctrine that Nature (non-conscious and independent of Spirit) is the material cause of the world. The cause of the world is the Self, unknown through Ignorance. It is not the three 'constituents' (guṇa) making up Nature spoken of by the Sāṅkhyas. (B.B.V. I.iv.478-80)

This is an explanation of the passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka (I.iv.7 ad init.*) which begins, 'This Self, for the sake of which all the traditional texts came into being, on which the notion of being one who acts, along with that of action and its results, are superimposed through natural Ignorance, that which is the cause of the whole world, that which is the true nature of name and form...'. There is mention here of transmigration, consisting of the feeling that one is acting, and associated with action and its results, as being 'superimposition'. The word 'superimposition' is used here to mean the result of superimposition, not the act, according to the interpretation 'A superimposition is what is superimposed'. The reference (in Sureśvara's verses) to (the worldly view that there must be) a cause of superimposition refers to the real substratum on which an imagined entity must rest.*

Sureśvara takes the phrase 'through Ignorance' from Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, interprets it according to his own system as meaning absence of knowledge, and then refers to the objection that might be raised, 'There cannot be superimposition without a (positive) cause'. On his own view, the statement 'Absence of knowledge is the cause of all the world' does not refer to absence of knowledge alone as the independent cause. The cause is the Self *as unknown. This, at least, is my own understanding of the verses. And then the reply comes, saying that there was no occasion for the objection that was raised.*

On the system of the revered Commentator himself, there is no problem about the falsity of transmigration, consisting in the feeling that one is acting, associated with action and its results. For he says, 'Transmigration is set up through

natural Ignorance in the form of erroneous knowledge'. Where he said, 'That Self which is the cause of all the universe', that was only to show that, because the whole universe is merely imagined, the Absolute can only be the cause in the sense of being the real substratum on which the imaginations are made. There is to this extent a difference between the explanations of Ignorance offered by Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara. The two explanations agree basically, however, as we have already explained at M.V.112.

(15) If the effect were taken as different from the cause, how could they be cause and effect? They would be known as separate, unconnected entities, like the Himalayas and the Vindhya mountains. But if the effect were taken as non-different, then, since there would be identity, there could not be cause and effect. What is actionless cannot function as a cause. That which is not the object of action should not be called an effect. And that which is void of action cannot be a factor of action. Time and action could not be causes, as they themselves only exist through that (the Self) in which they are due to dissolve. It is evident that what cannot even bring itself into being could not bring anything else into being, whatever its efforts. (B.B.V. II.i.399-402)

Here the whole conception of causality is rejected as rationally indefensible. A few verses later Sureśvara sums up. 'And so the creations and withdrawals of the universe down the ages are imagined, just as the distinctions of time and space are. When you have seen reality, you know that the creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe are impossible' (B.B.V. II.i.411, M.V.129,8). And so Sureśvara keeps to the tradition of the true experts in Vedanta, which says that the causality supposed to produce the world is illusory.

119 THE TREATMENT OF UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR

Thus the treatment of cause and effect in Sureśvara's works is not introduced to show that the Absolute is the cause of the world. Its purpose is actually to refute the whole conception of causality by first superimposing the notion of causality onto the Self in order to teach the existence of the latter (the Self, read ātmano 'stitvam), and then refuting causality in the light of the Self in its true nature. The case with the teaching of universal and particular is similar. The first step is to teach the existence of the Self by superimposing onto it the notion that it is a universal, in order, in the end, to be able to deny that it is characterizable either as a universal or as a particular. Here too, Sureśvara follows the method of the revered Commentator. Indeed, in the preliminary

false attribution of the notions of universal and particular, he follows the method of the Upanishad itself, as we can now see.

As the particular beats in a drum-roll cannot be heard separately from the drum-roll itself, even so the things whose existence depends on the Self cannot be perceived separately from the Self (B.B.V. II.iv.267-8, condensed). First one has the general perception, 'Those are the sounds of a drum', or one may hear them in a more specific, but still general, form as 'Those sounds arise from the striking of a drum in a special way'. But any relatively specific sounds, or particular sounds, are only heard as part of their universal, the general drum-roll (cp. B.B.V. II.iv.275-80). Again, first one has the general indeterminate perception 'pot', after that the specification 'is', yielding 'existent pot'. And so the original general perception is further specified in experience by subsequent particularization (having a long spout, existing at such and such a place and time, etc.: B.B.V. II.iv.281). Again, each further specification in our knowledge of a universal genus is known only as a specification of the universal and to the accompaniment of it. And, in the same way, every genus or particular is itself known as accompanied by Consciousness (cit) imperfectly known. It is superimposed on the Self through absence of knowledge of the latter. But the inmost Self does not require any external support to establish its own existence. The Self beholds the not-self only when it puts on the livery of being an individual experiencer. But it experiences itself as independent Consciousness in its true state only. Examples such as the sounds of the conch and lute are also given to illustrate the dissolution of all particulars everywhere into the one great universal, 'Being'.

And yet one must remember that in reality no distinction into universal and particular exists. For though the universal is invariably found in the particulars, the particulars are not invariably found in the universal. But the universal cannot be perceived separately and without being in some way related to the particulars. Even if one admitted that universals somehow existed in isolation from particulars, they would then become particulars themselves, like 'that particular short-horned cow' within the general species cow. And if one cannot establish the existence of universals one cannot establish the existence of particulars either. When one cannot establish the existence of either universals or particulars, it is vain to talk about a particular falling within a universal. For the relation of container and contained implies two terms. And no relation of distinction or of any other kind can be established as holding between universal and particular. This is the line taken by Sureśvara in his retraction. In this connection the following verses are worthy of note.

(1) The sound of the drum in general is mentioned

to exemplify the broad universal as such. The 'drum-roll' refers to the particulars conceived as the universal in its other (i.e. particularized) form. And the reference to 'external sounds' (Bṛhad.II.iv.7) refers to the (impossibility of hearing the) particulars alone (conceived as somehow separate from the universal). These are the three examples that the Upanishad gives (to show that sound in a particular form is dependent on sound in a more general form both to exist and to be known, so that particular Being, also, depends on more general Being both to exist and to be known). (B.B.V. II.iv. 288-9)

(2) Nothing whatever can be established by the means of valid cognition independently of the notion of Being, whether regarded as the same as Being through invariable concomitance, or as different from it through independence, or as of the nature of non-being. Because there cannot be anything separate from Being, there cannot be anything in relation with Being. And one should understand that, whatever is the case with Being, exactly the same is the case with the inmost Self, the reality of which is self-revealed, and does not have to be established by any separate means of cognition. (B.B.V. II.iv. 290-1)

No reality separate from Being conceived as a universal can be established either as in constant concomitance with Being or as independent of Being, or as non-being. This is what the example of Being conceived as the highest universal shows. So the point is proved by the example of Being conceived as the highest universal that there cannot be any relation of Being with anything else taken as separate. The meaning is that the same non-duality obtains in the case of the self-revealed Self (which is not, from the highest standpoint, a universal).

(3) The pot is perceived as existent, as having a long spout, as situated at a certain place, as existing at a certain time. No new object is perceived each time there is a further determination. (B.B.V. II.iv.281)

This is an example to show how all the later determinations are contained implicitly in the first indeterminate perception.

(4) In the same way, everything that is perceived is superimposed on pure Consciousness, as it is invariably perceived accompanied by that. Everything in the world, whether a universal or a particular, has Ignorance of pure Consciousness as its cause. (B.B.V. II.iv.282)

(5) There is no other source for the establishment of the inmost Self apart from the (self-revealed) inmost Self itself. In the case of the not-self, means of valid cognition are

required. Even then, the not-self is only known through the individual knower, who depends for his own existence on the Self. (B.B.V. II.iv.283, with gloss)

The inmost Self is its own means of valid cognition. The not-self is only established at all through the Self as means of cognition.

(5) The Self can only behold the not-self when it dons the livery of an individual able to act and experience. As pure Vision raised above change, it does not behold itself in the same way. The not-self, being complex, is known through perception. The Self, being simple, is known through itself in the form of knowledge bearing inwards. (B.B.V. II.iv.284-5)

The Self as an individual capable of action knows the not-self through applying one of the means of valid cognition. The Self in its true transcendence knows itself in immediate experience without recourse to any external means. Moreover, the not-self as known by the individual knower through his means of knowledge is a complex entity. But the Self does not enter into composition with any other being. It is known through its own Self in the form of knowledge bearing inwards.

(6) (The whole conception of universal and particulars is unintelligible.) The universal can no more be identical with the particulars than they can with it. But if the universal be taken as distinct from the particulars there can be no universal (and hence no particulars either). If a universal were taken *per impossibile* as not being in constant concomitance with its particulars (and so as not being identical with them), the universal and its particulars would be distinct, like an elephant and a rat. But then what we call a universal would be a particular among particulars, like a short-horned cow in a herd of others. (B.B.V. II.iv.269-70, cp. M.V.130,3)

'Among particulars' — that is, it would either be a particular sub-species among species, or a particular among particulars.

120 THE TREATMENT OF THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE FIVE SHEATHS

The view of Sureśvara expressed in his Vārtika is that the teaching about the Five Sheaths (cp. M.V.39), too, is introduced in the Upanishads in order to bring out the nature of the Self as the Absolute by first attributing to it possession of the Five Sheaths, but only with a view to denying them afterwards. This method of teaching may be briefly summarized as follows.

The notion that we are identical with the sheaths is implanted in us by an impression arising from beginningless Ignorance. In Vedanta, the sheaths are initially accepted as a device through which to introduce the idea of the inmost Self existing within them (T.B.V. II.232-3). The inmost Self, though only one, appears through Ignorance as if limited by the Five Sheaths in two ways, that is, on the individual plane and on the cosmic plane (T.B.V. II.234-5). The sheaths, beginning with the sheath made up of food (the physical body) are effects. They each have to be first dissolved into their material causes, food and so on. Then each earlier one in turn has to be dissolved into the next in the series, until the Self is left as the supreme cause, and then even the notion that it is a cause is cancelled by the knowledge arising from the upanishadic texts, and it finally remains over as the Absolute in its true form (T.B.V. 236-7).

(First one must meditate on one's own individual body as being nothing over and above 'food', the matter of the cosmos, until it is finally felt to be so (T.B.V. II.253). Then one must meditate on one's own vital energy till it is felt to be one with the cosmic vital energy (T.B.V. II.254), on one's mind (manas, M.V.25,8) as the cosmic mind (expressed as the Veda, T.B.V. II.306), on one's intellect (buddhi, M.V.25,8) as the cosmic intellect (Hiraṇyagarbha, the one who 'has' and realizes the ideas in the cosmic mind, T.B.V. II.306 ff.), and on the joy arising from the merit of one's rituals and prescribed meditations (T.B.V. II.320-22; 342-5) as constituting a sheath of the Absolute (the ānandamaya-kośa) which is a false appearance of the Absolute (T.B.V. II.340-2), though its true nature is nothing other than the Absolute (T.B.V. II.341). T.N.)

If (no account were taken of the cosmic plane and) only the sheaths of the individual plane were dissolved, the result would be the knowledge of a 'self' individualized by its own body and mind, in the manner of the Sāṅkhya teaching (T.B.V. II.268). Each later sheath that is mentioned in the series is spoken of as something separate from the earlier ones. It is regarded as 'another internal self' according to the formula 'it (the preceding self) is filled by that (the later one)'. As the series progresses, each sheath is said to be filled by the next one following it, which constitutes its true 'self'. So we see that the sheath made up of food is accompanied by the remaining four, beginning with the sheath made up of the vital energy. The sheath made up of the vital energy is accompanied by the remaining three, beginning with the sheath made up of mind (i.e. the sheaths made up of mind, intellect and bliss). On this basis, all effects have to be dissolved in the supreme cause by noting that the later sheaths are in constant concomitance with the earlier ones of the series, while the earlier ones are not in constant

concomitance with the later ones (T.B.V. II.269).

The reality that has to be communicated by this device is the Absolute. It is taught in the second Section of the Taittirīya Upanishad (the Ānanda or Brahmānanda Vallī). And the third Section (Bhṛgu Vallī) explains how the existence and nature of the Absolute has earlier been taught by pointing to the mutual concomitance and non-concomitance amongst the various sheaths, so that the two Sections agree. There is only this small difference that in the third Section the Absolute is taught as being pure Bliss in its true nature through the negation of the Five Sheaths which are effects of Ignorance, as is implicit in the text 'He had the knowledge "The Absolute is bliss"' (Taitt.III.6). (See T.B.V. II.332-5.)

And, in the same way, the meaning of the text 'A person becomes non-existence (if he thinks the Absolute to be non-existence)' (Taitt.II.6) is found to be the same. For it says that if a man thinks of the Absolute, which is in fact real as his own Self, as being one of the sheaths and therefore unreal, he becomes himself unreal. The knowers of the Absolute hold that he alone is real who knows himself as the real Absolute, beyond the sheaths. Therefore one should negate all the sheaths, which have been imagined through Ignorance and realize that one is the supreme Self, not subject to change (T.B.V. II.353-6).

In this context, these are the verses of the Taittirīya Vārtika most worthy of consideration.

(1) The mind has become deeply impregnated with impressions in this beginningless realm of transmigration. It can, however, be turned towards the inmost Self by a device, and so this device is now set forth. In truth, the one inmost Self has no contact with duality. It only undergoes bifurcation into inner and outer, subject and object, by way of illusion through Ignorance. On the subjective side, there are the five sheaths beginning with the sheath made up of food (the physical body), along with the inmost Self; on the objective side, there are food and the remaining material causes of the five sheaths (i.e. earth, water, fire, air and ether).

Having dissolved the five individual sheaths into their cosmic counterparts by meditation, one should meditate on the five cosmic counterparts of the five sheaths, taking each succeeding one as the inner 'self' of its predecessor. Having thus dissolved the whole notion that one is in any sense an effect, one should rest in the notion that one is the cause. And then finally one should dissolve that notion through the supreme Vedic texts, and attain to the Absolute as one's real Self. (T.B.V. II.233-7)

(2) Though the Self cannot be identical with the Five Sheaths, it appears to be so through Ignorance, as the rope-snake appears to be identical with the rope. And it appears to suffer

in tune with the sheaths. (T.B.V. II.250)

(3) As each effect in turn is of the nature of its material cause, the Absolute is infinite, and the Sāṅkhya dualism between Nature and Spirit is avoided. Each material cause in the series exists independently of its effect, which precedes it in the series (as the cosmic vital energy exists independently of food and is the source from which food proceeds). And yet it invariably accompanies its effect. Hence our thesis that the effect is nothing over and above the material cause can be supported by arguing from independent existence and invariable concomitance (vyatireka and anvaya).... All four of the other (and higher) sheaths are present in the sheath made up of food. The three other higher ones are present in the vital energy, two in the mind (intellect and bliss), one (bliss) in the intellect. (T.B.V. II.268-9,271)

(4) The Absolute was taught in the second Section of the Taittirīya Upanishad. To explain the method how it has to be learned, the third Section of the Upanishad recounts (Taitt. III.1, etc.) how Bhṛgu said to Varuṇa, 'Holy one! Teach me Brahman!' When the goal has first been explained, it then remains to explain the means. The means are the Five Sheaths, for one reaches the Absolute through (meditating on) them (as taught). It is clear that they are the means, because the Self is seen through them when they are analysed and meditated on according to the laws of universal concomitance (anvaya) and independent existence (vyatireka). (T.B.V. II.333-5)

After explaining Śrī Śaṅkara's interpretation of the word 'tapas' (austerity) given in his commentary on Taittirīya III.1, Sureśvara adds his own, which runs: 'Tapas is pondering according to the laws of constant concomitance and independent existence' (T.B.V. III.19). The present passage should be understood in the light of that.

(5) If a person identifying himself with the sheaths, thinks that the Absolute is unreal, although in fact it is real as his own Self, he himself becomes unreal in this world.... This being so, one should rise above the sheaths that have been imagined through Ignorance. One should take refuge in the supreme Self, beginningless, endless and not subject to modification. (T.B.V. II.353,356)

121 THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUBJECT AND OBJECT

The Self in its true nature as seen from the standpoint of the highest truth is also taught by the method of first falsely attributing to it the character of an individual experiencing

subject and then retracting the teaching. For example, we find the pure Consciousness that constitutes the true nature of the Self figuratively referred to at various places in the Upanishads as the perception of the individual and as the individual perceiver. This Consciousness, which in its true nature is one, appears as many through Ignorance. And then Consciousness in its true form as one is contrasted with the empirical consciousness arising in the course of the activity of the individual experiencer; and in this form it is referred to as Consciousness 'in its true nature' to ensure the contrast.

Empirical consciousness comes into being and suffers the six changes of state (coming into being, existence, growth, development, decline, destruction) undergone by everything in the temporal realm. But it is pervaded at every stage by unchanging pure Consciousness in its true form. We have the ůpanishadic text, too, 'The Absolute which is directly and immediately evident is the Self, present within all' (Bṛhad. III.iv.2). The word 'directly' (evident) might suggest that it was the individual subject which was being referred to. So the words 'and immediately' are added to set at rest any suspicion that the reference was to perceptual knowledge arising from the division into knower, knowledge and known. The details are given at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika III.iv.15-18 (see M.V.121,5 below).

Consciousness in its true nature only exists where the division into knower, knowledge and known has been transcended. The sequel to the passage 'You cannot see the seer of seeing' (Bṛhad.III.iv.2) shows that the Self is the Witness of the complex formed by the individual knower with his knowledge and its objects. It is not itself an object of cognition, as we know from the very fact of its being the real in its true nature (which transcends all distinctions, including that into subject and object). Thus it is said that the Self cannot be an object of empirical perception. There exists a Witness in the light of which alone the experience 'I see' and 'I do not see' is possible. That Witness must be identified with pure Consciousness, It can only be known through its own light. It cannot become the object of empirical perception. The individual knower and his knowledge and its objects are nonconscious by nature. Being a complex, they exist for the sake of another (cp. U.S.(prose) section 56). They cannot provide knowledge of the vision of the inmost Witness. They cannot even know each other unaided. They depend on the consciousness of the Witness to establish themselves at all. How could they possibly see the seer of all?

On this subject, one should consider the following verses.

(1) That Seer (the Witness) is itself the sight. It is not one of a complex of factors in an action. For sight is here claimed as a characteristic of the Seer. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1435)

On account of the attribution of seeing to the Seer as an essential property (not as a mere temporary activity) in the upanishadic phrase '(There is no break in) the seeing of the Seer' we understand that seeing is to be taken as the essential nature of the Seer. So the Self is not an agent carrying out an act of seeing.

(2) Consciousness is one only everywhere. It is different from all the not-self. This one Consciousness undergoes illusory manifestation in many different forms through causes arising from Ignorance of it. (B.B.V. III.vii.60)

(3) Consciousness, which is actionless, assumes this familiar form of empirical knowledge, divided into individual subject, act of knowing and object. But Consciousness itself is without this division. Because it is one and the sole reality, the familiar empirical form only arises as an appearance, ever pervaded by Consciousness in its true form. It is only when pervader and pervaded are exhausted in that relation that we have pervasion in the true sense, as in the case of the pervasion of the rope-snake by the rope. There cannot be pervasion in the full sense between things that are differentiated by space or time, like the Himalayan and Vindhya ranges. (B.B.V. III.iv.96-8)

Because vision, as an action explicable through the factors of action, is invariably accompanied by Consciousness in the true sense, which is not a factor in any action, we say that empirical vision arises 'pervaded by' pure Consciousness, and this implies that it is pervaded by it in the same sense that a rope-snake is pervaded by the rope. This alone is pervasion in the strict sense. When we say, for instance, that the pot is 'pervaded' (encompassed) by the light of a lamp, that is loose usage.

(4) This empirical vision on the part of the Self depends on the individual experiencer and other illusory factors. But know that the Consciousness of the inmost Self is real in the highest sense. It is only through the presence of real Consciousness, and pervaded by it, that the empirical vision enjoyed by the Self comes and goes and suffers the six stages of development typical of all temporal being (coming into being, etc., cp. above, M.V. p.344). The limitations thereby imposed on the universal Consciousness are but apparent limitations, like the apparent limitations in space introduced by the production of a pot (cp. M.V.27,1). (B.B.V. III.iv.99-100)

(5) And in case the characterization 'directly evident' suggests an active seer, the phrase 'immediately evident' is added to prevent this supposition (Bṛhad.III.iv.1).... The phrase 'immediately evident' (aparokṣād) is used to negate the

distinction into individual subject, known object, and knowledge, and to convey a reality that is without distinctions. When the distinction into subject, object and knowledge is negated, the self-revealed Witness alone remains over as established, revealed by the characterization 'immediately evident'. (B.B.V. III.iv.15,17-8)

(6) It is said (by the revered Commentator) that, since the individual subject and his knowledge and its object only exist relatively to one another, it is the true and eternal nature of the Self to be the Witness.... If, with that vision whereby you are able to say 'I know' and 'I do not know' you are able to turn round and see that very vision itself (as if it were an object) — then please speak out (and good luck to you!).... Those who say that, when the Witness of all the modifications of the mind is established as self-revealed experience, there still remains something to be brought about by action, will have the difficulty of explaining with what instruments the Witness could perform an action. (B.B.V. III.iv.82; 80; I.iv.320.

The operation of the valid means of cognition depends on the prior establishment of the Consciousness that is Witness of all. This, being self-revealed, does not depend on anything else. No contribution to that which is the Witness by nature can be given for activities appropriate to that which is merely the known. As the power of a lamp to shed light cannot be increased by any other lamp, so the lamp of immediate experience is incapable of being increased by any other immediate experience. This being the case, those who say that immediate experience is something that has to be brought about by action will have the difficult task of explaining how, with what instruments, and for what end, immediate experience could be produced. That is the meaning.

What has been said so far has been said from the standpoint of false attribution. Now we begin the corresponding retraction. The Self's unconditioned Vision stands prior to all activity either of seeing or of any other kind. It is not subject to increase or diminution. It is not a factor in any action. It is the Self in its true form. It becomes a Witness only through association with metaphysical Ignorance. And the very notion of association with Ignorance is itself a creation of Ignorance. In its true nature, the unconditioned Vision raised above all change can no more be a Witness than the non-conscious can. Pure Consciousness cannot be a Witness for lack of a connection with any object capable of being witnessed, while the non-conscious cannot be a Witness even when a connection with such objects exists. The supreme Self as Consciousness is therefore only a Witness through the medium of its reflection in Ignorance. On this view, all difficulties

can be solved.

(7) The inmost Consciousness has stood eternally without ever rising or setting, the prior condition for the possibility of the activity of an individual experiencer, itself not a factor in any action, transcendent (relationless). This is the true form of the Self, not of the nature either of a cause or of an effect, eternally manifest, homogeneous, void of all darkness and all distinctions. It assumes the form of a Witness only through connection with metaphysical Ignorance. And the notion of connection with Ignorance is itself due only to Ignorance. (B.B.V. III.iv.83-5)

(8) The unconditioned Vision raised above all change can no more be a Witness than what is non-conscious can. The unconditioned Vision has no connection with any object capable of being witnessed: the non-conscious is not capable of being a Witness even when such an object is at hand. Therefore the supreme becomes a Witness of its own reflection in Ignorance (in the form of the individual knower, knowledge and known). For the reflection of Consciousness in Ignorance (is an object capable of being witnessed, since it) is a compound implying relationship between effect and cause. (B.B.V. III.iv.89-90)

'Effect' here means the intellect and so on. 'Cause' means Consciousness as unknown.

(Whatever is compounded (saṃhata) has been brought into being by another and exists for the sake of another and is therefore an object capable of being witnessed. On 'compounded' in this sense, cp. U.S.(prose) section 56. T.N.)

(9) The Self has no second thing over against it, as it is raised above all change and has only Ignorance for its apparent conditioning adjunct. Nevertheless, the false idea that it is a Witness is superimposed upon it by dense souls whose minds have been blinded by Ignorance. (B.B.V. I.iv.372)

The notion that it is a Witness is a false superimposition, conditioned by the limiting adjunct of bare Ignorance.

(10) The individual knower, stationed in the intellect and identified with it, convinces himself of the presence of Ignorance and its effects in the Self, though in truth it is not present, through his own extraverted gaze — as simple souls attribute blue colour to the colourless ether of the sky. (B.B.V. I.iv.298)

The only source of our conviction as to Ignorance is our own immediate experience 'I do not know'. Even that experience occurs only through an extraverted gaze. But if we look

with a purely introverted gaze, Ignorance does not exist. It is like the case of the blue colour experienced when looking at the ether of the sky. Even at the time it is being experienced it does not actually exist. It is the same with Ignorance.

122 TEACHING BY EXAMINATION OF THE THREE STATES OF WAKING, DREAM AND DREAMLESS SLEEP

The exposition of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is not aimed at teaching that those three states really exist. The purpose of the author of the Vārtika is only to communicate the true nature of the Self by first teaching it through superimposing on it the three states, and then, by a critical examination of the latter, to reveal in immediate experience the eternal Self free from all changing states.

Briefly, the practical method followed for realizing the 'Fourth' (M.V.23, intro.) or final reality is this. While still in the state where he is subject to false superimposition, the student must identify his physical body with the body of the universe (Vaiśvānara) through meditation. Having achieved this sense of identity, he must then realize the identity of the body of the universe with the cosmic mind (Hiraṇyagarbha). He must then dissolve that in the Self as cause, called Prājña. And finally, he must emerge in his own true nature, beyond cause and effect, as 'neither this nor that'.

The details of this process are explained in the Vārtika on the section of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad dealing with light (jyotiḥ, Bṛhad.IV.iii.1 ff.). The individual soul as the Spirit viewed under adjuncts with intellect predominating (M.V.44,5, note) is of the nature of light. Through Ignorance he enjoys waking experience when the intellect is awake, and when it is asleep he sees dreams (B.B.V. IV.iii.448). This individual soul, a false appearance composed of impressions and consisting of an individual subject and his means of cognition, is said to pass into the dream-state when the mind becomes its own object as light, and in that dream-state also the soul is self-luminous light only. But in dreamless sleep the only conditioning adjunct is metaphysical Ignorance. The Self here is the cause which will later produce waking and dream as its effects (B.B.V. IV.iii.979). In the waking state the soul performs actions through its body and organs and experiences pleasure and pain. In the dream-state, with the intellect for conditioning adjunct, it sees dreams under the impulse of desire. In dreamless sleep its adjunct is Ignorance alone, and it there stands as the cause of the mind and other factors of the individual organism; that is the difference between the states of dream and dreamless sleep (B.B.V. IV.iii.1528).

In this connection, Sureśvara follows the method of the Upanishad and the revered Commentator in using the example of a great fish. The fish stands, in his exposition, for the Self, different both from the body and the organs of the waking state, known as 'death', and from the desire and activity that prompt the further existence of the physical body. And so it can be shown that the notion that the Self undergoes transmigratory experience is due to metaphysical Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.iii.1148-51).

In dreamless sleep the soul stands as 'the Self unknown', the cause of waking and dream experience, and, being void of name and form, is verily the Absolute. For, as remarked at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika II.i.451-2, we have the upanishadic texts, 'All these creatures go daily to the realm of the Absolute but are carried away by delusion and do not know it' (Chānd.VIII.iii.2) and 'Thus all things here return to the supreme Self' (Praśna IV.7). The upanishadic text giving the example of the hawk, too, (Bṛhad.IV.iii.19, cp. M.V.83,12, note) is intended to expound the true nature of the Self as eternally pure, conscious and liberated (B.B.V. IV.iii.1158). The phrase 'folds its wings' refers to its remaining in Ignorance. The phrase '(is borne down) to the nest' refers to the fact that in dreamless sleep even the reflection of Consciousness rests in the form of pure Spirit (B.B.V. IV.iii.1172-3). That, therefore, which, in the two states of waking and dream, was associated with Ignorance in the sense of having apparent conditioning adjuncts that were effects of Ignorance, now in dreamless sleep stands separated from Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.iii. 1174-5). This is the true form of the soul, free from Ignorance, desire and action. But in waking and dream there is an extraneous conditioning adjunct, caused by Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.iii.1205-6). One must, however, remember the other point that although, as explained, desires cease when waking and dream cease, nevertheless they do remain in dreamless sleep in the form of a latent impression, and they manifest again in the case of one who has awoken from sleep. They are never completely eliminated till metaphysical knowledge of the Self dawns (B.B.V. IV.iv.378).

In dream, the Self is defiled by desire and merit and demerit. Yet it is partly luminous, because unrelated to the external world, and it conforms to and illumines the objects created by mental impressions under the impulse of desire. On the other hand, in dreamless sleep the Self stands alone, conditioned only as the cause, and assumes perfect tranquillity. Hence dreamless sleep is called perfect peace (samprasāda, B.B.V. IV.iii.976-8). We admit absence of knowledge in dreamless sleep in a certain sense. There is absence of internal knowledge of the form 'This am I', and also absence of external knowledge of the form 'these creatures'. But this absence of knowledge comes from being in identity with the supreme Self as the 'Conscious One' (prājña). It is quite different

from the absence of knowledge that occurs in dream and waking, which is due to apparent conditioning adjuncts. And this is taught in the Upanishad with the help of the example of the man embracing his wife (B.B.V. IV.iii.1309-10).

But how do we know that this absence of knowledge in dreamless sleep is due to attaining identity, and not to a natural absence of consciousness? Absence of knowledge is, after all, the typical characteristic of non-conscious beings (B.B.V. IV.iii.1384). It is to answer this objection that the Upanishad says, 'Verily, when there (in the state of dreamless sleep) he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, though he does not see. For there is no break in the seeing of the seer' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23).

Desire, action, ignorance and the like are not the nature of the Self, as Consciousness is. And the Upanishad tells us that the soul is unattached and is not followed in waking by the effects of its experiences when dreaming (Bṛhad.IV.iii. 15-6, cp. M.V.40,3). The relation of the Self with metaphysical Ignorance is beginningless, (in the sense of timeless), no doubt. But it is accepted that its relation with such effects of Ignorance as positive acts of erroneous cognition, desires and so forth has a beginning (B.B.V. IV.iii.1408-9).

But what is the connection of one who is the victim of absence of knowledge and erroneous knowledge with the metaphysical teaching (B.B.V. IV.iii.1410)? To answer this question, dreamless sleep is expounded as a state free from ignorance, desire and action. Even in the dream-state the sense-organs dissolve into the vehicle of the impressions, as we know from the text, 'Himself not sleeping, he looks down on the sleeping sense-organs' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.11). How could the organs be present in dreamless sleep when not even their impressions are present (B.B.V. IV.iii.1416)? So, since the action of seeing and its factors and results are alike impossible, a person does not see in dreamless sleep. And (in another sense) he does see, since he is Consciousness by nature (B.B.V. IV.iii. 1417).

From the feeling 'I did not see (anything)' on the part of one who has woken up, we know that, in dreamless sleep, the absence of the individual subject and his knowledge and its objects has been directly experienced in that state by Consciousness in its true nature (B.B.V. IV.iii.1420). If there had been any break in the vision of Consciousness one would not be aware of dreamless sleep, as it would not have been experienced (B.B.V. IV.iii.1438). The present participle 'seeing' in the phrase, '... although seeing, He does not see. For there is no break in the seeing of the seer...' (Bṛhad.IV.iii. 23) does not mean that there is an individual subject enjoying experience. For that is impossible in dreamless sleep. You have to be content with the explanation that the I-notion of dreamless sleep ('remembered' retrospectively in subsequent waking experience) represents the Self in its true nature. It

is the subject of the participle 'seeing' in the same sort of (metaphorical) sense (not implying action) that we speak of space as 'giving' room (B.B.V. IV.iii.1442).

One should not raise the objection, 'How can the Self see at all if it has no factors of action at its disposal?' For even in the world we do not see the factors of action at work before an action. Whether there is action to be done or not, factors of action as a pre-condition can be ruled out in either case (M.V.122,15). Moreover, in the case where seeing is constant, it is impossible to establish a relation of temporal sequence between an action and its result, so that it is impossible to establish the existence of an end and means (and hence impossible to think of the seeing of the Witness as an action, B.B.V. IV.iii.1449). The distinctions that set up the appearance of an individual seer, his seeing and its results are shown to arise through Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.iii.1450). There is dependence on Ignorance for relation with knowledge of the not-self; but there is no such dependence on Ignorance, or the factors of action which are a mere appearance deriving from it, when it is known that only the Self exists (B.B.V. IV.iii.1451-2).

Thus in dream and waking the Self appears through Ignorance to undergo distinction according to the distinctions of name and form. But this is not the case in dreamless sleep, so that in that state one does not see duality, as one does in waking. In dreamless sleep, everything has assumed the form of the changeless Self. There is then neither Ignorance, nor its effects, nor absence of Ignorance, for there is then nothing apart from the Self for the Self to witness as its object (B.B.V. IV.iii.1518-23). Therefore, in dreamless sleep the Self knows nothing, without thereby giving up its nature as Consciousness. Thus all difficulties can be explained.

The Upanishad sums up the final truth about dreamless sleep in the passage beginning '(In dreamless sleep) the seer is one, transparent like water' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.32, cp. M.V.44, intro.). Here is the meaning. Water is pure. In the state of dreamless sleep there is no awareness of cause and effect, because Ignorance and its effects cannot penetrate that which is eternally conscious by nature. It is one, without internal distinctions, and not itself standing as an individual within a class. That is, it is one only, without a second. It is not a seer (in the empirical sense of one performing the act of seeing). For it is by nature void of the factors of action, and there is nothing for it to see. It is also non-dual because it transcends Ignorance and its effects (B.B.V. IV.iii. 1798-1806). It is ever immediately evident. The realm of the Absolute is not, properly speaking, either transcendent or immanent. It is that 'state' (loka) which is the Absolute. The implication is that the true nature of the Self is the Absolute. This is known from the highest texts of the Upanishads, where the subject-predicate relation of the words,

and the mutual qualification of the word-meanings gives rise to a sentence which can only express an indication (and not denote a definite meaning, B.B.V. IV.iii.1819-21). This is the highest state of the soul, which puts an end to all other states (B.B.V. IV.iii.1828). It is his supreme possession, his unsurpassable state of glory. It is the highest realm to which he can attain, for it is indestructible. It is his supreme bliss. For it exceeds all other bliss, and 'all other creatures subsist on a fraction of this bliss' (B.B.V. IV.iii. 1828, -32, -36, -40).

Thus from an examination of the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep we can establish that the Self is real, that it transcends all the not-self, that it is unalloyed, that it is self-luminous, that it is constant and eternal, that its nature is unsurpassable bliss, that it is a pure unity, that it is Consciousness and nothing else and that it is without a second.

The most important verses to consider in this regard are the following.

(1) The seeker of liberation (having identified himself with Vaiśvānara, the Self as associated with the cosmos in its objective form, cp. M.V.43,6), proceeds on from Vaiśvānara and identifies himself in his heart with its inner self, Taijasa or Hiraṇyagarbha (M.V.23; 43,6). Then he dissolves this into its inner self, the Cosmic Vital Energy. The term 'Vital Energy' as used in this context means the Self as cause (*viz.* the Self *qua* unknown). It is the seed of every effect and is also known as 'the Conscious One' (prājña, M.V.23 and 43). Effects cannot dissolve anywhere except into their material cause. Therefore, when the seeker of liberation has reached the cause of all, he should proceed on to the Absolute in its true nature, which is not a cause, by thinking 'neither this nor that'. (B.B.V. IV.ii.82-4)

(2) Just as, when the mind is awake, one identifies oneself with it falsely and feels 'I am awake', so, when the mind is dreaming and one is witnessing the dream, there is the false idea whereby one identifies oneself with the dream. (B.B.V. IV.iii.448)

(3) The Self as cause is indeed the inmost principle, but viewed under the adjunct of bare Ignorance. The effects which, as such, it produces are called waking and dream. (B.B.V. IV.iii.979)

(4) Ignorance is the cause of the mind. The mind is the condition of the individual experiencer. It is only in the realm of the body that one experiences pleasure and pain. All is caused by Ignorance of the inmost Self. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1528)

(5) The true form of the Self as pure and conscious and so on is set forth with an example (at Bṛhad.IV.iii.19) by the use of the words 'as a hawk'. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1158)

(6) By the image of the folding of the wings the upanishadic text teaches that, even here in this world, the creature that has sprung from Ignorance of the Self rests in it (i.e. in the Self in dreamless sleep). By the words 'is borne down to the nest' it refers to the pure form of the inmost Self assumed by the reflection of the inmost Consciousness in Ignorance when the soul comes to the inmost Self (in dreamless sleep). (B.B.V. IV.iii.1172-3)

(7) When all the effects of Ignorance, including the mind, are withdrawn, the reflection of Consciousness is also withdrawn, as the reflection of the sun in water disappears with the disappearance of the reflecting medium. Before dreamless sleep, the Consciousness associated with Ignorance was identified with the effects of the latter (in waking and dream). The distinction between Consciousness and its supposed reflection arises from Ignorance. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1174-5)

The true nature of the reflection of Consciousness in the mind is the inmost Consciousness itself. In the states other than dreamless sleep, it appears to be distinct from the inmost Consciousness, but only through Ignorance. In dreamless sleep, however, the case is otherwise. Here it rests in its own true nature as pure Consciousness, as the reflection of the sun in water returns to its original, the sun, when the reflecting medium is removed.

(8) This is the true form of the soul that is here described, free from Ignorance, desire and action in dreamless sleep. One should know that the other form of the soul, undergoing waking and dream, is due to an extraneous cause, that sole cause being Ignorance of the Self. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1205-6)

(9) In dreamless sleep, when waking and dream have disappeared, all men's desires disappear with them. They just remain in the form of latent impressions. The upanishadic text (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7) specifies *all* desires, to show that, for immortality, even the latent impressions of desire have to be neutralized. When Ignorance, the cause of desire, has been eradicated, no latent impression remains over, or anything else either, as Ignorance is the root of every phenomenon in the empirical world. (B.B.V. IV.iv.378-9)

It is only from the standpoint of empirical experience, according to Sureśvara, that Ignorance and its effects are said to leave impressions (reading saṃskāra-śeṣatva).

(10) The nature of the Self is pure Consciousness: it is not desire, action, (psychological) ignorance and the rest. For we know from the texts 'unattached' and 'not followed (in waking by its experiences that it had when dreaming)' (Bṛhad. IV.iii.15) that desire and the rest are illusory. Pure Consciousness, raised above all change, is the true nature of the Self. Its association with metaphysical Ignorance is beginningless, while its association with desire and other effects of Ignorance is regarded as having a beginning.

When the soul is afflicted by Ignorance of the Self and consequent positive misconception, what is the teaching to which it has to turn for knowledge of the truth? This the Upanishad explains when it says, 'Verily, when there (in the state of dreamless sleep) he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, though he does not see (for there is no break in the seeing of the seer' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23). (B.B.V. IV.iii.1408-10)

(11) The text (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23) says 'He does not see' because there cannot be the factors of action in dreamless sleep. It says 'although seeing' in relation to the true state of affairs (namely the presence of the universal Consciousness). (B.B.V. IV.iii.1417)

(12) (The Self can be known without dependence on one's individual subject-object cognition yielding empirical knowledge.) For it is after first beholding reality (in dreamless sleep), unattained by the triad of knower, knowledge and known, that one afterwards (is aware of that absence of the triad and) says 'I did not (then) see (in dreamless sleep)'. This absence of seeing is witnessed by the Self in its pure form as Consciousness, just as what is seen is also so witnessed (so that the Self as Consciousness is established as constant and eternal). (B.B.V. IV.iii.1420)

(13) If there were any break in the seeing of the seer in dreamless sleep one would not have the feeling of knowing one had been to sleep. Therefore the vision of the supreme Self is void either of origin or dissolution. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1438)

(14) As one may use the participle of a verb and refer metaphorically to the actionless ether of space as 'giving space', so may one refer metaphorically to the actionless Self as 'seeing'. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1442)

(15) Because no factor of action is found at work before an act is begun, factors of actions must be deemed universally inoperative at this stage.... If there is no action to be done, there can be no factors of action. And even if there is an action to be done, the notion of factors of action leads to infinite regress (as one would have to assume new factors of action to set the original ones in motion and so to infinity).

It is thus hard to show how factors of action operate at all. Moreover, in a case (like that of the constant 'seeing' of the Self), where it is impossible to establish a temporal sequence between an act and its result, it is impossible to establish the existence of an end and means either. But if Ignorance is accepted as the cause, all these difficulties become explicable. Everything is a mere appearance resulting from Ignorance. There is nothing incorrect. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1444,1448-50)

The assertion that, even accepting factors of action from the empirical standpoint, there is nothing wrong, appears to be no more than an artificial argument based on an unnecessary concession to the opponent's case (because Sureśvara has shown at length that there cannot be factors of action at work in the case of the 'seeing' of the Seer). Hence one need not examine this argument too closely. But students may find a passage at the end of the introductory part of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary to Bhagavad Gītā XVIII.67 of interest. It begins, 'No, for that would make what did not act into a performer of action...'. (See Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.67, trans. A. Mahādeva Śāstrī p.515.)

(16) Where a connection of the Self with the not-self is taught, there the reference is to a connection based on Ignorance, forming the notion, based equally on Ignorance, of an individual able to act, and of factors of action at his disposal, etc. But when for the man of wisdom the notion 'All is the (actionless) Self' arises, this idea is based on reality. It does not, like the notion of a not-self, depend on Ignorance and its effects. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1451-2)

(17) Where there are distinctions (as in waking and dream) there is the appearance of Ignorance (in the form of 'I do not know'). But there are no distinctions whatever in dreamless sleep (and consequently no feeling 'I do not know' and no Ignorance, cp. M.V.122,19). Ignorance belongs to the mind, as that is where it is consistently found. It does not belong to Consciousness in the state of dreamless sleep (prājña). In the one undivided Consciousness raised above all change an (apparent) distinction arises through vision based on Ignorance, a distinction which comprises thousands of further distinctions through name, form and action. But in dreamless sleep that duality is not found. Ignorance, the cause of evil, is not present. There is then no duality for the soul to perceive through distinction into individual subject, empirical knowledge and objects, as there is in the waking and dream states. To speak of the absence of Ignorance and its effects is to affirm the sole existence of the Self, eternal and raised above all change, as the only reality. To affirm the sole existence of the Self, the cause, in dreamless sleep is to deny the existence of the effect as a reality. (B.B.V.

IV.iii.1517-20).

We now show the method of the negation of the three states.

Ignorance of the Self is nothing real. Our certitude as to its existence rests only on the feeling 'I do not know' that arises in the course of empirical experience (T.B.V. II.176). The soul, centred in the mind and looking not inwards but outwards, convinces itself of its ignorance of the Self, as one convinces oneself of the blue colour of the (colourless) ether of the sky. But if it turns its gaze inwards, it finds neither ignorance nor doubt nor wrong knowledge in waking, dream or dreamless sleep (B.B.V. I.iv.298-9). And one should not raise the objection that one has to accept that Ignorance was present in dreamless sleep on account of the memory 'I knew nothing' that is supposed to occur to one who has awoken from it. For in dreamless sleep one does not in fact have the experience 'I do not know'. And it is not right to say that the feeling 'I did not know' (that comes to one after he has woken up) represents a memory. When Devadatta remembers 'I knew that then', he remembers what he had previously experienced according to its proper details of time and place. But one cannot say that this Self looks back over what it had previously experienced in this way. For, since the Self is the Witness of time, space and causation, it cannot undergo determination by time, space and causation (since it witnesses these as objects and therefore as distinct from itself).

Ignorance, again, does not exist for its own sake. *(That which exists for the sake of another is non-conscious, cp. U.S. (prose) section 71. That for which it exists must be conscious and self-existent, in short the one Self taught in the Upanishads. What exists for the Self has no existence independent of the Self and is reducible to a temporary illusion arising on the substratum of the Self, cp. Ānandagiri on B.B.V. I.iv. 301, IV.ii.25. T.N.)* Ignorance is an illusion arising in the Self and appearing before it, like the illusion of a rope-snake and so on. It is thus correct to dismiss it as mere false imagination. As the rope-snake is falsely imagined in the rope and is nothing other than the rope, so Ignorance is imagined in Consciousness, and, being in its true nature Consciousness, manifests there. And when the eternal Consciousness raised above all change is known, Ignorance and its effects are cancelled. (B.B.V. I.iv.300-6).

It is true that at Naiṣkarmya Siddhi III.58 (prose introduction) Sureśvara makes a case for the existence of Ignorance in dreamless sleep, saying, 'In dreamless sleep there is present that very Ignorance of the Self that is the cause of all evil'. But there is nothing wrong here. For this was said on the assumption that everyone accepts Ignorance at its face value until it is finally cancelled through metaphysical knowledge derived from the holy texts. Nor should one think that this implies that there is no experience of the Self in

dreamless sleep, which might imply, in turn, that it did not then exist. For we have to accept that the Consciousness which was infallibly present to enable us to say 'I knew nothing (in dreamless sleep)' is in fact the Self, of the nature of immediate experience (B.B.V. III.iv.103). In its true nature the Self is totally devoid of Ignorance, not only in dreamless sleep but in waking and dream as well. It is not active. It is interior to all. It constitutes all. It is the true nature both of itself and of anything else. So the Upanishad was correct to say that when it does not see, in dreamless sleep, yet it is seeing when it does not see (Bṛhad. IV.iii.23). It no more sees (in the sense of an activity) in waking and dream than it does in dreamless sleep. And there is no more any break in its real Consciousness in dreamless sleep than there is in waking and dream (B.B.V. IV.iii.1493-5, 1907-8).

It can be proved by reason that the states of the Self are false appearances. The state of waking is a false appearance simply because of its form as waking experience, and because it has a beginning and an end, like the (admittedly illusory) appearance (to the dreamer) of being awake in dream. The effects of Ignorance that lie before us are apprehended as non-conscious, and they have no independent existence of their own, like the water seen in a mirage (B.B.V. IV.iii.1072-3). Again, waking and dream do not pertain to the true Self. For they are only found belonging to the individual soul, as apparently delimited by the mind, itself associated with psychological ignorance and desire. They do not in any way belong to the inner Witness of the individual soul. For the Witness, from the very fact of being the Witness, cannot be organically connected with what it witnesses (since the subject can never be the object nor the object subject, B.B.V. IV.iii.905). And again, all the not-selves are false appearances, as they exclude one another mutually, like the snake, stick, trickle of water, etc., falsely imagined in the rope (B.B.V. I.iv.1496-7). And in dreamless sleep and coma they (not merely exclude themselves mutually but) all completely disappear from view (B.B.V. II.iii.222). But the Self as Consciousness is never lost (B.B.V. II.iv.126), as it is the Witness both of the feeling 'I know' and 'I do not know' (B.B.V. II.iv.129). Thus from the standpoint of the final truth, neither waking nor dream nor dreamless sleep belong to the relationless Self. These states are only illusory experiences arising from metaphysical Ignorance, like the experience of the rope-snake and the rest (B.B.V. II.i.264-6). Thus in all circumstances the Self is pure Consciousness. It is non-dual, and does not undergo different states.

The whole doctrine that the Self passes through different states is taught (and then later denied) only to bring out how the supreme reality is free from such states. It is only from the texts of the Upanishads that one can know that the supreme

reality is free from such states. It is only from the texts of the Upanishads that one can know that the supreme reality is the Absolute, not from logical investigation of the implications of the three states and from that alone (B.B.V. IV.iii. 1112-5). That is the teaching of the Vārtika. Here are the chief verses worthy of consideration on these topics.

(18) Ignorance of one's own Self is a false appearance, alike in waking, dream and dreamless sleep, that comes into the field of practical experience, witnessed by the Self that is self-revealed.... It is only when the Conscious One, seated in the mind and identified with Ignorance, turns its gaze outwards that it fails to apprehend its own true Self and accepts Ignorance and its effects as real, like a child accepting as real the blue colour of the sky. It does not do so through its own true nature. But when its gaze is turned inwards, it finds neither ignorance, nor doubt nor wrong knowledge in waking, dream or dreamless sleep. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1293, I.iv.298-9)

(19) One who awakens from dreamless sleep has the memory 'I did not know anything'. But that is not a genuine cognition bearing on the state of dreamless sleep. For nothing that belongs to the Self can pertain to the past, since the Self is undifferentiated by time, space or other factors. (B.B.V. I.iv.300)

For the whole notion 'Ignorance residing in the Self was experienced in the past' makes no sense (since neither the Self nor metaphysical Ignorance falls within time.)

(20) The innermost Self is not accepted as being touched either by past time or by future time. Whatever exists for another exists as an illusion appearing on the substratum of that which is self-existent. Hence it is traditionally taught to be false imagination. The fact that a thing belongs to the past cannot be known through perception, and the fact that a thing lies in the future cannot be known through any means of valid knowledge. Hence all notions of past and future are false knowledge.... Ignorance manifests in the Self, but in truth it is only pure Consciousness. Since it is dependent on the inmost Self raised above all change, this imagined cause can be cancelled, together with its effects, (through a realization of one's true nature as the inmost Self). (B.B.V. I.iv.301-3,6)

(21) If Consciousness as immediate experience was not invariably present in dreamless sleep, how do you explain how the one who awakens from it can have the idea 'I knew nothing in dreamless sleep'? (B.B.V. III.iv.103)

(22) The Self in dreamless sleep 'is seeing though it does

not see' because it has none of the factors of action, because it is interior to all, because it is all, and because it is the true nature of all else. It does not see in dreamless sleep for the reason mentioned (namely that it has none of the factors of action, so that it is present shining but does not perform any act of seeing); but one should understand that it does not see in waking and dream either, for the same reason. And just as Consciousness is unbroken throughout dream and waking, so is it also in dreamless sleep, for the reasons given. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1493-5)

(23) This Self has unbroken vision. This has already been declared to be the case in dream and waking. But it is true in the case of dreamless sleep also, as the text 'When there in the state of dreamless sleep...' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23) shows. And just as the Self transcends the factors of action in dreamless sleep as bare eternal Consciousness raised above all change, so does it also transcend the factors of action in dream and waking. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1907-8)

(24) This state of waking is unreal, simply on account of the fact that it is a state of waking. For it has a beginning and comes to an end, like the state of waking that appears (to the dreamer) to occur in dream. The waking state is a mere appearance arising from Ignorance. Its objects (since they appear before the Witness) are invariably non-conscious, and have no independent existence of their own, like the water seen in a mirage. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1072-3)

(25) It is the mind that acts, afflicted by ignorance and desire. Sleeping and waking belong to the mind; they do not belong to the Witness of the mind, pure Consciousness. (B.B.V. IV.iii.905)

(26) When a garland is misperceived as a snake, it cannot be misperceived as a stick or in other ways at the same time. Similarly, when the inmost Self is misperceived as undergoing one of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, it cannot be misperceived as undergoing one of the others at the same time. Even under metaphysical Ignorance, the various not-selves (are seen to be unreal because they) exclude each other mutually. How much more clearly will their unreality be revealed when all Ignorance is dissolved without remainder in the inmost Self! (B.B.V. I.iv.1496-7)

(27) The various manifestations of the not-self (are known to be unreal because they) exclude one another mutually. And in dreamless sleep, swoon, trance and other such states the Self as Witness reveals the complete disappearance of the not-self. (B.B.V. II.iii.222)

(28) In dreamless sleep the individual subject and his knowledge and its objects disappear, but pure Consciousness does not disappear. However, all other things in the world apart from Consciousness exclude one another mutually and disappear altogether in dreamless sleep.... Whenever there arises the notion 'I do not know', this is witnessed by the Self. How much more evidently is this the case with the feeling 'I know!' Pure Consciousness, therefore, never disappears. (B.B.V. II.iv.126,129)

(29) The relationless Self does not undergo either dreamless sleep or waking. How could it then undergo the state of dream? Waking, dream and dreamless sleep are but natural (uncaused, beginningless) Ignorance of the Self. The imaginary idea that the Self is asleep or awake or is dreaming belongs only to creatures asleep in the night of Ignorance. This whole universe consisting of the moving and the fixed is a mere illusion. The Supreme is its true nature, as the rope is the true nature of the illusory snake. (B.B.V. II.i.264-6)

(30) The notion that the Self passes through the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep arises from other (secular) means of knowledge. The Vedic teaching appearing to confirm the existence of the three states (does not constitute valid authoritative teaching but) is only given to conform with (false) knowledge derived from other sources (secular experience). But the fact that the one who appears to be passing through (repeated cycles of) waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep is really the Absolute can only be known from the upanishadic texts. Hence it is *that* which they are concerned to communicate as valid knowledge. The purport of 'That thou art' and other metaphysical texts of the Veda is to teach that the true nature of one's own Self is the Absolute, and the true nature of the Absolute one's own Self. (B.B.V. IV.iii. 1113-5)

123 CAN THERE BE AN INJUNCTION FOR KNOWLEDGE?

There is a text in the section of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad containing the teaching given to Maitreyī which runs: 'The Self, indeed, should be seen, heard about, pondered over and subjected to sustained meditation, Maitreyī. Verily, through seeing the Self, through hearing about it, through thinking of it and through knowing it, all this (world) becomes known' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5).

In this connection, the question whether or not the seeing and so on were enjoined has been a subject for dispute among philosophers. For example, Ācārya Maṇḍana wrote: 'The phrase "should be subjected to sustained meditation" is part of one

long connected passage that begins "For the sake of the Self" and ends "All this is but the Self" (Bṛhad.II.iv.5-6). The purpose of this passage is to expound the true nature of the Self. The phrases occurring within it, "should be seen", "should be heard about" and "should be subjected to sustained meditation", though expressed (in imperative form) as gerundives, are not separate injunctions, but (belong to the main passage expounding the Absolute and) are intended for eulogy. For the gerundive termination is said to have other meanings apart from command, such as ascribing worth or value (cp. Pāṇini III.iii.169, quoted above, M.V. p.19). The text therefore only means "The Self is worthy of being seen, etc."). We have such examples of this as "Viṣṇu is worthy of being offered (lit. "should be offered", gerundive) the Upāṃśu Sacrifice" (T.S. II.vi.6), which occurs amongst the texts about offering the Upāṃśu' (B.Sid. p.155; see also Śabara, P.M. Bhāṣya II.ii.10).

Sureśvara, however, makes three distinctions in treating this problem. He says that 'should be seen' cannot be an injunction, as it refers to knowledge conditioned by reality. 'Should be heard about' and 'should be pondered over' are injunctions, since they refer to actions dependent on the human will. 'Should be subjected to sustained meditation' is not an injunction. For sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) is (not an action but) that immediate experience of one's own true Self that constitutes the goal of the Vedantic spiritual discipline.

'It should be seen', then, is not an injunction. Why not? In the phrase 'The Self should be seen' the word 'Self' refers to one's inmost Self, and knowledge of one's Self is already one's own by nature. Again, the knowledge expressed here by the verb 'seen' cannot be enjoined, as it is conditioned by reality. When the word 'knowledge' is used to refer to symbolic meditations (such as 'Woman, O Gautama, is the sacrificial fire', Chānd.V.viii.1) it stands for something that can be enjoined, but symbolic meditation is not the topic of the present passage. Again, there is no other seer apart from the inmost Self. And where the seer and that which has to be seen are the same there can be no injunction of the form 'It should be seen'. For there cannot be an injunction to an act of seeing where the seer, acting on himself, is performer and object of the same act. Therefore the teaching 'All this (world) is but the Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.6) is given by the Veda after it had first used the formula 'neither this nor that' (Bṛhad. II.iii.6) to negate the notion that the Self had assumed the form of the not-self. And so the real force of the apparent injunction 'the Self should be seen' is to *give some information* about something the hearer did not previously know. This is the gist of Sureśvara's refutation of the possibility of there being an injunction for seeing.

Objections raised by opponents are disposed of as follows.

One should not object that the Vedic texts making metaphysical statements are no more authoritative than casual worldly remarks like 'There are five fruits on the river bank'. Nor should one object that the words cannot be properly interconnected to form a sentence for lack of a verb. For the Veda will be an authoritative means of knowledge if it can awaken anyone to the truth of the sole reality of the one Self, a truth inaccessible to any other means of knowledge. And the Vedic text can perform this function even when the connections of the words with their meanings are not apprehended, as in the case of sentences that awaken sleepers. Nor do the metaphysical texts ever lack verbs, as forms of the verb 'to be' can always be understood and supplied. The remark about there being fruits on the river bank concerns a matter which can be known from sources other than the spoken word. It does not concern a matter that can only be known through verbal revelation, so it was an irrelevant example.

Here are the chief verses to consider.

(1) In the phrase 'The Self that should be seen' (Bṛhad. II.iv.5) the word 'Self' refers to the inmost Self, as the Self is invariably experienced as that which is inmost. The words 'should be seen' refer to a correct knowledge of that through the Veda. It is true that everyone is naturally aware of their own Self. But what they do not know is that it is the Self of all. It is that idea that is affirmed by the Veda as something new that has to be known. This text, however, could only be an injunction to act if the knower and the thing to be known were different. In the present context there can be no injunction to act, for lack of any difference between what was enjoined and the one on whom the injunction was laid. (B.B.V. II.iv.95-7)

The idea is that, because one does not know that all this is one's own Self, it is correct to suppose that this is what the text affirms. But there is no command to perform any act here, since, although the text assumes the grammatical form of an injunction, there is no distinction between what is enjoined and the one on whom the injunction is laid. What we have, rather, is the communication of a piece of hitherto unknown information.

(2) The idea 'All this is the Self' is valid knowledge conditioned by the object known. Only if it had been the idea of something already familiar from worldly experience, like fire, could it have arisen in dependence on the arbitrary will of the individual knowing subject (and only in such a case could it have been the object of an injunction, for instance an injunction to meditate, as is implicitly the case in the text 'Woman, O Gautama, is the sacrificial fire', (Chānd.V.viii.1, cp. M.V. p.361). So there cannot be an injunction for

metaphysical knowledge of the Self, as it is not an idea that arises in dependence on the will of man. But actions like reasoning over the meaning of the words of the texts by the method of agreement and difference are enjoined, since they are dependent on the will of man. (B.B.V. II.iv.120-1)

(3) When subject and object are different, there is pervasion of the object by the subject in order to know it, as in the case of perception of a pot. But the Self cannot actively pervade itself to have knowledge of itself in this way. There cannot be pervasion where there is non-difference, for the very reason that pervader and pervaded would already be identical. (B.B.V. II.iv.135)

Unlike a material object like a pot, the Self is not capable of being pervaded through the activity of the individual knowing subject in the form of seeing. Nor can the Self's own vision (act on and) pervade itself.

(4) Nor is there any other subject who could see the Self as an object, for this is specifically denied in the text 'There is no other seer... but He' (Bṛhad.III.vii.23). And, indeed, we do not find in the world two subjects playing between them the role of subject and object. (B.B.V. II.iv.136)

When the Vedic text says 'There is no other seer... but He', it means that, from the standpoint of the highest truth, the Self is not an object that can be seen. Even from the standpoint of worldly experience, one subject is never the object of the vision of another subject.

(5) If the seer were able to see itself, that would be a contradiction of the laws of action. And if (by some strange chance) it could do so, it would always be doing so, so that the injunction to do so would be rendered useless. (B.B.V. II.iv.137)

The contradiction of the laws of action would consist in the fact of the one doing an action being himself the object of that action. The implication of the verse is that there cannot be an injunction to see one's own Self, whether such vision be of the very nature of the seer or whether it be associated with an individual knowing subject.

(6) Here, too, in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka as well as in the Chāndogya, the text accepts on the basis of common experience all that it has negated as not being of the nature of the inmost Self in the words 'neither this nor that' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6) and affirms 'All this(world) is the Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.6).... The injunction here 'The Self should be seen' (Bṛhad. II.iv.5,6) is therefore no more than the communication of

hitherto unknown information (i.e. 'The Self should be seen' = 'See that, namely, I am telling you that, the Self is as here taught', cp. M.V.125,2). The text 'the Self should be seen' could not be intended as an injunction to act addressed to one not yet acting, as action is impossible in the case of the Self. (B.B.V. II.iv.104 and 115)

(7) It is not correct to say that all the texts of the Upanishads have to be interpreted as injunctions, on the ground that statements of fact are never authoritative, since they depend for their validity on knowledge gained from other sources. For the metaphysical statements of the Upanishads are an authoritative means of knowledge, since they awaken one to the sole reality of the Self, not knowable from any other source, as words are used to awaken a sleeper. (B.B.V. II.iv. 148)

(8) There is no rule that a verb must appear overtly in a sentence before the words can be connected. In the metaphysical texts, verbs like 'art' and 'am' can very well be understood and supplied even when not overtly expressed. It is true that there is dependence on other sources of knowledge in the case of the casual remark 'There are fruits on the river bank', because there the things denoted by the words 'fruits' and 'river bank' are accessible to another means of knowledge, namely perception. (B.B.V. IV.ii.161-2)

124 CAN THERE BE INJUNCTIONS FOR HEARING, PONDERING AND SUSTAINED MEDITATION?

It is correct to hold that hearing, pondering, inner and outer control and other such parts of the spiritual discipline can be enjoined, as they fall within the scope of the human will, and are indispensible auxiliaries to that rational examination of the meaning of the words of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads which is necessary for a comprehension of their meaning. As Śrī Śaṅkara said in his Upadeśa Sāhasrī:

(1) The knowledge that one is (in truth) ever liberated comes from the Vedic texts and from no other source. And knowledge of the meaning of a text is not possible without first calling to mind the meanings of its component words. It is certain that the meaning of a word is called to mind on the basis of agreements and differences (in the way one has heard the word used and the meanings for which it is made to stand). In this way one comes to know oneself as the pure transcendent Self, beyond pain or action. (U.S.(verse) XVIII.190-1, cp. M.V.107,2)

Let us examine this further in the context. In the

Bṛhadāraṇyaka, the words 'it should be heard about' are added to show that the earlier words '(The Self) should be seen' do not imply that one should resort to all the valid means of cognition, but only to the texts of the Upanishads. As for the further phrase 'it should be pondered over', this includes resort to the various methods for determining the meaning of the Vedic texts, such as testing by the Six Forms of Evidence (M.V. p.23), as well as reasoning in consonance with the Veda.

On the other hand the phrase 'it should be subjected to sustained meditation' is declared to refer to the immediate experience in which hearing and pondering ought to culminate. When there arises that immediate intuition of one's own true nature which depends on no external factor, then there is nothing left that one has to do. When the non-dual Self has been perceived as a result of hearing and pondering one has the conviction 'There is no further knowledge left to arise, there is no Ignorance left that has not been burnt up'. One should not raise the objection that the word 'nididhyāsana' must mean meditation. For the meaning of the term 'nididhyāsana' has been expressed by the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) in the passage, 'Verily, through seeing the Self, through hearing about it, through thinking of it and through knowing it (in immediate intuition, vijñāna), all this (world) becomes known' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5). That meditation (dhyāna) is a prerequisite of immediate intuition is not denied. But it is immediate intuition, and not meditation and the rest of the discipline, that is ultimately required to realize the goal of liberation. Nor should one object that liberation must be impermanent if it is the *result* of immediate intuition. For liberation in the sense of being the one universal Self is always, and for everyone, a fact. All that has to be effected by immediate intuition is the practical negation of our Ignorance that we are the one universal Self. Liberation is in no way distinct from immediate intuition of the Self. One should understand that, if liberation is spoken of as the result of immediate intuition, this is only a figure of speech.

On this topic, the following verses should be noted.

(2) So there cannot be an injunction for metaphysical knowledge of the Self, as it is not an idea that arises in dependence on the will of man. But actions like reasoning over the meaning of the words of the texts by the method of agreement and difference are enjoined, since they are dependent on the will of man. In the same way, a person can decide whether to carry out hearing and pondering as well as inner and outer control and the other parts of the spiritual discipline — so all these practices are enjoined. (B.B.V. II.iv.121-2)

(3) One might suppose that all the means of valid cognition revealed the Self in that the cognitions resulting from them depended on it intimately for their light. But the Bṛhad-

āraṇyaka Upanishad says 'It must be heard about', pointing thereby to the upanishadic texts. (B.B.V. II.iv.212)

One might suppose that the Self should be seen through all the valid means of cognition, because the Self as Consciousness constitutes the resultant-cognition of each. But the force of the words 'It must be heard about' is to show that it is the upanishadic texts that are the authoritative source of knowledge of the Self, since it is only through them that metaphysical Ignorance of the Self (reading ātma-ajñāna) can be brought to an end.

(4) It is the application of the Six Forms of Evidence (M.V. p.23) that brings out the true force of the words. Then the text says 'It (the Self) must be pondered over' to determine the true meaning of the traditional texts communicating it. It is clear from the command 'It must be pondered over' that what is being taught here is reality in its true nature. In the case of mere symbolic meditations prescribed for merit, such as 'Woman is the sacrificial fire' (Bṛhad.VI.ii.13), we do not find any injunction to ponder over the meaning. (B.B.V. II.iv.214-5)

He just remarks in passing that the injunction saying that there has to be pondering shows that the text here is concerned with final vision, not with preliminary meditation.

(5) Reasoning in conformity with the words of the Vedic texts is also enjoined, for this is what enables one to determine accurately what the words mean. (B.B.V. II.iv.216)

Reasoning is of help, for instance, to find out how the meaning of the word 'Thou' in 'That thou art' must be the Witness and cannot be anything else.

(6) Awakening to immediate knowledge of the supreme Self depending on no external factor is called Nididhyāsana. It is mentioned after seeing and hearing to show that they culminate in that.... One's first knowledge of the Self is through hearing, and then one ponders over what one has heard. When hearing and pondering are complete, one comes to have immediate knowledge of the Self.... Because the use of the word 'Nididhyāsana' (lit. 'sustained meditation') might lead the hearer to suppose that meditation was meant, the Upanishad deliberately uses the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) as a synonym for it at Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.iv.5, to show that meditation is not here meant. I already mentioned earlier how meditation and other practices are a means to immediate experience. But immediate experience does not exist for the sake of anything else. It is taught to be just liberation,

attainment of the final goal of all. (B.B.V. II.iv.217,220, 233-4)

(7) Hearing and the rest are the means to that immediate intuition which depends on nothing apart from itself. When this has arisen, nothing more is required apart from that immediate experience of the Self already attained.... There is no other result of knowledge that our Self is the sole reality except the eradication of our ignorance of that fact. For this is ever by nature our true state.... The one inmost Self is the reality of which cause and effect are mere false appearances. When that Self is known, how could Ignorance fail to be destroyed? Tell me, pray, how there could ever be Ignorance of the Self again. (B.B.V. II.iv.221,235,231)

I have given the form 'ajñāna' ('Ignorance') at the end of the last verse ('Ignorance of the Self') following Ānandagiri. But if (as would also be legitimate) the word were read as 'jñāna' ('knowledge'), then we would have 'On account of knowledge of the inmost Self, no other knowledge needs to be acquired'. The passage would then agree with the end of the preceding verse (B.B.V. II.iv.230), which says 'There is (then) no knowledge that has not been acquired; there is no Ignorance that has not been destroyed'.

125 COMPARISON OF ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA AND SUREŚVARA ON THE TOPIC OF HEARING AND THE REST

At first sight there appears to be a certain disagreement between Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara on the question of whether hearing and the rest can be the subjects of an injunction. Śrī Śaṅkara makes an opponent ask 'What do these apparent injunctions mean, texts like "The Self, verily, should be seen, heard about..." and so forth?' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.68,3). On account of his use of the phrase *apparent* injunctions, it might seem that he did not admit that hearing and the rest could be subjects of injunctions. But at another place he seems to admit that hearing and the rest can be enjoined. He says: 'Repetition of the affirmation must be carried out. Why? Because it is taught repeatedly. The repeated teachings like "The Self must be heard about, pondered over and subjected to sustained meditation" point to a repetition of the affirmation' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1). For he would not say that anything had to be done unless there were an injunction on the subject in the Veda.

In Sureśvara's Vārtika, on the other hand, there is no reference to injunctions for hearing and the rest as 'apparent' injunctions. On the contrary, he says openly and emphatically that these practices are enjoined, in the words 'A person can decide whether to carry out hearing and pondering... so all

these practices are enjoined' (B.B.V. II.iv.122, M.V.124,2).

And there is another apparent point of difference. In Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, the text 'the Self should be subjected to sustained meditation' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) is accepted as referring to a duty that has to be performed. For it is treated as an act, as is shown by the passage 'And meditation (upāsana) and sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) are said to constitute one act that entails repetition (B.S.Bh. IV.i.1, cp. M.V.56,8, note). There are grounds for supposing that he regarded sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) as a species of meditation (upāsana) because in the next passage he gives as examples of it 'He assiduously meditates on (or attends on) his Guru' and 'She whose husband is abroad dwells on him fixedly' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1).

On the other hand, in the Vārtika of Sureśvara 'awakening to immediate knowledge of the supreme Self depending on no external factor' is clearly said to be the meaning of the term 'nididhyāsana' (B.B.V. II.iv.217, M.V.124,6). And having said this, Sureśvara goes on in the sequel to deny that the term 'nididhyāsana' refers to an act that has to be performed. He aims to demonstrate that the term 'nididhyāsana' did not refer to meditation (dhyāna) because the text uses the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) as a synonym for it (B.B.V. II.iv.233, M.V.124,6).

Do the two systems, those of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara, agree — or do they contradict one another on these points? If they do in fact contradict one another, which is the better? It is a point worth considering.

My own view is the following. Śrī Śaṅkara spoke of the *appearance* of an injunction in a particular context. His purpose was to refute the contention of the authors of the earlier commentaries (vṛtti) on the Brahma Sūtras that the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads were authoritative only if regarded as subordinate to an injunction to acquire metaphysical knowledge. He did this by asserting that metaphysical knowledge is something conditioned by reality, and different from meditation. Here is his text as he himself set it out.

(1) The idea of fire, when one is in the presence of that well known object, is not dependent on an injunction, nor is it a mere creation of the human mind. It is in fact a piece of *knowledge*, conditioned by the nature of the object perceived. It is not an act. And it is the same with all objects of the various means of knowledge (such as perception, inference, etc.). This being so, knowledge of the Self in its true form as the Absolute cannot be dependent on an injunction to act. Imperative and similar forms applied to it, even in Vedic texts, lose their imperative force and become blunted, as razors become blunted if used against hard objects like stones. For here the object to which they are applied is something not subject to rejection or acquisition. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4,

cp. M.V.68,2)

Thus a view is tentatively advanced by an opponent (and refuted by Śrī Śaṅkara). According to this view the Absolute can only be taught through injunctions involving some duty to be done. But the whole theory is wrong. For there is also such a thing as knowledge of the Absolute conditioned by its true nature — that is the gist of this passage in the commentary. And it goes on to ask, 'But what do these apparent injunctions mean?' (where the reference is to passages which say that the Self should be 'seen' or 'heard about' and so on). The very fact that this question is raised also implies that knowledge cannot be the subject of an injunction. Consider, too, the refutation of the opponent. It runs: 'But when such a person comes to desire the supreme human goal, texts like "The Self, verily, is to be seen" and so on turn him away from the natural concern with the psycho-physical organism and its affairs, and engage him in continuous remembrance of the inmost Self' (cp. M.V. 68,3). It does not say anything about whether hearing and the rest are or are not able to be enjoined, as that is not the question at issue (which is the refutation of the view that knowledge can be enjoined). No doubt there is the implication that there is also a certain element of enjoining a duty in places where gerundive expressions like 'should be seen' or 'should be heard about' are used; for only so will the gerundive ending in the suffixes -ya, -tavya and -anīya, which denote a duty to act, have meaning. But this does not mean that one has the right to insist that knowledge also can be the subject of an injunction, as the passage is only intended to strengthen the argument in hand (namely the refutation of the opponent's view that knowledge can be enjoined). There is another passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary that expresses the same idea.

(2) Texts in the form of a command such as 'The Self should be seen', which are found in the sections dealing with the highest knowledge, are fundamentally for the purpose of turning the hearer in the direction of the knowledge of the Self, and are not primarily to be regarded as injunctions to become aware of the real. Even in the world, when people give a command and say 'Look here' or 'Listen to this', the meaning of such phrases really is 'Pay attention', and not 'Acquire a piece of direct knowledge'. When anyone is in proximity with a knowable object, knowledge of it sometimes arises and sometimes does not. Therefore, anyone who wishes to acquaint someone with an object should show it to him. When it has been shown to him, knowledge will arise according to the nature of the object and the means of cognition applied. (B.S.Bh. III.ii.21, cp. M.V.68,4)

Thus the force of the 'injunctions' apparently enjoining

hearing and so on is not actually to enjoin immediate knowledge through these disciplines. Their force, as the revered Commentator concludes by saying, is to inculcate attention to the Self. There is no contradiction with what is said at Brahma Sūtra Commentary IV.i.1, as it is taught there that it is just this attention to the Self that has to be repeatedly practised.

Sureśvara also maintains in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika that only that which is within the scope of free human will can be enjoined. He does not insist on denying that knowledge can arise from one act of hearing and so on. His words are 'The action of hearing and so on must be continued here diligently until the immediate intuition we have spoken of arises in all its glory' (B.B.V. II.iv.218). So there is no difference between the two systems in regard to the teaching that hearing and pondering are open to injunction.

Sureśvara does give the appearance of saying that no one could attain direct and immediate intuition of the Self merely from hearing. For one of the verses of the Vārtika begins 'Acquaintance with the Self is first through hearing, and then one ponders over what one has heard' (B.B.V. II.iv.220, M.V. 124,6). On the other hand Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Brahma Sūtra Commentary, 'Repeated resort to hearing, pondering and sustained meditation would indeed be useless in the case of the person who gained immediate experience of the fact that his true Self was the Absolute merely from hearing the text "That thou art" spoken once' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2). How could there be such a contradiction? In this case, too, we reply, there is nothing more than a superficial appearance of disagreement. For Sureśvara wrote in the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi: 'Of these (four different kinds of hearers of the text "That thou art"), there is one who knows "that which is not the meaning of any sentence" in his inmost Self. For him, all the not-self has come to an end. As all his impediments have been destroyed, there is in his case nothing more to be said. Nor is there anything further to be said about the one who acquired realization merely from hearing the text (that is, without having to reason over it at all). He, also, is in possession of some supernatural power' (N.Sid. III.64, prose intro.). Thus when it was said in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika 'One's first knowledge of the Self is through hearing' and so forth, this was only said with reference to those who are unable to apprehend the meaning of the text and realize that their own true Self is the Absolute merely through hearing it once. So there is agreement between the system of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara in maintaining that immediate knowledge can arise through mere hearing.

Let us therefore turn our attention to the apparent contradiction on the subject of 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana). In Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) is seen to be a kind of spiritual practice and to be enjoined. Speaking of the term 'sustained meditation', for instance, he says clearly that when we are using it

'we are talking of an act that entails repetition' (B.S.Bh. IV.i.1, cp. M.V.56, 8, note). And he says also, 'Pondering and sustained meditation too, like hearing, are for the sake of direct experience' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4). Thus he refers to 'sustained meditation' as something different from immediate intuition, as something to which one has to apply oneself for the sake of immediate intuition. So we conclude that for him sustained meditation was a kind of practice that could be enjoined. He also held that 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) was not different in kind from meditation in general (upāsanā). For at some places he uses the term 'upāsanā' to stand for it, as when he says 'Meditations (upāsanā) aimed at right intuitive knowledge have to be performed until the final end is achieved, like pounding the paddy to extract the rice' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.12, M.V.56,8).

And yet there is a certain difference between 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) and meditation as described by Śrī Śaṅkara in the following passage: 'Consider the texts, "Man, O Gautama, is the sacrificial fire" and "Woman, O Gautama, is the sacrificial fire" (Chānd.V.vii.1,V.viii.1). Here the identification of man or woman with the sacrificial fire is a mental idea. It is an act owing its origin solely to the injunction to meditate thus. It is therefore an action, and one that is freely determined by the human will' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4). Sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) as conceived by Śrī Śaṅkara differs from meditation as described above in that it does not owe its origin solely to the injunction to meditate. For hearing about the Self, pondering over it and subjecting it to sustained meditation are for the sake of something which can be experienced here in this world, and for realizing one's identity with the Self. This is shown in such a passage as 'The Self comes to be seen through the disciplines of hearing, pondering and sustained meditation resolutely pursued. Right knowledge of the Absolute as the sole reality only dawns when these three disciplines of hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are fused into one, and not otherwise, for example through hearing alone' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.5). It follows also from the passage: 'But in any case, pondering must be carried out by reasoning in accordance with what is laid down in the Veda. And sustained meditation must be performed on what has been pondered rationally, on what has been ascertained through revelation and reason' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.v.1, intro.). Even though this discipline is referred to by the term 'upāsanā' it is evidently different from such meditations as those prescribed in the texts speaking of woman as the sacrificial fire, which are for the sake of a result not to be perceived in the present life, namely the accumulation of spiritual merit through meditation. For the notion that woman is the sacrificial fire is not a notion based on the true nature of reality. It is formed only through obeying the injunction to meditate on this theme, and it brings its results not here in this life but in other worlds

(to be attained after death). But the case with sustained meditation is different. That which one subjects to sustained meditation one perceives here in this very life. It is a case of sustained attention and nothing else. That is the difference between meditation (upāsanā) and sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) in the system of Śrī Śaṅkara.

It is well known that words like 'vision', 'knowledge' and so on may be found used by Śrī Śaṅkara quite appropriately either to designate knowledge of the real or else to designate a certain form of deliberate arbitrary mental activity; for they may be used in different senses according to whether they are addressed to fit candidates for the higher or for the lower form of knowledge of the Absolute (the latter being not so much knowledge of the Absolute as meditation on it under prescribed forms). And we should understand that, in the same way, phrases such as 'one should meditate' or 'one should practise sustained meditation' may either refer to the mere cherishing of a mental idea (bhāvanā) or else to sustained attention to previously attained right knowledge — according to the context. That is how we explain the use of the term 'sustained meditation' in Śrī Śaṅkara's system.

Now let us consider Sureśvara's Vārtika. He says, 'Awakening to immediate knowledge of the supreme Self depending on no external factor is called Nididhyāsana' (B.B.V. II.iv.217, M.V.124,6). From this clear statement one deduces that for him the term Nididhyāsana cannot refer to any activity of the form of cherishing a mental idea (bhāvanā), although he does not deny that meditation is required as a preliminary discipline for right metaphysical knowledge. We learn this from the sequel, when he says 'I already mentioned earlier how meditation and other practices are a means to immediate experience. But immediate experience does not exist for the sake of anything else. It is taught to be just liberation, attainment of the final goal of all' (B.B.V. II.iv.234, M.V.124,6). This shows that though Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara understood the term 'nididhyāsana' in a different sense, their systems agree in maintaining that meditation is an activity and a preliminary discipline for knowledge. However, Sureśvara does insist on the point that because the Upanishad uses the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) in the sequel (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) as a synonym for the 'nididhyāsana' referred to just before, one should not suppose that it had meant 'meditation' by 'nididhyāsana' (B.B.V. II.iv.233, M.V.124,6).

'Nididhyāsana' is placed here in the Upanishad in apposition with hearing and pondering, so it is proper to suppose that it represents an activity. And we find the equivalent of 'vijñāna' in the form of a verb used elsewhere to denote action for the sake of immediate intuition, as in 'That one should investigate, that is what one should desire to know in immediate intuition' (Chānd.VIII.i.1,vii.1; cp. M.V.52,9 and note). In the present text (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) too, we can very well accept that the

term 'nididhyāsana' means meditation for the sake of direct vision. For Sureśvara himself accepts such meditation as the cause of direct vision. And if one takes 'The Self should be seen' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) to refer to immediate experience conceived as the result of seeing, then there would be nothing wrong in taking hearing, pondering and sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) as being a threefold activity enjoined for the sake of that result. It seems, therefore, that the revered Commentator's explanation of the term 'nididhyāsana' is the better one. Otherwise (i.e. on Sureśvara's view) it appears that useless repetition would be attributed to the Upanishad when it says 'draṣṭavya' (should be seen) followed later by 'nididhyāsitavya' (interpreted by Sureśvara as 'should be seen in immediate intuition'). In any case, there is no disagreement between the two authors on the question of what are the means to metaphysical knowledge, so that no serious difficulty arises.

126 THE INJUNCTION FOR INNER AND OUTER CONTROL AND THE OTHER DISCIPLINES

The text 'This is the eternal glory of the one who has realized the Absolute' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23, cp. M.V.53,7) means that the person who has gained enlightenment has the eternal glory of realizing the undifferentiated reality expressed as 'neither this nor that'. A verse quoted in that text expresses the nature of the glory of the enlightened person by saying 'He is not tainted by action, which is evil' — meaning that the result of his exalted state is to place him beyond the 'taint' of karmic merit or demerit.

Sureśvara first explains the term 'one who knows this state' (pada-vit) according to Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, and then goes on to suggest an alternative meaning of the term as 'one who knows the meaning of the words' (padārtha-vit, B.B.V. IV.iv. 1190). On this view, there would be an injunction to discover the meaning of the individual words of the metaphysical texts, and the reward for obeying it would be a knowledge of the meaning of the sentences which they composed.

The upanishadic text continues, 'Therefore, possessed of inner and outer control, abandoning all action for personal ends, strengthening himself by voluntary resistance to discomfort, and concentrating his mind, he sees the Self here in the midst of this life in the present body' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23). Sureśvara explains that this passage, as connected with what went before, implies the idea 'Because knowledge has this result, therefore he who knows thus becomes possessed of the disciplines of inner and outer control and the rest, and comes to know the meaning of the word "glory"' (B.B.V. IV.iv.1192-3).

It is said that such an one, possessed of the fourfold means to liberation (discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold

spiritual equipment —(see the qualities mentioned at Mādhavānanda, p.766)— and desire for liberation), that is, having inner and outer control and the other spiritual prerequisites, having distinguished the Self from the not-self through reasoning by the method of agreement and difference, finally comes to see 'All is the Self' (B.B.V. IV.iv.1201-2).

In the modern printed editions of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary at this point we read (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iv.23) '"Possessed of inner control" (śānta) means "desisting from the activities of the external sense-organs" and "possessed of outer control" (dānta) means "free from mental thirst"'. One must presume that these terms (śānta and dānta) have been written the wrong way round due to the carelessness of some copyist. For elsewhere we find an explanation running '"Inner control" means "the coming to rest of the mind"' and '"outer control" means "the coming to rest of the external senses"' (Bh.G.Bh.XVI.1). And in line with this we find Sureśvara saying in the present passage of the Vārtika, 'First he becomes possessed of outer control, then possessed of inner control, and afterwards he withdraws from all activity for personal ends. For in interpreting the sequence the rational order in which the qualities would have to be developed must take precedence over the literal order in which they happen to be mentioned in the text under comment' (B.B.V. IV.iv.1203-4).

Sureśvara next addresses himself to the question, 'Why should there be an injunction for inner and outer control and the rest, when the desire to pursue them arises naturally?' He says that human actions are of four kinds, based respectively on transgression of the law, personal desire, unthinking instinct and duty (B.B.V. IV.iv.1208). It is clear that the seeker of liberation cannot indulge in the first three. But how could a man of understanding want to pursue even duty when he sees that it leads to the same evil (namely rebirth) as non-performance of it? (B.B.V. IV.iv.1213) Therefore, when a person is acting for duty's sake his mind naturally becomes purified, and he comes to feel that he must give up even this form of action, so that the desire for inner and outer control leading on to the capacity for withdrawal from all action for personal ends arises naturally. We find teaching to the same effect in the Smṛti: 'The wise person should apply himself continuously to the broad moral principles (yama, cp. Yoga Sūtra II.29 f.), but he should not apply himself to the particular daily duties'(niyama, Manu Smṛti IV.204).

If you argue in this manner and ask why inner control and the rest are enjoined, the reply is that, even though these practices might be prompted naturally, the function of the upanishadic text is to enjoin them specifically as means to knowledge of reality. Or again, it might be that the mere idea of withdrawal from activity for personal ends might arise naturally, without the idea of *duty*, expressed in the feeling 'I must actually carry that withdrawal out'. That duty of

carrying out the practices is what is enjoined here (B.B.V. IV.iv.1220). Nor would it be correct to raise the objection 'The mention of inner and outer control would have been quite enough, since all action is given up through them. What was the need for specifying withdrawal as well?' For in sound exegesis, the positive injunction to perform daily duty will prevail over a mere general negation, which is always open to exceptions, so that the upanishadic text enjoining withdrawal has to be supplied to bring about the definitive abandonment of the daily duties (B.B.V. IV.iv.1223-6).

One should not raise the objection 'Hearing and cogitation and so on involve disturbance of the mind just as much as performance of the daily duties. Why is no effort made to discourage *them*?' For it would be wrong to give them up, since they are predominantly helpful to the attainment of withdrawal (B.B.V. IV.iv.1238).

The discipline of strengthening oneself through voluntary resistance to discomfort implies acquiring the power to endure the pairs of opposites (heat and cold, pleasure and pain and so forth). The upanishadic text adds 'concentrating his mind'. This is to enjoin the renunciation even of those activities, such as casual fantasies, in regard to which man is not naturally free. 'With faith for his (sole) wealth' (Bṛhad.IV.iv. 23, Mādhyandina recension) enjoins the total renunciation of all action (B.B.V. IV.iv.1269).

Thus with the help of these auxiliary disciplines a person should come to see the Self even while alive in the present body, through reasoning by agreement and difference. Then he comes to see all as his own Self (B.B.V. IV.iv.1278). That is the meaning of Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad IV.iv.23. One should observe the following verses of Sureśvara.

(1) First one should acquire outer control, then inner control, and finally the capacity for withdrawal from all activity for personal ends. For the logical order in which the qualities have to be developed takes precedence (in interpretation) over the order in which they happen to be mentioned in the text under comment. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1203)

(2) Yes, it is true that there can be no injunction for inner control and the rest, since they are prompted in the natural course. They are prompted naturally, it is true. But what the Vedic text does is to lay down authoritatively that they are the specific means leading to correct knowledge of the inmost Self. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1218)

(3) Or else we may say that the idea of abandonment of action comes naturally, as explained, but that the notion that it is a duty that one has to carry out (if one wishes to attain enlightenment) does not arise naturally. Hence it is enjoined. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1220)

(4) The injunction to perform the daily obligatory ritual all one's life will certainly be a more powerful authority and prevail over any *general* injunction to give up action (as the particular injunctions to kill at a sacrifice prevail over the *general* prohibition 'One should not harm any living being'). For the injunction to do the daily obligatory ritual all one's life is only concerned with keeping one's body alive (and not with ministering to and encouraging the egoistic passions). Since the *general* injunction to inner and outer control and so on will not suffice to annul the injunction to do the daily ritual all one's life, the text takes the further step of *specifically* enjoining the abandonment of all actions for personal ends (uparati). (B.B.V. IV.iv.1225-6)

(5) If the performance of the obligatory daily ritual is prohibited because it creates disturbance, wandering about to beg for one's food and other activities of the monk also create a great deal of disturbance. Why are they not prohibited too? Hearing and pondering over the upanishadic texts, too, cause a good deal of disturbance. Why are not these activities also prohibited by the Veda, as well as the rituals? But this objection is wrong. For these activities contribute to the chief goal. Wandering about to beg for alms and the rest are not prohibited as they are engaged in for the sake of that goal. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1235-7)

(6) And now, by saying 'concentrating his mind', the upanishadic text enjoins continual reduction to a minimum of those actions which one is not free to abandon entirely. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1246)

There must be the strictest control over those activities of the mind and the senses which we are not free to abandon entirely, such as seeing, hearing, mental fantasy and so forth. Where concentration is enjoined, it means that one should absorb the senses in the mind and the mind in the Self (through meditation).

(7) One should not suppose that the reading (of the Mādhyandina recension) 'With faith for his (sole) wealth' is otiose, on the ground that total renunciation has already been prescribed. For the enlightened person still has some action to perform in the realm of perceptible objects (in the form of maintaining the body and so on). The purpose of the phrase is to enjoin the relinquishment of any feeling of 'mine' in regard to the instruments or materials of these acts. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1267-8)

The purpose of the text 'With faith for his (sole) wealth' is to enjoin the abandonment of feelings of possession even towards objects like the begging bowl.

(8) Faith is his only possession. Because he has nothing else, the one who has abandoned all actions is called 'One who has faith for his (sole) wealth'. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1269)

(9) He should see the Self while he is yet in the body, separating it from the whole mass of the not-self through reasoning by agreement and difference supported by the spiritual disciplines mentioned above. Or the reading may be just 'He sees...'. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1272-3)

To read 'He should see...' would be to follow the reading of the Mādhyandina tradition.

127 HOW ACTION AND MEDITATION RELATE

There is a passage in the Vārtika which explains the order in which the various disciplines leading to the rise of metaphysical knowledge have to be practised and describes the method of these practices.

(1) Only metaphysical knowledge is required for the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance. Only inner control and the other spiritual disciplines are required for metaphysical knowledge. Only purification of the mind is required for the acquisition of inner control and the other spiritual disciplines. Only the performance of the daily obligatory ritual is required for the purification of the mind. Metaphysical Ignorance of the Self is the sole cause of action, mental, vocal or physical. When that (metaphysical Ignorance) has been cancelled by knowledge of the Self, how could there be any further dependence on action? (B.B.V. I.iii.98-100)

It is also said in the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi:

(2) From performance of the obligatory daily rituals comes merit; from merit comes destruction of (the karmic effects of) sin; from this comes purity of mind; from this comes a correct evaluation of transmigratory life; from this comes indifference to it; from this comes desire for liberation; from this comes the search for the means to liberation; from this comes renunciation of all ritualistic action and its accessories (the sacred thread, etc.); from this comes practice of yoga; from this the focusing of the mind within; from this a knowledge of the meaning of the metaphysical texts like 'That thou art'; from this the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance; from this establishment in one's own Self alone, according to the texts, 'Verily, being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6) and 'Though already released, he acquires final release' (Kaṭha II.ii.1). (N.Sid. I.52, prose intro., cp. M.V.60,2 and 3)

Meditations, it is clear, each have their stated reward, like rituals. And just as the performance of the obligatory daily ritual is enjoined as a preliminary contributing to the rise of knowledge, or even as all ritual is laid down as a means to the awakening of the desire for knowledge, so in the section of the Veda devoted to knowledge and meditation, the meditations are laid down as a means to preparing one to become fit for knowledge. For we have texts like, 'When you are released from here, where will you go?' (Bṛhad.IV.ii.1) And we know that meditations are useful on the path of gradual release, because they are taught in connection with the Path of the Flame and elsewhere. *(On the Path of the Flame, see Deussen, 1912, Chapter XXX. T.N.)*

(3) Whatever is taught on the subject of meditations in the Knowledge-Section of the Veda is only for the sake of *preparing* oneself for the knowledge that all is the one Self. We know from the text 'When you are released from here, where will you go?' (Bṛhad.IV.ii.1) and from references to the Path of the Flame that meditations are not limited in their results to the rewards promised for them (but may also lead to gradual release). This shows correctly the relation between the Rituals-Section and the Knowledge-Section of the Veda, and there are no grounds for asserting any different relation. (S.V.329-31)

Meditations: *The reference is to those meditations taught in the Knowledge-Section of the Veda and associated with the Path of the Flame and other teachings about release by stages. The reference is not to all meditations throughout the Veda in general.*

Not limited in their results to the rewards promised for them: *It means that they are not merely concerned with meditation and worship, but are also a means to knowledge. No attention should be paid to the claim of Ānandagiri that the purpose of the meditations is liberation and that this purpose cannot be achieved except through a succession of stages. There are no grounds for it.*

(4) What Śrī Yājñavalkya asked King Janaka was (not about entry into the world of a deity at death through meditation, about which the king knew, but) 'When you leave the first plane of existence, what is the second to which you will go?' This was to show that meditation on deities and purification of the mind through similar practices are also a means to the (gradual) attainment of knowledge. Śrī Yājñavalkya's question, 'When you are released from here, where will you go?' really meant 'Do you believe that, in the case of one fit for the highest knowledge, all the meditations prescribed in the Upanishads lead to liberation by stages?' (B.B.V. IV.ii.12-13, cp. M.V.83,5)

All such meditations may result in release by stages: the incidental implication here is that they retain their lower purpose for those who are not fit for immediate liberation. For it is only here and there in the Upanishads that the teaching of the Absolute in its highest form is exhibited, as indicated, for instance, by certain phrases in the conversation between Gārgya and Ajātaśatru, or in that between King Janaka and Śrī Yājñavalkya, such as: '"It cannot be known if there is no more knowledge than that" said Ajātaśatru. "Then let me come to you as a pupil", said Gārgya' (Bṛhad.II.i.14) and '"Very well", said Śrī Yājñavalkya, "I will tell you where you will go (i.e. nowhere, because the king had already reached the state beyond fear)"' (Bṛhad.IV.ii.1; see B.B.V. IV.ii.31 ff.).

128 THERE IS NO OTHER LIBERATION EXCEPT ERADICATION OF IGNORANCE

There is a text in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka which runs: 'I am in touch with the subtle, far-reaching ancient path, having finally discovered it. By this path the wise who have known the Absolute go to the shining realm after leaving here, released' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.8). Here the knower is not different from the known, the Absolute, so the phrase 'I am in touch with' is used (B.B.V. IV.iv.549). 'Discovered it' means 'have found it through the teachings of the Veda and the Ācārya' (B.B.V. IV.iv.550). Having turned their backs on Ignorance by following this path, and having attained to the Absolute, they go. Those who have known the Absolute 'dissolve in the Absolute', this is the meaning of 'go to the shining realm after leaving here' (B.B.V. IV.iv.552). 'After leaving here' does not imply that they have to wait for the death of the body before they attain the Absolute. For the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance, the cause of illusory empirical experience, they have to wait for metaphysical knowledge only, and for nothing else (B.B.V. IV.iv.554). The passage agrees with and confirms the other text which runs 'Verily, being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6), says Sureśvara, commenting on a later part of the text (B.B.V. IV.iv.560).

The following verses should be noted.

(1) Because it would be impossible for the Absolute not to include me, therefore it is said 'I am in touch with the path'. This path, as described, has come to me. Later, I discovered it myself, following the teachings of the Veda and the Ācārya. In knowledge of the inmost Self, the subject is not different from the object. (B.B.V. IV.iv.550)

(2) This 'shining realm' (the Absolute, not 'heaven') was

what was really meant before by the word 'svarga', even in the phrase 'He who wants svarga should offer sacrifices'. For that which is established by the knowledge arising from the upanishadic texts cannot be reached through rituals. (B.B.V. IV.iv.555)

Even in the earlier remark, 'He who wants svarga should offer sacrifices', the real reference was to the 'Absolute as a shining realm', not to 'heaven' as a happy abode. In any case, it is only the Absolute (appearing as heaven) under a conditioning adjunct that can be reached through rituals.

(3) The word 'svarga' is used here only to mean 'the highest bliss'. Because it occurs in the context of teaching liberation, it is something eternal. Hence it cannot here mean what comes as the result of performing rituals. (B.B.V. IV.iv.556)

(4) On the (false) theory that liberation depended on the death of the body, it would depend on dissolution in the cause. But after the eradication of the cause of all, enlightenment supersedes automatically, and nothing else is needed. (B.B.V. IV.iv.558)

It would depend on dissolution in the cause: *It means dissolution in the Absolute as yet unknown, assuming some such other apparent form as the cosmic vital energy.*

After the eradication of the cause of all: *This means after the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance.*

(5) No other obstacle to liberation is admitted except Ignorance. Accordingly, when Ignorance has been destroyed, then, a person (nṛ) is liberated already in this life even before he is finally liberated from rebirth at the death of the body. The Upanishad has already taught this earlier in the text 'Being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.6). No later upanishadic passage, therefore, could make us believe that liberation depended on the death of the body. (B.B.V. IV.iv.559-60)

Liberated already... before one is... liberated from rebirth: *This is a reminiscence of Kaṭha Upanishad II.ii.1.*

129 ALL DUALITY IS IMAGINED THROUGH IGNORANCE

In the system of Sureśvara, all duality is an effect of Ignorance. There is therefore nothing else to be done once Ignorance has been eradicated. The distinction between the Self and the not-self, the distinction between known and unknown, the distinction between real and unreal, the distinction

between being and not being an individual knowing subject — all these distinctions arise through Ignorance. Five 'sheaths' encasing the individual and five corresponding cosmic sheaths standing as their causes are distinguished only through Ignorance. Other distinctions like that between manifest and unmanifest, effect and cause, whole and parts, action and its component factors and results are also set up by Ignorance alone. The Witness, the Lord, creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe, the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, and, in a word, the very relationship of the Self with Ignorance itself, is all the work of Ignorance alone. Therefore when vision of the inmost principle is attained and Ignorance brought to an end, all bondage to transmigratory experience ceases immediately. The manifestation of Ignorance and its later eradication have no effect whatever on the Self, the principle of reality, any more than the imagination of a snake in a rope and the later cessation of that imagination have any effect on the rope. Here also, as in the system of the revered Commentator, the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction is consistently followed everywhere. This we have to accept.

(1) Clothed in the livery of being an individual knowing subject, the Self beholds the not-self; but it cannot behold the Self as an object in this way, as the Self is the pure light of Consciousness and nothing else. (B.B.V. I.iv.734)

(2) The distinction between known and unknown, the distinction between appearing as knowledge and as Ignorance, and the distinction between being and not being an individual subject enjoying knowledge — none of these distinctions belong to the Self. For they are not self-established. They depend on the Witness. (T.B.V. II.666)

(3) Texts like 'Darkness (Ignorance) is death, (light is immortal)' (Bṛhad.I.iii.28) and 'In the beginning, this universe was water' (Bṛhad.V.v.1) show that metaphysical Ignorance is continually at work, either in manifest or unmanifest form. 'Emerging from these elements' (Bṛhad.II.iv.12), the Lord, though raised above all change, appears through Ignorance as the Knower of the Field (M.V. p.35), through the rise of an illusory appearance of Himself as the not-self. (B.B.V. I.ii.136-7, cp. M.V.118,11 and note)

(4) That which is neither a cause nor an effect assumes the appearance of cause and effect through Ignorance. Hence the Veda works for the eradication of the latter.... Ignorance of the Self manifests everywhere as cause and effect, though it has for its true nature that (the Self) which is not either a cause or an effect. It is witnessed as an object by its own true Self. (B.B.V. I.ii.130,I.iv.309)

(5) The notion which we have here in the world of whole and parts belongs to the plane of Ignorance of the inmost Self. It does not belong to the supreme Self, in which all Ignorance (lit. blindness) is negated by 'neither this nor that'. (B.B.V. I.iii.269)

(6) True Being does not undergo birth and is not a cause. It appears as a cause through Ignorance, and also as action and all its component factors and results. (B.B.V. I.ii.128)

(7) That supreme principle of reality, which is indicated by the negative texts such as 'Not gross...' (Bṛhad.III.viii.8), which in its true nature lies divested of Ignorance and its effects, appears as 'the Witness' and 'the Inner Ruler' when apparently limited by the adjunct of Ignorance, its own illusory manifestation. (B.B.V. I.iv.151)

(8) And so the creations and withdrawals of the universe down the ages are imagined, just as the distinctions of time and space are. When you have seen reality, you know that the creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe are impossible. (B.B.V. II.i.411, cp. M.V.118,15 and note)

(9) The imaginary idea that the Self is asleep or awake or is dreaming belongs only to creatures asleep in the night of Ignorance. (B.B.V. II.i.265, M.V.122,29)

(10) The individual knower, stationed in the intellect and identified with it, convinces himself of the presence of Ignorance and its effects in the Self, though in truth it is not present, through his own extraverted gaze — as simple souls attribute blue colour to the colourless ether of the sky. (B.B.V. I.iv.298, M.V.121,10)

It should be understood that certain verses that have already been quoted above in different contexts have been re-introduced in the present section to show that Sureśvara approved the method of teaching through false attribution followed by subsequent retraction.

130 THE FORM OF NON-DUALITY APPROVED IN THE VĀRTIKA

The Vārtika of Sureśvara accepts that the true Self, as the Absolute, is non-dual. It is accessible when metaphysical Ignorance, the source of the whole imaginary network of duality, has been eradicated through the texts of the Upanishads. This is what one learns from the study of the Vārtika. Sureśvarācārya refuted all the existing systems of Advaita opposed to his own. He did so on the authority of Vedic

revelation, backed by reason and his own direct intuition, as we have had occasion to note at the point where we examined the different varieties of the early period of the teaching (cp. M.V.90, intro.). We have also explained here and there in the present chapter some of the differences between the system of Ācārya Maṇḍana and that of the Vārtika. Various theories of Advaita accepted or tolerated by Maṇḍana are refuted by Sureśvara: we might refer to the theories of Non-Dualism of the Word (śabdādvaita, cp. M.V.102,3), Non-Dualism of Being, where Being is conceived as a universal (sattādvaita, cp. M.V.102,4) and Non-Dualism of Positive Being (bhāvādvaita, cp. M.V.102,5). We shall close this chapter with a few verses on these topics.

(1) That which has in truth no name or form manifested as name and form, depending solely on Ignorance (i.e. manifested at the beginning of the world period). Statement, in general, is called 'name' (nāma); the stated, in general, is called 'form' (rūpa). Through these two categories the Lord is able to manifest Himself for all creatures born in the realm of manifestation; if He had stayed in his unmanifest form this would not have been possible. (B.B.V. I.iv.390-2)

For the Non-Dualism of the Word adopted by Maṇḍana, one should consult Brahma Siddhi pp.17-19 (cp. Potter,1981, pp.356-8).

(2) Therefore (i.e. because mental repetition is traditionally rated higher than oral repetition of the texts) the true nature of the Yajur Veda (and of all Vedic texts) is to be divine knowledge implanted in the mind. In this way the eternality of the Vedas can be rightly explained (since eternal Consciousness pervades the mind). Their power to communicate can be established if they are not taken as physically spoken words (but as ideas); it cannot be established if their essence is supposed to be the (assumed) eternal principle (sphoṭa) latent in the spoken word. (T.B.V. II.297-8)

For Maṇḍana's views on 'Sphoṭa', one should consult his work the Sphoṭa Siddhi (see Bibliography, under Biardeau).

(3) Here in the upanishadic text the term 'the Absolute' is used in its direct meaning as the reality that is neither transcendent nor immanent, neither a universal nor a particular. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1815)

The Absolute is described in these terms throughout the Vārtika, as at B.B.V. I.iv.656,745,1073,1272,1446; II.i.371; II.iii.12,240; II.iv.14; III.iv.38 and so forth (cp. also M.V.119,6). But Maṇḍana understood the Absolute to be the universal called Being (sattā), see Brahma Siddhi p.37 (M.V.102,4).

(4) The inmost principle, raised above all change, remains contemplating itself as the light (lit. result) in every cognition, witnessing all knowledge of being and non-being. It is itself that immediate experience that is not experienced by another. And so when the individual knowing subject and his knowledge and its objects cease, then the inmost Self establishes itself as the sole existent by its own inherent power. When the fact that the individual subject and his knowledge and its objects do not exist is established through awakening to one's true Self, then the notion of 'not' indicates that which is eternally luminous and not knowable by any exterior means of knowledge. (B.B.V. II.iii.227-9)

*The implication of this is that the notion of 'not' does not apprise one of non-existence. And this refutes the Non-Dualism of positive Being (bhāvādvaita). But Maṇḍana accepts it. See Brahma Siddhi p.4.**

**(At B.Sid. p.4, cp. M.V.102,5, Maṇḍana makes an opponent remark that the Absolute can be associated with positive attributes (e.g. bliss) and negative attributes (e.g. absence of the world or of Ignorance). As Maṇḍana does not contradict this, he was taken by later authors as having accepted the view that the Absolute could have the negative attribute of 'absence of the universe' or 'cessation of Ignorance' (cp. B.Sid., ed. Kuppuswami, English intro. pp. xl-xlv). It is non-dual in its positive aspect (bhāvādvaita), but tolerates a kind of duality in that it has negations of various kinds for its 'negative attributes'. Bhāvādvaita, which rests on the error of reifying negations and setting them up as a strange kind of reality, reappears in such later Advaita authors as Vimuktātman (cp. M.V.234) and Ānandabodha (cp. M.V. 275). No such reification is found in Sureśvara. For him the word 'not' merely indicated the Absolute in its true form. T.N.)*

CHAPTER VIII
THE PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ

131 THE NEED FOR AN EXAMINATION OF THE SYSTEM OF THE PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ

We now take up the examination of the Pañcapādikā, within the limits of the scale and purpose of the work in hand. It has been mentioned above (M.V. p.16) that this sub-commentary on Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary is supposed to have been the work of a certain Padmapādācārya, a direct pupil of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara. But the name Padmapāda is not found in the colophons of the work, nor is any name of the author mentioned in the gloss on the work called the Vivaraṇa (cp. M.V. p.18). From the title 'Pañcapādikā' we might deduce that it covered five Pādas of the Brahma Sūtras (i.e. up to B.S. I.i.31). But the work is at present only available as far as the first four Sūtras, to the great regret of the historians of Vedantic ideas. The story that the work was once completed and then for some reason destroyed by fire seems to be a mere invention put forward to explain its unfinished state.

There is some indication in the body of the surviving portion that the author intended to write a complete commentary. For instance, there is a sentence 'We shall explain how this is so at the Sūtra "Some say that the soul is mortal because it is confined to the present body"' (B.S.III.iii.53) at the beginning of the section on the theme that all is the one Self (P.P. p.148/33). This shows that the author intended to complete his work at least as far as that section (i.e. that adhikaraṇa of the Brahma Sūtra).*

**(Page-references to the Pañcapādikā are given here first according to the Madras edition, followed after an oblique stroke by the page in the older 'Vizianagram' edition, page-references to which are given in Venkataramiyah's English translation. For a summarized English translation with page-references to these*

editions, see Potter, 1981, pp.563-97.
For translations of Sureśvara, see Bibliography under Alston, Balasubramanian, Mahadevan, Potter (1981), Raghavachar. All three works quoted in the M.V. are summarized in Potter's work with page-references. T.N.)

Be all that as it may, the treatise must in any case be one of the oldest of the Advaita works that have survived, as it quotes texts from the old commentaries on the Brahma Sūtras that have not come down (P.P. p.180/42; 201/48). No older gloss on Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary is available today. The Pañcapādikā, then, even in its truncated form, represents a particular theory of the meaning of Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary that has been current amongst the interpreters of that commentary for a long time and has consequently acquired very great authority. For this reason, also, this system deserves a close examination.

132 THE NATURE OF IGNORANCE ACCORDING TO THE PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ

The nature of Ignorance is set forth in the Pañcapādikā in a highly individual way. For example, we find in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary (cp. M.V.22,4), 'And yet, though these two principles are utterly distinct in nature, there is a failure to distinguish one from the other, and each, together with its attributes, is superimposed on and identified with the other. And from that there results this natural worldly experience, based on wrong knowledge (mithyā-jñāna) and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as "I am this" and "This is mine"'.

To get straight to the literal meaning, one has to assume that the construction the revered Commentator intended was, 'There is superimposition of Self and not-self, subject and object, through a failure to discriminate them one from the other'. And we find in the Gītā Commentary, 'The "conjunction" between the Knower of the Field (cp. M.V. p.35) and the Field, which are respectively subject and object and of utterly distinct nature, is in fact (no real conjunction at all but) a (mere mutual) superimposition of their attributes, conditioned by a failure to discriminate them one from another' (Bh.G.Bh. XIII.26). This has been explained above (M.V.22,6).

Maṇḍana, too, accepted the technical terms of Śrī Gauḍapāda, and spoke of non-perception (agrahaṇa) and wrong perception (anyathāgrahaṇa) as together constituting Ignorance (B.Sid. p.9). This has also been referred to above when dealing with Maṇḍana (M.V.92, intro.;110,intro.). Sureśvarācārya, also accepted that only the Ignorance encountered in the feeling 'I do not know' deserved to be referred to by the term 'Ignorance' (M.V.110,1 and 2;111,4-6). It has been explained above,

in the course of examining his system, how he came also to speak of Ignorance as wrong knowledge and as the appearance of a not-self set up by that wrong knowledge (B.B.V. I.iv.386, M.V.112, intro.). Bhartṛprapañca, also, described Ignorance as 'non-perception' (as 'not being awake to the Self', M.V. 82,1).

In the Pañcapādikā, however, we find something very different. The author does not offer any explanation at all of Śrī Śaṅkara's phrase 'there is a failure to distinguish one from the other...' (cp. M.V.22,4;112,intro.). And he explains the phrase from the Commentary 'this... worldly experience based on wrong knowledge...' *(ibid.)* in a sense quite different from that in which it was meant. Thus we have:

(1) The indeclinable past participles used to express the ideas 'is superimposed' and 'involving a synthesis' *(ibid.)* are not used to denote priority in time, or with the idea that they refer to anything other than the worldly experience itself. For there are not here two separate actions involved, as there would be for instance, in the sentence 'He's going away now, having had his meal'. 'Superimposing' and 'this natural worldly experience' amount in fact to the same thing. And in the concluding summary the phrase 'And so this "natural" (uncaused) beginningless and endless superimposition...' (M.V.23,3) mentions superimposition as the only activity. Hence the use of the indeclinable past participle should be seen as a mere figurative way of speaking, as when we say 'Consciousness is the nature of the Spirit' (as if the nature of the Spirit were something different from the Spirit that somehow belonged to it). (P.P. p.25 f./4)

(2) Objection: When stating what the topic was to be, there was mention of 'this natural worldly experience'. How is it that now at the conclusion of the topic you can refer to this same worldly experience as 'superimposition' and throw in the extra characteristic 'beginningless'? To this objection we reply as follows. At the time of stating the topic, too, the reference was to natural worldly experience conceived as superimposition of the ego-sense onto the inmost Self. And the inmost Self is established as beginningless. Anything which is 'natural' to that is implicitly beginningless too. So the conclusion of the passage does agree with the beginning after all, and beginningless was not just 'thrown in'. (P.P. p.159 f,/36)

This shows that the words 'superimposition' (adhyāsa), 'making a synthesis' (mithunīkaraṇa) and 'worldly experience' (vyavahāra) are used as synonyms. We shall have to examine this later when we are looking at superimposition (M.V.140).

(3) The Commentary says 'mithyājñāna-nimittaḥ'. 'Mithyājñāna'

means 'that which is false (mithyā) and which is Ignorance (ajñāna)'. By 'false' is meant 'indeterminability'. And 'Ignorance (ajñāna)' means the non-conscious power of Ignorance (avidyā-śakti), the negation of knowledge. 'Tannimittaḥ', 'having that for its cause' means 'having that for its material cause'. (P.P. p.26/4)

Here it is claimed that the 'power of Ignorance' is the material cause of superimposition. It will become clear at every step that by 'the power of Ignorance' the author of the Pañcapādikā does not mean 'the power belonging to Ignorance' but 'the power that is Ignorance'. The doctrine that superimposition requires a material cause, the doctrine that Ignorance is a non-conscious power (śakti), and the doctrine that the word 'false' (mithyā) means 'indeterminable' — none of these doctrines is found anywhere in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The term 'false knowledge (mithyājñāna)' is occasionally found there to mean a false idea as opposed to right knowledge, as at B.S.Bh.I.i.4, I.iii.19, II.i.14, II.i.22 and so on. It is true, again, that we find 'indeterminability either as the real or as anything different' ascribed in the Commentary to the seed of name and form, which is imagined through *Ignorance to be the supreme Lord (B.S.Bh.II.i.14). Nevertheless we do not find anywhere in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries on the Brahma Sūtras, Upanishads or Gītā the attribution to Ignorance, as the seed of name and form, of bare 'indeterminability' conceived in the manner of Maṇḍana as 'not altogether unreal, nor... real... so indeterminable' (cp. M.V.111,2).*

(4) This beginningless Ignorance is referred to in the Vedas, Smṛtis, Epics and Purāṇas as Name and Form, the Undeveloped, Ignorance, Māyā, Nature (prakṛti), Non-perception, the Unmanifest, Darkness (tamas), the Cause, Dissolution, Power, the Great Sleep (mahāsupti), Sleep (nidrā), the Indestructible, the Shining Ether. In different places it is spoken of in many different ways. It is spoken of as preventing the manifestation of Consciousness in its true form as the Absolute and then producing the appearance of the individual soul. It is spoken of as the wall on which are painted the pictures of the impressions resulting from our meditations, rituals and acquired skills in previous lives. It is spoken of as that which remains in dreamless sleep as the mere latent impression of its power of projection, concealing the light of Consciousness. (P.P. p.98 f./20)

Here 'Ignorance' (avidyā) and 'Power' (śakti) are not used as separate words, each meaning Ignorance. Ignorance has already been designated by the compound word 'power-of-Ignorance' (avidyā-śakti) in the phrase 'And the power of (i.e. the power called) Ignorance must be admitted'(P.P. p.27/4). And Ignorance, being referred to by the terms 'the Undeveloped'

(avyākṛta) and so on is clearly affirmed to be the state of the world prior to cosmic projection. It is also referred to as the obstacle which prevents the Absolute from manifesting as the Absolute. The author regards Ignorance in the form of superimposition, which was the form in which it was explained by Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara in the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary, as an effect, and clings to the idea that 'the power of Ignorance' is its material cause. The author of the Pañcapādikā does not use the word Ignorance to designate that phenomenon of superimposition or erroneous cognition, which is well known as being subject to correction and cancellation through knowledge. Why, instead of doing that, he applies the term Ignorance to the Undeveloped Principle, which belongs to the realm of knowable objects, is a mystery.

133 WHAT IS THE PROOF OF IGNORANCE?

It is clear that in the systems of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara and Sureśvara it is accepted that Ignorance is established through immediate experience. Thus the introduction to Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary declares '(Superimposition, which is) the origin of the sense that one can act and have experiences as an individual, is directly familiar to everybody' (M.V.23, 3). And Sureśvara says, 'On my view only one assumption has to be made — Ignorance. And that is based on immediate experience' (S.V.182). And the same thing is stated at other places in clear terms. In the Pañcapādikā, however, Ignorance is established (not by immediate experience but) by resort to argumentation and proof through the recognized means of knowledge (pramāṇa).

(1) In the case of (all) external objects and mental experiences, this power of Ignorance must necessarily be admitted to exist invariably in association with their real nature as bare Being. Otherwise the manifestation of false objects would be inexplicable. (P.P. p.27/4)

Here the appeal is to the recognized means of knowledge called presumption (arthāpatti) in its empirical (not exegetical) use as applied to perceived objects.

(2) We reply that here, too, (in the case of the Self) there exists a defect of non-perception, of the nature of Ignorance, which conceals the light of Consciousness. How is that known? From the Veda and from the exegetical presumptions we have to make in interpreting its texts (śrutārthāpatti). Examples of Vedic texts would be 'Enveloped in falsity (all these creatures go daily to the realm of the Absolute but are carried away by delusion and do not know it)' (Chānd.VIII.iii.2, M.V. p.348) and '(The individual soul) bewildered, grieving and helplessly

drowned in sorrows' (Muṇḍ.III.i.2, M.V. p.100). Presumption as applied to the Vedic texts also establishes metaphysical Ignorance. Everywhere in the Upanishads knowledge is taught to be the means to liberation. From this we conclude by presumption (arthāpatti) that a natural bondage exists, of the nature of Ignorance, the failure of the soul to be aware that in its true nature it is the Absolute. (P.P. p.73/14)

Here an appeal is made to the Veda and to the exegetical use of the means of valid knowledge called presumption to determine the meaning of Vedic texts, with a view to establish the existence of Ignorance. The function of a means of valid knowledge (pramāṇa) is to put an end to ignorance of its object. This is generally admitted. But, if so, it is not clear why appeal was made to the Veda and other means of knowledge to prove the existence of Ignorance, which is already by definition proved to exist (as motive) before one can decide to apply a means of knowledge. There was also an appeal to presumption (arthāpatti). But no explanation was offered why presumption should establish a (cosmic) power *of Ignorance, rather than the individual Ignorance, (guaranteed by our personal experience and) accepted by the other systems of Advaita (such as those of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara).*

134 THE EFFECT OF IGNORANCE

Because the power of Ignorance consists in Name and Form, it follows by implication that the whole world is its effect. At a particular point, however, the author of the Pañcapādikā speaks of it specifically, in the course of his discussion of superimposition, as a cause of the superimposition of the ego-sense. Thus we have:

(1) But this (Ignorance) is not an obstacle to the manifestation of non-conscious objects in their true nature as they exist in the objective world. For failure to perceive them is already accounted for by the defects and insufficiencies of our instruments of knowledge. And we see in the case of the illusory appearance of silver, the true (i.e. empirically real) nature of the silver as shell is apprehended before and after the illusion, even though Ignorance is uniformly present. In such cases, therefore, Ignorance is only the cause of the shell appearing in a different form. The inmost Self, however, being of the nature of pure Consciousness, is self-luminous. The non-manifestation of the Self, since it can have no other cause, must be traced to the obstacle of the power of Ignorance, established as inhering in it naturally. The power of Ignorance, therefore, prevents the inmost Consciousness from manifesting in its true form, and is also the cause of its appearing as the ego-sense and in other guises that are not its

true nature. In dreamless sleep, however, and other states in which subject-object consciousness is suspended, the ego-sense, with its appurtenances, remains as a mere latent impression of the creative activity of Ignorance, and afterwards re-awakens. And so worldly experience, consisting in identifying oneself as a human being and so on, through the ego-sense of 'I' and 'mine', though in one sense natural (and so beginningless), is nevertheless (rightly) declared (by the Commentator Śrī Śaṅkara) to be 'caused' by Ignorance, but (caused as something 'natural' and so beginningless, and) not as anything arriving adventitiously. (P.P. p.29 f./4-5)

Here it is taught that Ignorance has its seat in Consciousness, that it is the obstacle which prevents Consciousness manifesting in its true nature, and that it is the cause of its manifesting in what is not its true form (i.e. as the ego-sense and so on). From this it would follow that a non-conscious appearance, too, would be a manifestation of Consciousness in what was not its true form. (But the author says, 'Ignorance is taken by presumption (arthād) to rest in the individual soul, obscuring its true nature as the light of the Absolute', cp. M.V.134,2;139,4;241,4 and note; V.P.P. English Intro. p.110.) It is quite unintelligible how he could claim that Ignorance has its seat in an effect of Ignorance, given that the effects of Ignorance are non-conscious (cp. M.V.113,1). But we desist from further examination of this here, as we shall have to examine the explanations of Prakāśātman on this point below (M.V.241,4).

The statement that this power of Ignorance is the cause of an appearance of the inmost Self in forms, such as the ego-sense and the feeling of possession, which it does not really have, appears to be in conflict with the passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary which states that the ordinary worldly experience of 'I' and 'mine' is 'natural' and therefore uncaused. There is, however, the special point that the author of the Pañcapādikā also holds that in dreamless sleep and similar states, where subject-object consciousness lapses, superimposition remains as a mere impression and then rises up again in manifest form on waking. To this extent superimposition is not natural but the effect of a cause. We shall have to consider this when we are examining the topic of superimposition (M.V.140).

(2) But have we not said that the soul is nothing other than the Absolute? Yes we have. That is why Ignorance is taken by presumption (arthād) to rest in the individual soul, obscuring its true nature as the light of the Absolute. Otherwise, if there were constant awareness of the fact that, from the standpoint of the highest truth, the individual soul was identical with the Absolute, the teaching about their identity in the Veda would be useless. So those who truly understand the Veda,

the Smṛti and reasoning have to accept that the Absolute, itself one and homogeneous, is the substratum of innumerable individual souls only as delimited by beginningless Ignorance. (P.P. p.73 f./14-15)

Here (in the last part of the extract) it is said that this Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute, and that it is the cause of the appearance in the latter of innumerable individual souls. The proof of this offered is the impossibility of the teachings about the identity of the individual soul with the Absolute on any other hypothesis. It is clear that this system differs from that of Maṇḍana here, who taught that Ignorance had its seat in the individual soul (M.V.94,1).

(The author holds that the P.P. had no consistent and clearly thought out view about where Ignorance has its seat. See Pañcapādikā-Prasthānam, p.55. T.N.)

135 DID THE DOCTRINE OF IGNORANCE AS MATERIAL CAUSE OF THE WORLD ORIGINATE WITH THE PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ?

Of the books that maintain that the power of Ignorance is the material cause of all distinctions, the Pañcapādikā is the oldest that still survives today. But there is external proof that the author of the Pañcapādikā was not the author of the doctrine. For we find in the Brahma Siddhi the words 'And those who claim that Ignorance is (a kind of substance or power and) the material cause of all distinctions say, "Ignorance is beginningless and purposeless"' (B.Sid. p.10, M.V.94,1). We do not find a phrase exactly like this ('Ignorance is beginningless and purposeless') in the Pañcapādikā. So we infer that the doctrine that Ignorance was a power (śakti) and a material cause must have originated earlier.

This view of those who accept the power of Ignorance implies a different method of interpreting the Veda from the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction accepted by Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara. We may assume that, as there was no competent authority known to have originated it, it must have been first introduced under the guise of an explanation of Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, and then, with the passage of time, it came to be accepted as constituting a small current within that mighty river itself. The Brahma Sūtra Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara and the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika of Sureśvara do not anywhere make the slightest mention of any doctrine treating Ignorance as a material cause, though they examine a considerable number of the earlier systems. So one might, as an alternative, surmise that this system was evolved by someone after the time of the composition of the Vārtika. As this is really a subject for professional philologists, I

do not propose to write more about it here.

136 THE DEFINITION OF SUPERIMPOSITION IN THE SYSTEM OF THE PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ

Śrī Śaṅkara raises the question in the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary 'What then is this thing called superimposition?' And he gives the answer in the form of a definition: 'We reply: "It is the manifestation at one place of what had previously been seen at another place, of the nature of a memory"'. The Pañcapādikā explains that passage as follows.

(1) Here the words 'at another place' imply that it is something else that is manifesting, other than the actual object in front. The manifestation is like a memory (smṛti-rūpa). The term 'memory' (smṛti) means (here not the act of remembering but) the memory-image. For the 'ghañ' and other suffixes (including the 'ktin' which forms the final 'ti' in 'smṛ + ti = smṛti'), though they cannot be used to denote the performer of an act, are found applied to the root to form derivatives in senses other than that of the verbal noun expressing activity. ('Smṛti' may therefore mean 'the memory-image' as well as 'the act of remembering', cp. Patañjali, Mahābhāṣya, Vol.I, p.146, commenting on Pāṇini III.iii.19).

A superimposition is *like* a memory, but is not literally a memory. For (unlike a memory) it is something that manifests clearly in front of one as if it were an object of perception. It is, however, rightly called 'like a memory' (by Śrī Śaṅkara) because it is a manifestation of something that has been seen previously. There is no illusory manifestation of silver in a piece of shell when a person is in sense-contact with the latter unless he has previously seen silver. And the definition of superimposition extends by implication to the erroneous cognition that has the superimposed thing for its object.

Do you ask how this is so? A superimposition, we reply, is *like* a memory, but superimposition is not memory. For the cognition in a superimposition does not manifest the object of a past cognition as such (i.e. as a memory recognized to be a memory of something previously perceived). How, then, can we say that a superimposition is of the nature of a memory? Because its rise depends on a previous cognition. A cognition which manifests something (like illusory silver) with which there is no present sense-contact necessarily depends on a previous cognition of that object (silver) through the valid means of knowledge. (P.P. pp.39-42/6-7)

On this subject, the words of the revered Commentator, when he explains superimposition as a cognition that synthesizes the real with the false, agree well with his general doctrine. He says, '... and each, together with its attributes, is super-

imposed on and identified with the other... involving a synthesis of the real with the false... (from which there results) this natural worldly experience' (M.V.22,4). And he confirms this in the sequel by saying 'Everyone superimposes (the notion of) another object onto the object standing in front of him'. And, as is well known, he gives a yet clearer definition in different words in the concluding summary to his introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary when he says, 'And we have already said that superimposition is the notion of one thing mistakenly applied to another thing', thereby showing that superimposition was superimposition of an *idea* only.

The author of the Pañcapādikā ignores all this. He takes refuge in mere established usage. He says that established usage applies the '-ti' suffix to the root even when the meaning intended is not a noun expressing activity (i.e. when 'smṛti' is used to mean 'a memory-image' and not 'remembering'), though the traditions of the early Grammarians restrict such a formation to nouns expressing activity, as is shown by the Sūtra, 'The "ghañ" suffixes (including "-ti") may be added to the root to form verbal nouns expressing activity, though not to denote the performer of an act' (Pāṇini III.iii.19). On the fragile basis of a claim about usage, he takes the word memory (smṛti) to mean the memory-image, although it could perfectly well have meant the act of remembering (so that there was no justification for appealing to established usage to assert a new meaning in defiance of Pāṇini's rules).

It appears to us that the author of the Pañcapādikā resorted to this procedure to safeguard his own private theory that the term 'mithyājñāna' meant the power of Ignorance conceived as the material cause of superimposition. For if he had followed the usage of the Brahma Sūtras as explained by Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary and had taken Ignorance primarily as superimposition, a form of wrong knowledge subject to cancellation through right knowledge, he would never have relegated this meaning to a secondary position by saying 'And the definition extends by implication to the erroneous cognition that has the superimposition for its object' (cp. *supra*). For superimposition is explicitly defined in the commentary (not as an illusory *object* but) as a form of false *knowledge* — in the words, 'And we have already said that superimposition is the notion of one thing mistakenly applied to another thing'. There is therefore no question of this only being known 'through implication'.

The author of the Pañcapādikā also gives an artificial explanation of the portion of the commentary explaining its own phrase 'the manifestation at one place of what had previously been seen at another place', designed to make it agree with his own interpretation. He says, 'For when a person's sense-organs are bearing on a piece of shell, silver does not erroneously manifest unless he has previously seen silver' (P.P. p.40-1/7) and 'A cognition which manifests something (like illusory silver) with which there is no present sense-contact

necessarily depends on a previous cognition of that object (silver) through the valid means of knowledge (P.P. p.42/7). But the revered Commentator was not concerned to enter into the question of how something previously perceived could manifest again in memory, or indeed to examine the nature of memory at all. All he was concerned to do was to show that superimposition was of the nature of memory.

Nor is the subject-matter of the present portion of the commentary in any way concerned with examining the question how superimposition arises, that one would be justified in interpreting it as saying 'Superimposition is invariably made possible through its object having been perceived before, otherwise it would be impossible'. For there is only one point of similarity between superimposition and memory which the commentary intends to point out and illustrate. It is the fact that, in memory as in superimposition when the latter is conceived as a form of cognition, there is no object of cognition standing in front of us. One cannot pass from this to the proposition 'For no memory of a thing with which there is no present sense-contact can arise unless the thing now manifested has been the object of the previous application of a means of valid cognition'. For no one can show that this must be the case with the wrong memories that can arise in dreams or states of lunacy and the like. Nor could any Vedantin admit that the superimposition of the original illusory distinction, that between means of knowledge and object of knowledge, could arise from the previous application of a valid means of knowledge bearing on that illusory distinction. For another means of knowledge bearing on that original illusory distinction (which itself brought the means of valid knowledge into being) would be impossible; or even if it were somehow possible, it would lead to infinite regress (as the last means of knowledge would presuppose a fresh instance of the original distinction that brings means of knowledge into being, and this in turn would imply a fresh means of knowledge and so on).

So we do not maintain that the object of an erroneous cognition has been previously perceived. What we maintain is that there is an illusory manifestation *like* something that has been perceived before. All we say about superimposition is that it is the erroneous imagination that something *like* what we have previously seen, such as silver, is really standing in front of us. That is why Śrī Śaṅkara did not go into any particulars about what was implied by 'having been seen before' in his concluding summary on superimposition at the end of the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary. He just accepted 'the notion of one thing mistakenly applied to another thing' as being the meaning of his earlier words defining superimposition. And that is how the matter should be understood.

137 WHY ARE DIFFERENT THEORIES OF SUPERIMPOSITION MENTIONED?

In the introduction to Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, the first definition of superimposition is followed by a reference to the opinions of various philosophical schools on the topic. 'Some say that superimposition is just superimposition of attributes where they do not belong. Some affirm that wherever there is a superimposition it is invariably caused by some failure to discriminate differences. Others, again, say that a superimposition is nothing more than a wrong notion as to the attributes of the object where the illusion is perceived'. These various views are mentioned, but none of them is criticized, because the question of how superimposition arises, and the answers given to it, are of little interest, and not relevant to the topic under discussion. That topic is not an exposition of the causes of superimposition. The topic being expounded is: 'In worldly experience there is a natural superimposition of Consciousness and the non-conscious'.

In this context, the question is raised, 'What is the nature of that superimposition which is being affirmed?' To this it is replied with the definition, 'It is the manifestation at one place of what had previously been seen at another, of the nature of a memory'. And Śrī Śaṅkara sums up his reason for mentioning other theories on the topic in the words, 'But in any case, all theories agree that one thing appears with the attributes of another'. That is, philosophers who disagree about the cause of superimposition all agree that it consists in the wrong notion of one thing having the attributes of another.

But Śrī Śaṅkara's sub-commentators of different schools enquire to whom the different theories set out by Śrī Śaṅkara belong in order to determine their nature in more detail, and then expound them in order to point out their defects, each sub-commentator using his own particular theory as a criterion. The author of the Pañcapādikā, for his part, includes two of the doctrines as sub-species of an initial conception. He says, 'Some say that a superimposition is a superimposition elsewhere, for instance onto a piece of shell, of the attributes of another thing, such as silver, whether that thing be a cognition (as in the "Ātmakhyāti" theory of the Vijñāna Vādins) or an actual external object (such as the actual silver in the market, supernormally perceived and wrongly referred to the locus of the shell, as in the "Anyathākhyāti" theory of the Naiyāyikas)'.

The second conception (the Akhyāti theory of the Mīmāṃsaka school of Prabhākara) he describes as follows: 'They say that wherever there is a superimposition it is an illusion of the unity of two (cognitions, namely a partial perception of an object present in front but only perceived vaguely as a "this", and a memory, not recognized as such, of a similar object

previously experienced); and they claim that the illusion proceeds from a failure to discriminate the two (component elements in the experience, so that the memory is taken for a perception)'. He describes a third conception (the Asatkhyāti theory attributed to the Mādhyamika Buddhists) in the words, 'Others say that, where there is a superimposition of silver onto shell, there is the false notion that that fragment of shell has the contradictory character of being silver — a notion which produces the appearance of something which in no way exists' (P.P. p.61/11).

The author of the Pañcapādikā first expounds the second conception of superimposition (Akhyāti) in detail, and then refutes it, starting the exposition as follows. 'An error arises when there is a false appearance of unity — like the false appearance of unity of two trees seen in the distance — due to the failure, on account of a defect in the cognitive mechanism, to perceive the difference between a perception and a memory that occur simultaneously' (P.P. p.43 ff./7-8).

He then goes on to refute three conceptions of error: namely, the theory that the manifestation of the piece of shell as silver is perfectly real, the theory that it is a transformation occasioned in the shell on account of some defect, and the theory that the rise of silver is a mere false notion arising from a defective instrument of knowledge (P.P. pp.48-50/8-9). And then afterwards he sets out his own doctrine. To help set that doctrine in relief he opposes to it two other doctrines — the doctrine that superimpositions occur without a substratum, and the doctrine called anyathākhyāti, according to which an actual object present at another place somehow manifests itself in the substratum of the illusion (P.P. pp. 62-71/12-14).

It is clear that here, too, the revered Commentator, while retailing the theories of others about superimposition, was in agreement with them that superimposition was always superimposition (not of objects but) of ideas. He uses the two definitions 'error is caused by a failure to discriminate' and 'error is the false imagination of inappropriate attributes' in the sense of a superimposition of ideas, because that agrees with his own view. The Pañcapādikā, however, specifically accepts superimposition (not of ideas but) of objects and explicitly attributes this conception of superimposition to Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary. This is strange, indeed, when its author must have seen that the emphasis in the commentary was on superimposition as 'the *notion* of one thing mistakenly applied to another thing', and must also have seen that the commentary maintained that all theorists agreed with this definition of superimposition, and must have seen that it spoke of superimposition as erroneous *knowledge* subject to direct cancellation by right knowledge.

138 THE TWO EXAMPLES ADDUCED IN ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA'S COMMENTARY TO ILLUSTRATE SUPERIMPOSITION

Śrī Śaṅkara first shows how all theorists agree essentially in their definition of superimposition, and then, in order to clarify his meaning, he goes on to adduce two examples of superimpositions recognized to occur in worldly experience. His words are: 'And worldly experience agrees with this. For the piece of shell appears as silver (in the well-known silver-illusion), and the one moon (in the case of double-vision) appears to be accompanied by a second moon'. The Pañcapādikā explains the example of the piece of shell appearing as silver as follows.

(1) Now he (Śrī Śaṅkara) goes on to explain what the use of reasoning is, when the nature of superimposition can be indicated well enough through worldly examples. One may begin with the proposition, 'It is the shell that manifests as silver'. But then the objection will arise, 'The shell does not in fact manifest. Only silver manifests'. So neither part of the proposition will hold — neither 'shell (manifests)' nor 'as silver' (since silver itself manifests). To this it is replied that we speak of shell because the illusion is afterwards known through right knowledge to have consisted of shell in truth all along. And the word 'as' is justified, because one has to accept that the true non-silver (the shell) with which one's eye is in contact is identified in the illusion with false silver. The silver is spoken of as false because its existence is caused by a defect that comes adventitiously, and because it is open to swift subsequent cancellation. The silver is not called false on the ground that it is different from the shell, with the latter conceived as absolutely real.

Since the silver is not in contact with the sense-organs, it is not the cause of the rise of the idea 'this'. The idea 'this' pertains to that only (the shell) with which the sense-organ (the eye) is in contact. Although the manifestation of silver is due to a latent impression from previous experience, nevertheless it appears as if it were an object standing in front of one on account of defects in one's organs, and also because it falls within the (partial) cognition (of shell standing in front) based on sense-contact. (P.P. p.69 f./13-14)

(2) But how could it possibly be that there is manifestation of silver when the sense-organs are only in contact with shell? Well, we do not admit the rise of any memory not recognized as such and supposed to be separate from the cognition caused by sense-contact. We admit only one single cognition, arising from the sense-organ associated with a mental impression. How is this? A defect, we reply, in the cognitive mechanism blocks its proper operation on the object, and also activates a

certain latent mental impression so that it comes into manifestation. We infer the presence of a defect in the cognitive mechanism from the nature of the effect produced. Behind the superimposition, therefore, lies a single complex of factors, with the cognitive mechanism thrown out of order by the latent impression. Because this complex is a unity, it produces one act of knowledge issuing in one resultant-cognition. This knowledge arises from a complex associated with an impression activated by a defect. It is therefore quite intelligible that it should have false silver residing in the shell as its object. It is 'false knowledge' because its object is false (in that we later have the cancelling cognition 'this never was silver'). But the cognition as such was not false, in that we do not have any later cancelling cognition of the form 'this was not a cognition'. (P.P. p.51 f./9)

The following explanation is given to show how the silver is false and is also the object of false knowledge.

(3) Thus on our theory there is no contradiction with experience. For it is only the falsely manifesting silver that is the object of the cognition. The silver is thus illusory (māyā-maya). Had it been real, it would have been perceived by everybody.... But since it is only illusory, it is right that it should only be seen by those whose instruments of cognition are afflicted by a defect, for example by those whose eyes have been placed under the spell of a hypnotist's mantra. Again, the cancelling cognition 'This is not silver' points to its being illusory. Why? Because it shows it is false and of indeterminable reality-grade. For we feel, 'This is not silver. It was a mere false apparition'. And that would be out of place if it had had any form of real existence, for example if it had been (distant real silver) in (super-normal) contact with the sense-organs (as the Naiyāyikas hold) or if it had been real as conscious idea, while only the notion that it was an object external to consciousness had to be rejected (as the Vijñānavādin Buddhists hold). (P.P. p.54 f./10)

Here there is a definition of the superimpostion of an idea as a cognition brought about by sense-contact with an object, associated with a latent impression activated by a defect. The view of the Pañcapādikā is that the superimposed cognition is false only because it has the illusory silver residing in the shell as its object, not in itself as a cognition, as it is not subject to any cancelling cognition of the form 'This was not a cognition'.

The superimposed object (arthādhyāsa), however, (as opposed to the superimposed cognition answering to it (jñānādhyāsa), is false for the following reasons. It is caused by a defect. It is only seen when the cognitive mechanism is defective. And it is revealed as false by the cancelling-cognition 'This is

not silver'. We must therefore infer, says the author, that the object-element of the superimposition is illusory (māyā-maya) and an effect of the power of Ignorance.

The Pañcapādikā refutes the objection that the definition of error is too narrow because it does not include the sufferings of the dream-state as follows:

(4) It has already been said that memory is only the manifestation of objects previously experienced through the means of valid cognition. Well, here in dream, the mind, overwhelmed by sleep and other defects, yields cognitions of unreal objects which arise in conformity with the assistant latent impressions that have been activated by occult forces like karmic merit and demerit. And it is the power of Ignorance supported by the immediate Consciousness delimited by the mind that evolves into the objects of these cognitions. (P.P. p.56/10, cp. M.V. 153,1)

The idea is to claim that the definition of error may rightly be regarded as extending to dream, because there also the mind is the organ, while sleep and so on are the defects, and there is a latent impression activated by karmic forces. The alleged threefold cause of superimposition is therefore present. The author adds that Ignorance supported by Consciousness transforms itself into the illusory objects of dream, and through this becomes an object for the mind.*

**(The threefold cause of superimposition taught in post-Śaṅkara Advaita comprised (1) sense-contact with the substratum of the superimposition (2) defect in the apprehender, his sense-organ or the object (3) a latent impression in the apprehender, derived from the previous experience of an object similar to the substratum, and now activated by the defect. Cp. M.V. 138,3, note. T.N.)*

No such separate description of superimposition of ideas and superimposition of objects is found anywhere in Śri Śaṅkara's commentaries on the Brahma Sūtras, Upanishads or Gītā. We will quote a few of the revered Commentator's texts here, reflection on which will enable us to understand his view.

(5) Similarly, in the sentence 'He sees the piece of shell as silver', the word 'shell' simply means the actual shell, whereas the word 'silver' implies the imaginary idea of silver. One merely imagines silver, although there is in fact no silver there. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.5, M.V.46,10)

(6) He sees the instruments of the sacrifice as non-existent except as the Self, just as one who knows the shell sees the non-existence of the silver in the shell. Therefore the statement 'The sacrificial offering is the Absolute' is like saying

'What appears to be silver is actually only shell'. (Bh.G.Bh. IV.24)

Here what is said is that there is indeed non-existence of silver in the shell, and that the true nature of the silver is shell and nothing else.

(7) He, though seeing, does not see, like one afflicted with double-vision who sees two moons, or like one who erroneously sees the moon as if it were hurtling through the clouds. (Bh. G.Bh.XVIII.16, following on from M.V.25,9)

(8) The moon does not in fact become many when seen as if many by an eye afflicted with double-vision. (B.S.Bh.II.i.27, M.V.47,6)

What is here said is that what appears to be seen as many by one afflicted with double-vision is not many at that time or ever.

(9) There is no coming-to-be or passing-away of the second moon seen by one afflicted with double-vision. (Taitt.Bh.II.8, cp. M.V.223,9)

(10) (And it is the same in worldly experience. Shell manifests falsely as silver.) The one moon (in the case of double-vision) appears to be accompanied by a second moon. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

Here there is a denial of the existence of the second moon that one who is afflicted with double-vision imagines he sees. And it is affirmed that its true nature is the real moon.

(11) We have the example of a piece of shell which is actually being perceived (as a 'this'), and yet, since it is misapprehended as silver, it is not (properly) perceived. The sole obstacle here is misapprehension. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7, M.V.30,8)

Here it is only the shell that is manifesting as silver. Even at the time when one is perceiving the appearance of silver, it is only the shell that is being perceived. It is only wrong knowledge that can be removed by right knowledge, not illusory silver — that is the implication.

(12) It is in fact the rope that is called a snake, under the impression that it is a snake.... But for those who discern the rope in its true nature, the name and notion of the snake cease. (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.3, M.V.47,1)

What is emphasized is that there is no snake in the rope apart from the name and idea of a snake (so that there is no room

for the illusory snake posited as an extra-mental object by the Pañcapādikā, M.V.138,3)

(13) A piece of mental imagination like a rope-snake does not actually either rise up from or dissolve back into the rope. Nor does any real snake actually rise up in or become dissolved in the mind. Nor do both these things happen. (G.K.Bh.II.32, M.V.35,1)

There is no rise or dissolution, etc., of a rope-snake in any way. All that is mere false imagination in the mind.

And so we see from the above-quoted texts that the view maintained in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries was that it is the shell and the rope only that manifest in different forms through error (i.e. there is no room for the theory of the Pañcapādikā that there is an illusory object, silver or snake, picked up by a cognition).

139 THE DEFECT OF IGNORANCE AS THE CAUSE OF THE DISTINCTIONS AMONGST THE INDIVIDUAL SOULS

The Pañcapādikā says: 'It has been shown through the shell-silver example that the silver is not the true nature of that (the shell) with which the sense-organ (the eye) is in contact. The purpose was to illustrate a parallel case. The ego is superimposed, and is not the true nature of the Self as pure Consciousness, the latter being the "non-this" element (non-objective element that makes experience of the ego possible). That the ego is by nature a "thou-entity" (an object) is shown by the fact that it has to be illumined by the light of pure Consciousness to become manifest.

'It is a different point that is made through reference to the example of the double-vision of the moon. This is to show that the appearance of a distinction between the soul and the Lord and between the different souls does not represent the true nature of the Self' (P.P. p.70-1/14).

Now, the objection may be raised, 'Granting that superimposition has three causes, how do non-perception and wrong perception arise in regard to the individual soul?' The Pañcapādikā states it as follows:

(1) In the case of an external object, defects leading to erroneous perception may be found in the object, such as excessive similarity to some other object, and defects may be found in the sense-organ, such as the disease of double-vision. And since external objects have parts, it is reasonable to suppose that while one part of the object was known, the defects should constitute an obstacle to the knowledge of another part, (as

when part of a shell is perceived vaguely as a 'this', and a defect prompts the rise of the impression of silver, M.V.138,1). But the case with the Self is different. For it is self-luminous and not dependent for its manifestation on any external cause (which might contain a defect). And the whole process of superimposition (which implies that part of an object should be perceived and part not perceived) is impossible in the case of the partless, self-luminous Consciousness. (P.P. p.71/14)

No one before the author of the Pañcapādikā has laid it down that superimposition requires as its precondition three defects — a defect in the apprehender (such as greed, etc.), a defect in the object and a defect in the apprehending organ. Sureśvara's views stand in complete contrast, for he raised the following question and returned the following answer.

(2) But is it not the case that in worldly experience erroneous knowledge is found to occur where a memory of silver arises when the general form of the shell has been perceived, without a knowledge of its particular attributes? Erroneous knowledge is found to exist in the world when what is superimposed is in truth different from that onto which it is superimposed, and the two are confused. But this situation is impossible in the case of the Self, where all is one.... We take no notice of this useless objection, because, on our view, all the evils of erroneous knowledge arise from the *one* cause of Ignorance of the inmost Self. (B.B.V. I.iv.415-6,418)

In the Pañcapādikā the exponent of the *prima facie* view is also made to raise an objection against superimposition on the ground that the individual soul is not different from the Absolute.

(3) It might be objected as follows. It is agreed on all hands that (in empirical experience) the Absolute is not manifest in its true form. But it does not follow from this that the true nature of the individual soul should not be manifest and should be wrongly perceived. Just because a piece of shell is not perceived, it does not follow that a post should fail to be perceived or be wrongly perceived. Perhaps you (Advaitin) will reply to this by saying that the Absolute is not different from the individual soul, since the Upanishad recorded 'Being' as saying '(Let me — i.e. Being — enter the elements) as the living soul' (Chānd.VI.iii.2), and argue from this that non-perception of the Absolute implies non-perception of the true nature of the soul. But if this were the case, ignorance of the true nature of the soul would be all the more impossible. For the Absolute is of the very nature of knowledge. Everything manifests through it alone as Consciousness, as is expressed in the text 'All this shines through its light'

(Kaṭha II.ii.15). (P.P. p.71 ff./14)

The reply to this is set out as follows.

(4) To this we (Advaitins) reply as follows. There certainly *is*, even here, the defect of non-perception, of the nature of metaphysical Ignorance, hiding the light of Consciousness. How do we know this? From the Veda, and from the implications of its texts. As regards the texts themselves, we have 'Carried away by delusion' (Chānd.VIII.iii.2), 'Bewildered, grieving and helplessly drowned in sorrows' (Muṇḍ.III.i.2) and others. And then there are also the implications of the texts. Everywhere in the Upanishads it is knowledge of the Absolute alone that is declared to be the means to liberation. This implies that a natural bondage exists, of the nature of Ignorance, a failure on the part of the individual soul to be aware that in his true nature he is the Absolute.

But have we not said that the soul is nothing other than the Absolute? Yes, we have. That is why Ignorance is taken to rest in the individual soul, obscuring the light of the Absolute (cp. M.V.134,1, note;134,2;241,4, note). Otherwise, if there were constant awareness of the fact that, from the standpoint of the highest truth, the individual soul was identical with the Absolute, the teaching about their identity in the Veda would be useless. So those who truly understand the Veda, the Smṛti and reasoning have to accept that the Absolute, itself one and homogeneous, is the substratum of innumerable individual souls only as delimited by beginningless Ignorance. And thus the Smṛti says, 'Know that Prakṛti and Puruṣa are both beginningless' (Bh.G.XIII.19), where it refers by the word 'Prakṛti' to the beginningless power of Ignorance which is the cause of the distinction between the Field (M.V. p.35) and the Knower of the Field. And in the Veda we have 'One should know that Nature (prakṛti) is Māyā' (Śvet.IV.10). Hence, though the Absolute is not different from one's own Self, one does not know it because it assumes an individual form as delimited by Māyā. And it has also been said, 'When the individual soul, asleep under a beginningless illusion, finally awakens, he awakens to a knowledge of the unborn, sleepless, dreamless, non-dual reality' (G.K.I.16). (P.P. p.73-5/14-5)

Here the Vedic text 'bewildered, grieving' (Muṇḍ.III.i.2) proceeds on the basis of accepting the familiar distinction between the individual soul and the Lord. ('The individual soul stands on the same tree as the Lord, bewildered and grieving...'.) Then it goes on in the sequel to speak of the ending of grief through the vision of the supreme Self. The passage runs, 'When he sees the other whom he has propitiated, the Lord in his glory, he becomes free from grief' (Muṇḍ. III.i.2). The text 'Carried away by delusion' (Chānd.VIII. iii.2) refers to the familiar experience of the way in which

individual souls gain unity with the Absolute every night in dreamless sleep and yet are not aware of the fact. The context in which the text comes shows that the reason for this is that they are under the spell of desire and action caused by erroneous knowledge.

These texts, and others like them, refer to the individual soul in the state of empirical experience. They conform to this standpoint, in which the soul is in the grip of the alien forces of desire and action. But it is not at all clear how they can be made out to be concerned with 'the defect of non-perception, of the nature of metaphysical Ignorance, hiding the light of Consciousness', regarded specifically as a prerequisite for superimposition.

One can accept as true the statement that the Upanishads teach knowledge of the Absolute for liberation on the principle that 'a natural bondage exists, of the nature of Ignorance, a failure on the part of the individual soul to be aware that in his true nature he is the Absolute'. But the Pañcapādikā does not make it clear why such a bondage of Ignorance should not be just the natural (uncaused and beginningless) superimposition mentioned by the revered Commentator. For what the latter's commentary says, supported by reasons, is the following.

(5) This 'natural' (i.e. uncaused) and beginningless and endless superimposition, which is of the nature of false supposition and is the origin of the sense that one is acting and experiencing, is directly familiar to everybody. And the entire upanishadic teaching is begun to communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self, and thus to put an end to this superimposition, the cause of all evil. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro. *ad fin.*, cp. M.V.23,4;112)

Or consider, again, what is meant by the example of the two moons, which is dealt with in the Pañcapādikā sub-commentary. It would have been quite enough to have explained it as saying that the distinction between the individual soul and the Lord, and the distinctions between the various individual souls, is set up by Ignorance in the form of natural superimposition rooted in a failure to discriminate the real in its true nature. The author of the sub-commentary does not make it clear why he did not just keep to that. On this topic, too, one can quote a relevant passage from Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary.

(6) Name and form, imagined through Ignorance as if they were the very nature of the Self, the omniscient Lord, indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything (independent and) different from it, the seed of transmigratory experience and the differentiated world, are spoken of in the Veda and Smṛti as 'The Power of Māyā belonging to the omniscient Lord' and as 'Nature' (prakṛti). The omniscient Lord is different

from them. For the Veda says 'The shining ether, verily, draws forth name and form. That in which they exist is the Absolute' (Chānd.VIII.xiv.1). (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, M.V.45,1)

Here it is said that name and form, imagined through Ignorance, are Māyā and Prakṛti. Prakṛti is called Māyā. Ignorance or superimposition, through which Māyā is imagined, must be different from it. This is the implication of what is said.

This also explains the texts 'Prakṛti and Puruṣa' (Bh.G.XIII. 19) and 'One should know that Nature (prakṛti) is Māyā' (Śvet. IV.10). Māyā, spoken of as Prakṛti, is accepted in the commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara as the seed of name and form, imagined through Ignorance. There is nothing to show that Śrī Śaṅkara accepted the view of the author of the Pañcapādikā that Māyā was a word that could be used to stand for 'the beginningless power of Ignorance'. But if one agrees that the word Ignorance may in certain circumstances stand for 'imagined through Ignorance', then it must also be accepted that the Ignorance in question is an imagining force that does both the obscuring and the projecting, and that it is not name and form, the mere secondary product.

Nor can the words of an acknowledged authority 'being asleep through beginningless Māyā' (G.K.I.16) be adduced as a proof in favour of the view of the author of the Pañcapādikā. For the Kārikās of Gauḍapāda do not anywhere accept any 'power of Ignorance': they speak only of non-perception and wrong perception. And the commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara on the Kārikā in question explains it, quite differently from the Pañcapādikā, as follows: '(The individual soul in transmigration is) asleep in the states of waking and dream also, seeing dreams... through a beginningless illusion which has two forms, the seed-form of not being awake to reality, and the (consequent) form of misperceiving reality' (G.K.Bh.I.16).

(7) Thus the Lord appears to conform to the conditioning adjuncts set up by Ignorance. It is like the ether of space appearing to conform to the shapes of the cavities of pot and jar. Thus in the realm of practical experience the Lord exercises lordship over the conscious beings called individual souls, who, corresponding to the pot-ether in the illustration, appear to conform to the limitations of their bodies (gross body and subtle body) and organs, which consist of name and form set up by Ignorance. Such souls are in reality nothing but the Lord's own Self. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

When it is said that the Lord has the apparent conditioning adjunct of name and form, and that the individual souls have the apparent conditioning adjuncts of their various bodies and organs, the meaning is that all the distinctions are due to distinctions in conditioning adjuncts, which are imagined

through Ignorance. (See also M.V.242,9, note.)

140 SUPERIMPOSITION AND EMPIRICAL EXPERIENCE ARE ONE AND THE SAME THING

We have already explained how, in the opinion of the author of the Pañcapādikā, the use by Śrī Śaṅkara of the past indeclinable participle in expressing the ideas 'superimposing' and 'making a synthesis' was not intended to imply past time or to denote anything apart from worldly experience itself (M.V.132). The Pañcapādikā claims that when Śrī Śaṅkara says 'Superimposing... there is this natural worldly experience' this simply states the nature of worldly experience. Meanwhile in the concluding summary of the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary Śrī Śaṅkara uses the phrase 'this natural, beginningless and endless superimposition'. Here the author of the Pañcapādikā thinks that, because Śrī Śaṅkara only put this in the concluding summary, he must therefore be identifying worldly experience with superimposition. The author of the Pañcapādikā analysed the phrase 'worldly experience' that occurs in the commentary as follows.

(1) In the phrase 'loka-vyavahāra', the term 'loka' refers to those living beings who have the conviction 'I am a human being'. 'Vyavahāra' means 'empirical experience'. The phrase means 'experience of being human', the feeling 'I am a human being'. (P.P. p.24 f./4)

And he explained the words in the commentary 'making a synthesis of the real with the false' as follows:

(2) The real is pure Consciousness as not-this (i.e. free from any element of objectivity). The false is the 'thou-element', (the object element in our experience). It is false because it is superimposed (in contrast to pure Consciousness, which is not itself superimposed, but onto which the idea of relationship is superimposed). (P.P. p.25/4)

My own view is that if one examines the Brahma Sūtra Commentary as a whole, the revered Commentator's teaching emerges as follows. We have the passage: 'And yet, though these two principles are utterly distinct in nature, there is a failure to distinguish one from the other, and each, together with its attributes, is superimposed on and identified with the other. And from that there results this natural worldly experience based on wrong knowledge and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as "I am this" and "This is mine"'(M.V.22,4). This passage asserts that Self and not-self, together with their attributes, pure Consciousness

and the non-conscious, are in reality of contradictory nature, like darkness and light, and are eternally separate. But the people of the world, with their natural thoughtlessness, fail to discriminate them one from the other. People who fail to discriminate them then go on to superimpose them each onto the other, together with their attributes, making a synthesis of the real with the false. He who does that then has the experience 'I am this, this is mine'. From Śrī Śaṅkara's other commentaries we learn that the criterion for reality is unfailing existence and presence, the criterion for unreality, failure to exist and be present.

(3) When a thing is determined as being of a particular form and that form never fails, that is its real form. When a thing is determined as being of a particular form and that form fails, it is said to be an unreal form. Thus a modification is something false. (Taitt.Bh.II.1)

(4) That the notion of which never changes, is existent. That the notion of which is transient, is non-existent. The distinction between the existent and the non-existent depends on our notions. Everywhere we find two notions arise with reference to one substratum. We are not speaking of (specification through an additional qualifying notion, as in the case of) ideas like 'the lotus is blue'. We are speaking of (the succession of impressions having the form) 'The pot is existent', 'The cloth is existent', 'The elephant is existent' and so on. In these pairs of notions, the notions of 'pot', 'cloth' and 'elephant' are transient, as has already been pointed out. But the notion of 'existent' is not. (Bh.G.Bh.II.16)

Here, the notion of unfailing presence is equivalent to the notion of reality; the notion of failure to be invariably present is equivalent to the notion of unreality. The term 'notion' (buddhi) is here used to mean 'the notion universally present to everyone that such and such is so'.

On this basis, the Self is real, as the notion that reveals it to us never fails. The not-self is unreal, as the notion that reveals it is invariably superseded by another. Self and not-self are therefore of contradictory nature, and separate and distinct from one another. The Brahma Sūtra Commentary, therefore, points out that their separateness is caused by their being of contradictory nature as subject and object. But it is not clear why the Pañcāpādikā makes the claim 'The false is the realm of the objective. It is false because it is superimposed'. (M.V.140,2)

Moreover, the claim that if a thing is superimposed it is false appears to suffer from circularity of argument. For establishment of falsity would depend on the prior establishment of the fact that the thing itself had been superimposed.

But establishment of superimposition, which is based on a synthesis of the real with the false, would itself depend on the prior establishment of falsity. Nor does the expounder of the orthodox Advaita doctrine expose himself to criticism if he says that the Self is superimposed as well as the not-self. It is true that the superimposed is unreal in the form in which it is superimposed. But it does not necessarily follow from this that it is unreal in its own original form. In worldly experience, just because silver is sometimes superimposed onto shell (mother of pearl) when the two happen to be lying close together, it does not follow that the silver is unreal in its own form independent of the shell. In the same way, though the Self may be unreal in the form in which it is superimposed on the ego-sense, its reality remains unchallengeable in its own true independent form as changeless Consciousness. And so at the conclusion of his introduction to the Brahma Sūtra Commentary the revered Commentator has no hesitation in saying:

(5) Thus one first superimposes the ego-notion onto the inmost Self, the Witness of all. And then, having done that, one proceeds contrariwise and superimposes that inmost Self, the Witness of all, onto the inner organ (mind) and other elements of the finite personality. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

Here the notion of being the ego-sense is superimposed onto the Self, the Witness of all. And the notion of being the Witness of all is superimposed onto the ego-sense. But this does not mean that the ego-sense really becomes the Witness of all or attains reality. Nor does it mean that the Self becomes the ego-sense or becomes unreal, though it may appear to do so. For the commentary itself goes on to say, 'And all this being so, that onto which a superimposition is made is not in the slightest connected with the qualities or defects of the superimposed appearance' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.).

The Pañcapādikā, we saw, makes another claim, namely that worldly experience (loka-vyavahāra), interpreted as the conviction that one is a human being, is the same as superimposition, quoting in support of the claim the fact that the concluding summary speaks only of 'natural superimposition' (without any qualification to show that 'natural superimposition' should be understood differently from the earlier expression 'natural worldly experience'). My own view, here too, disagrees with the Pañcapādikā. It is that the meaning of the word 'superimposition' is the same at the beginning, middle and end of the introduction to the Commentary (and is not 'worldly experience' but 'the *cause* of worldly experience'). At the beginning, the Commentary stakes out the initial claim, 'From that superimposition there results this natural worldly experience "I am this" and "This is mine"'. In the middle, there is the checking of the premises. 'All commerce between the means of valid knowledge (perception, inference, etc.) and their objects,

whether in the Vedic or secular sphere, proceeds on the basis of this same mutual superimposition of the Self and not-self called Ignorance, as does all Vedic tradition, whether concerned with injunctions and prohibitions or with liberation'. Finally, in the concluding summary he speaks of 'natural superimposition, of the nature of false supposition, directly familiar to everybody, which promotes the idea that one is capable of action and experience'. It is true that we do not here actually find the word 'experience'. But the idea is implicit, in that he says that superimposition is what promotes the idea that one is capable of action and 'enjoyment'.

There are over a hundred texts in the Brahma Sūtra Commentary which speak of superimposition, conceived as erroneous cognition and identified with Ignorance, as the cause of all empirical experience. Here there is space only to quote a few.

(6) And also because perception and the other means of knowledge operate in cattle and other animals, too, who lack discrimination. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

That is, their experience depends on superimposition which, in its turn, has lack of (metaphysical) discrimination (between the Self and the not-self) for its pre-condition.

(7) All practical experience of the Absolute as an object of meditation, or as the one performing meditation, takes place in the state of Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.i.12 = M.V.26,6;49,5)

(8) And in this sense the Veda says, 'For where there is an appearance of duality, there (a subject who is) one sees (an object which is) another' and so on (Bṛhad.IV.v.15). It shows that experience of being able to perform action and so on belongs to the realm of Ignorance, just like the experience of elephants and so on in dreams. And then afterwards it points out how he who has achieved metaphysical discrimination of the Self from the not-self does not have the experience that he is able to perform action and so on, in the words 'But when all has become his own Self, then what could a person see and with what?' (B.S.Bh.I.ii.12)

(9) This idea that the individual soul and the Inner Ruler are different is a result of the apparent conditioning adjuncts of bodies and organs set up by Ignorance.... Once this is understood, the Vedic texts speaking of distinctions such as subject and object, means of empirical knowledge such as perception, etc., transmigratory experience of the world, and the Vedic texts conveying injunctions and prohibitions all become intelligible (even when non-duality is accepted as the final truth). And the Veda itself confirms this. For it shows that all empirical experience belongs to the realm of Ignorance in such texts as, 'For where there is an appearance of duality,

there (a subject who is) one sees (an object which is) another' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15). But this text goes on to deny any empirical experience in the realm of enlightenment in the words, 'But where everything has become the Self, what could one see and with what?' (B.S.Bh.I.ii.20, cp. M.V.27,4;49,6;170,16, note)

(10) The continuous empirical experience of the individual soul proceeds solely through its being afflicted with Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.3, M.V.27,2)

(11) And so when the identity of one's true Self with the Absolute has been apprehended through the Veda it contradicts and cancels the previous natural conviction of one's identity with the body, as the ideas of the rope and the like contradict and cancel the (illusory) notions of the snake and the like. But when the notion of one's identity with the body has been contradicted and cancelled, all empirical experience based on it stands contradicted and cancelled too, so that there is no longer any need to assume a lower aspect of the Absolute, characterized by plurality and variety, in order to explain it. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, M.V.77,7)

Natural empirical experience — i.e. that set up by natural superimposition. This is because superimposition causes one to identify oneself with the body and so on, thinking of it as 'I' and 'mine'.

(12) Nor can it be said that this immediate intuition is either useless or erroneous. For it is seen to bring metaphysical Ignorance to an end, and there is no other knowledge that could cancel this intuition. But before this immediate intuition of the unity and sole existence of the Self, all practical experience of the true and the false holds, both within the Vedic and the secular spheres. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.161,1, note)

(13) Hence the 'lordship' of the Lord, as well as his omniscience and omnipotence exist in relation to external conditions which are of the nature of Ignorance. From the standpoint of ultimate truth, there can be no talk of any opposition between a Lord and his subjects, or of omniscience, etc. (B.S. Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.45,2)

(14) Moreover, when one becomes awake to the non-difference of the soul and the Absolute through such texts teaching their non-difference as 'That thou art', this puts an end to the notion that the individual soul is suffering transmigration, and also to the notion that the Absolute is a world-creator. For all empirical notions of distinction, which are introduced by wrong knowledge, are cancelled and eradicated by right knowledge. (B.S.Bh.II.i.22, cp. M.V.45,5)

(15) Yet the texts teaching that there was a creation are not immediately concerned with proclaiming the ultimate truth. For their subject-matter falls within the realm of practical experience consisting of name and form imagined through Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.II.i.33, cp. M.V.261,10)

(16) All experience, whether secular or based on Vedic teaching, comes to an end in the case of the man of steady wisdom, in whom metaphysical discrimination has arisen. For his Ignorance has come to an end, and that experience was based on Ignorance. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69, cp. M.V.30,10)

In this way, Self and not-self are respectively real and false, since the idea of the Self is unfailingly present, the idea of the not-self not so. And the synthesizing of the real and the false is natural error. It is Ignorance in the form of superimposition, consisting in the idea that Self and not-self are identical and have the same attributes. Worldly experience, on the other hand, is something that is itself set up by Ignorance. It is the idea of all means of empirical knowledge and all objects of empirical knowledge in all their forms. It includes the notion that one is able to act and have experiences, which depend on it, along with all kinds of speech usage, which likewise depend on it, and all engagement in action and all desistance from action, which also depend on it. This is what we see to be the teaching of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary.

In the Pañcapādikā, however, 'superimposition','synthesizing of the real and the unreal' and 'empirical experience' are all taken as synonymous terms. And the term 'worldly experience' is demoted from its natural application to all mental activity whatever and confined to the mere single idea 'I am a human being'. That his system departs from that of Śrī Śaṅkara on this point is clear.

141 THE EGO-SUPERIMPOSITION

The Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara says, 'This natural worldly experience, "I am this, this is mine..."'. Here we extract a few texts to show how the Pañcapādikā interprets the ego-superimposition.

(1) Śrī Śaṅkara sets forth the nature of superimposition as 'I am this, this is mine'. The ego is the first superimposition. Perhaps you will think that 'I' manifests as partless pure Consciousness, so that there is no other part, whether superimposed or not. Well, we will show later how there is another part that is superimposed. (P.P. p.31/5)

(2) When the ego-sense itself is of the nature of

superimposition, its accessories, too, must be of the nature of superimposition. The royal panoply of a king anointed only in the realm of dream or conjured forth by the mass hypnotist is not itself a reality. In the same way, worldly experience, consisting of action, its factors and results and beginning with the ego-sense as its first and foremost feature, is superimposed on the Self, which is eternal, constant, pure, conscious and liberated by nature. (P.P. p.32/5)

This statement that the ego-sense is superimposed on the Self is in harmony with the words of the Commentary, 'Thus one first superimposes the ego-notion onto the inmost Self, the Witness of all one's activities'. That is evident to everyone.

(3) It is true that this ego-sense refers to the experiencing subject, distinct from the body and so on. Nevertheless, because it does not have an exact knowledge of the subject in its true nature, it superimposes the attributes of the latter onto the not-self. We find that a thing may be manifest in its true nature, and yet may appear confused with another thing because its difference from the latter is not clearly apprehended. For example, the vowel 'a' (in the theory of the Mīmāṃsakas) is one; but it appears confused with other notions such as 'short' and 'long'.* (P.P. p.77/15)

**(The Mīmāṃsakas held that vowels were eternal changeless sounds, and that in ordinary speech we utter and hear them in truncated and confused form, superimposing on them shorter or longer duration, high and low pitch, etc. T.N.)*

(4) Yes. It is an illusion, since it is the work of Ignorance. The ego-sense is grounded in its true object (the pure Self) alone. But beginningless Ignorance is found to obscure that sole foundation and create the notion that the ego-sense is grounded in the body and organs. And so (if we take account of Ignorance) there is no contradiction if the ego-sense is founded on its true object (the pure Self), but also takes the body and organs for its object. Therefore, if a discriminative enquiry is also made into the true nature of its object, and this (merely logical) enquiry reveals that nature as it really is, the result is only to get an abstract understanding about where the ground of the ego-sense lies, not to discover anything new in immediate intuition. But, as we have said, the fact of the ego-sense being grounded in the pure Self does not prevent it from identifying itself (through Ignorance) with the body and organs with a sense of 'I' and 'mine'. Therefore there is no change in the ego-sense even after the true nature of the object of the ego-sense has been established by reflective analysis. And so the feeling 'I am a man' is never a mere metaphorical idea (as claimed by the Mīmāṃsakas).* (P.P. p.79 f./16)

(The Mīmāṃsaka ritualists held that the world was real. One school of them said that a person could have knowledge of his eternal soul as separate from his body and yet continue to act in the real world with his body and organs. Indeed, without a conviction that he was an eternal soul no one would perform ritual for the sake of advantages in lives to come. Such a person would speak as if he were the transient body and organs for practical convenience in life, while being clear that in reality he was the eternal soul. The P.P. argues that the mere abstract knowledge that the true 'I' is eternal is not enough to abolish the universal metaphysical Ignorance that causes the 'I' to be identified with the body and mind. Cp. M.V.141,6. T.N.)

The answer to the question whether this does or does not agree with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary depends on how the passage is interpreted. We start from the proposition, 'The true object of the ego-sense is other than the body and organs'. We may then say that the notion that the ego-sense is grounded in the body, etc., when it is really grounded in something other than them, is the result of beginningless Ignorance. People in the world have ego-feeling both for the pure Self and for the body and organs through mutual superimposition. If that is all that is meant, it agrees with the Commentary. But an obstinate insistence on the view 'The ego-sense is sound only when it bears on the experiencing subject' would not appear to be endorsed by the Commentary. For consider the following texts of Śrī Śaṅkara.

(5) This notion that one acts and is an experiencer is a mere piece of imagination arising from the failure to distinguish between the mind and the Self. In truth, action and empirical experience cannot belong to either. (B.S.Bh.I.ii.12)

(6) But can we not say (the Mīmāṃsaka of Prabhākara's school suggests) that the identification of the soul with the body and organs is not false and erroneous, but is a mere figure of speech, since they are known to be different? No. For figurative use of words is only possible when both the figurative meaning and the literal meaning of the words in question are patent and familiar to all.

For instance, regular concomitance shows that it is a certain figure with characteristic features like a large mane which forms the literal meaning of the word and the idea 'lion'. And if we have acquaintance with a man in whom leonine qualities such as ferocity and heroism predominate, he is nevertheless well known to be quite different and distinct from a lion. Now, it will only be a person to whom the two beings are known to be different and distinct who can apply the word or the idea 'lion' to the man in a figurative sense. Such figurative usage cannot be applied to anyone to whom the distinction between the

two beings is not clear. If the latter person applies the name or notion of one of the two beings to the other it will be a case of erroneous judgment and not of deliberate figurative usage. It will be like the application of the name and notion 'man' to a tree-stump not clearly recognized as such in the twilight, or like the application of the name and notion of silver to a piece of shell unwittingly mistaken for silver. How, then, can one say that the word and notion 'I', when applied to the complex of the individual soul and its bodies and organs, are a case of figurative usage, when they arise from failure to distinguish the Self from the not-self? Profound scholars who know the distinction between Self and not-self in theory, apply the name and notion of 'I' to the body through confusion, just like shepherds and goatherds. Hence those who maintain that an eternal soul exists as something quite separate from the body and its organs apply the notion of 'I' to the body and organs not figuratively but erroneously. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.47,2)

(7) It is true that the body and the Self are both already familiar. But they are not familiar to everyone as objects of distinct ideas, like tree-stump and man. In what way, then, are they familiar? Always as objects of inextricably mixed ideas. For no one has the apprehension 'This is the body' and 'This is the Self', where the two cognitions are separate ideas. Thus people are confused about the Self and the not-self, and say 'The Self is such and such, — no, it is such and such else'. It was this particular point I had in mind (said the Teacher) when I said, 'You cannot limit (the range of superimposition) thus (to superimposition of the familiar onto the familiar only). (U.S.(prose) section 54)

After considering the significance of these passages and analysing the subject carefully, one would have to conclude that the contention of the Pañcapādikā — that the individual experiencer is the true object of the ego-sense while the body, organs and mind are the apparent object — is not in harmony with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. For Śrī Śaṅkara said, in commenting on Brahma Sūtra I.i.1 (trans. Gambhīrānanda p.33), that the individual experiencer was the Self as perceived (i.e. misperceived) through Ignorance, conjoined with body, organs and mind. And he claimed that this agreed with the Vedic text, 'The wise say that the individual experiencer is (not the Self in its true nature but) the Self apparently associated with such adjuncts as body, organs and mind' (Kaṭha I.iii.4).

But the statement in the Pañcapādikā also has the force of declaring that some people merely have faith that a soul beyond the body and organs exists and believe that the ego-sense has that for its true object, and that in the case of such people the ego-sense continues to identify itself with the

body and organs as before, and this without any question of figurative usage. To this extent, the statement is in harmony with the teachings of Śrī Śaṅkara.

The Pañcapādikā explains how its own definition fits in with the superimposition of the ego-sense as follows.

(8) Self-luminous as the soul is, its difference from the aggregate of its bodies and organs does not manifest as such. From this results the superimposition 'I am a human being'. And as a result of the experience of this superimposition the soul fails to manifest in its true nature, as identical with the Self and the Absolute, the ultimate cause of this being that beginningless Ignorance which conceals the light of Consciousness; the existence of this Ignorance is revealed by the texts of the Upanishads when their proper implications are understood, and it is that which explains the superimposition of the ego-sense. And because it is beginningless it has the characteristics attributed to it by the revered Commentator of 'having been previously seen' and of being 'of the nature of a memory'.

Further, there is no distinct awareness of the experiencing subject in its true form, while there is direct awareness of the true experiencer (the Self) as intermingled with the not-self. Thus there is a mutual identification implying the false appearance of one thing as another. Hence the definition of superimposition given by the revered Commentator ('the false appearance at one place of what was previously seen at another place') covers the superimposition of the ego-sense onto the Self. (P.P. p.80-2/16)

Here the statement that the ego-sense is not, from the standpoint of the final truth, an attribute of the Self is in conformity with the teaching of the Commentary, as also is the argument adduced, namely that it belongs to the realm of the knowable, like the conviction that one is an individual human being. And that argument also certainly proves that the ego-sense is superimposed through Ignorance. In this connection we may quote the following passages from Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries.

(9) And it is the same if he superimposes the characteristics of his body, and thinks 'I am stout', 'I am lean', 'I am fair of skin', 'I am standing still', 'I am walking', 'I am leaping'. And it is the same if he superimposes the characteristics of the senses.... Thus one first superimposes the ego-sense onto the inmost Self, the Witness.... (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(10) We infer that (pleasure, pain and delusion — sattva, rajas and tamas — ...) do not belong (to the Witness). For they are superimposed through Ignorance, like decrepitude, and

can be rejected or accepted. This being so, transmigratory life, which is equivalent to the notion that one is an individual capable of acting and undergoing experience, belongs to the realm of the knowable and is superimposed on the knower (Witness) through Ignorance. Therefore it does not affect or harm the Witness in any way. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2)

As for the remark (M.V.141,8) 'The soul fails to manifest in its true nature as identical with the Self and the Absolute, the ultimate cause of this being that beginningless Ignorance which conceals the light of Consciousness; the existence of this Ignorance is revealed by the texts of the Upanishads when their proper implications are understood...' — it falls under the criticism made above at M.V.133, so there is nothing further to be said about it here.

142 THE SELF AS THE OBJECT OF THE NOTION 'I'

In the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary, Śrī Śaṅkara raises the question: 'But how can there be a superimposition of the object and its attributes onto the inmost Self, which is not an object? For a person normally superimposes one object onto another object standing in front of him, whereas you say that the inmost Self does not pertain to the sphere of the not-self and is not an object'. And the reply is made, 'It is not altogether a non-object. For it is the object of the ego-notion'. This is explained in the Pañcapādikā sub-commentary as follows.

(1) The ego-sense is regarded as the notion 'I'. It includes a 'this' element and a 'not-this' element. (P.P. p.85 f./17)

(2) Though Consciousness is homogeneous and not a 'this', and therefore not an object, yet, because it becomes capable of entering into empirical experience through the ego-sense, it can be spoken of figuratively as 'the object of the idea "I"'. For what is capable of entering into empirical experience is invariably an object of knowledge.

But do we not here have circularity of argument? Superimposition depends upon availability for empirical experience. But availability for empirical experience depends upon an ego-sense (to have the experience), which in turn depends upon superimposition. Not so — there is no defect of circularity, because superimposition is beginningless. (P.P. p.113 f./24)

Here, too, the teaching is that a latent impression is the cause of error, since it has been earlier explained that the ego-sense and its latent impression precede and follow one another as cause and effect, in a beginningless cycle like

seed and sprout. (See P.P. p.112/23.)

(3) The complex that forms the ego-sense is called 'I', and it is also a notion. For, being intermingled with pure Consciousness, the 'not-this', it is the cause of its manifestation, as a mirror is the cause of the manifestation of a mirror-image. As Consciousness therefore *seems to be* its object, it is spoken of figuratively as if it *was* its object, and is called the object of the ego-sense. (P.P. p.133 f./29)

Here Śri Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary raises the question 'How can there be superimposition of an object and its attributes onto something (the Self) which is not an object?' And it gives the reply, 'It is not altogether a non-object, because it is the object of the ego-notion'. It is clear that it has been accepted that the Self stands as an object and that an explanation for this fact must be found. But the Pañcapādikā claims that the ego-notion is only the appearance of an ego-notion, and that the ego-sense is therefore only figuratively called a notion, because it is the medium through which the Self manifests. Its being an object is also figurative. And being capable of entering into empirical experience is said to be equivalent to having a hypothetical kind of existence. From every point of view, there is the refusal to admit that the Self can be the object of the ego-notion, if the word 'object' be accepted in its primary sense. How this would serve to answer the question raised by the objector is not clear. (The question was: 'How can there be superimposition... onto the inmost Self, which is not an object?' — to which Śrī Śaṅkara gave the simple reply, based on universal experience, 'It is not altogether a non-object, for it is the object of the ego-notion'.)

Further, an earlier objection was raised by the opponent envisaged in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The opponent was made to claim that, since subject and object are of contradictory nature, they cannot either be of the nature of the other, so that it is impossible that they should be superimposed. And yet we all have worldly experience based on just this same natural superimposition. The expounder of the finally accepted view answers the objection by appealing to universal experience, on the principle 'Nothing that is perceived can be impossible'. Śrī Śaṅkara does not refute the objector (in the manner of the Pañcapādikā) by saying that the ego-notion has no object. Instead, he argues as follows.

Superimposition is 'the notion of one thing mistakenly applied to another thing'. It is well known that this normally means the superimposition of one object onto another. But the inmost Self is not an object, as it does not fall into the category of the not-self. And so an objector is again set up asking 'How, then, can there be superimposition in the case of the inmost Self?' And then the answer is given, 'This inmost

Self is not altogether a non-object'. How could the opponent possibly be silenced by appeal, in the manner of the Pañcapādikā, to a hypothetical ego-notion having a hypothetical object? An enemy who puts together a great army of well-armed warriors cannot be put to flight by soldiers bearing mere pictures of arms.

When the Pañcapādikā accepts the doctrine that the 'being an object' of the Self consists in becoming accessible to practical experience through an ego-notion that is merely figurative, it exposes itself to another charge. In the case of the ego-sense, superimposition depends on availability for empirical experience. But availability for empirical experience depends on superimposition (M.V.142,2). The reply given that there is no circularity of argument because we have a beginningless cycle like that of seed and sprout is not correct. For if accessibility to empirical experience and superimposition followed one another in time, like seed and sprout, this would result in the absurd consequence that time was not itself superimposed.

It follows that the Pañcapādikā has not here given a correct interpretation of the Commentary. It is a fact (of universal experience) that the Self is the object of the ego-notion and also that there is superimposition. So there is no contradiction, since the opponent, too, agrees that there can be superimposition of objects on objects. But objectivity of this kind derives from superimposition. Nor does this result either in circularity of argument or in superimposition occurring in time (considered as a real entity, itself not superimposed). From the standpoint of superimposition, the Self appears as object of the ego-notion and as the substratum on which the attributes of the latter are superimposed at the same time, even as a dream-cow and its calf are perceived at the same time. From the standpoint of the highest truth, nothing but the supreme non-dual Self exists. And this, as it seems to us, is the simple and correct way of explaining the Commentary.

143 THE EGO-NOTION

What is the nature of the experience 'I'? The Pañcapādikā mentions two alternative views in the guise of objections, first the view of the followers of Prabhākara, then the view of the followers of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.

(1) The object of an act of cognition is known directly, because it is the object of the act. The knower and the knowledge are immediately evident, too, but they are not known as objects. Knowledge is immediate experience (anubhava). It is self-luminous, and is the resultant-cognition that arises from the application of the means of knowledge. The subject and the object manifest through the power of this immediate

experience. On the other hand we are never directly aware of the means of knowledge (the perception, inference, etc. by which knowledge is gained). It is a function carried out by the knowing subject, but it always has to be inferred from its end-product, the resultant-cognition. In the case of 'I know this', knowledge is the function of the knower, but it bears on the object, not on the self of the knower. The self of the knower is known indirectly as 'I' in knowing the resultant-cognition and the object; it is only known mediately through experience of objects. (P.P. pp.87-9/17, expounding the Prābhākara view)

(2) It is not so. The ego-notion is not mediated through the knowledge of the object. It is a separate cognition of the form 'I' bearing on the self alone as its object. The self is an object of knowledge because it is a substance, and yet it is also the subject because it is the knower. Because the ego-sense illumines both the subject and the object in the case of the act of self-knowledge, we know that the self is both a subject and an object. Thus it has a 'this' aspect (aspect as object) and a 'not-this' aspect. For its object-aspect has the form 'this', and its subject-aspect has the form 'not-this'. (P.P. p.89/17-8, expounding the Bhāṭṭa view)

This doctrine of the Bhāṭṭas (followers of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa) is refuted by the Prābhākaras (school of Prabhākara) as follows. It is wrong, they say, because the soul does not have parts (aspects). And the soul is not subject to change. The object has the form of a 'this' because it is external, not being the soul. The self-luminous immediate experience that constitutes the resultant-cognition in knowledge of, say, blue, illumines the objects as a 'this' and the knowing subject as a 'not-this', while it enables one to infer that perception must have been at work.

After refuting both these views, the author of the Pañcapādikā sets forth his own view as follows.

(3) Thus the Self, of the nature of pure Consciousness, can be called 'immediate experience' (anubhava) when it has the apparent limiting adjunct of this or that known object (in the course of the knowing process). It is called 'the Self' or by other names when no reference to apparent conditioning adjuncts is intended, as the trees of a forest are referred to as trees when one is not concerned with the fact that they stand packed together to form a forest. This is the view you will have to accept in the end. (P.P. p.93/19)

(4) Thus the ego-sense is not just another idea bearing on an object, differing only from the idea of blue and so on in that it happens to bear on the Self instead of on blue. Nor is the ego-notion a mere by-product of the experience of objects....

This beginningless Ignorance,... which remains in dreamless sleep as the mere latent impression of its power of projection, concealing the light of Consciousness,... is taught in various ways in the Vedas, Smṛtis, Epics and Purāṇas.... It assumes, under the control of the supreme Lord, a certain form in which it has the two cosmic powers of knowledge and activity. In this form, it is the sole source of the power to act or experience as an individual. Its light derives from its being united with the eternal changeless Consciousness. As such it stands as the self-luminous, immediately evident ego-sense. It is because of its union with this ego-sense that the eternal changeless Consciousness, the 'not-this' element in the ego-sense, the universal Self, becomes erroneously known as the experiencer....

This form assumed by the power of Ignorance is separated intellectually by the exponents of the upanishadic tradition from the Self, which forms the 'not-this'. So separated, it is labelled inner sense, mind, intellect and ego with respect to the individual forms assumed by its power of knowledge. In its power as physical energy it is called the vital energy (prāṇa). Thus the notion that the Self is the ego-sense is false, and is caused by the colouring of Consciousness that the inner sense receives from the Self, which is false like the red colour apparently assumed by a crystal from an adjunct in the form of a red object lying next to it. (P.P. pp.97-100/20)

We have already said that the doctrine taught here and frequently elsewhere in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.134,1;139,4;142,2) that the ego-sense is a transformation of the power of Ignorance supported by pure Consciousness as pure Being is nowhere found in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary.

The question asked in the present extract is, 'How does the experience "I" arise?' Is it the Self that is the object of the ego-notion, being itself both subject and object of such a cognition? Or is it that the notion 'I' is just a by-product of experience of objects? Or is there some other cause altogether for the ego-notion? — if these questions are under discussion, then a mere unsupported claim that the ego-sense is a particular transformation of the power of Ignorance is clearly not going to stand as the final answer to the enquiry. The Commentary manifestly says that the ego-notion is a notion that indeed arises, but it does not explain how or why it arises. It does not say, in the manner of the Pañcapādikā, that the ego-sense is called the ego-notion in a figurative sense.

All that Śrī Śaṅkara says is the following. The notion 'I am the one who acts' is imagined through Ignorance, as is the notion that the individual soul acts and undergoes experiences. However, there exists, over and above the individual soul imagined as acting and experiencing, a Witness onto which this acting and experiencing are superimposed through Ignorance. On

this topic one should observe the following passages from Śrī Śaṅkara's works.

(5) The Buddhist Nihilists deny that anything exists over and above the body even though they have the ego-notion.... The Mīmāṃsakas and Logicians, however, when they come to know of their own Self, do so through Vedic tradition and through signs for inference pointed out by the Veda. But although they are in fact following the Veda, they suppose that the signs, such as the ego-notion, that are actually pointed out by the Veda, come from the teachings of their own school, and say, 'The soul is both immediately evident and subject to inference'. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

This affirms that an ego-notion is something that comes into being.

(6) For it is only the Self perceived through Ignorance as united with the body and organs that is purified through ritualistic acts.... It is only through that ego-sense, the 'knower' who is yet the object of the ego-notion, that all acts are carried out, and it is the ego-sense that experiences their results. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

Here it is affirmed that the one who acts and who experiences, the individual soul, is the object of the ego-notion.

(7) Nor can the Self of all, present in all beings, one, everywhere the same, eternally raised above all change, the Spirit, be known by anyone as an object, either through the texts of the ritualistic section of the Veda or in the context of logical enquiry, except as object of the ego-notion, of which it is in fact the Witness. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

Here, too, it is accepted that it is the Self in the illusory form in which it appears to be capable of action that is the object of the ego-notion, and it is implied that its Witness is not an object at all.

(8) When the ego-notion, the seed of action, present in the inner organ (mind), has been burnt up by the conviction 'I am not the ego', how can further action spring up (from such a burnt seed)? (U.S.(verse) IV.1)

Here, too, the ego-notion is said to be the seed of action. And action belongs to the one who has the ego-notion, the Self in the illusory form in which it appears capable of action. If the seed of action is burnt by the fire of the knowledge 'I am not capable of action' the sprout of action will not appear — that is the meaning of the verse.

The following verses were written by Sureśvara in his Naiṣkarmya Siddhi.

(9) Just as there is no manifestation of the 'I' without a modification of the mind directed to the external, so there is no clear manifestation of Ignorance unless the mind is itself manifest. (N.Sid. III.58)

There is no manifestation of the 'I', even though it is present, unless there is a mental idea focussed on the external realm. And, in the same way, in the case of those who have not heard the upanishadic texts, Ignorance is not manifest to them in dreamless sleep, even though it is present. Why is that so? Because Ignorance can only manifest in the form 'I do not know', and this can only occur when the mind is operating.

(10) Just as fire and wood are burner and burnt respectively, though appearing as one blazing indistinguishable mass, even so the 'I' and the knower of the 'I', though indistinguishable in empirical experience, are respectively known and knower. (N.Sid. III.59)

Here we find an answer to the objection, 'There is no subject-object distinction in the Self, the object of the ego-notion, as there is no clear experience of there being one'. The fire as burner and the wood as the fuel being burnt, though different, do not appear different in the blazing log. In the same way, the Self as knower and the ego-sense both appear through superimposition without distinction as the Self of the experiencer in the form of 'I'. In reflection on dreamless sleep and other such states, however, one can see that the two are in fact different.

(11) The Witness knows objects as 'this', the 'I' (ego) knows them as 'mine'. The notion 'this' arises through the illusory limiting adjunct of Ignorance. 'Mine' is thus a modification of the 'I'. (N.Sid. III.60)

This is an answer to the objection, 'If the ego, too, belongs to the side of the object, why does not it manifest as "mine"?' The knower has the knowledge 'this' through the sole adjunct of Ignorance. The Self in its unregenerate form as still unknown superimposes onto itself the power to have knowledge as an individual subject, and perceives all else as an object and a 'this'. The notion 'mine' does not arise from the Self as associated with the adjunct of Ignorance. The notion 'mine' arises when the Self is associated with the adjunct of Ignorance and also *of 'I'. The notion 'mine' can only arise through the operation of the ego-notion. This is made clear in Sureśvara's introductory prose commentary to the verse III.60.*

(12) Because nothing else can make any contribution to the Witness, the 'I' is not adopted by it with the feeling 'mine'. On the contrary, it is a 'this', just like a pot or any other object, because its basis is just Ignorance. (N.Sid. III.61)

External objects like pots and so forth are either helpful or harmful. But this is not the case with the ego-sense, so the Witness does not adopt it with the feeling 'mine'. As the only adjunct of the Witness here is Ignorance, the ego-sense is known to the Witness as a 'this'.

(13) In itself, the Self is free from Ignorance and modification, and feels neither 'this' nor 'mine'. For it is only the one who has woken up from sleep (i.e. the empirical knower) who experiences Ignorance and feels 'I did not know (anything then)'. (N.Sid. III.62)

It has already been shown earlier that when both Ignorance and a modification in the form of 'I' are present, then the idea regularly comes 'This is mine'. In addition to this positive rule, the purpose of the present verse is to indicate the corresponding negative rule that when neither of them are present then neither the idea 'this' nor the idea 'mine' arises. In dreamless sleep there is no Ignorance and no ego-notion. So no knowledge of 'this' or of 'mine' arises. The subsequent reflection 'I knew nothing' occurs to one who has woken up. Otherwise the subsequent reflection would have revealed knowledge of objects and sense of possession.

As can be seen from these quotations from the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi, the system of Sureśvara and his Vārtikas is different from that of the Pañcapādikā. In the system of Sureśvara, the ego-notion only manifests when summoned to do so by a mental idea representing an external object. Here, as in the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara, the ego-superimposition is traced to the non-discrimination of the mind, and is confined to the waking state. For Sureśvara claims that the mind is not present in dreamless sleep.

Our own opinion in this matter is as follows. According to Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, not a single instance of empirical experience occurs without superimposition of the ego-sense. He says, 'Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in the feelings of "I" and "mine" there can be no empirical knower and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro., cp. M.V. p.274). But the Self is not always throughout our ordinary experience the object of the ego-notion with the feeling 'I' present to consciousness, nor are objects always objects of the notion 'mine'. The feeling of identity with the body, sense-organs and mind is natural (naisargika, uncaused, beginningless). But consciousness of the Self as object of the ego-notion is only occasional

and temporary. From the standpoint of the highest truth, our Self is unborn, non-dual pure Consciousness by nature, eternally raised above all change. But from the worldly standpoint based on metaphysical Ignorance, it appears to be divided into knower, knowledge and known, into actor, act, instruments and results, into experiencer, experience and experienced. This is beginningless Ignorance. You cannot ask for a cause of it.

For it is the very nature of Ignorance that it should set up the appearance of the existence of things that do not really exist, and should make the Self appear to be circumscribed by them. It creates feelings of approbation and disapprobation towards the realm of illusory objects that it has itself projected, along with the imaginary idea that they are favourable or unfavourable. It produces attachment and aversion in the Self, and the urge to act in accordance with these feelings. Ignorance, itself unmanifest, is the author of all this. Into empirical experience, which is by nature chaotic, it introduces the appearance of order. It makes the Self into an individual capable of empirical knowledge, and it makes objects into objects of the notion 'this' entertained by the mind of the Self in its capacity as individual experiencer. It confers on the Self the appearance of the power to act, and onto objects the appearance of coming within the range of that 'action' by the Self. It confers onto the Self the appearance of being an individual experiencer, and onto objects the capability of being experienced. It confers the notion 'I' on the Self, and the notion of 'mine' onto the objects that fall within the Self's experience.

This being so, the ego-notion bearing on the Self is not manifest when the mind is engrossed in objects, as it is then totally engrossed in them like the arrow-maker who did not notice the king passing by as he sat engrossed in his work (B.S.Bh.III.ii.10). Nor is it present in that bewildered state where lust or anger or other passions overwhelm the mind and all other ideas are put to sleep. But when the people of the world are engaged in reflecting about themselves, then the ego-notion regularly appears, in such typical forms as 'I am stout', 'I have eyes', 'I have a will', 'I have certitude about such and such', 'I am successful' or 'I am happy'. So it follows that Ignorance in general is the superimposition of the ego-notion onto body, senses, mind, intellect and ego, but that the particular manifestations of the ego-notion in regard to the body and the rest are transient and temporary. The attribute of belonging to the realm of the ego-notion, mentioned in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, applies equally to the beginningless and to the temporary forms of the ego-notion. When the matter is understood in this way there is no confusion.

Here we should examine what the Pañcapādikā means in its doctrine of the mutual superimposition of the Witness and the ego-notion.

(14) If there were only a superimposition of objective elements onto the inmost Self, the inmost Self would not manifest. For the shell does not manifest when silver is superimposed on it, while Consciousness does manifest in the ego-sense and other component elements of the individual personality. And again, if there were only the superimposition of Consciousness onto the ego-sense and the rest, then the ego would not manifest, and neither would the world-appearance, of which it is the chief factor. To avoid both these unacceptable conclusions, the revered Commentator goes on to say, in accordance with experience, '(Thus one first superimposes the ego-notion onto the inmost Self, the Witness of all.) And then, having done that, one proceeds contrariwise and superimposes that inmost Self, the Witness of all, onto the inner organ (mind) and other factors of the finite personality'. (P.P. p.157 f./35-6)

This does not seem to us to be correct reasoning. There is no universal rule to say that, in all superimpositions, only the superimposed element manifests, and the substratum onto which it is superimposed does not manifest at all. For we see even in the case of the superimposition of silver that the 'this' element of the shell manifests in correlation with the silver to yield 'This is silver'. Children superimpose onto their own face the idea that it is identical with the mirror image, and yet the face is manifest independently of the mirror image. And if there were a law that that on which anything was superimposed did not itself manifest, then, if mutual superimposition of Self and ego were admitted, why would this not result in the non-manifestation of either?

Thus there can be no objection against this assumption of mutual superimposition, since it accords with universal experience. All the Pañcapādikā ought to have done was to explain what that universal experience was. You do not need reasoning to support universal experience. The point made by the Pañcapādikā about the non-manifestation of the substratum of a superimposition was not what Śrī Śaṅkara had in mind when he spoke of mutual superimposition. What did he have in mind then?

He said elsewhere, 'Superimposition is the synthesis of the real with the false' (M.V.22,4) and also 'That onto which a superimposition is made is not connected even in the slightest with the qualities or defects of the superimposed appearance' (cp. M.V.140.5, note). These two points are brought out again when he says, 'Thus one first superimposes the ego-notion onto the inmost Self, the Witness of all. And then, having done that, one proceeds contrariwise and superimposes that inmost Self, the Witness of all, onto the inner organ (mind) and other factors of the individual personality'. The superimposition onto the Witness of the power to act and undergo changes of state associated with the ego, and the superimposition of

the interiority and consciousness that belong properly to the Witness onto the ego, mind, body and sense-organs of the individual soul are both false. It is made clear that such superimpositions do not really introduce the defect of changeability into the Witness. Nor do they really introduce consciousness as an attribute of the ego and other factors into the individual personality. On this topic, we find it said elsewhere:

(15) If you say that it is wrong to speak of two notions arising with reference to one substratum (as at M.V.140,4), since the substance to which existence is attributed, namely, 'pot', etc., is non-existent in each case, we reply 'No'. For we find two notions arising with reference to one substratum when we refer to a non-existence in actual experience, as when we speak of 'this water' in the case of a mirage and so on. (Bh.G.Bh.II.16)

Here, in the idea 'the pot is existent', the notion 'existent' refers to the Self, which is real. The notion 'pot' refers to the pot, which is unreal, just as the idea 'this' refers to the desert, while the idea of water refers to the illusory water.

(16) Indeed, whenever there is a reflection of a thing, the thing and its reflection are apt to be identified through lack of proper discrimination. In this way everyone naturally fails to discriminate between the Self and the intellect in which it is reflected and says 'He knows' as if it were an act. Superimposing onto the Self the agency pertaining properly to the mind, we say of the Self 'he knows' and call it the knower. And superimposing onto the mind the Consciousness (that pertains properly to the Self), we speak of the mind also as the knower. (U.S.(verse) XVIII.64-5)

The notion that the Witness performs knowledge as an act is false. Similarly, the identification of the reflection of Consciousness perceived in the mind (lit. in the ego) with the mind is also false (cp. Sac, **Kleśāpahāriṇī** *p.171).*

(17) True, the Logicians say 'Knowledge is produced causally'. But they are deluded by the representations of the mind, which are admittedly produced and have a *semblance* of consciousness. (U.S.(verse) XVIII.68)

Different states such as knowledge, ignorance and doubt, etc., are falsely superimposed onto the Self as if they were modifications arising in it. Similarly, identity with Consciousness is falsely superimposed onto the ego (or mind).

144 THE EXAMPLES OF SUPERIMPOSITION GIVEN IN THE PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ

First the Pañcapādikā says, 'Therefore it is but a false appearance when the Self seems to acquire the nature of the ego-sense, through colouring received from the mind, like the false appearance of red colour assumed by the crystal through the external adjunct (the red rose lying adjacent)' (P.P. p.100/20). Then it raises the question 'How can the Absolute assume the false appearance of being the individual soul?' And it quotes three examples by way of illustration, namely the reflection in a crystal, the rope-snake, and the example of the ether of space apparently delimited by pots.

(1) The red colour of a crystal placed near a red flower is false. One cannot conceive that the rays of light proceeding from the eyes and deflected from the crystal onto the red flower would perceive the red colour anywhere else except in the red flower where it belonged (reading japākusumastham vihāyānyatra, cp. P.P. p.100/21). Nor can there be visual perception of a mere colour detached from the thing of which it is a colour. Nor is it correct to maintain that the crystal manifests as red because it is really pervaded by a red sheen emanating from the red flower. (For in that case the notion that the crystal was red would still be false, as it would really remain its own whitish colour. Or if the red sheen were supposed to dispel the whitish colour, the crystal would be left colourless, and what is colourless (like the air) is not an object of vision at all.) And in any case a red flower does not emit a red sheen (as a glittering red jewel does). So we conclude that the ego-colouring in the Self as Consciousness is false, like the apparent colouring in a crystal deriving from an external adjunct. (P.P. p.100 ff./21, summarized)

(2) We point to the example of the reflection of the face in a mirror or the moon in water. It implies that the individual soul is not a reality separate from the Absolute, separate from the 'not-this' element in the ego-sense, any more than the reflection in the illustrations cited is a separate reality different from the original. In fact it *is* the Absolute. But we speak of it as 'illusory' to show that there is just the error that it *seems* to be different. How do we know that it is identical with the Absolute? Because we see that its nature is the same.

An opponent might object that he could accept that the soul was not a separate reality over against the Absolute, but not that it was identical with the Absolute. For shell-silver, though undeniably false, is seen to manifest with the same nature as real silver, (which is nevertheless different, from the very fact of being real). But this objection is incorrect. For the shell-silver is indeed false, since it is contradicted

and cancelled. But no such contradiction and cancellation is found in the case of the individual soul.... But do we not see it cancelled through the text 'That thou art'? Not so. The words 'that thou' teach that, in his true nature, the individual soul, corresponding to the reflection in the illustration, is the Absolute, corresponding to the original of the reflection in the illustration. Otherwise the text would have said not 'That thou art' but 'Thou art not', as one says 'It is not silver'. And experience based on the teaching of the Veda also shows that the final truth is that the reflection is identical with the original.... We do not admit that the separation of the individual soul and the Absolute is real. We affirm their identity. Their separation is an appearance set up by Māyā....

But the individual soul, as a reflection, is immediately known to all of us as consciousness; it is not (unlike the shell, blotted out by the silver), blotted out by the natural non-consciousness of the mind (cp. M.V.244,5). It takes the ego-sense for its Self, and does not realize its identity with the Absolute, as the reflection is identical with its original in the reflection-example. And so it is right to affirm that, when it (realizes it is the Absolute, and) loses its form as a reflection, it will lose its character of falsity too. (P.P. pp.104-11/21-3)

(3) One might object that, in the cases cited, there is a real cause of error near the person under illusion, in the form of a mirror or piece of polished lac. But how can a theorist like you, who holds that all that is not pure Consciousness is the play of illusion, appeal to a real external cause of error near the one under delusion? To set aside doubts of this kind, the Teachers of our school appeal to the (other) example of the rope-snake. You will perhaps reply that even there, though there is admittedly no external snake present, there will be the latent impression of the previous experience of one. We agree. It is the latent impression from previous experience that is the cause of error. We shall explain later (M.V.142,2, above) how, here too, the ego-sense and the latent impression it leaves form a beginningless cycle of cause and effect, like seed and sprout. (P.P. p.111 f/23-4)

(4) Union with the red colour is possible for the crystal, because the crystal has parts. But we know that what manifested as union with red colour was not really such, as subsequent experience shows it to have been an illusion of indeterminable reality-grade. Still, what is actually only a reflection in the crystal is imagined as if it were really related to it. In the case of the rope, however, there is simply the notion that it is a snake, without any question of its being either in union with the rope or not in union with it. Therefore... the relationlessness of the Self is not clearly brought

out in this illustration. For that purpose there is resort to the illustration of pots and the ether of space. For neither distinction, form, use (e.g. for storing) or name (e.g. 'space in the pot') belong to the space in the pot considered in itself (since it is one with the undifferentiated universal space); it only acquires these distinctions when it is thought of in relation to this or that context. (P.P. p.112 f./24)

Now, it is true that the author of the Pañcapādikā here makes a disclaimer. He says: 'All these examples are for the purpose of calming the mind and undermining the preliminary prejudice according to which what has in fact been proved by Vedic revelation, reason and the direct experience of the sages is thought to be impossible. They are not intended as direct proofs of reality'. Nevertheless there is a difference between Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries and the Pañcapādikā about how the examples cited relate to what they exemplify and what points of resemblance they are intended to illustrate. So we shall make some examination here of the examples cited in the Pañcapādikā.

When the crystal example is brought forward by Śrī Śaṅkara, he never speaks of the red colour as 'indeterminable'.

(5) Compare the case of a piece of transparent crystal, where before the introduction of a discriminating cognition the true nature of the crystal, which is really light and transparent, does not seem to be different from such external adjuncts as the red or blue colour of objects near which it is placed. But after the rise of a discriminating cognition, the crystal becomes distinct, and it is said to have 'attained' its true nature as light and transparent, although it was really exactly the same all along. In the same way, when the true nature of the soul does not yet appear to be discriminated from the body and external adjuncts, the knowledge arising from the Veda that does effect this discrimination is what constitutes 'transcending the body'. And the 'attainment' of the soul's true nature is nothing other than direct knowledge of the true nature of the Self, the result of the discriminating cognition. The question whether the soul 'has' or 'has not' a body depends simply on whether discrimination has or has not arisen. (B.S. Bh.I.iii.19, M.V.101,3)

Here, the phrase 'although it was really exactly the same all along' negates the possibility of the creation of redness of indeterminable reality-grade at the time of non-discrimination. The assertion 'depends simply on whether discrimination has or has not arisen' shows that the question whether the soul has or does not have a body depends solely on whether or not metaphysical discrimination has been achieved: it does not depend on the rise and negation of an adjunct of indeterminable reality-grade. Similarly, in the phrase 'does not yet appear

to be discriminated', the word 'iva' (translated as 'appear') excludes any actual *creation of an adjunct of indeterminable reality-grade.*

In regard to the example of the reflection in mirror, water or other reflecting medium, the special point emphasized in the Pañcapādikā is that no cancellation is effected by 'That thou art' and that the text only affirms the identity of the individual soul with the Absolute in the same sense that a reflection is identical with its original (M.V.144,2). That special point does not agree with the teachings of Śrī Śaṅkara.

(6) The function of teachings like 'That thou art', associated with reasoning over their meaning, is merely to negate the not-self element from this Self, which is itself already existent and evident as 'I am'. The process is like the negation of the idea of a snake falsely imagined in a rope. (U.S.(verse) XVIII.4)

Here what is taught is the cancellation *of the notion of an objective element in the self-evident Self, as the notion of a snake is cancelled in the rope by a correcting-cognition.*

(7) One should understand that the individual soul stands to the supreme Self as the little image of the sun reflected in water stands to the real sun. The individual soul (as such) is not identical with the Self. Yet it is not a separate entity either. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.50, cp. M.V.95,1, note)

The words 'The individual soul (as such) is not identical with the Self' stand in open contradiction with the claim of the Pañcapādikā, 'The reflection is identical with the original'. It is true that the revered Commentator accepts that the principle of Consciousness present in the individual soul is identical with the Absolute. But there is no contradiction, as what he is really saying, even here, is that the soul's nature as an individual soul is imaginary. He denies the identity of the soul with the Absolute when the soul is considered in its imaginary form as an individual.

(8) If the supreme Self is without suffering and there is no sufferer other than it, would not that mean that the whole initiative of the Veda to remove pain was useless? No, for its purpose is to remove the erroneous notion, superimposed through Ignorance, that one is a sufferer. It is like removing the error of the rustic who forgot to count himself when counting up the number (of the people who had crossed the river, cp. M.V.59,14). And we admit the existence of an *imaginary* self undergoing suffering (cp. M.V.95,1, note).

Before the projection of the world (at the beginning of the world-period) the Self was not manifest. After the world as

effect had been projected and made manifest, the Self became manifest within mind (first in the Cosmic Mind, B.B.V. I.iv. 510). It is taught in the words 'It entered here' that it had projected the world as effect and then appeared to have 'entered' it like the sun or other entity appearing to 'enter' water or some other medium as a reflection. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

Here the use of the example of the tenth man shows that two points are accepted. The function of the Veda is to put an end to errors about one's own nature, as the bystander put an end to the erroneous notion of the person counting that he was not the tenth. And the Veda has legitimate scope for its activity, in that its teaching envisages the imagined suffering self. It is clear that on this conception the teaching that one is the supreme Self is effected through the cancellation *of the individual soul, a merely imaginary idea.*

Consider, again, the rope-snake example. Here it was said in the Pañcapādikā: 'It is the latent impression from previous experience that is the cause of error.... Here, too, the ego-sense and the latent impression it leaves form a beginningless cycle of cause and effect, like seed and sprout' (M.V.144,3, *ad fin.*). If Śrī Śaṅkara's phrase 'what has previously been seen... of the nature of a memory' is interpreted in the manner of the Pañcapādikā as meaning that superimposition implies a threefold cause, (sense-contact with the substratum of the superimposition, defect in apprehender, organ or object, latent impression from previous experience activated by the defect, M.V.136,1; 138,1-4) — then we have already explained how this teaching is nowhere found in Śrī Śaṅkara's writings (M.V.136,1, note; 138,4, note; 138;5-12). The teaching about the formation of a snake of indeterminable reality-grade has also been refuted above (rope-snake example mentioned, M.V.144,3; theory that the superimposition-cognition has an object of indeterminable reality-grade, M.V.138,1 and 3; refutation of this theory, M.V.138,4, note; 138,5 ff.; cp. also 136,1, note; 137 *ad fin.*). Nothing further, therefore, remains to be said here. We shall rest content with the quotation of two short texts.

(9) And there is no difference between the reality as it is during the time of the snake-idea and the reality as it is after the snake-idea has disappeared. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.6)

Nothing is said here about the formation (as an object) of a snake of indeterminable reality-grade during the time of the erroneous notion of a snake.

(10) Just as the rope-snake, (though unreal), possesses being by virtue of the rope until it is discriminated from it, so also does the complex of the Self, the reflecting medium and the reflection possess being by virtue of the changeless Self

(until it is discriminated from it). (U.S.(verse) XVIII.46 and 47, cp. M.V.118,13 note)

Even before discrimination, the rope-snake was really the rope. And in the same way, the ego-sense seated in the reflection of the Self, has reality only through the Self. Here, too, there is no acceptance of the existence of an illusory snake over and above the rope.

145 THE IDENTITY OF SUPERIMPOSITION AND IGNORANCE

Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says: 'This very superimposition, thus defined, the wise call "Ignorance". And ascertainment of the ultimately real principle through discrimination between the confused elements (in this mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self) they call "knowledge"'. On this the Pañcapādikā comments:

(1) The knowers of the Absolute term 'knowledge' (vidyā) that ordinary knowledge (vijñāna) in the world which determines the object in its own true nature as a rope, and dissolves the superimposed snake that was not the true form of the rope. (P.P. p.137 f./30)

If che orginary knowledge of the world is termed 'knowledge' (vidyā), then why bring forward the extra characteristic of destroying superimposed things, by saying 'dissolves the snake'? We are not ordinarily aware of knowledge of the rope going on to make a further operation to dissolve the rope-snake after it had already put an end to the idea *of a snake by its rise. No answer is offered in the Pañcapādikā to the question why an extra operation should be required to dissolve a non-existent snake. Perhaps it will be said that 'dissolution of the snake' is nothing more than cancellation of the illusory idea of the snake. But this would contradict what had been said in the Pañcapādikā. For it speaks directly of the superimposition of an object in the course of its definition of superimposition, and makes imposition of the false cognition of a snake a secondary phenomenon, dependent on the objectively existent false rope-snake (śukti-gata-mithyā-rajatam ālambanam... mithyālambanam jñānam mithyājñānam, P.P. p.52/9, M.V.138,2* ad fin.). *Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, on the other hand, affirms that superimposition occurs through failure to discriminate, and that 'knowledge' (vidyā) means ascertainment of the true nature of reality through discrimination; so it is clear that, for him, the description of knowledge and Ignorance (excluded the notion of illusory external objects and) was confined to the realm of ideas.*

(2) If this be so, you might object, then it was an offence against the law of economy in thought to have begun with superimposition and then to have called that Ignorance. It would have been simpler to have started with Ignorance in the first place. But this, we reply, is not correct. For if the revered Commentator had first mentioned Ignorance, that would only have covered its veiling function, not its role of causing evil by manifesting reality as different from what it is. So the right course in the context was first to show, by the use of the word 'superimposition', that Ignorance had the power to make reality appear as other than it is, and then to show by the use of the word 'Ignorance' (avidyā, lit. = non-knowledge) that it could be removed only by knowledge. (P.P. p.138/30)

If this were so, then why did the author of the Pañcāpādikā explain the phrase '(this worldly experience) based on wrong knowledge' as meaning 'having the power of Ignorance, indeterminable as real or unreal, as its material cause'? You do not clarify the nature of anything by describing it as its own material cause. So this appears to be an incorrect conception. In the Sūtra 'Now, therefore, the enquiry into the Absolute' it is taught that there must be reflection for the sake of knowledge of the Absolute, and also that knowledge is the means to the highest human end. This implies that the sole cause of bondage is Ignorance, which can be corrected and cancelled through knowledge.

What is the nature of this Ignorance? Is it ordinary 'ignorance' as generally recognized and spoken of in other schools and in other spiritual and philosophical works? Or is it something different? To answer this question, Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary first speaks of 'this Ignorance' as being of the nature of mutual superimposition of subject and object, a synthesizing of the real with the false. Then later it speaks here of this Ignorance, hitherto referred to as superimposition, as 'Ignorance', to agree with the name authorized by the Veda and Smṛti. Such, at any rate, is our own view. It is not correct to say that this fails to refer to the veiling quality of Ignorance. For Śrī Śaṅkara says that the Self is concealed solely by Ignorance in the form of superimposition. Witness his text: '(The Self is always evident by its very nature, the sole obstacle to this being Ignorance.) We have the example of a piece of shell which is actually being perceived (as a 'this'), and yet, since it is misapprehended as silver, it is not (properly) perceived. The sole obstacle here is misapprehension. The (partial) perception of the shell can only be knowledge. In the same way, Ignorance (= misapprehension) is the sole obstacle in the case of the perception of the Self. (True) perception of the Self, therefore, arises from the removal of Ignorance through metaphysical knowledge and in no other way' (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7, cp.

M.V.30,8;138,11). For nowhere in the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara do we find Ignorance accepted as anything else apart from confusion of the Self and the not-self.

146 EMPIRICAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE MEANS OF VALID KNOWLEDGE

We find in Śrī Śaṅkara's introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary the following: 'All commerce between the means of valid knowledge (perception, inference, etc.) and their objects, whether in the Vedic or secular sphere, proceeds on the basis of this same mutual superimposition of the Self and not-self called Ignorance, as does all Vedic tradition, whether concerned with injunctions and prohibitions or with liberation. But in what sense do we mean that perception and the other means of knowledge together with Vedic tradition belong to those realms of Ignorance? What we say here is this. Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in feelings of "I" and "mine" there can be no individual knower, and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin'.

On this the Pañcapādikā observes:

(1) Yes, says the opponent, we agree. On that definition Ignorance could belong to the inmost Self. And yet, that is not enough to show that it does actually do so. Therefore this has to be proved, to accomplish which we argue as follows. The means of valid knowledge belong to the individual knowing subject. Therefore it is the *knowing* subject that has them, not the one in Ignorance. They cannot belong to one in Ignorance; that would not make sense. Or the construction may be, 'How can perception and the rest, and also the Veda, be means of valid knowledge if the one they belong to is by definition ignorant? They will be means of valid knowledge, through partaking of the defects of the being to whom they belong. So says the opponent'. (P.P. p.140/31)

In several printed versions the text followed runs here '(Yet) that is not enough to show that it actually does do so (i.e. that Ignorance belongs to the inmost Self)'. We think the better reading would be 'That is not enough to prove its existence', as that would agree with what the Pañcapādikā originally undertook to prove. That undertaking was expressed as follows.

(2) The section of the Commentary beginning 'Well, but what is this thing called superimposition?' is intended to prove the existence of superimposition. Within this section there is a distinction. The part that precedes the words 'But in what sense do we mean that perception and the rest... belong to those in the realm of Ignorance?' is intended to state the

nature of superimposition and establish its possibility; what follows is intended to establish its actual existence. (P.P. p.32 f./6)

With this in mind, we may consider a later passage in the Pañcapādikā sub-commentary, which runs: 'Therefore it is the knowing subject which has them (the means of valid cognition), not the one in Ignorance. They cannot belong to the one in Ignorance; that would not make sense (P.P. p.140/31; M.V.146,1).

It does not seem that this is in line with what the revered Commentator wanted to say. Why not? He had already said earlier: 'This mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self the wise call Ignorance. And ascertainment of the ultimately real principle through discrimination between the confused elements they call "krowledge"'. Here the nature of superimposition has been stated and its logical possibility has also been explained. But no proof has been set out of which the phrase 'This natural worldly experience based on superimposition' was the preliminary hypothesis. So the 'veritable existence' of Ignorance as superimposition is something that (if it was going to be proved at all) would have to be established later through objections and answers. The Pañcapādikā itself says, 'That is not enough to prove its existence. Therefore it has to be proved'. But why is an irrelevant objection raised and answered? For to raise the objection that the means of valid knowledge must belong to the individual knowing subject, and cannot belong to the one in Ignorance, as that would not make sense, is irrelevant. The topic of how the means of knowledge operate, or where they belong, has nothing to do with the subject in hand, and should not have been made the subject of questions and answers here.

(3) The words (from Śrī Śaṅkara) 'But in what sense do we mean that perception and the rest... belong to those in the realm of Ignorance?'... (P.P. p.140/31; M.V.146,2)

This quotation from Śrī Śaṅkara, too, was introduced out of context. For the revered Commentator's purpose was not to establish the validity of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge along with the Veda, but to show that they were necessarily conditioned by Ignorance.

Consider, finally, what the Pañcapādikā says by way of conclusion.

(4) The mere existence of the power to act as an individual knowing subject is the cause of the operation of the valid means of empirical cognition. But this power itself proceeds from the play of superimposition, through metaphysical Ignorance. That is why the Commentator says that all the means of knowledge belong to the realm of those afflicted with Ignorance. They are independent and establish their objects by

their own power. They are invariably valid if there is no cancelling-cognition to contradict them. These facts are backed by solid positive evidence, and cannot be gainsaid merely by saying 'No'. The cause of error, when error occurs, is a defect, and that always comes as something adventitious. Defect and error are not natural to the means of valid cognition. For this is what experience teaches. We do not see any defect in what is universal and natural. People do not regard the slight discomfort caused by hunger and thirst, or the continuous adjustments taking place in the bowels, or the downward passage of food and drink, as illness. But a passing, momentary, slight touch of fever, or a cold, or even a slight cough is set down as illness, because it is not natural. And when Śabara said that one could only speak of a cognition as faulty when the organ was faulty and when the conviction that it was false later supervened (through conflicting experience, P.M. Bhāṣya I.i.5) — this implied that a fault was something unnatural and therefore adventitious. (P.P. p.144 f./32)

The teaching that the power to act as an individual knowing subject results from the play of Ignorance is found in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, and should be accepted. The teaching that, in the the realm of empirical experience, the deliverances of the means of valid knowledge in their own specific fields cannot be gainsaid unless there is a cancelling-cognition is also quite correct.

But it seems that there was no occasion for the Pañcapādikā to argue, with the help of examples, that 'natural' (as opposed to adventitious) defects do not falsify the validity of a means of cognition. The example offered was our continual exposure to the slight discomfort of hunger and thirst. But people are not universally aware of the defect of Ignorance in the same way, that one should seek a disclaimer of the form 'We do not feel that Ignorance is a defect'. We have already explained how it is unmanifest Ignorance that ordains all practical experience of means and objects of valid empirical cognition (M.V.48,7). Nor does practical experience of the means and objects of valid empirical cognition in perception and so on lead to absolutely valid knowledge on the view of the Vedantin, as it does for the Logicians. So that for the Vedantin an examination to see whether faults affect their validity is meaningless. For the Vedantin, the means of empirical knowledge act upon their objects or cease from so acting simply on natural impulse. As Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary puts it, 'It is the same as in the case of the animals' (B.S. Bh.I.i.1, intro.). So the best view is: 'Natural Ignorance, synonymous with superimposition, brings about the rise and play of the empirical means of cognition, and also the conviction of their reality and truth. There is no occasion for argumentation through objections and answers on this topic'. For Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says:

(5) All empirical experiences that occur before one has realized that one's Self is the Absolute are taken as real, like the experiences of a dream before waking.... Ordinary people, when asleep, see beings of high and low degree in dreams. And this knowledge is felt to be genuine perception until awakening, and there is no notion during the dream that only an appearance of perception is in play. It is the same with waking perception before realization of the Self. (B.S.Bh. II.i.14, cp. M.V.48,7)

One may enquire into defects affecting the instruments of cognition and other factors of error within the realm of empirical experience. But, on the topic now under consideration, the contradiction with *all* empirical cognition arising from the clash with metaphysical knowledge of reality is enough to show the falsity of empirical cognition on the metaphysical plane. This shows the point of the saying of one who knew the true tradition quoted by Śrī Śaṅkara as follows:

(6) 'Just as the notion of the identity of the body with the Self is imagined to be valid knowledge, so worldly empirical knowledge itself is imagined to be valid knowledge until the true nature of the Self has been realized'. (Quoted at B.S.Bh. I.i.4, *ad fin.*)

147 THE IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT CHARACTER OF THE OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

Nowhere in the Sūtras or the Commentary of the Vedanta school do we find any examination of the operation of the empirical means of knowledge. In this school, it is accepted that all practical experience of the objects and means of empirical cognition is based on superimposition. And the purpose of the Upanishads is to communicate the Absolute, which is eternally pure, conscious and liberated, by the negation of superimposition. It is agreed that, when one studies this or that system, one usually follows a method of enquiry into the means of knowledge agreeable to that school, according to the maxim 'One follows the opponent's view where it does not conflict'. But here in the Pañcapādikā there appears for the very first time a certain special examination of the means of knowledge and kindred topics. We shall quote it here to enable the reader to think about it for himself.

(1) The 'this' element in the ego-sense thus constituted (the objective element that requires to be illumined by a reflection of the element of pure Consciousness) has the activity called knowing. This activity has an object. It therefore introduces a certain modification into its base (pure Consciousness as apparently delimited by the individual mind) relative to

that object. For every activity occasions a change in the one performing it. The modification here in question is 'being a knower in relation to a known object', and it is said to be analogous to the modification undergone by one performing the act of reaching somewhere (when he comes into a new relation with, say, a village by going to it). In this way, it is only as related to particular objects that the mind delimits Consciousness. The object, for its part, stands penetrated by the activity of the mind when the latter asserts itself. Being itself but an illusory modification (vivarta) of Consciousness, the object manifests its immediately evident presence (aparokṣatā) as identical with the immediately evident presence (aparokṣatā) of pure Consciousness (apparently) delimited as the individual knowing subject, the latter having been conditioned by the mind to assume the form of the object. From this results (the perceiver's feeling of) identity with the immediately evident Consciousness present in the object (as its metaphysical support), this feeling being a particular state called 'awareness of an object'. It is produced in the Self through its adjunct the mind, which has itself assumed that state. This experience (though in truth only a manifestation of eternal, changeless Consciousness) is rightly called a 'result' (the 'resultant-cognition'), because it has the same object as the result of the mental act. Thus the ego-sense (identifiable here with the mind) becomes an individual knowing subject through the power of Consciousness, the element of true Selfhood in it, and also through being affected by its own activity; in this way we are able to say, 'A person becomes aware of an object in his mind'.

The immediate experience of the self-luminous individual subject, though differentiated by its relation to particular objects, is nevertheless the same in all people, on account of its very immediacy. But a mental act is brought about by the co-operation of a number of factors. Any given mental act bears only on the factors to which it is related, not anywhere else. The object of a mental act of knowing, therefore, is immediately evident only to that subject with whom it co-operates to complete the act, as a village only relates to the one who goes to it. (P.P. p.114 ff./24)

Here, the statement that the individual knowing subject includes a conscious and a non-conscious element agrees with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The latter says, 'Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in feelings of "my" and "mine" there can be no empirical knower and so the process of empirical knowledge cannot begin'. And we can also approve the teaching about the feeling of the Self apparently located in the mind of its identity with the immediately evident Consciousness present in the object, a feeling referred to as 'awareness of an object' and as a 'resultant-cognition' — provided it is understood that the element of Consciousness is

included. If it is not included, the feeling of identity cannot constitute a resultant-cognition. For no one applies a means of valid knowledge with a view to produce a particular idea in the mind only (i.e. without true content). Thus Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says that the enquiry into the Absolute must end in direct experience, which he expresses as follows.

(2) The object of the wish here expressed is knowledge culminating in direct experience. A wish implies a goal. The desire is to have direct knowledge of the Absolute, with metaphysical knowledge itself as the means of knowledge. Direct knowledge of the Absolute is the true goal of human life. For that is what eradicates Ignorance, etc., and all the causes of the evils of transmigratory life. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1)

That Consciousness itself is of the nature of direct knowledge is made clear elsewhere as follows:

(3) But is it not a contradiction to say that direct experience is the resultant-cognition that comes after the application of the valid means of empirical knowledge, and also that it is raised above all change, and the pure essence of the light of the Self? No, it is not a contradiction. Direct experience is in fact eternal and raised above all change. But it is referred to figuratively as the culminating point in a perception or other empirical cognition, since such cognitive activity proceeds for its sake. And since cognitions arising from perception, etc., are transitory, it, too, seems to be transitory. Hence it is referred to figuratively as their 'result' (phala). (U.S.(prose) section 108)

Thus the true nature of the individual knowing subject is eternal Consciousness and nothing else. We may also say 'Yes' and assent to the proposition 'Thus the ego-sense becomes an individual knowing subject through the power of Consciousness, the element of true Selfhood in it, and also through being affected by its own activity' — but only if we keep firmly in mind the truth that the individual knowing subject is in reality eternal Consciousness alone. If the statement is made with the individual ego-sense itself chiefly in mind, then it is in contradiction with the writings of Śrī Śaṅkara. He says that the Self alone can be spoken of as the individual knowing subject, under certain conditions: in itself, it is the substratum of the superimposition of the body, sense-organs and ego-sense.

(4) Nor can the relationless Self be an individual knowing subject without all these preliminary conditions. (B.S.Bh. I.i.1, intro.)

(5) The author of the Sūtras replies by the word 'Conscious'. The soul is eternally and immutably conscious. And he adds the

words 'For this reason...'. For the reason of what has just been shown at B.S.II.iii.17, namely, that it has no origin (beginning). The Absolute, the transcendent, beyond modification, assumes the appearance of the individual soul through the influence of the apparent conditioning adjuncts. (B.S.Bh. II.iii.18)

Elsewhere he clearly makes the point:

(6) The individual knowing subject is he who desires to know and resorts to the valid means of empirical cognition. (U.S. (prose) section 99)

But having first thus stated the position from the standpoint of acceptance of apparent conditioning adjuncts, he later adds the following to show that it is only the eternal Consciousness in its true nature that can be accepted as the knower.

(7) Now, on this basis, the individual knowing subject cannot be the seat of right knowledge (a function which is fulfilled, rather, by the Self in its pure form). How, then, can the individual knowing subject actually *be* an individual knowing subject? We reply as follows. There is no difference in the nature of right knowledge according to whether it is constant or interrupted.... A parallel case is that of the meaning of verbs like 'stands', where the function is not different according to whether the standing is temporary and preceded by moving, or whether it is constant. We say equally 'The people are standing' and 'The mountains are standing'. In the same way, though the individual knowing subject is eternal direct experience in its true nature, nevertheless there is no contradiction if we refer to it as the individual knowing subject, as its function is still the same. (U.S.(prose) sections 102-3)

Similarly, we regard as vain and superfluous the theory which accepts 'the immediate Consciousness present in the object' as something existing over and above what is figuratively referred to as the direct experience arising in the Self through the adjunct of a particular state of the mind (termed 'awareness of an object'). No one experiences immediate Consciousness located in the object as something different from the mental modification referred to as 'direct experience'. Nor does any idea yielding immediate knowledge ever arise in the mind of the individual knowing subject without contact with an object.

148 ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS ABOUT THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE UPANISHADIC TEACHING

On the topic of the authenticity of the Vedic teaching, the

following texts from the Pañcapādikā are worth quoting.

(1) Before there is a proper realization of the meaning of the text 'That thou art', the Veda relates its teaching to the ego-sense and to transmigratory life as set up by Ignorance; it does not go beyond the realm of (the vision of) those afflicted by Ignorance. (P.P. p.151/34)

(2) Speech in general is only found used to refer to what has previously been the object of perception. But we must explain how a learner learns its meaning. Children learn the meaning of words through observing the behaviour of those to whom they are addressed. The behaviour of one who hears the words of another, if not influenced by knowledge derived from other sources, would clearly be a guide to the meanings of words. The child who is learning the meaning of words by overhearing the conversation of his elders does not know, at the time he is learning the meanings of the words, that they refer to things which the hearer already knows to exist from other sources of knowledge (reading 'siddhārtha' with the Vivaraṇa). Thus it is in the absence of such knowledge that he is able to learn the meanings which the words express. And his understanding of the meaning comes from his having learned it in this way.

But it is only when the learner has himself once learned the meaning of the word and wishes to use it to teach something to someone else, and wishes to explain something of which he has personally been a witness and has learned from a non-verbal source, that he realizes both that the word can be used to designate its object, and also that the object is known to exist from a non-verbal source. But neither of these points were known at the time of learning the meaning of the word in childhood. At the time of learning the meaning of the word, therefore, the fact that it referred to something known from a non-verbal source was not realized. Thus words produce knowledge in accordance with their meaning as learned, without depending on any other source of knowledge; they are just as independent of the help of any other source of knowledge as the faculty of sight and so on. The fact that their meanings are also the objects of non-verbal sources of cognition does not affect the independent power of words to produce knowledge of their meanings.

Further, in the case of the Veda, which is a non-human verbal authority, there is always the same independence in conveying knowledge as there is in the power of sight. So how could there be any suspicion of its not being a proper authority? (P.P. p.325 f./84-5)

(3) But, you will say, have we not already stated a good ground for suspecting the inauthoritativeness of verbal revelation, when we pointed out how (no means of knowledge is authoritative without corroboration, since) the various dimensions represented

by the sense of sight when we look at a picture are rejected when we feel (with our fingers) the flat texture of the surface on which it is painted? But that objection was not right. For in the case of Vedic revelation there is no potentially defective instrument of knowledge, whereas there is one in the case of the picture (namely the sense of sight, which we know to be deceptive on occasion). But Vedic revelation, being superhuman, has no defects. Nor can one appeal to defects leading to error lying in external objects made known by Vedic revelation (as defects lying in perceived objects, such as excessive distance or excessive similarity to other objects, can vitiate perception). For in the case of Vedic revelation it cannot be established that an external object plays a role in promoting the knowledge that results (as even worldly discourse may refer to past or distant events). For speech is restricted to its own meaning, which is all that it conveys. In the case of visual knowledge, on the other hand, the external object falls within a whole assemblage of factors necessary for such a cognition (sense-organ, object, light, proximity, clarity, etc.). In the above-quoted example, the (confusing) juxtaposition of darker and lighter lines is the defect (causing the illusory perception of depth on a flat surface). For if the surface is washed clean of the lines, correct apprehension of the flat surface results. The illusion disappears automatically with the disappearance of the defect, as right knowledge (of the moon) follows immediately on the ending of the disease of double-vision affecting the eye. Accordingly, even if the sense of touch is used to test the vision of the surface after the lines have been removed, it corroborates it, and does not undermine the validity of visual perception. Not that the experts on the criteria of knowledge really define validity as agreement of one means of knowledge with another: they define it as communication of knowledge.

And so, just as the injunctive texts of the Veda are valid in their own particular sphere, so are the metaphysical texts in theirs. For they each have the common characteristic of pointing out some matter hitherto unknown. (P.P. p.325 ff./84-5)

(4) But is it not a fact that only the injunctive texts are valid, since the Veda only exists to teach action? No, for the argument is circular. The Veda, it is argued, can only be deemed to exist to teach action alone if the injunctive texts alone are valid; and the view that only the injunctive texts are valid can only be established if the fact that the sole purpose of the Vedic texts is to teach action has been established first. So we have a vicious circle. Neither thesis can be established on the basis of the other. Therefore we have to accept that whatever a given text of the Veda teaches, its purpose is to teach that. Just as the texts teaching something that has to be done have that for their purpose, so equally must those which teach the unity and sole reality of

the Self have that for their purpose. (P.P. p.328/85)

(5) Well, but is it not the case that a great authority in the interpretation of the Veda (Jaimini) declared 'Since the Veda only exists to promote action, the texts that do not deal with that are useless' (P.M.S. I.ii.1, cp. M.V.63, intro.) and taught that any words occurring in the Veda that were not concerned with action would be meaningless? ...

We reply. You have not rightly understood the meaning either of the author of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Sūtras (Jaimini), or of his commentator Śabara, or of sound empirical reasoning on the subject in hand. Consider the sentence, 'Devadatta! Fetch the white cow with the stick'. Here the only word which prompts action is 'fetch'. The other words like 'Devadatta' refer to existent entities and do not of themselves prompt any action. Yet, because they belong to a *sentence* which prompts action, we are entitled to ask whether they have or do not have the power to denote already-existent objects. If they do, then the word 'useless' used by Jaimini only meant 'not the main subject in hand', not (as you suppose) meaninglessness.... And how can one label 'useless' texts which co-operate to lead one to immediate awareness that one's true Self is the Absolute, and so result in the achievement of the highest possible human end? (P.P. p.358 f./95-6)

(6) Very well (says the follower of Prabhākara), let us admit that words can denote already-existent objects if they belong to a sentence which prompts action. But there cannot be knowledge through speech of an already-existent object unless it is included (in a situation involving action). For the meanings of words are only learned through their being joined together for the purpose of inciting action. (P.P. p.359 f./96)

To these objections the Pañcapādikā offers the following two passages by way of reply.

(7) There are sentences in the Veda which are immediately intelligible to the hearer, yet which lack verbs or any overt reference to anything to be done. For instance, we have 'The first draught (is) the portion of the Hotṛ priest who utters "Vaṣaṭ"' (cp. T.S. III.ii.5.1-2) and 'Therefore Pūṣan (has) the well-kneaded portion' (T.S. II.vi.8.5). The connection of the words with an action that has to be done (despite the absence of a verb) depends on their ordering and inflection (which is of such a kind as to demand the supplement of a verb implying something to be done in order to make sense). It is not the case that the understanding of the ordered and inflected words depends on prior knowledge of their connection with something to be done.

Then there was the Sūtra of Jaimini, 'Words referring to already-existent entities are taken as connected with a verb

enjoining action' (P.M.S. I.i.25). Here also, it must be accepted that words stand for things like colours that are known without dependence on speech. And it has been shown by the Mīmāṃsaka commentator Śabara that they may stand interconnected in sentences through various relations such as that of standing in a common grammatical case, with their meanings qualifying one another as substance and attribute (without their necessarily being related to a verb enjoining an action to be done). When the Sūtra said 'with a verb enjoining action', it was said at the beginning of the enquiry into merit, and with a view to promote the particular subject in hand. In the same way, the commentator Śabara says 'For the purpose of the Veda is seen to be to give information about the results of action', when he should have just said that it had true teachings to impart about reality; if he said '(its purpose is seen to be) to give information about the results of action', that was merely with a view to promote the subject immediately in hand. (P.P. p.360 f./96-7)

(8) Here in the Brahma Sūtra we have the text 'But that, (the Absolute, is the main topic of the Veda) on account of the harmony of the texts'. This points out that the harmonious teaching of the Vedic texts culminates in 'That thou art', which, (when properly understood, cp. M.V.144,6) refers to a partless entity, excluding any substance-attribute relation, excluding any acceptance, even on a figurative basis, of subject-predicate duality. It is in consonance with this that the revered Pāṇini lays down that the nominative case-ending only expresses the meaning of the nominal stem, together with number and gender (Pāṇini II.iii.46). It does not (of itself) imply that the thing referred to exists or acts — despite Kātyāyana's view '(If you say "There is scope for the prescription of the nominative because it does not imply action", we reply "This is not so). For the nominative implies the action of existing (even when the latter is not overtly expressed)" '(Kātyāyana on Pāṇini II.iii.1, vārtika 11). And we find phrases like 'these fruit-laden trees' and 'this representative of the king' used without any implicit reference to the verb 'to be'. Even here, the meaning is not 'These fruit-laden trees which exist' or 'that person who is the king's representative — he exists'. All the phrases do is to express a connection between their constituent terms — 'these fruit-laden trees' or 'this man, the representative of the king' (cp. M.V.99.1).

Thus it has been shown that the final purport of the Upanishads, when they are conceived as an ordered whole, consists merely in affirming that the world-creator — already known to exist from other sources, but only in a general way — has omniscience and other particular attributes. Or again, it consists in affirming that the being (i.e. the hearer of the text) denoted by the term 'thou' — whose existence is established in advance by his own experience — has the Absolute

for his true nature. Thus no *action* of being is implied here (by the word 'art'), even in regard to the real in its true nature — still less in regard to anything else. (P.P. p.362 ff./96-7)

This should be compared with the following text from Maṇḍana. 'In the Sūtra "But that (the Absolute, is the main topic of the Veda) on account of the harmony of the texts", the word "but" specifies the Absolute, the subject-matter of the Upanishads, distinguishing it from ritualistic merit, the subject-matter of the Vedic injunctions and prohibitions. And the Sūtra declares that the Absolute can be known through the Upanishads conceived as an ordered whole. "Conceived as an ordered whole" implies considering the inter-relation of the meanings of the words, including the due ordering between chief and subordinate themes. The Absolute is known from the metaphysical texts of the Veda in this way, and not from the injunctive texts' (B.Sid. p.155).

In the same way, the texts of the Pañcapādikā on the verb 'to be' should also be compared with Maṇḍana's work (from which they are largely borrowed, including the examples of the fruit-laden trees and the king's representative, B.Sid. p.99, M.V.99,1). The same is the case with the texts declaring that a world-creator, already known to exist, but only in a general way, also possesses particular characteristics which need to be known (B.Sid. p.157, M.V.99,1).

Śrī Śaṅkara has said, 'What is there to prevent the texts proclaiming the existence of the supreme Self and the Lord from being proper sentences with subject and predicate if they are associated with the verb "to be"?' (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iii.1, quoted M.V.99,1, note) And Sureśvara says, 'We cannot accept this (i.e. that the texts of the Veda are only intelligible if they refer to what has to be done or if the meanings of their words are already known through perception and inference). We accept "art" and "is"' (B.B.V. I.iii.80). It is not clear why the author of the Pañcapādikā rejected the grammatical connection of the word 'is' (with other words in the metaphysical teaching), which had been accepted by the revered Commentator and the author of the Vārtika, and remained satisfied with examples like 'these fruit-laden trees' after the manner of the author of the Brahma Siddhi.

And again, the author of the Pañcapādikā paid no attention to such texts from the Vārtika as: 'It is hard to make out how the Self could be expressed either by a word or a sentence, since it is different from nothing and related to nothing. This Self, therefore, is only known through its own direct experience of itself' (B.B.V. I.iv.1408, cp. M.V.107,3 for parallel references). It is not clear what he had in mind when he neglected this point, and, following Maṇḍana, limited the final purport of the Veda as a whole to what could be

taught in a sentence, saying 'We know in advance in a general way that the Absolute is cause of the world, while its true nature (which we do not know without Vedic revelation) has omniscience and other characteristics'.

As has been evident in various passages quoted above, the Pañcāpādikā everywhere grounds the authoritativeness of the upanishadic texts either on an examination of the denotative power of words or else on the fact that the Veda is of superhuman origin, that is to say, in the same way that one grounds the authoritativeness of the ritualistic texts of the Veda. The author nowhere points out how the results of the knowledge arising from the upanishadic texts can be verified in one's own experience. Śrī Śaṅkara, however, says:

(9) In the case of action, the reward, such as heaven, may not be immediately evident, and in such cases there will be doubt whether it will come or not. But the reward of knowledge of the Absolute is immediately evident, for the Veda speaks of 'the Absolute which is immediately and directly evident' (Bṛhad.III.iv.1) and teaches 'That thou art' as an already accomplished fact. (B.S.Bh.III.iii.32, cp. M.V.75,7)

And there are other passages in Śrī Śaṅkara's writings to this effect. This is another point on which the reasons for the attitude of the author of the Pañcapādikā are not clear.

149 DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF THE SELF

Can there or can there not be direct experience of the Self arising from the upanishadic texts alone? The author of the Pañcapādikā does not seem to give a clear and unambiguous declaration of his own view on this point. The following texts from the Pañcapādikā are here worthy of consideration.

(1) It is true that a certain understanding of the meaning of a text arises through the power of the text itself before exegetical enquiry. But, at the same time that it arises, one's reasoning may also suggest another contradictory idea about the meaning, felt to have equal weight. On account of this contradiction, the meaning of the text keeps on looming up and disappearing again like a man drowning in water, and the outcome is doubt. Then, through exegetical enquiry, one ascertains correctly the meaning of the words, and after this knowledge the opposite idea no longer arises. We say that the meaning has been determined when, because the meaning no longer continues to be submerged in doubt, it is as if a new, fixed and determinate knowledge had arisen through exegetical enquiry. (P.P. p.271 f./69)

Here it is granted that knowledge arises merely from hearing

the texts. But doubt arises through another cause. The service of the science of exegesis is to bring the appearance of a new determination of the meaning by eliminating the doubt. That is the teaching here.

(2) In the case under consideration, even when knowledge has arisen it does not necessarily take root. For its content may be suppressed either by a prejudice about its logical impossibility or else by some contradictory conviction. In ordinary worldly experience, we may have the conviction that a thing cannot exist at such and such a time or place by its very nature. And yet somehow or other fate may contrive that we should perceive it there. In such a case, though we may actually be seeing it, yet we will not believe our eyes till we have logically established the possibility of its presence. Thus, even right knowledge, when unconfirmed as to its content, may (be attained and yet) appear as if unattained. In such a case it takes the help of logical argumentation to confirm its own content. (P.P. p.170 f./39)

(3) What, then, is the use of logical argumentation? When there is the doubt as to the possibility of the truth of the content of one's knowledge (even though it is in fact genuine), and when it has not yet yielded its reward in direct experience, then logical argumentation is useful in removing the obstacle to that reward, through showing that the content could be true after all. Thus, in the text 'That thou art', the word 'thou' refers to the individual soul. The soul (which hears it) may think it impossible that its true nature should be identical with the Absolute, the meaning of the word 'that'. And it may have a positive notion of itself as limited which is irreconcilable with its being the Absolute. In such circumstances, though right knowledge may arise from the text, yet it will not take root till the soul has eliminated its contradictory convictions through logical argumentation, and has convinced itself by such means that it could indeed in its true nature be the Absolute. Until then, though knowledge has been acquired through the texts, it is as if it had not been acquired. And it is the Upanishads themselves that have given a hint about how it has to be acquired, by speaking of its reward as 'direct and immediate' knowledge. (P.P. p.172/39)

Here, also, the doctrine is that even after knowledge has arisen, there is a place for logical argumentation to dispel such ideas as the logical impossibility of its content.

(4) 'Avagati' means direct and immediate experience. But the word 'knowledge' (jñāna) extends also to that which is only known abstractly and is not a matter of immediate concrete experience. We have already mentioned how knowledge of this kind can refer even to an object lying in one's proximity, if

the presence of such an object is thought to be impossible. In such cases, knowledge is inconclusive. (P.P. p.260 f./66)

Is this inconclusive knowledge here conceived as abstract or concrete? Insofar as its object is lying in proximity, it could be called concrete. Insofar as it is inconclusive, it would be abstract.

Here is how the Pañcapādikā explains Śrī Śaṅkara's words, 'exegetical examination of the texts of the Upanishads, supported by logical argumentation not in contradiction with them...'.

(5) Logical argumentation, dialectic, is a useful preliminary or an accepted part of the preparation for knowledge. Or you could say it was actually a secondary cause of knowledge. Logical argumentation thus understood means logical thinking that is not in contradiction with the upanishadic texts. It means that logical thinking is an aid to understanding the meaning of the Upanishads by strengthening conviction of their truth. (P.P. p.291 f./76)

Here the teaching is that the term 'logical argumentation' (tarka, dialectic) refers to dialectical argumentation aimed at ridding oneself of the conviction that the metaphysical teaching of the Upanishads was impossible, and to inference aimed at strengthening the conviction derived from the texts.

At another place Śrī Śaṅkara writes: 'Here (in the Upanishads as opposed to the ritualistic section of the Veda) it is the same texts (the Veda and Smṛti) that are the authority, but with immediate experience (and firm remembrance, etc.,) added in the case of the purely metaphysical texts. For knowledge of the Absolute requires to culminate in immediate experience, and (unlike the part of the Veda dealing with commands and prohibitions) has an already-existent reality for its object' (M.V.31,7). On this the Pañcapādikā comments as follows:

(6) Śrī Śaṅkara's text refers to 'Śruti, etc.'. 'Śruti' here means 'direct declaration, depending upon no other words but its own'. He adds 'etc.', which refers to indirect implication, and to syntactical connection, context and other Forms of Evidence for the interpretation of passages in revelation (M.V. p.23). But they are not the only authorities for knowledge of the Absolute. Direct experience, etc., are also authorities (where 'etc.' refers to pondering, reasoning, sustained meditation and so forth). He gives the reason for this, saying 'For knowledge of the Absolute requires to culminate in immediate experience, and has an already-existent reality for its object'. There can be direct experience of an already-existent reality, and when enquiry into it culminates in that, no further enquiry is needed. (P.P. p.305 f./79)

(7) Here, however, we have an already-existent reality which is directly perceived but erroneously. The rise of such erroneous knowledge cannot be halted without *immediate* right knowledge. It is like the case where one misperceives the moon as two. (P.P. p.307/80)

Here the teaching is: Erroneous cognition that is immediate and concrete in character cannot be eliminated without immediate experience of the Absolute as reality.

(8) Well, if this is so, the Absolute cannot be proved by inference. How then can inference be a support to the texts expounding the Absolute? To this we reply as follows. The upanishadic texts dealing with the Absolute implicitly appeal to reasoning when they use examples such as that of clay. It is agreed that the texts embodying injunctions and prohibitions require explanatory passages (artha-vāda) implying eulogy or blame — passages which encourage or dissuade. The passages implying reasoning have a parallel role in relation to the metaphysical texts of the Veda. They are explanatory passages required to explain the possibility of the truth of the doctrine, until the teaching has resulted in immediate experience. Hence they are present as auxiliaries in the Vedic teaching. That is what is being taught. (P.P. p.309 f./81)

Here it is taught that the role of reasoning in leading to immediate knowledge of the Absolute is to demonstrate the mere possibility that the metaphysical teaching might be true. One could explain this to imply that knowledge cannot arise directly from the text. The examples like clay are in fact given to answer the question 'What does the teaching mean?' The author of the Pañcapādikā does not explain why he claims that they are used to establish the mere possibility that the teaching of the texts might be true.

150 REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE THAT THE ABSOLUTE IS TAUGHT AS AN APPENDAGE TO AN INJUNCTION TO MEDITATE

With a view to refuting it later, Śrī Śaṅkara states an opponent's view in his Brahma Sūtra Commentary I.i.4 as follows: 'The Veda communicates the Absolute as the object of an injunction to know'. The Pañcapādikā explains this as follows:

(1) We reply: What is the nature of this knowledge of the Absolute that is alleged to be the object of an injunction? It cannot be such as arises directly from the words, as that is already covered by the injunction to go through one's appointed texts daily, so that no new injunction here is either necessary or possible.

Perhaps you will say that repeated affirmation of the knowledge derived from the words is what is enjoined. But we do not see that any result could follow from this. Perhaps you will reply that continual remembrance of a desirable object is found to bring continual joy. But our answer is that if that were so, then, for that very reason, an injunction here would be useless (and so, by implication impossible — as one acts for pleasure from natural inclination). Perhaps you will say that continual affirmation is enjoined for the sake of immediate and direct knowledge. But that also is wrong. For there cannot be an injunction to act for a reward expected to occur in this life when it would in fact be impossible for it to do so. Something which is only known indirectly through an inferential sign cannot be known directly through the indirect knowledge arising from the inference, even though the latter be repeated thousands of times (so that mulling over the indirect knowledge coming from words will never take one beyond indirect knowledge). Finally, you may perhaps suggest that immediate knowledge does not arise directly from re-affirmation of the knowledge derived from the texts. It arises, you may say, from a new cognition produced by this practice of re-affirmation. But we reply that there is no evidence that such could be the case. (P.P. p.333 f./87)

(2) Very well, says our opponent, let us suppose that what is enjoined is the mental activity called meditation (dhyāna), focused on what was learned from verbal revelation in the form in which it was learned (i.e. without the hypothesis of the rise of a new cognition). You ask (he says) what such an act of meditation is for? It is in order to become immediately aware of the object of meditation.

But we, for our part, do not accept this. We do not find that anything known indirectly can become an object of immediate apprehension when the indirect knowledge is subjected to meditation. Nor can you say that an object known indirectly sometimes becomes an object of immediate apprehension through the force of overwhelming desire or some similar factor. For in such cases the object is not being meditated on. On the contrary, it is just a hallucination, as the fact that it is subject to subsequent cancellation shows.

Well, says the opponent, but is it not the case that the text 'It should be subjected to sustained meditation' (Bṛhad. II.iv.5), starting from the earlier proposition 'It should be seen', implies the enjoining of a meditation for the sake of vision? But we have already explained that there cannot be an injunction to act for a reward to occur in this life when it would in fact be impossible for it to do so. Meditation is never found to produce immediate cognition of its object. Even if, for argument's sake, we conceded that an object of meditation could be immediately apprehended through meditation, what guarantee is there that the object thus apprehended in

meditation would be apprehended as it really was? In the context of injunctions to meditate, the Veda limits itself to enjoining meditation as a means to attaining immediate vision. It does not guarantee the reality of what is seen.

Very well, says our opponent, but its reality is proved according to the principles to follow later (B.S.Bh.I.iii.26) which show that the gods are embodied beings. But we reply that the two cases are not parallel. In the case of the gods, there is no evidence either to confirm or to deny anything, so the revealed teaching is accepted as it stands by those who take refuge in faith. But here in the case of the doctrine that all is the Self, the position is not the same. For here perception and the other empirical means of knowledge supply evidence in conflict with the teaching. And the teaching could well be a mere theme for fanciful meditation consisting in deliberate superimpositions. And this same line of argument may also be used to refute the other theories, already mentioned above, that maintain that there is an injunction for knowledge. (P.P. p.334 f./87-8)

And so the Pañcapādikā goes on. It refutes the doctrine that the Upanishads enjoin another, supernormal form of knowledge, different from that arising from the texts — and conceived as a duty to be carried out. It argues that if the object of knowledge were known, any injunction to know it would be useless: while if it were not known, an injunction to know it would be impossible. Again, the means to such knowledge is nowhere laid down, so that any injunction about it would be incomplete by nature. As for the doctrine expressed by the words 'He who desires liberation is enjoined to perform meditation on the Absolute', which was supported by appeal to the principles according to which the gods were known to be embodied — that theory is refuted along the lines of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, by pointing out that the rewards of 'performed actions' and 'metaphysical knowledge' are totally disparate (P.P. p.336 f./88).

Other questions raised and answered arise out of the following objection. Granted that there should be enquiry into the Absolute, nevertheless the opening Sūtra of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Sūtras, 'Now therefore the enquiry into ritualistic merit', includes reflection on the meaning of all the texts of the Veda, because, since it is enjoined (by the very term 'enquiry'), it falls within the realm of merit.

According to what is regarded in the Pañcapādikā as an incomplete theory, the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads are not associated with any injunction. They were therefore not included by Jaimini when he said 'Now therefore the enquiry into merit'. On this view, it was held to follow that after the completion of the enquiry into ritualistic merit (that is, into the rules of Vedic ritual), the student should put off his concluding ceremonial bath and take up the metaphysical enquiry

into the Absolute while still a Brahmacārī and without leaving the house of his Teacher. For though the metaphysical texts state a fact, the gerundives with which they are associated ('should be seen', 'should be heard about', etc.,) convey a command. And because we know that they have the practical end of putting an end to Ignorance (we cannot deny that they constitute injunctions — P.P. p.183/42).

The exponents of another incomplete theory argue as follows: Our opponents hold, they say, that perception and the other empirical means of knowledge ought theoretically to be able to reveal the Absolute, as they are established as able to reveal already-existent realities. And yet they cannot do so. All the less could the Veda reveal it, since its subject-matter is (not what is already-existent but) what has to be done. (This being so, they make out that enquiry into the meaning of the Veda ends with the last four chapters of Jaimini's Sūtras, which complete the teaching about ritual. And it is to refute this idea that the Brahma Sūtras begin 'Then therefore the enquiry into the Absolute'.) Here, in this enquiry too, these theorists maintain (with a view to refute the opponent of Vedanta) that all injunctions about knowledge of the Self refer to actions that have to be performed, just like the injunctions about ritual. And they maintain that knowledge of reality is an act that has to be carried out, as it is seen to be the subject of an injunction addressed to one specifically qualified to perform such an act (P.P. p.184 f./42-3).

Then there is another theory which runs: And so there is an injunction to see everything as being, in its true nature, the Self. It is through eliminating what is not its true nature that a thing is known. If no injunction is found, then let an injunction be assumed (P.P. p.188 f./44).

And here is another view: There is no direct experience of that kind to be had from verbal revelation. Therefore there must be an injunction for (meditating on the abstract knowledge conveyed verbally and) converting it into concrete apprehension (P.P. p.195/46).

Another view: A person is prompted by nature to work for immediate realization of the Self, as it is a human end. Repeated affirmations based on the Vedic texts are known to be a correct option, as they are the means to immediate knowledge of the Absolute. In regard to this view, the author asks 'What is the need for a Vedic injunction on this point?' (P.P. p.196/46).

Another unthought-out view: The Veda is only concerned with performance of duties. To suppose that it is an authority on metaphysical reality is mere fancy. The only way to discover the nature of the Self is through the ego-notion. There is no other supersensuous form of the Self, as alleged, accessible only through Vedic revelation. For revelation has no scope in this area. This being so, in texts like 'This Self is the Absolute' and 'This your Self is the Inner Ruler, immortal',

words like 'Self', 'Absolute' and 'Inner Ruler' are used in some figurative way to refer to our Self (in this theory equivalent to 'soul') as revealed (in its true form, which is individual), by the ego-sense. Therefore the text 'That is the Self, that thou art' is an injunction to meditate, for the sake of the reward of liberation, on the Self (i.e. on one's own individual soul), both with the qualities that it really has and also with others that are attributed to it figuratively (P.P. p.200 f./47). The Pañcapādikā refutes all these views successively.

Thus the author of the Pañcapādikā demonstrates that the Absolute is beyond the scope of any injunction. He does so under the guise of defending the project of enquiry into the Absolute laid down in the first Brahma Sūtra. On the occasion of explaining the word 'atha' (i.e. the 'then' in 'Then therefore the enquiry into the Absolute', B.S. I.i.1) he summarizes and refutes the views of a number of previous commentators, some of whom are mentioned in Sureśvara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika and in Maṇḍana's Brahma Siddhi, while others are not. Sometimes the Pañcapādikā follows here the line of the Brahma Siddhi. I do not say anything on the subject of whether these authors were contemporaries of or earlier than Maṇḍana, as this is a question for professional philologists.

151 HOW CAN BEGINNINGLESS IGNORANCE HAVE AN END?

The Pañcapādikā puts the following into the mouth of an objector. 'If superimposition, the cause of all evil, is beginningless, how can it come to an end? Beginningless metaphysical superimposition is a superimposition of a universal, the universal "humanity" or whatever the case may be, qualified by individuality (as "this individual human being" or "this individual animal"). So that even if the ego-sense were effectively distinguished from the true Self, the metaphysical superimposition would still continue unabated as before'. The author replies to the objection as follows:

(1) The objection does not stand. For our doctrine is that there arises from the sentence 'That thou art' another cognition which plumbs the depths of the Absolute. When this knowledge arises, it extirpates once and for all the beginningless Ignorance which is the cause of the ego-sense and other illusory projections. It is this Ignorance which, by concealing the Absolute, conceals the fact that Consciousness in truth *is* the Absolute, and sets up instead the false notion that it is the individual soul. It is only reasonable to conclude that, when the cause is removed, the effect, consisting in the notion 'I am the individual soul and the experiencer, equipped with various organs', will also be removed. On the other hand,

since the ego-sense, itself beginningless, exists alongside the complex of the subtle body and its instruments, the two are not in contradiction. When the ego-sense is discriminated from all else, therefore, it is not thereby brought to an end. There is a difference between the two cases. In the case of knowledge which merely distinguishes the ego-sense from all else, no other metaphysical knowledge arises which plumbs the depths of the Absolute and cancels Ignorance once and for all. (P.P. p.162 f./37)

(2) But would it not be the case that, when Ignorance was removed through knowledge of the Absolute, the ego-complex, which is its effect, would cease at that very moment? No. Ignorance can continue in the form of an impression, as the sensation of fear may continue on as an impression after the snake has been removed through knowledge of the rope. Though the fear has been removed by right knowledge, it continues on (in a certain sense) and causes further trembling through the power of impressions it has caused in the mind. In the same way, Ignorance also continues on through the impressions it has left, and continues to cause the ego-complex. There is nothing illogical in that. (P.P. p.174/40)

Here the doctrine is that another knowledge can arise from hearing the text 'That thou art'. Ignorance is dispelled by its mere rise. We do not find that direct and immediate experience of reality can occur either through repeated affirmation or through meditation. This is declared repeatedly in such passages as the following:

(3) Nor is there anything to show that immediate apprehension can arise through repeated affirmation. (P.P. p.196/46)

(4) For there cannot be an injunction to act for a reward expected to occur in this life when it would in fact be impossible for it to do so. That which is only known indirectly through an inferential sign cannot be known directly through the indirect knowledge arising from an inference, even though the latter be repeated thousands of times. (P.P. p.333/87, M.V.150,1)

(5) We do not find that anything known indirectly can become an object of immediate apprehension when the indirect knowledge is subjected to meditation. (P.P. p.334/87, M.V.150,1)

(6) Meditation is never found to produce immediate cognition of its object. Even if, for argument's sake, we conceded that an object of meditation could be immediately apprehended through meditation, what guarantee is there that the object thus apprehended in meditation would be apprehended as it really was? (P.P. p.335/88, cp. M.V.150,2)

And yet the author behaves strangely. He puts the following into the mouth of an objector: 'A person is prompted by nature to work for immediate realization of the Self, as it is a human end. Repeated affirmations based on hearing and pondering over the Vedic texts are known to be a correct option, as they are the means to immediate knowledge of the Absolute'. In replying to this he says:

(7) If so, what is the need for a Vedic injunction on this point? A person is prompted by nature to work for immediate realization of the Self, as it is a human end. (P.P. p.196/46)

Here, in contradiction to his own express teaching, he accepts, in the manner of Maṇḍana, the idea that immediate apprehension can arise from repeated affirmation. Why he does so in unclear.

Thus we meet again here with the doctrine that we have already heard from Maṇḍana (M.V.100), here presented in a slightly different form. We heard above: 'After something has been determined in its true nature by an authoritative means of knowledge, all false appearances of it cease in principle, and yet they may continue if there is a special cause. For example, erroneous double-vision of the moon or a false sense of the direction of the quarters of the compass may persist even in those who know the truth about the moon or the direction of the quarters from a trustworthy person' (M.V.100,1). And the author of the Pañcapādikā follows Maṇḍana in other points of his teaching, as when he says: 'Similarly, we see the continuation of fear arising from the erroneous notion of a snake even in the case of a rope that has been correctly known as such, when that correct knowledge is forgotten' (M.V. 100,1). And: 'Just as, in the case of some people, trembling and symptoms of fear arising from the false superimposition of a snake cease at once, as soon as the source of fear has been removed through right knowledge of the rope, in the case of others they persist for some time on account of latent impressions' (B.Sid. p.131, cp. M.V.101,2).

There is, however, a certain difference between the accounts of Maṇḍana and the Pañcapādikā, as is shown in what follows.

(8) Therefore, even after vision of reality has arisen from the right authority, the Veda, the sages recommend repeated affirmation of the vision of truth in meditation to overcome or root out entirely that more powerful impression acquired naturally from the beginningless repetition of erroneous vision. (B.Sid. p.35, cp. M.V.100,1)

(9) (What is the cause of the apparent continued relationship with the body on the part of the person who has realized the Absolute?) The connection cannot be due to merit and demerit arising from action, as that would involve circular argument (there would have to be connection with the body to get action

and there would have to be action to get connection with the body); and pure Consciousness is totally devoid of action anyway. Nor is the problem solved by saying that the process is beginningless, as that leaves you without any firm foundation anywhere, like an endlessly proliferating row of blind men (i.e. you remove the problem back indefinitely, but never solve it — there is no light anywhere). Again, even if it were admitted for argument's sake that the person who had gained knowledge of the Absolute could be connected with a body through action, such a connection (on the part of such a person) would have to be taken as deliberate figurative usage, like people identifying themselves in imagination with the bodies of their close relatives. But all this is impossible. Identification with the body is not experienced in this way, that any of the recognized forms of figurative usage could apply (cp. M.V.47,2;141,6). And if it were supposed to be true, the ridiculous consequence would follow that people could no more have experience through their own bodies than they can through the bodies of their relatives. So it comes to this — that a person's relationship with a body must be based on Ignorance, there being no other possible explanation. When Ignorance has ceased, relationship with the body also ceases. And how then can there remain experience of pleasure and pain, which depends upon it?

It is in this sense that teachings from the Veda and Smṛti are cited by Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary which show that the person who has direct knowledge of the Absolute no longer indulges in the activities of transmigratory life. One who effectively identifies his Self in its true nature with the Absolute is no longer subject to transmigratory life, as to identify himself with it would now be a contradiction. In the case of the person who has effectively realized his identity with the Absolute, there is admittedly direct experience of the objects of the transmigratory realm. This experience is caused by the remnants of the portion of merit and demerit from deeds of past lives that brought about the life in which realization of the Absolute was attained. It is like the continuing vision of two moons through the eye-disease of double-vision (on the part of one who is not taken in because he knows that there is only one).

Pondering over the meaning of the upanishadic texts one has heard and subjecting them to sustained meditation are not required after there has been direct experience of the Absolute. Like the hearing of the texts, they apply only to the period before that experience. (P.P. pp.369 ff./98-9)

Here it is admitted that non-perception of the Self can continue after direct knowledge of the Absolute — and that this would be the cause of (the continued presence of) the ego-complex. But this in fact would contradict the sense of identity with the Absolute. How can it be claimed that it would

not imply the continuation of transmigratory life as before? And if pondering and sustained meditation belong exclusively to the period before direct knowledge of the Absolute, as the Pañcapādikā maintains, then the work fails to give any clear explanation how the continued non-perception of the Absolute could be brought to an end. Experience of the Absolute (if subject to effacement by a mental impression) would itself depend on a mental impression; and that impression would itself dissolve with the dissolution of the merit and demerit that brought the current life into being. Such would be the inevitable conclusion from the passage of the work we have just quoted.

152 THE TREATMENT OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

The following texts from the Pañcapādikā are concerned to teach that the Absolute is the cause of the world.

(1) That on the support of which the world unfolds is the Absolute, the root cause of all. (P.P. p.300/78)

(2) In the passage of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary beginning 'of the world with its attributes as we have already described them...' he points out that the words of Brahma Sūtra I.i.2, 'That from which proceed the origination, maintenance and dissolution of this world', constitute a piece of reasoning to define the nature of the Absolute, either through interpreting the text as having two functions at the same time, or else, (if this is ruled out), through reading it twice and interpreting it as having a different function the second time (i.e. interpreting it once to define the Absolute, and the second time to refute the definitions of other schools). (P.P. p.301 f./78)

(3) And so, since we have also used reason to refute the possibility of anything else (such as the 'Nature' of the Sāṅkhyas or the 'atoms' of the Vaiśeṣikas) being the cause of the universe, it follows, as the only alternative left, that the Lord, with attributes as described, must be the cause. (P.P. p.303/79)

(4) Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary proceeds, 'But is it not the case that that (sort of) inference (i.e. based on secular reasoning) is being set out here in the Sūtra (I.i.2)?' That is, the objector suggests that just as from a certain kind of fragrant smoke we infer the presence of sweet aloe-wood as cause, so from the particular (complicated) structure of the universe we infer that the Lord is possessed of special attributes such as omniscience and others and that He is its cause. To this the revered Commentator replies, 'No. Because the purpose of the

Sūtras is (not to indulge in logical argumentation but only) to weave a chaplet of flowers from the upanishadic texts'. That is, the objector is correct. An inference of that (secular) kind is being set out here: but it is only an incidental auxiliary. It is not the real purpose of the Sūtras. The purpose is to weave a chaplet of upanishadic texts. (P.P. p.304/79)

(5) We see that earth and the other elements come into being, persist for a time, and then pass away. But there is nothing to show whether their cause is one or many. All that is clear is that the cause must have the attribute of intelligence. On this we have the upanishadic text, 'That from which these creatures are born...' (Taitt.III.i.1). Here the cause is referred to in the singular. And the text reveals by implication the particular nature of the cause of the world, namely that it is omniscient and omnipotent. For it is only to reveal this that the text is laid down at all. Again, following on the text 'That is what you should enquire into' (Taitt.III.i.1), the Upanishad says 'That is the Absolute'. From the use of the word 'brahman' meaning 'the Absolute' we infer that the meaning of this word must follow from the verb 'bṛhati' = 'expand' and must imply that the Absolute is the cause of the world, the Absolute being itself unlimited by anything. And there is another text determining its nature, 'Verily, from bliss are these creatures born...' (Taitt.III.6), which, being associated with the word 'hī' in the sense of 'as is well known', implies that the Absolute is of the nature of bliss. (P.P. p.311 f./81)

(6) Hence, in a text concerned with the Absolute, all the attributes like 'being the origin of the world' and so on are mere apparent indications (valid only from the standpoint of an observer in the grip of Ignorance, and not characteristics of the Absolute in its true nature). For they do not touch the Absolute (as it truly is). Therefore it is clear that what the Sūtra 'That from which proceed the origination and so on of the world' (B.S. I.i.2) actually defines is the Absolute, omniscient, omnipotent, of the nature of supreme Bliss. (P.P. p.312 f./81)

Here, there is agreement on all hands that Brahma Sūtra I.i.1 'Then therefore the enquiry into the Absolute' announces the opening of the enquiry into the meaning of the upanishadic texts by declaring that the enquiry into the Absolute is something that ought to be carried out. Then there comes this next Sūtra, which answers the question 'But what is the nature of the Absolute taught in the Upanishads?' (B.S. I.i.2). Here the Sūtra and Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary are in perfect agreement. So what was the need for introducing a hypothesis, as was done by the author of the Pañcapādikā, saying 'This constitutes a piece of reasoning to define the nature of the Absolute, either

through interpreting the text as having two functions at the same time, or else through reading it twice and interpreting it as having a different function the second time'? And one cannot say that the Sūtra is intended to demonstrate the possibility of the Absolute existing and having the particular nature there defined. For there is no word expressing the idea of 'possibility' either in the Sūtra or in the upanishadic texts with which it deals. It is true that the Commentary says that there cannot be any other cause of the world, such as the 'Nature' of the Sāṅkhyas or the 'atoms' of the Vaiśeṣikas, apart from the Absolute with its attributes as explained. But that is not enough to justify the reasoning about the impossibility of Nature, etc., being the cause of the world in the way it is presented in the Pañcapādikā. For we do not find anything in the Commentary to support the statement in the Pañcapādikā that there are upanishadic texts whose purpose is 'to explain the particular nature of the way in which the Absolute operates as cause of the world, when its general nature as cause of the world is already established' (P.P. p.369/98). On the contrary, the Commentary begins with a sentence explaining the meaning of the Sūtra and saying 'When there are upanishadic texts speaking of the Absolute as the cause of the origination, etc., of the world...', thus explaining that this knowledge is only to be had from Vedic revelation. And it then goes on to speak of resort to reasoning as a mere auxiliary to revelation. It openly denies that the Sūtra allows the use of independent reasoning. It says, 'Therefore the Sūtra "That from which the origination, etc., of the world proceed" is not intended to lay down a logical inference'.

And the author of the Pañcapādikā contradicts his own words. First he says, 'And what Śrī Śaṅkara's words imply is that reasoning is an auxiliary to the revealed texts aiming to help make their truth a matter of immediate concrete experience' (P.P. p.309/80). He then goes on to say, 'The upanishadic texts dealing with the Absolute appeal implicitly to reasoning when they use examples such as that of clay.... They are... required to explain the possibility of the truth of the doctrine... (and) hence present as auxiliaries to the Vedic teaching' (P.P. p.310/81, M.V.149,8; cp. M.V.149, 2 and 3). What Śrī Śaṅkara said in his Commentary was, 'Here it is the same texts (Veda and Smṛti) that are the authority, but with immediate experience (and firm remembrance, etc.,) added in the case of the purely metaphysical texts' (M.V.31,7). The Pañcapādikā does not enter into the question how reasoning could be an auxiliary factor in promoting direct experience. Nor does it ask in what sense direct experience (anubhava) could be spoken of as a *means* of knowledge (pramāṇa), if that were to be understood as something different from the *result* (phala) of the application of a means of knowledge (which is what 'anubhava' is ordinarily taken to be). It appears that this is a point where the meaning of the Pañcapādikā requires further

investigation by scholars.

And there is another point worthy of consideration. In Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary it is clearly said that the creation of the world is illusory.

(7) Nor is the creation of the cosmos, beginning with the ether-element, absolutely real. For the Brahma Sūtra itself says, 'It (the world) is non-different from that (from the Absolute), as is shown by such texts as "a suggestion of speech"' (B.S. II.i.14, cp. M.V.33,9;34,4) — texts which declare that the world is a mere illusion.... So it is significant if the author of the Sūtras here (B.S. III.ii.3) refers to dream as 'a mere illusion', as in the case of dream the words have a special (intensified) sense. (B.S.Bh. III.ii.4)

The Pañcapādikā, however, argues through appeal to inference and other forms of evidence that the Absolute is a cause. It does not make it clear whether the world is illusory or whether it is a real effect emanating from the Absolute. True, it raises the question of how the Veda, if *per se* non-conscious and therefore requiring a conscious cause, could be an independent authority, and replies as follows. 'It is not dependent on anything else, because, like the Absolute, it is beginningless, and also changeless and eternal. In what sense, then, is it said to spring from the Absolute? In the sense that it depends on the Absolute for its existence, as the illusory snake depends on the rope' (P.P. p.315/82).

From this we might conclude that the world of which the Absolute is the cause was illusory. But as we do not have the part of the Pañcapādikā commenting on Brahma Sūtra II.i.14 we do not know in exactly what sense the illusory nature of the world was understood. Or again, because he introduces the example of the rope-snake, we might suspect that the author of the Pañcapādikā intended to say that a world of 'indeterminable' reality-grade was created (cp. M.V.132,3 and note).

153 THE TREATMENT OF THE THREE STATES

Since we do not possess the part of the Pañcapādikā that would have commented on the third Book of the Brahma Sūtras, we are not in a position to say with certainty how the author would have handled the examination of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. In this connection, we have already explained at M.V.138,4 how the Pañcapādikā, after raising the objection that the definition of superimposition did not cover the sufferings of the dream-state, answered it by saying that there also (in dream) there was a defect (sleep) and impressions and the other factors required for superimposition. It is said there that it is the power of Ignorance supported by the

immediate Consciousness that is delimited by the mind that evolves into the objects of false cognition in dream. The author then goes on as follows:

(1) But, if that were so, would it not follow that dream-objects were mere internal phenomena? Well, they are. Who denies it? All right, but is it not a fact that space is experienced as external in dream, just as it is in waking? That would not be possible if dream-objects were based on internal experience alone. And is not space itself also internal? So how could anything at all manifest as external through relationship with space? Here is another defect in your theory.

No, it is not a defect. For even in the waking state knowledge gained through the attested means of knowledge is immediate internal certitude. It is not anything different from the immediate Consciousness that is the support of the object. As pure light, Consciousness is everywhere one and the same. Even in the waking state, an object can only be experienced if it is encompassed by the immediate experience of the knowing subject. Otherwise an object, being non-conscious, could not be known. It is like the case of a pot, which, when enfolded by darkness, cannot manifest without in turn being encompassed by light coming from a lamp. As for the appearance of externality, that is set up by Māyā in waking as well as in dream. For the whole universe of plurality has Consciousness as its one support; and Consciousness is partless and without spatial distinctions. (P.P. p.57 f./10-11)

(2) That power of Ignorance... which in dreamless sleep and similar states stands as a mere remnant consisting of the impressions of projections like egoism, again arises. (P.P. p. 29 f./5)

(3) Beginningless Ignorance... which remains in dreamless sleep as the mere latent impression of creative activity, concealing the light of Consciousness. (P.P. p.98 f./20)

(4) Thus in waking and dream this being (the Self) is known as 'I'. In dreamless sleep, its light is blotted out by Ignorance in the form of non-perception (agrahaṇa) endued with the latent impression of the ego. Coming and going thus (as seen from the standpoint of Ignorance), the Self is spoken of in the Veda and Smṛti as 'the transmigrator', 'the individual soul', 'massed individual consciousness', 'the one whose nature is to have determinate knowledge', 'the one endowed with Consciousness' (prājña), 'the embodied one', 'the Self', 'he who enjoys the repose of dreamless sleep', 'the Spirit' (puruṣa), 'the inmost Self', 'the one who acts', 'the experiencer', 'the Knower of the Field (M.V. p.35)'. (P.P. p.134 f./29)

(5) The revered Commentator shows the unreality of evil by

saying, 'Wherever there is a superimposition, that onto which the superimposition is made is not in the least affected either by the defects or the virtues that apparently result'. Indeed, if the superimposition were anything real, it could not be removed by base knowledge, and that would undermine the fundamental claim of the system. (P.P. p.138/30)

(6) But would it not be the case that, when ignorance was removed through knowledge of the Absolute, the ego-complex which is its effect, would cease at that very moment? No. Ignorance can continue in the form of an impression.... (P.P. p.174/40, cp. M.V.151,2)

(7) But when a person comes to know his own true nature, like one suddenly becoming aware of the necklace lying forgotten on his neck, then, even though he formerly supposed himself to be an individual knowing subject, he now becomes free from all the defects of transmigratory life. (P.P. p.374/100)

On this topic we have the following words of a true expert: 'When the individual soul, asleep under a beginningless illusion, finally awakens, he awakens to a knowledge of the unborn, sleepless, dreamless, non-dual reality' (G.K. I.16, M.V.44,4; 139,4).

(8) But is it not the case that we are aware of the 'I' in dreamless sleep? For we see that when one has awoken from sleep he reflects over it afterwards and is aware of having experienced the pleasure of sleep as expressed in the feeling 'I slept happily'. That can only be experience of one's own Self as 'I'. Yes, we admit that a person has this experience. But it is not a memory based on an experience of happiness. Rather it is a notion of happiness derived from what was in fact mere absence of pain. (P.P. p.95 f./19, cp. M.V.246,8)

Here the doctrine is that the power of Ignorance persists throughout the three states, accompanied by the latent impression of the ego. But several points are not explained. When Ignorance has been abolished through metaphysical knowledge, how can it in some sense continue through a latent impression? How could Ignorance be an attribute of the (non-conscious) not-self? Through what concrete experience can one have (prior) knowledge of a point (the nature of dreamless sleep) that is taught in the Upaṇishads? Nor is it explained anywhere in the Pañcapādikā how the unreality of Ignorance becomes directly evident to spiritual enquirers when it in some sense continues even after it has been abolished.

No explanation is offered about why there is no mention of a 'power of Ignorance' in the Sūtra and its Commentary when they discuss dreamless sleep. The Brahma Sūtra says, 'Dreams are absent. (In dreamless sleep the soul is) in the subtle

canals (nāḍī), as is shown by the Vedic texts saying so (Chānd. VIII.vi.3, etc.), and in the Self' (B.S.III.ii.7). In commenting, Śrī Śaṅkara observes, 'Therefore it is verily the Self alone that is the dwelling-place of the soul in dreamless sleep'. Later he says, 'We now lay down, in accordance with the Veda, the true nature of that Absolute which the soul reaches in dreamless sleep and similar states (mystical trance, swoon, etc.), where the limiting adjuncts fall away'(B.S.Bh. III.ii.11).

One might ask how the soul could possibly attain the Absolute in the state of Ignorance. The answer is given in the Veda, 'This, verily, is his form in which he is free from craving, free from evils, free from fear' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.21). On this Śrī Śaṅkara comments: 'Now the direct teaching is given that liberation is realization that one is the Self of all, which is the result of metaphysical knowledge and is devoid of action, its component factors and results. Here Ignorance, desire and action do not exist'. The author of the Pañcapādikā nowhere examines how this statement that Ignorance, desire and action are absent in dreamless sleep fits in with his own doctrine. (On the parallel between dreamless sleep and liberation in this regard, cp. Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.22, quoted M.V. p.271.) The author of the Pañcapādikā quotes the Kārikās of Gauḍapāda as an authority. Why he does not give the same priority to the examination of the three states that the Kārikās do is not clear.

154 EXAMINATION OF THE MEANS TO METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE

On the topic of the means to metaphysical knowledge, the following passages from the Pañcapādikā are worthy of consideration. First of all, the author brings up the topic 'In what way are rituals helpful for the enquiry into the Absolute?' He considers and refutes two answers to this question. The first runs: 'The word "then" (atha) in Brahma Sūtra I.i.1 means "following on after mastery of the science of the Vedic ritual". This is because (according to the first view) one can know from the Veda as a whole in its various sections what discipline is required for the sake of what end, and because the ultimate aim of the Veda is the highest good of the student, and this highest good may either come from acquiring aptitude for the performance of a series of rituals of ascending importance or from the self-purification that ensues'.

The second view runs: 'The word "then" implies that the enquiry into the Absolute begins after the enquiry into ritual, as it depends on the latter'.

(1) One who wishes to reach the top of a high house finds that the stairs, if ascended one by one, enable him to do so. But one cannot say that one who wants to enquire into the Absolute

would be led to it in the same way by rituals performed for thousands of years, as there is no evidence for it. (P.P. p.242/59)

(2) Therefore, what eradicates pleasure-desire is always insight into the defects of sense-objects as sources of pleasure, and perception of the eternal, changeless reality.... The doctrine that rituals prepare one for enquiry into the Absolute by abolishing pleasure-desire is simply not true. (P.P. p.244 f./60, cp. M.V.71)

(3) Well, says the opponent, let us grant that rituals may serve as a prelude to enquiry into the Absolute through their purifying effect.... Indeed, the author of the Sūtras will himself declare that success in enquiry into the Absolute (usually) depends on the performance of the religious and other duties of one's stage of life. For he says, 'Attainment of metaphysical knowledge depends on the performance of all religious duties, as is shown by such Vedic texts as that (Bṛhad. IV.iv.22) which speaks of sacrifice as an instrument for attaining metaphysical knowledge.. (They are an aid) like a horse (which will take you more quickly and easily to the next village, even though you could have gone there on foot)'(B.S. III.iv.26).

This would have been true, we reply, if one could be sure that duties performed in this birth purified one and fitted one for enquiry into the Absolute. (But one cannot, as there are no rigid rules about the timing of the fruition of rewards for actions performed in obedience to injunctions.) (P.P. p.245 f./61)

This should be compared with the discussion in the Brahma Siddhi p.36 f. (See the author's comments on this above, M.V. p.286; on Śrī Śaṅkara's interpretation of B.S.III.iv.26, see Sac, Misconceptions, p.106.)

(4) A person does not become detached until he is able to discriminate the real from the unreal. He does not do so until he realizes that all enjoyments up to and including the attainment of the state of Hiraṇyagarbha are produced and limited and subject to destruction. For this is what we are taught. And we are also taught that, although everything up to the constant and eternal reality is perishable, the latter is not. Otherwise, since the production of anything is impossible without a material cause, even what is at present (from the standpoint of empirical experience) existent could not and would not have existed (which is absurd).

Who indeed could attain to a genuine desire to know the Absolute if he had not first acquired a longing for release, and become equipped with the means to it, which are inner and outer control, withdrawal from all activity for personal ends, power

to endure hardship and power to concentrate the mind? Such a person must be one who has already attained detachment, who has failed to derive satisfaction from earthly enjoyments, having seen that they disappear while the enjoyer is in the midst of his enjoyment, like the joy of the garlands, sandal-paste, fine robes and ornaments donned by a widow as she ascends the funeral pyre, and who has had direct experience of the sufferings that arise from action taken to procure them. No one who is without these attributes will be able to see how the Absolute into which he is enquiring is his own true Self. This will be true in all cases, whether his enquiry be prompted by fate or by curiosity or by the desire for learning. Because he will lack the essential spiritual equipment, his mind will remain extraverted and unable to practise the necessary introversion. Therefore the Ācārya (Bādarāyaṇa) used the word 'then' to mean 'after the acquisition of practical mastery of the spiritual virtues we have mentioned'. (P.P. p.251 ff./63)

The description of the spiritual equipment of inner control and the rest given here should be compared with that of the Vārtika of Sureśvara, given at M.V.126.

(5) This being so, effective knowledge that the Absolute is one's own true Self does not proceed from any form of command to act, since its subject-matter is reality in its true nature (knowledge of which can only be passively received). There is therefore no room for an injunction here. Though injunctions (such as 'the Self ought to be seen', etc.,) appear in the Vedic texts, their force as such is blunted by the fact that they have no scope in the case of knowledge of the real, which is passively conditioned by the operation of the means of knowledge. They may therefore be taken as eulogistic, turning the mind of the hearer towards knowledge of the Self by extolling it. For this reason, and also because they contradict the natural tendency to extraversion and so have an element of the function of an injunction, they may be called injunctions, but only in a figurative sense of the term. (P.P. p.352/93; cp. M.V.125,1 and 2;259,6, note)

(6) And similarly 'hearing' means reflecting over the texts of the Upanishads and studying the Brahmá Sūtras with a view to obtaining direct knowledge of the Self. Pondering (manana) means pursuit of trains of reasoning about the arguments and examples given in the Veda to support and illustrate the metaphysical texts — passages like that giving the example of the drum (Bṛhad.II.iv.7, cp. M.V.37, intro.), or like those speaking of the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world (cp. M.V.36, intro.), or like that speaking of the modifications of the basic world-elements that form the objects of the world as mere 'suggestions of speech' (Chānd.VI.i.4, cp. M.V.33,1). Pondering also includes the pursuit of inference in

general, in so far as it does not conflict with the teaching of the Veda. Sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) means fixing the mind on the content of the metaphysical texts of the Veda as supported and mediated by pondering. Nididhyāsana cannot here mean dhyāna in the sense of upāsanā, for the practice of enjoined meditations for karmic merit would be useless in the present context (cp. B.Sid. p.154, M.V.98,1, *ad fin.*). In the text 'The Self should be seen' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5), the 'seeing of the Self' refers (not to an act performed in response to a command but) to immediate awareness of the unity and sole reality of massed Consciousness, bereft of all manifestations of plurality, arising as a result of having fixed the attention on the content of the metaphysical texts. (P.P. p.352 f./93-4)

(7) (If 'seeing' in the above passage (M.V.154,6; cp.154,5) is not to be taken literally, then we have an eulogy.) What is the eulogy involved here? To this question we answer as follows. Maitreyī, wife of the sage Śrī Yājñavalkya, felt a profound sense of detachment from the world of transmigration, consisting of action, its component factors and results. She felt a deep longing to be liberated from it once and for all. Śrī Yājñavalkya wanted to teach her Self-knowledge, the means to such liberation. He therefore explained to her that the husband and so on were not what was dearest, in the words 'It is not, indeed, for the sake of the husband that the husband is dear', and taught instead that it was the Self that was dearest (Bṛhad.II.iv.5)....

If the Self is already known in advance to be the dearest thing, then to say 'It should be seen' or 'It should be heard about' constitutes (not an injunction but) a mere eulogy (cp. M.V. p.19). All this is implied in the first Sūtra of the Brahma Sūtras, and explained in the Commentary. The gerundive is not here used in the sense of an injunction. It is used in the sense of fitness, according to the Sūtra 'The optative, the gerundive and the noun of agency may be used to express the idea of fitness' (Pāṇini III.iii.169). And one should see that this is the true explanation of other apparently injunctive texts such as 'His meditation should be "It is only the Self"' (Bṛhad.I.iv.7) and 'He should meditate on the Self alone as his world' (Bṛhad.I.iv.15). (P.P. p.353 f./94, cp. M.V. 259,6, note)

In this connection one should look at the following passage in the Brahma Siddhi. 'The text "Once the wise man has acquired knowledge of the Self alone, he should practise repeated affirmation" (Bṛhad.IV.iv.21) is not an injunction to acquire a new consciousness. The phrase "the Self alone" lays down the non-existence of all else and its burden is to communicate that, as the burden of the sentence "The cloth is red" is to predicate red colour of the cloth. Here what is taught is the existence of an undifferentiated state of the Self before the

emergence of the ether and other elements. It is only in the context of enhancing one's consciousness of the Self in its pristine nature as the sole reality that "the Self alone" is laid down. That is why in the first half of the text the Self was taught as beyond ether and the other elements, with mention of "the great Self, unborn, taintless, fixed, beyond the ether" (Bṛhad.IV.iv.20). It is in the context of enhancing one's consciousness in this form that the text says "the Self alone*", in order to negate the ether and the other elements. Otherwise the word "alone" would have been meaningless, and one would not have known what was to be negated. That is further explained in what follows, "Let him not meditate on many words" (Bṛhad. IV.iv.21), which is to be taken as part of the same passage, on pain of the fault of "splitting the sentence". And as the context would not allow us to suppose that a mere prohibition of meditating on words was meant, we should take it that the real prohibition is against meditating on anything denoted by words, as all such meanings depend on words.*

'In the same way, in the text "One should meditate only on 'It is the Self'" (Bṛhad.I.iv.7), the term "only" has the same force as a negation of the not-self. Again, there is the text, "The Self should be subjected to sustained meditation" (Bṛhad. II.iv.5), preceded by "but it is only for the sake of the Self that they are dear" (ibid.) *occurring in a passage which ends "All this (world) is but the Self" (Bṛhad.II.iv.6). This all forms one passage, and it is concerned (not with injunctions but) with affirming the existence of the supreme Self' (B.Sid. p.154 f.).*

And one should especially note the following passage which gives the same doctrine as the Pañcapādikā. It runs: 'The phrases occurring within it (occurring within the passage Bṛhad. II.iv.5-6), "should be seen", "should be heard about" and "should be subjected to sustained meditation", though expressed (in imperative form) as gerundives, are not separate injunctions, but are intended for eulogy. For the gerundive termination is said to have other meanings apart from command, such as ascribing worth or value (Pāṇini III.iii.169). (The text therefore only means "the Self is worthy of being seen, etc.".) We have such examples of this as "Viṣṇu is worthy of being offered the Upāṃśu Sacrifice" (T.S. II.vi.6) which occurs amongst the texts about offering the Upāṁśu' (B.Sid. p.155; cp. M.V.123, intro.).

On the topic of hearing the supreme texts, pondering over them and subjecting them to sustained meditation, one should note once more the considerations set out at M.V.125 discussing how far Sureśvara's Vārtika agreed with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, and see from this how far there was agreement with the Pañcapādikā.

155 SUMMARY OF THE PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ

In the Pañcapādikā we sometimes find trains of reasoning copied from the Brahma Siddhi, sometimes the same examples are borrowed, sometimes the same terms are used, sometimes whole sentences are the same. But the Pañcapādikā also introduces new topics, never before raised in other works that survive. Without doubt this work deserves careful study on certain points by those who wish to determine the true method of the Vedanta, for it is in every way a stimulating piece of writing, with a highly original style of exposition, backed by an impressive array of reasoning. Amongst the more important topics for examination are the description of Ignorance and analysis of its nature, the reflections over the ego-sense, the dissection of the views of earlier commentators on how to defend the right to institute an enquiry into the Absolute, and the way in which it explains the meaning of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary at the point where it declares that the Upanishads exist to teach effective knowledge of the fact that all is one as the Self.

It is also beyond question that we need an examination of the work comparing it with the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara and the Vārtikas of Sureśvara and similar works to see how far it is really of service for understanding the traditional method of teaching by false attribution followed by subsequent retraction. I have brought out a few points on these topics, according to my lights, at various places in the present chapter. And as we shall be clarifying the same topics further at Chapter XIII below, dealing with Prakāśātman's Vivaraṇa, there is no need to go into them further now.

CHAPTER IX
BHĀSKARA

156 THE PLACE OF THE DOCTRINE OF BHĀSKARA IN THE HISTORY OF VEDANTIC THOUGHT

One might suppose that, to complete the study of the Pañcapādikā, the right course would be to follow it immediately with an examination of its commentary called the Vivaraṇa, for this would avoid any break in the flow of thought through the intervention of a different system. But the fact is that we have to study the system of Bhāskara, and to study it even before the Bhāmatī and other works. The reason for this is that Bhāskara takes up for consideration and criticism many points from Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, and also from the Brahma Siddhi and Pañcapādikā, in his efforts to revive the system of Difference in Identity, while his own doctrines are brought up for refutation at every stage by the Bhāmatī and the Vivaraṇa. Another reason for examining the system of Bhāskara is that parts of it are often brought up for examination in the later Vedantic commentaries of other schools.

Though Sanskritists speak of a number of authors called Bhāskara, they are not all Vedantins. One should ignore the conversation between Śaṅkarācārya and Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara recorded in the Śaṅkara Vijaya of Mādhava as a mere piece of fancy. The refutation of Bhāskara there presented largely follows the Vivaraṇa, the well known commentary on the Pañcapādikā, while if we turn to the Vivaraṇa itself we find that it is refuting the doctrines of Bhāskara all the time. So we may conclude that the Vivaraṇa itself is the real source for the imaginary account of an argument between Śrī Śaṅkara and Bhāskara given in the Śaṅkara Vijaya. The respectful reference to 'the doctrine of revered Bhāskara' made by Kullūka Bhaṭṭa in his commentary on Manu Smṛti I.15 shows that Bhāskara had many followers in the latter's day.* So although it might have seemed the correct course to proceed next to the sub-

commentaries on Śrī Śaṅkara's work, we shall pass them over for the moment and proceed on to examine the system of Bhāskara first.

(Kullūka probably wrote in the thirteenth century A.D., according to Renou, 1947, p.437. T.N.)

157 THE TRADITION FOLLOWED BY BHĀSKARA

The only work of Bhāskara that is completely available at the present time is his Brahma Sūtra Commentary. But in that Commentary at I.iv.21 he says, 'The doctrine of Māyā and the doctrine that the individual has power to eliminate the universe have been refuted in detail at various points in the Chāndogya', from which we conclude that he wrote a commentary on the Chāndogya Upanishad. In later Vedantic works, including commentaries on the Upanishads and Gītā, there are repeated references to Bhāskara's views, from which we conclude that Bhāskarācārya must have written commentaries on all three starting-points of the Vedanta tradition (Sūtras, Upanishads and Gītā). At present we have available — printed, though in a very corrupt form, — the text of his Brahma Sūtra Commentary, here to be abbreviated 'Bh.B.S.Bh.'. It is a source of some partial satisfaction at least to students of the history of Vedantic thought to reflect that this work is available and contains enough material to establish the nature of Bhāskara's system.

Bhāskarācārya thought that his own system, which followed the doctrine of Difference in Identity, represented the Vedanta tradition in its pure form. He repeatedly claims that the doctrines of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda contradict it.

(1) Some who do not like the doctrine of Difference in Identity maintained by the author of the Sūtras, and who teach the doctrine of Māyā, declare that it is the Lord Himself who is the transmigrant, and that there is no such thing as an individual soul, constituting a part of the Lord. The experience of being an individual soul undergoing transmigration, these people say, arises through distinctions set up by apparent conditioning adjuncts that are imagined through Ignorance. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.ii.6, p.39)

It was quite wrong to attribute to Śrī Śaṅkara the doctrine that it was the Lord who was undergoing transmigration.

(2) Thus the Upanishads and the author of the Sūtras teach that there is a real distinction between the individual soul and the supreme Self. There are some, however, who turn their back on the teachings of the Upanishads and the words of the

author of the Sūtras and work out a completely different doctrine, imagined in their own minds, according to which the distinction is a mere illusion. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.ii.12, p.41)

(3) And this (teaching that the Absolute undergoes a real transformation to manifest in the form of the world) is the traditional doctrine, taught in the Chāndogya and accepted there by the commentator and sub-commentator (Bh.B.S.Bh. I.iv.25, p.85; cp. M.V.158)

Again, it is well known that when commenting on the section of the Brahma Sūtras called the Vākyānvaya Adhikaraṇa (B.S. I.iv.19 ff.; cp. M.V.76), Śrī Śaṅkara set out the three views as mentioned in the three Sūtras beginning 'It was the view of Āśmarathya that (the teaching at Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.iv.5 that the Self should be seen was) a sign that the promise, (at Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.iv.5, that through the knowledge of the Self all this world would be known) would be fulfilled'. Of the three views, he accepted the last (that of Kāśakṛtsna) as supporting the system that he himself propounded. On the view of Bhāskarācārya, however, Āśmarathya supported a form of Difference in Identity.

(4) If the individual self and the supreme Self were absolutely distinct, then, because the passage (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) begins by speaking about the individual soul and ends by talking about the supreme Self, it would lack continuity, and then (since *absolute* difference cannot give way to identity) the promise made at the end of it (that through knowing the Self all this world would be known) could not be substantiated. Therefore the passage begins by stressing the aspect of non-difference between the supreme Self and the individual soul (by referring to the Self as that which is 'most dear'). And yet the implication is that there is also a certain difference between the individual soul and the supreme Self. (Bh.B.S.Bh. I.iv.19, p.81)

The second doctrine referred to (that of Auḍulomi) is also described by Bhāskara much in the same terms as it is described by Śrī Śaṅkara.

(5) The individual soul is entirely different from the supreme Self. But it attains to identity (reading aikyam) with it in liberation after it has mastered knowledge, meditation and concentration, and left the complex of its bodies and organs at death. This was the view of Auḍulomi Ācārya about the nature of the individual soul. And the Upanishads, too, teach this doctrine (Muṇḍ.III.ii.8), with the help of the example of rivers (becoming one only when they enter into the sea). (Bh. B.S.Bh.I.iv.20, p.81)

Then Kāśakṛtsna's doctrine is described as follows.

(6) Kāśakṛtsna did not hold (in the manner of Āśmarathya) that the individual soul was a modification of the supreme Self, the latter conceived as a primordial substance undergoing modification. Nor did he hold (with Auḍulomi) that the individual soul began as entirely distinct from the supreme Self and obtained identity in liberation. He held that, even before the final emergence of the soul from the complex of bodies and organs at liberation, the supreme Self was non-different from the individual soul in the beginning, since the latter was only a 'state' it assumed. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.21, p.81)

Bhāskara then imagines an objection to be raised as follows. 'If the individual soul were really identical with the supreme Self, then the teaching given to Maitreyī (properly speaking, to Janaka) "This great unborn Self..." (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22-5) would have been useless. One who is omniscient does not need a Teacher'. To this Kāśakṛtsna is assumed by Bhāskara to make the following reply.

(7) You are right. There is a distinction between the individual soul and the supreme Self, due to the delimitation of the individual soul by the conditioning adjunct of beginningless Ignorance, along with actions and their results. The individual soul is a part of the supreme Self. The relation is like that of sparks coming from fire. Or again, the case may be likened to that of the parcels of the ether of space apparently enclosed within apertures of the body (such as the ear-hole, cp. M.V.169,4) which are so perceived and referred to in speech (e.g. 'the ether in the ear'). Or again, it is like the parcel of the cosmic vital energy that appears to be enclosed within every living body as its fivefold vital energy. Even so, the individual soul, by nature both different from and identical with the supreme Self, is not liberated before (it throws off Ignorance). Hence teaching about metaphysical knowledge given to it for the sake of liberation has a use. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.21, p.81)

Though the words 'different yet identical' do not occur here in the Sūtra, Bhāskara introduces them to show that his own doctrine (which he traces to Kāśakṛtsna) is different from that of Āśmarathya.

From these passages it is clear that, although Bhāskarācārya taught difference in identity, his doctrine did not agree with that of Bhartṛprapañca in every respect. For Bhartṛprapañca maintained that the soul was a modification of the consciousness of the supreme Self (M.V.79), whereas here in the teaching of Bhāskara the relation of difference in identity between the soul and the supreme Self is taken as beginningless. And there

are other doctrines of Bhartṛprapañca that are not accepted here. So that, even in the parts of Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine that were not singled out for refutation by Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara, we must assume that there were some differences from Bhāskara. Or rather, perhaps we should suppose that many sub-species of the Doctrine of Difference in Identity arose over a long period of time, and that that of Bhartṛprapañca was just one of them. But we desist from speculation on this point, remarking that it is a subject which requires further investigation by historians.

158 THE 'AUTHOR OF THE VṚTTI' AND THE 'AUTHOR OF THE VĀKYA' REFERRED TO BY BHĀSKARĀCĀRYA

We have already explained (M.V.62;63) that many people from early times have set out to lay down the right method for interpreting the Upanishads and have done so in many different ways. Merely from the study of Bhāskara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary we can see that, as was the case with other founders of traditions, he had predecessors of his own opinion who had already explained the Upanishads, Brahma Sūtras and Gītā on his own lines with the help of quotations and arguments, even before his own commentary had been composed. And we have already quoted Bhāskara's remark 'And this is the traditional doctrine, taught in the Chāndogya and accepted there by the commentator and sub-commentator' (M.V.157,3).

It is not easy to be sure at the present day exactly who the commentator and sub-commentator he had in mind were. There is no universally accepted definition for the terms 'author of a commentary' (vākya-kāra) and 'author of a sub-commentary' (vṛtti-kāra). In his various commentaries, Śrī Śaṅkara summarizes and refutes the views of a number of Vṛtti-kāras who belonged to different early traditions of Advaita. And, as earlier pointed out (M.V.106), the same is true of Sureśvara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika. The Pañcapādikā, too, quotes sentences from some early Vṛtti-kāras in order to refute them.

In the latter work we have, for instance, 'Here, some set forth a new doubt and open a separate enquiry into the Absolute' (P.P. p.180/42), 'Others again begin their argument like this...' (P.P. p.184/42), 'And this is set forth in another sub-commentary (vṛtti) as follows...' (P.P. p.239/58), 'There is another author, too, who puts the point differently in his sub-commentary...' (P.P. p.239/58), 'The author of another sub-commentary puts a different meaning for the term "the Absolute" into the mouth of an objector and refutes it...' (P.P. p.256/64), 'But the author of another sub-commentary explains "knowledge of the Absolute" (B.S. I.i.1) as a subjective genitive (so that according to his view, specifically rejected by Śrī Śaṅkara, the first Brahma Sūtra speaks of enquiry *on the part*

of the Absolute, not enquiry *into* the Absolute)' (P.P. p.257/64).

Thus efforts were made for a long time by many different people in many different ways to establish the right method for the interpretation of the Upanishads. For this reason the recognition of the right method has become difficult, and that is why we ourselves are making the attempt in the present book.

As for the question of whether or not the commentator and sub-commentator that Bhāskara had in mind were followers of Bhartṛprapañca — there is no means of solving the problem, as they are not directly quoted in the Commentary at present under consideration. And that is all we can say in the matter for certain.

159 THE DIVISIONS OF SUBJECT-MATTER IN THE BRAHMA SŪTRAS ACCORDING TO BHĀSKARA

The subject-matter of the Brahma Sūtras is divided up as follows according to Bhāskara.

(1) The Absolute has three conditions — its condition as cause, its condition as effect and its condition as the individual soul. The enquiry into the Absolute here ordained embraces all phases of the Absolute without distinction. For no distinctions of meaning in the term 'the Absolute' are implied when the Veda says 'Verily, all this is the Absolute' (cp. Nṛsiṃha Uttaratāpinī VII.3).

The first Book of the Brahma Sūtras expounds the nature of the Absolute and the proof of its existence. The second Book refutes any belief that the doctrine of the Absolute contradicts Smṛti; the second quarter of it, the quarter devoted to dialectic (tarka-pāda), refutes the doctrines of other schools; and this Book also shows that the various texts of the Upanishads do not contradict one another. The topics of the third Book are as follows: description of the process of transmigration, account of the different states (waking, dream, dreamless sleep, etc.,) assumed by the soul, the nature of the Absolute, reflection over difference and identity in the prescribed meditations, and a consideration of how knowledge and action combined bring liberation. The fourth Book describes the practices of repeated spiritual affirmation, also the Path of the Flame and the results of metaphysical knowledge. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.1, p.8)

What this passage in the Commentary does not explain is the answer to the question, 'If the intention had really been to expound the nature of the Absolute as having three conditions — cause, effect and individual soul — why did the second Sūtra say "That from which the origin and so forth of the world proceeds", limiting itself to a definition of the Absolute as

cause only?'

Here, the division of topics is the same as that in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. Also like Śrī Śaṅkara, Bhāskara explains the Sūtras as carrying their own message while sometimes refuting the doctrines of other schools as well. He also analyses Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary in many places, and quotes and refutes it. From this we conclude that, at the time Bhāskara wrote, Bhagavatpāda's doctrine had spread everywhere, and Bhāskara thought that he could only establish his own thesis of Difference in Identity by refuting the doctrine of Śrī Śaṅkara. And this is why, in the verse with which his commentary begins, he formally stated that this was what he was undertaking to do.

(2) This science (śāstra) must be explained anew in order to silence those (i.e. Śrī Śaṅkara) who have explained it in such a way as to draw attention to their own private opinions through concealing the true meaning of the Sūtras. (Bh.B.S.Bh. I.i.1, p.1)

160 TREATMENT OF THE TOPIC OF IGNORANCE

Bhāskara does not accept Śrī Śaṅkara's identification of Ignorance with superimposition. Nor does he accept that worldly experience is based on Ignorance. He summarizes Śrī Śaṅkara's view as the theory of an opponent as follows.

(1) Ignorance, (says our Advaitin opponent, does not rest in the Lord but) rests in the individual soul, which, in its true nature, is the real. Metaphysical Ignorance implies the wrong notion that the body and other instances of the not-self are the Self, along with the failure to perceive the Absolute in its true nature, thus including both wrong perception and non-perception. It is brought to an end through the knowledge arising from hearing 'That thou art' and other metaphysical texts of the Upanishads. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.19)

Having summarized Śrī Śaṅkara's view of Ignorance thus, Bhāskara begins his refutation of it as follows. 'What is this Ignorance you speak of? Is it vision of difference or something else?' (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.19) And having raised this question he suggests various possible definitions and refutes them as follows.

(2) If you (Advaitin) hold that Ignorance is vision of difference, then there is a point you have to explain. In what sense can vision of difference be Ignorance? Is Ignorance called such because it is something positive, different from knowledge? Or is Ignorance just absence of knowledge? It cannot be

the latter, because it is immediately perceived as a positive form of consciousness.... Nor can it be something positive that is not knowledge. For knowledge of distinctions is not (on Śrī Śaṅkara's theory) either a substance or a quality or an act. It therefore could not be a positive entity other than knowledge. Knowledge of distinctions must itself be knowledge, as the use of the word 'knowledge' shows.

Let us assume, however, that Ignorance is something positive, contrary to knowledge. In that case, is it eternal or non-eternal?... If Ignorance were beginningless, it would follow that there could never be liberation. Ignorance would be ineradicable, like the Absolute. Let us suppose, then, that Ignorance had a beginning. In that case, what did it spring from? If it were produced, it would be an effect, and therefore something real. And that would ruin the claim that Ignorance was unreal. No unreal entity, like a hare's horn, is ever produced.... So Ignorance cannot be defined as vision of difference. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.18-9)

(3) If you (Advaitin) say 'Ignorance is indeterminable either as real or as unreal' we reply that this would have consequences that you yourself would not accept. As the verse has it: 'To say that that whereby this whole world is made available to experience is inexplicable is to make a remark that itself illustrates the point it makes (i.e. a remark that is itself inexplicable)'.

Or let us suppose that Ignorance *was* inexplicable. How could a Teacher then expound it to his pupils? If it cannot be taught, how could one claim that it was what made empirical experience possible? Again, one must say whether it does or does not have a beginning. If it had no beginning, it would be eternal and so ineradicable, and liberation would be impossible. We have already explained how the theory that the Absolute is its cause will not do. Even if its cause were other than the Self, that cause would have to be (beginningless and so) eternal. As the effect of such a cause would never cease, there would again be no possibility of liberation. Perhaps you will say that Ignorance is both real and unreal. But then you would be confronted by the impossibility of that which was real being at the same time unreal. One cannot have genuine knowledge of contradictories co-existing in the same thing at the same time. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.95)

The true position of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara is as follows. Ignorance is superimposition and superimposition is the synthesizing (the identifying) of the subject and the object, the real and the false. Superimposition may appear to be beginningless from the standpoint of natural empirical experience. But, because it is not real, it can be brought to an end through obtaining an effective knowledge of the real in its true nature.

(4) Perhaps you (Advaitin) will say that your doctrine of metaphysical Ignorance must be right as metaphysical Ignorance is mentioned in the ancient texts, identified with the Unmanifest Principle and the shining Ether. Well, we are quite happy that it should be so mentioned. When the matter is properly understood, there is no contradiction of our own position. But the fact that Ignorance is produced shows that it is real, like any other effect, such as a sprout produced from a seed. (Bh. B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.95)

The true position of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara is as follows. The Unmanifest Principle is not Ignorance in the proper sense of the term. But because it is set up by Ignorance it is sometimes called *Ignorance. And it is wrong to speak of things set up by Ignorance as real. For they are just false notions, like shell-silver and the rest.*

Sometimes we speak of 'ignorance' understood as an attribute of the mind, like non-discrimination. But then we are speaking of something which falls within name and form, like the Unmanifest Principle, the seed of name and form, set up by metaphysical Ignorance proper. Ignorance is indeterminable either as the real or as anything different from it, from the mere fact of being falsely imagined in the Self, like shell-silver. 'Inexplicable' means 'indeterminable either as the Self or as anything different from it because of being a mere fantasy'. In this there is nothing strange. Śrī Śaṅkara explicitly denied that the Self was characterized by name and form: 'Name and form are imagined to exist in the Absolute like night and day in the sun, though in reality they are not there' (Taitt.Bh. II.viii.5).

(5) And Ignorance cannot be equated with mere non-perception. Since absence of perception is not a positive reality it cannot be a cause of bondage. If Ignorance were a non-reality, it could no more cause bondage than a flower imagined to be growing in the sky could. To speak of a binding force that was unreal would be a contradiction in terms, like talking of a halter for a fish. So the theory that Ignorance is indeterminable breaks down. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.96)

(6) Even in the case of those who hold that 'Ignorance' is a technical term used to denote name and form, indeterminability cannot be established. 'Determinable' means 'open to explanation'. Words like 'cow' and so on are open to clear explanation in grammar. And the things that they stand for, such as the objectively existent cows and so on, are regarded as 'explicable'. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.96)

This passage does nothing to refute Śrī Śaṅkara's position. The points to which Śrī Śaṅkara holds are: Both manifest and unmanifest name and form are indeterminable either as the real or as

anything different, because they are both merely imaginary. They are in fact unreal. They are subject to cancellation through knowledge. In the last analysis they are non-different from the Self in its true nature.

It is clear that in all this discussion no attention has been paid to Ignorance as conceived by Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara, which is the synthesizing of the real and the unreal. We now go on to set out Bhāskara's treatment of the theme 'The question of where Ignorance has its seat is a hard one to answer on Śrī Śaṅkara's principles'.

(7) Metaphysical Ignorance (as conceived by the Advaitin) cannot belong to the Absolute. For the nature of the Absolute is pure Consciousness and unsurpassable bliss. Nor can it belong to the individual soul. For no individual soul over and above the Absolute is admitted to exist, and an imagined soul in the form of a reflection is nothing real. And an Ignorance that has no seat (no conscious being whose consciousness it obscures) belongs to the realm of non-existence. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.19)

(8) Whose is this Ignorance? It does not belong to the individual soul. For (on the Advaitin's theory) the soul is not real. Nor does it belong to the Lord. For in his case Ignorance would be contradictory, since He consists of the light of eternal Consciousness. And if He were reduced to the status of an ignorant transmigrant, his 'Lordship' would be contradicted. For 'Lordship' means being free from the pleasure, pain and delusion that arise from the three 'constituents' (guṇa) of Nature, while 'being subject to transmigration' means continuing to be affected by them. As it would be contradictory for one and the same soul at one and the same time to be the seat of subjection to transmigration and freedom from transmigration, of Ignorance and Enlightenment, of bondage and liberation, one of the two must perforce be given up, as either cold or heat would have to be. If the Lord is the Lord, He is not subject to transmigration; if He were subject to transmigration, He would not be the Lord. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.21, p.82)

Here Bhāskara takes no notice of what Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Commentary to Brahma Sūtra II.i.14 about the 'Lordship' of the Lord and the 'transmigratorship' of the soul being mere notions of empirical experience (M.V.45,2). Nor does he take into consideration the teaching at Gauḍapāda Kārikā II.32 that the notions of bondage and liberation pertain to the practical standpoint only, not to that of ultimate truth (M.V.29,1).

(9) It is true that when (in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary) the question is raised 'To whom does Ignorance belong?' the answer is given 'It belongs to you who ask'. But that also was a bad answer. If he had said 'I am the individual soul, a part of

the supreme Self' we could have replied, 'All right, you can sit quiet'. (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.i.1, p.219)

Here the meaning of Bhagavatpāda's Commentary was not properly understood. The idea of raising the question 'But whose is this Ignorance?' was to show that, on the doctrine that all is one, such a question is impossible. If pure unity is known to be the truth, then (it is seen that) there is in fact no Ignorance anywhere for anyone. If it is not known, then the question itself shows that Ignorance belongs to the questioner alone. And so the reply to one who answered 'I am the individual soul' could only be 'Ignorance belongs to you'.

Raising the question 'Is Ignorance one or many?', Bhāskara gives the following reply.

(10) If Ignorance were a plurality, it would have to be something real, and that would contradict the theory that it is indeterminable either as the reality or as anything else. And if it were one, then that would mean that everyone would be liberated at the same time. (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.i.1, p.219)

What is overlooked here is the fact that the alternative 'one or many' is only possible in practical experience through *Ignorance. There is no scope for applying it to Ignorance* itself.

Fault is also found with the doctrine of the cessation of Ignorance.

(11) Ignorance as you (Advaitin) interpret it means vision of difference. No one whose body was still being sustained by Ignorance (as you claim the body to be) could lose his knowledge of difference, as his eyes and other organs are the cause of it, and where the cause is, there the effect is bound to follow. And knowledge of difference is required for the experience of merit and demerit. How does it help such experience? By making possible empirical experience with its distinction of body, organs and objects. Ignorance, desire and action affect one another mutually and cause each other to continue, like seed and sprout. (If we were to accept your theories) the wheel of transmigration would roll on for ever, contradicting and cancelling knowledge of non-duality. Liberation would be impossible, as the contradictory forces would be too strong for it. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.20)

No account is taken here of the passage in Bhagavatpāda's Commentary where he says 'Without self-identification with the body and senses, expressed in feelings of "I" and "mine", there can be no empirical knower, and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.; cp. M.V.97,1, note; 143,13, note). If the body and organs had been real, then

being an individual experiencing subject and experience of transmigratory life would have been the result of their work. But, from the higher standpoint of the Witness, the body and organs are not real. Hence Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says, 'One could not conceive of the Self as embodied except through Ignorance in the form of false identification with the body' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, M.V.265,3). And again, once non-duality has been realized, there can no longer be any place for the duality of cancelling and cancelled. For the Upanishad says, '(But when all this has become his own Self), then what could a person see and with what?' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14). These are points to which Bhāskara did not pay due attention.

There is not a trace here in Bhāskara of the doctrines about Ignorance we encountered earlier on in dealing with the system of Bhartṛprapañca. There were, for instance, the following passages. 'Ignorance is not being awake to the conviction "All this universe is in truth nothing but my own Self"' (M.V. 82,1); 'On the other hand metaphysical Ignorance has the Self's Consciousness for its seat.... It distorts that Consciousness and conditions it for erroneous perception' (M.V.83,11); 'Ignorance springs up spontaneously here and there in the Self, like desert places appearing on the surface of the earth' (M.V.85,3, note). So we should assume either that Bhāskara omitted these subjects in his Commentary because they had been refuted by Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara, or else that Bhāskara's system was different from Bhartṛprapañca's on these points.

131 THE AUTHORITY OF PERCEPTION, ETC., AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE VEDA

Śrī Bhagavatpāda taught that all commerce between means of experience and objects of experience, as well as the action of Vedic revelation, took place in the realm of Ignorance. He announced this in the words: 'All commerce between the attested means of knowledge (perception, inference, revelation, etc.) and their objects, whether in the Vedic or secular sphere, proceeds on the basis of this same mutual superimposition of the Self and not-self called Ignorance, as does all Vedic tradition, whether concerned with injunctions and prohibitions or with liberation'(B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.: M.V.23,2). No notice of this is taken in the system of Bhāskara. So we should not be surprised to find him accepting the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā doctrine in regard to the operation of the means of knowledge.

On this topic, Bhagavatpāda raises the following hypothetical objections to his own position. If one accepts absolute unity, there cannot be any plurality, and, in that case, how can perception and the other means of knowledge operate? How could the texts of the Veda containing injunctions and prohibitions in that case be meaningful? And if the words of the

Vedic texts are an illusion, how can they lead to knowledge of the Absolute? He answers by saying, 'All empirical experiences that occur before one has realized that one's Self is the Absolute are taken as real, like the experiences of a dream before awakening' (B.S.Bh.II.i.14; M.V.27,3;48,7;146,6). Bhāskara alludes to this in his own Commentary, and then goes on as follows:

(1) On this we would make the following observations. An explanation has been given of the phrase 'The truth is, it is only clay' (Chānd.VI.i.4). Now, if the universe of plurality were unreal, clay also would have to be unreal, as it is part of that universe. But how can unreality be established? Not by perception and inference. For they are just what determine this whole universe as real. Nor can we say that there is here a cancelling-cognition that reveals a defect in the means of knowledge leading to error. For all living creatures that inhabit the world share knowledge of the five elements from which it is composed. And so distinctions are a fact, and empirical experience based on them is true. One may very well take it that a cognition which ultimately turns out to have been false retains its validity as long as no cancelling-cogntion arises, as may occur when one re-orientates oneself after losing one's sense of direction; but if it meets with a cancelling-cognition it is nullified.

But, you will say, will not Ignorance in association with the individual subject (reading pramātṛvad) be present as a defect here also? The experience of distinctions by individual subjects associated with Ignorance would then be false like the double-vision of the moon. Our reply to this is that, in refuting an opponent, a disputant should avoid arguments that undermine his own position. And this argument certainly undermines your (Advaitin's) own doctrine. If the knowledge of difference that comes to the individual knowing subject who is afflicted with Ignorance is false because of that affliction, his knowledge of the non-dual Absolute will be equally false for the same reason....

Do you claim that there is a cancelling-cognition that contradicts our knowledge of the world? If so, you yourself have already taught that the cancelling-cognition itself must have causal factors vitiated by the defect of Ignorance. As this situation would hold throughout, the whole basis for proving falsity would be undermined. And again, we challenge you with this further inference. Knowledge of the Absolute must be false, because it is knowledge, like knowledge of plurality.

(Moreover, there is no universal rule that falsity only results from a cancelling-cognition.) For all dream-experience is false (even before it is cancelled by waking), because there is a defect in the apparatus of knowledge, just as in dreamless sleep. And one who, afflicted with the disease of double-vision, lives his whole life in the primaeval forests (and so

never has a chance to be told that there is only one moon and so to have a cancelling-cognition and know better) — such a person continues indefinitely to have false knowledge of two moons. Such people supply examples of error where there is no cancelling-cognition.

And finally, there is no example of knowledge of the real arising from something which was itself unreal (as your doctrine would require). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.94)

Here it is clear that it is the doctrine of error adopted in the Pañcapādikā that is singled out for criticism, the doctrine according to which error arises from a threefold cause, including a defect (cp. M.V.138, esp.138,4, note). The doctrine of the revered Commentator Śrī Śaṅkara that all the play of the empirical means of knowledge rests on metaphysical Ignorance has simply been left out of consideration. The revered Commentator does not establish falsity with the help of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge, so it would have been irrelevant to have criticized his doctrine by pointing out that these means of knowledge were afflicted with defects. His own view is that it is only the final direct metaphysical intuition that reveals (read avadhāraṇenaiva?) the falsity of all experience that comes through the empirical means of knowledge (cp. M.V.48,7).

Nor is there any force in the inference purporting to show that (on Śrī Śaṅkara's principles) knowledge of the Absolute would be false. Since all means of knowledge fall within the universe of plurality, when knowledge of the Absolute has arisen from the Veda, no further knowledge is required. The revered Commentator said, 'And this is the final means of knowledge, which reveals that the Self alone exists. After that, nothing further is required'. And he adds: 'Nor can it be said that this immediate intuition is either useless or erroneous. For it is seen to bring metaphysical Ignorance to an end, and there is no other knowledge that could cancel this intuition. But before this immediate intuition of the unity and sole existence of the Self, all practical experience of the true and the false holds, both within the secular and the Vedic spheres' (B.S.Bh.II.i.14).

(2) As for the doctrine that perception and the other empirical means of knowledge cannot be false in themselves, but may be shown to be false from another standpoint — we should like to be told on the basis of what distinction this claim is made. Perhaps you will say that it is always the case, as illustrated by dreams and so on, that falsity is detected, not from the false cognition itself, but from some other source. For instance, one does not apprehend the falsity of the false cognition of silver through the silver-cognition itself. On this view, irrefutable Vedic revelation is supposed to show that perception and the other empirical means of knowledge are

always false and never true. This doctrine, however, would jetison the whole account of the validity of perception, given in the opening section of the Brahma Sūtras in order to establish the validity of the injunctions of the Veda. And that account (is not to be taken lightly as it) stems from Ācārya Upavarṣa, the founder of the tradition. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.ii.29, p.124)

Here one does not quite know what opponent is being refuted. It is clear that on the doctrine of Śrī Bhagavatpāda, the uncontradicted validity of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge continues uncancelled until the role of being an individual subject is cut short by the intervention of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads. Indeed, these two ancient verses from some knower of the Absolute are quoted on this subject by the revered Commentator at the end of his Commentary on Brahma Sūtra I.i.4.

(3) The Self is only an individual knowing subject before the attainment of direct knowledge of that Self which the Upanishads say has to be investigated. When the true nature of the individual knowing subject has been thoroughly investigated, then it is found to be (the supreme Self) free from sin and other defects. Just as the notion of the identity of the Self with the body is imagined at first to hold as valid, so are all the means of knowledge found in worldly experience (including the Veda) imagined to hold as valid until the Self has been realized. (Old verses quoted at the end of B.S.Bh.I.i.4; cp. M.V.28,10;165,6)

It is clear that Bhāskara rejects the view that the Veda can only give its teaching in the context of metaphysical Ignorance, and thinks that the validity of the Veda should only be defended according to the arguments of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. This emerges at different points in his Commentary.

(4) Because the Absolute can only be known through Vedic revelation, the Teacher Bādarāyaṇa goes on to expound the definition of it that is found there. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.2, intro., p.8)

(5) When the Sūtra says 'The Absolute has the Veda for its womb', the meaning is that the Veda is the authoritative means of knowledge by which it is known. 'Being the womb of the Absolute' means 'being that by which the Absolute is known', in the sense of being the authoritative means of knowledge in regard to it. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.3, p.9)

This is a refutation of the doctrine that the Self is the object of a Vedic injunction (niyoga) in the sense that there is something that has to be done before it can be known, namely the active elimination of the universe. And Bhāskara goes on

to refute the notion that knowledge of the Self can be the subject of an injunction at all, using the argument that the forms assumed by knowledge are not conditioned by the will of man (but by the form of the reality known). Here he follows the line of argument already laid down by Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara.

(6) And if it were maintained, through a complete misconception, that the Vedic texts are always and everywhere concerned with tasks to be done, that would make it impossible to establish the existence and true nature of the omnipotent Lord. For we have the text: 'The texts of the Veda are divided into three categories — injunctions, explanatory passages and hymns. If the Veda were exclusively concerned with enjoining things to be done, it would not be an authority for declaring what truly exists'.... Therefore anyone who believes in the existence of God must infallibly admit that there are certain texts concerned with declaring what truly exists. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.15).

(7) Nature does not depend on any of its own modifications, since it is self-existent and complete in itself, but the modifications depend on Nature, as they are not self-existent and complete in themselves. In the same way, the ritualistic section of the Veda does not depend on the knowledge-section. But the knowledge-section depends on the ritualistic section, since the Upanishads (e.g. Bṛhad.IV.iv.22, M.V.53,7;55,1) themselves teach that the obligatory daily ritual is required for liberation in co-operation with knowledge. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.16)

(8) Some teach that action performed on its own and unaccompanied by knowledge or meditation is only for the preparation of the student and is not part of the teaching given at the highest level. But this is only a wild personal fancy. (Bh. B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.16)

Bhāskara has explained what he means earlier, in his Commentary to B.S. I.i.1. He said there: 'The word "then" (in the Sūtra "Then, therefore, the enquiry into the Absolute") refers to the moment when one has fulfilled one's debts to the gods and other beings, and has cleansed oneself of one's sins through attaining wisdom...'. The idea is that some held the doctrine that a person renders himself fit for the teaching given at the highest level, namely 'The Self has to be seen...', through action.

(9) And there is no objection to holding that the Veda, too, proceeds directly from the Absolute, and that it is through the Absolute that the Veda manifests in the mind of Prajāpati at the beginning of the world-period. And since the supreme Self is eternal, the eternality of the Veda is all the more certain as it is identical with the supreme Self. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iii.30, p.65)

It does not occur to Bhāskara here to ask himself whether, for one who holds that creation is (perfectly real and yet only) the manifestation of the already existent, it would not follow from this principle that everything would have to be eternal.

(10) On this point the Mīmāṃsakas (who reject the doctrine of world-periods) raise an objection. How could any person learn the Veda (at the beginning of a world-period) when there would be no tradition for teaching it? And if the Veda were due to the intelligence of one person, it would be the creation of that individual, and so not eternal. To this we reply as follows. On certain points about the Veda you and I both agree. We agree that, as demonstrated in the first section of your Śāstra (Śabara, P.M.S.Bh.I.i.5), the Veda is authoritative, because the connection between words and their meanings is eternal, because tradition does not tell us of any individual human author of the Veda (Śabara,I.i.27-32), because it is not declared to have a mere auxiliary function like the fore-sacrifices (prayāga) and because it reveals matters not known from any other source. And we have also explained how all evidence is authoritative on the nature of that for which it is the sole evidence. And just as you affirm the existence of heaven on this authority, so do I, on the same authority, affirm that the supreme Self is omniscient and omnipotent and the cause of the (repeated) creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the world. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iii.30, p.65)

One should notice that on one point (that of the ultimate reason for the authoritativeness of the upanishadic teaching) Bhāskara takes no notice of the reasoning given by Śrī Śaṅkara. What the latter said was: 'Since the results of rituals, results like heaven and so on, are not a matter of immediate experience, there is always the doubt "Will they actually come or not?" But the reward of knowledge of the Absolute is immediately evident, for the Veda speaks of "the Absolute which is immediately and directly evident" (Bṛhad.III.iv.1) and teaches "That thou art" as an already accomplished fact' (B.S. Bh.III.iii.32, cp. M.V.75,7).

162 THE RELATION OF VEDIC REVELATION AND REASON

In Bhāskara's Commentary, the independent character of the authority of the Veda is safeguarded by assigning reason a position defined in the following terms.

(1) Therefore, the conditions governing bondage and liberation have to be enunciated on the authority of the Veda. They cannot be stated on the basis of mere logical reasoning, as the latter has no sure footing anywhere. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.19)

(2) The supreme Lord is omnipotent. He is therefore able to create special forms for the benefit of his devotees. Are these forms illusory? No, they are not, we reply. They are perfectly real. For the Veda reports things as they truly are. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.20, p.29)

Bhagavatpāda accepted the principle that the Veda was a source of knowledge in the sense that (1) It could convey knowledge (useful at its level) until the rise of immediate intuition and (2) It was not without a (divine) author. But the principle appealed to here by Bhāskara, namely, 'Whatever the Veda teaches is an ultimate fact', is wrong (because the Veda teaches many things by way of false attribution followed by later retraction).

(3) Here you might object, 'How can there be two experiencers in one body? By what right do you bring in a contradiction and say this? The Veda says "There is no other seer... but He" (Bṛhad.III.vii.23) and denies that there is any other seer apart from the Inner Ruler now under discussion'. To this we reply as follows. We have already explained how this very text brings out the distinction with the phrase 'He who, dwelling in the body,...' (Bṛhad.,Mādhyandina version,III.vii.22). Do you not see the point? This text cannot be just passed over as if it were a mere casual word of greeting, as it is just as authoritative as the text 'There is no other seer... but He'. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.ii.20, p.45; cp. M.V.170,13 and note)

Here Bhāskara interprets the text 'This is your Self, the Inner Ruler, the immortal' as if it was expounding distinctions, although its real purpose is to teach that the Self is the one reality present within all.

(4) One can accept as true that part of the teaching (of the Yoga School) that can be used as a means to help arrive at true vision, because it agrees with Vedic teaching. But the part that does not agree must be wrong, as mere humans are quite capable of expounding things as other than they are. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.3, p.89)

There is a point here that Bhāskara does not consider. Could it be the case that disputants of all schools express their agreement with the Veda in that part of its teaching that agrees with their own, but are not able to refute the part that does not agree by mere logical argumentation?

(5) As for what was said to the effect that the Veda itself teaches that logical reasoning must be brought in when it says 'the Self should be pondered over', this does not mean that the Veda recognizes empty hypothetical reasoning. It only admits reasoning in conformity with Vedic teaching, conducted

in order to demonstrate its validity. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.6, p.90)

A question that Bhāskara does not here consider is: 'Where disputants are not agreed about what kind of logical arguments should be used to support the Veda, how can one arrive at a decision?' (Contrast Śrī Śaṅkara's attitude, explained at M.V. 31,12, note. T.N.)

(6) In regard to something that is completely beyond the range of the senses, logical argumentation cannot establish whether it is either the same as or different from anything else. Therefore (in this context) no one can prove their point by logic. Therefore the principle stands that it is only on the basis of the Veda that one can establish the true nature of the cause of the world. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.11, p.92)

Bhāskara does not here explain how all disputants are to be brought to agree over this point.

(7) By the word 'etcetera' the author of the Sūtras means that, because the piling up of examples and counter-examples is endless, reason can neither refute anything established by Vedic revelation nor subtract from it, nor add to it. (Bh.B.S. Bh.II.i.25, p.104)

What Bhāskara does not say is whether or not that which is established by Vedic revelation has to culminate in immediate experience.

Though Bhāskara, as well as Śrī Śaṅkara (cp. M.V.169,6), is capable, on occasion, of appealing to the principle 'Not even a hundred texts can alter a perceived fact' (Bh.B.S.Bh. IV.iv.22), nevertheless it is clear that his general principle is that a thing should always be described as it is given in the Veda (i.e. without sufficiently allowing for the degree to which the Veda resorts to figurative usage and provisional teaching). What is more, though he uses dialectic to reveal the flaws in the theories of his opponents, his usual procedure for defending his own doctrines against the objections brought by his opponents is merely to hurl Vedic quotations at them as if they were divinely guided missiles. It is a pity that a number of the later Vedantins followed him in this method of argumentation.

163 THE PRIME IMPORTANCE OF THE CAUSE-EFFECT RELATION IN THE SYSTEM OF BHĀSKARA

In Bhāskara's system the world is a real transformation of the Absolute. Hence the importance attached to the cause-effect

relation. In his Commentary on the first Sūtra we find the following.

(1) The existence of the Absolute is generally accepted because it is known on the authority of Vedic revelation. It is taught to have been the cause of the world in the words 'Being only, my dear one, was all this in the beginning, one only, without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1).. We know it also from the etymology of the word Brahman. Brahman (the Absolute) comes from the root bṛh meaning 'to expand'. That beyond which there is nothing greater, the Absolute, must be the root cause of all, as there is no other alternative. The term 'the Absolute' is only applied to the form that the Absolute assumes as an effect, namely the world of plurality, in a figurative sense, as we might speak of a keen student in a figurative way and say 'The little fellow is fire'.

But if the existence of the Absolute is generally accepted, what is the need for enquiring into it through the Vedantic discipline? The purpose is to put an end to all disagreement about its particular nature. Some (the Sāṅkhyas) say that the cause of the world is Nature (prakṛti) with its three constituents (guṇa). Others (the Vaiśeṣikas, etc.) claim to establish the existence of minute, separate atoms as the material cause of the world. So an enquiry into the Absolute is opened.

And the Absolute has three conditions — its condition as cause, its condition as effect and its condition as the individual soul. The enquiry into the Absolute here ordained embraces all phases of the Absolute without distinction. For no distinctions of meaning in the term 'the Absolute' are implied when the Veda says 'Verily, all is the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12). (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.1, p.7-8)

Where Bhāskara says that it is generally known from the Veda that the Absolute is the true Self of all, but that an enquiry has to be begun because there is disagreement over its particular nature — there he is following Śrī Bhagavatpāda. But one will only do justice to the meaning of the Veda if one thinks 'One must enquire into the Absolute without any presuppositions about its being a cause or not being a cause'. The Sūtra 'That from which proceed the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world' (B.S. I.i.2) is not intended to teach that the Absolute is the cause of the world. It is intended as an indirect indication of the nature of the Absolute.

In this connection, to say that an enquiry into the Absolute is instituted in the Brahma Sūtras because philosophers are seen to disagree about the cause of the world does not appear to be correct. For it suggests that the purpose of the Vedanta is to enquire into the nature of the cause of the world and declare that it is the Absolute; whereas the real intention is to institute an enquiry into the true nature of the Absolute, familiar already in a general way. Even if we conceded for

argument's sake that the purpose of the Veda was enquiry into the Absolute as cause, it would still not be right to claim that the Absolute had three conditions (its conditions as cause, as effect, i.e. as world, and as soul), but that an enquiry was ordained which embraced all phases of the Absolute without distinction. For (on Bhāskara's own showing) the enquiry into the Absolute is only instituted to put an end to dissent about the cause of the world (but not to argue about its nature as effect or as soul).

164 THE TREATMENT OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

The theory advanced by Bhāskara is that cause and effect are equally real, and that they are both different and also non-different from one another.

(1) The Vaiśeṣikas hold that cause and effect are totally different, that the cause is the lump of clay and that it is perceived as different from the clay dish and other effects. And the effect is a vessel for carrying water, or whatever else it may be, but not the original lump of clay. So the two are different. And an effect that was formerly non-existent is brought into existence. It is to refute this view that Sūtra II.i.14 (cp. M.V.164,2, *ad init.*) is given. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.93).

Here the refutation of the Vaiśeṣikas would be out of context. On the author's own view, the first section of the second Book of the Sūtras (B.S. II.i.1 ff.) was concerned only with refuting the idea that the Vedanta lay in contradiction with Smṛti (Bh. B.S.Bh.II.i.1, p.87).

(2) The author of the Sūtras says, 'It (the world as effect) is non-different from that (the Absolute), as we know from such texts as "a suggestion of speech" (Chānd.VI.i.4) and others'. The author of the Sūtras has made the claim that through knowledge of the one all is known. Now he brings in an example to substantiate his claim. 'Just as, my dear one, all that is made of clay is known from one lump of clay, so it follows that a modification is a name, a suggestion of speech. The truth is, it is all clay' (*ibid.*). That passage is what the author of the Sūtras had in mind. Both the modification and the name are suggestions of the organ of speech. That which is named can very well be referred to as a modification. Speech embraces both the name and the thing named, as when we say 'Use the pot to bring the water'.

The explanation why we say of the pot 'It is made of clay' is as follows. Somebody might claim that if the effect were a reality able to serve as a stimulus for empirical experience,

the effect could not be non-different from its material cause. To dispel that idea, the Upanishad says, 'The truth is, it is only clay'. It is the material cause which, in the form of the effect, still stands as the pot. For the pot is always apprehended in association with the clay, throughout past, present and future. The effect is dependent on the material cause. It is never apprehended in separation from it in space or time, in the way that a horse and a buffalo are apprehended separately. The effect is only a particular state of the material cause, different and yet not different. And because it is transient like shell-silver, it is referred to as 'unreal' and 'ephemeral'. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.93)

How he can (on his own principles) say that the effect is 'false like shell-silver' is not clear.

(3) The Upanishad later says 'The "firehood" of fire has disappeared' (Chānd.VI.iv.1). It means that the effect is later (after analysis into its component elements, cp. M.V.33,2) seen as the cause and as nothing over and above the cause. It disappears into its own material cause. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.93)

(4) When the author of the Sūtras mentioned 'and other' texts, he meant texts like 'This whole world has this for its Self. That is the real. That is the Self. That thou art' (Chānd. VI.viii.7). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.93)

(5) And there is another text which shows that the world conceived as separate from the Self is real: 'His name is "reality of the real". The cosmic vital energy is the real. He is the reality of the vital energy' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6). If it had been intended to say that the world was unreal, the text would have said 'The vital energy is the unreal'. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.93)

Here it is not clear why the effect is taken to be both different and non-different from the cause. It is true that, in the example quoted from the Upanishads, the clay is provisionally accepted as real in deference to perception. But one must take note of the force of the word 'only' in the phrase 'the truth is, it is only clay'. It would not make sense if the effect were taken as real.

Again, in the treatment of 'threefolding', if it had been meant that the effect, which (after dissolution) is 'seen as the cause' and 'not seen as anything over and above the cause', was nevertheless real in its own form, then why does the text speak repeatedly of fire and the sun and other entities losing their 'firehood' and 'sunhood' and disappearing? And why does it affirm that only the three basic elements that compose the world are real, in the words 'The truth is, "there are only the

three elements"' (Chāndogya VI.iv.1, etc.)?People would not initially doubt the reality of the pot, cited in the example, or of earthly fire, the sun and the rest, which it is cited to illustrate, since modifications of the elements and their names are the very basis on which empirical experience rests. It is *the sole reality of the cause* that is repeatedly emphasized by reiterating the words 'a modification is a name, a suggestion of speech'. For no one denies or doubts that an external object, such as a pot, referred to by the organ of speech, is a fit object for empirical experience through that organ, or that its name is a fit object either. So it is not *this* that the Upanishad is teaching by its repeated affirmation. What it is doing is to teach (from the standpoint of metaphysical truth) the sole reality of the cause, and to emphasize by repetition that the effect is a mere suggestion of speech, a mere external appearance and name. And it seems that this cannot be properly explained on the theory of those who hold that the effect is real.

Bhāskara says of the effect, 'It is different and yet not different (from the cause). And because it is transient like shell-silver, it is referred to as "unreal" and "ephemeral"'. Does he only mean by this that the effect is transient because it comes and goes? Or does he mean that it is literally unreal, a mere piece of fantasy, like shell-silver? This point needs to be explained.

In the ensuing part of the Upanishad the word 'false' (anṛta) is used, both in the example and the thing illustrated, to mean the opposite of 'true'. 'If (in trial by ordeal) a person has committed the crime, he will have made himself false. Given to falsity, enshrouded in falsity, he will take up the searing heated axe and be branded and then executed. But if he did not do it, then he will have made himself true. Given to truth, enshrouded in (and protected by) truth, he will take up the searing heated axe and not be branded, and then he will be released' (Chānd.VI.xvi.1-2). The text goes on, 'Just as such a person would not be branded, so this whole world has this (the Self) for its Self. That is the true/real (satya)'. The word 'satya' (true/real) occurs in the account both of the illustration and the thing illustrated. We hear (in the example) 'Given to truth... he is released', and in the thing illustrated (there is the idea) 'Convinced that the Absolute alone is real, one is released'.

It seems, therefore, that the only interpretation that really agrees with the intentions of the author of the Sūtra is that of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara. The latter interprets the Sūtra as following the principle of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction. The effect is superimposed onto the material cause like shell-silver onto the shell; it is merely suggested by speech to appear as 'pot' or 'cup' (when the reality is only the clay). Nothing else apart from the material cause exists. That was the view with which the author of

the Sūtras was siding when he said, 'It (the effect) is non-different from that (the cause)' (B.S. II.i.14). Otherwise he would have had to have said, 'It (the effect) is *not* non-different from the cause'.

We have, also, the claim that another upanishadic text (Bṛhad.II.iii.6) teaches that the cosmic vital energy is real in the words, 'His name is "reality of the real". The cosmic vital energy is the real. He is the reality of the cosmic vital energy'. That claim was wrong. For where a point made in a Vedic text is the main topic of the passage in which it occurs, it cannot be effectively contradicted by a different point made in another passage, where the latter point is not the main topic of the passage in which it occurs, but only something incidental. The passage containing the phrase 'a suggestion of speech' is one which repeatedly affirms that all modifications are mere names and that only the material cause is real. The phrase 'The cosmic vital energy is real', on the other hand, is a mere incidental remark made in conformity with general worldly opinion. The purpose of the passage in which it occurred was to proclaim 'He is the reality of the vital energy'. And the 'reality' of the vital energy only meant its reality from the empirical standpoint. It appears to be real. But the truth is proclaimed in the text 'neither this nor that'. Only the Self is real. And that is why the Self is referred to as 'the reality of the real' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6). 'The reality of the real' is a figurative expression like 'The iron scorches through the heat of the fire' (in which it is not literally meant that the iron has any power to scorch at all; it is only the fire in the iron that actually does the scorching, the iron being simply a vehicle for that fire; but we accept the appearance that the iron does the burning for purposes of ordinary speech). And so we have shown that this text does not contradict the unreality of the world.

165 REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNREALITY OF THE EFFECT

We have already, on the occasion of examining the validity of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge at M.V. 161,1 above, given a bird's-eye view of the way in which Bhāskara's Commentary refutes the view that plurality is an illusion. Bhāskara also argues in the following way that Vedic revelation, too, shows that there is nothing to prove the falsity of the world.

(1) It is said that the fact that the universe is an illusion emerges from Vedic revelation. But that is incorrect. If all knowledge that arose from hearing were an illusion (as such a theory would imply), then texts like 'That thou art', which are composed of spoken syllables, would simply not exist. And then

what would there be to show that the world was illusory? (Bh. B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.95)

(2) Because the phrase 'There is no plurality here' (Kaṭha II. i.11) includes the word 'here', the view that it means that there is no plurality in the Absolute in its true nature *as cause* stands. But there is no contradiction if we affirm that there is plurality in the effect during the world-periods when the world is manifest. (*ibid.*)

(3) The phrase 'This Self is "neither this nor that"' simply states the true nature of the Self to the exclusion of the body and other elements of the not-self (where the not-self is disregarded but not rejected as unreal). (*ibid.*)

(4) In the phrase 'For where there is an appearance of duality' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14), the words 'an appearance of' (expressed in Sanskrit by the one word 'iva') are meaningless. It is as when we say 'It has an appearance of being spread out' (meaning 'it *is* spread out'). Or the word 'iva' may be being used for precise determination (to mean 'precisely where there is duality'), as when we say 'precisely like a horse' (yathāśva iva). Or it may mean (not total negation but) similarity, as when we say, in the case of fire burning with damp fuel, 'The smoke and sparks are like the fire' (so that 'where there is an appearance of duality' could mean 'Where there is a manifestation which is not unreal but which appears to imply strict duality without actually doing so, there being a hidden element of unity'). In the state of the Absolute where there are various modifications, there a subject who is one perceives an object which is another. The following text 'But where everything has become his own Self, then by what power could he see what object?' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15, modified) denies that there is knowledge of objects when the Absolute has been realized in its causal form. In this way there are no contradictions. (*ibid.*)

It is an agreed point in Vedanta that everywhere in duality there is a distinction between true and false. From perversity, the distinction is sometimes wrongly drawn. But if both the knowledge that comes through the ear and the words of such texts as 'That thou art' were illusory, how could the ear and the mouth be real, so that the speaker could pronounce the text and the hearer hear it and understand its meaning? What could then be proved to be true or proved to be false? What could be effectively negated? On this point one should consider the following saying of an expert: 'False imagination might be brought to an end if anyone had really imagined it. This doctrine (that things are imagined) is for the sake of teaching (those in Ignorance). When the truth is known, there is no duality' (G.K. I.18).

Thus a distinction between truth and falsity only obtains before the attainment of the direct knowledge 'All this is the Absolute alone'. As the revered Commentator put it: 'Thus all worldly experience and Vedic teaching holds good before one realizes that one's true Self is the Absolute' (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.48,7). On this point, we take up the study of the texts quoted by Bhāskara to show how incorrect his explanation of them was.

(1) *'There is no plurality here' (Kaṭha II.i.11):* This text declares that there is no plurality in the Absolute *as such*; it does not say 'in the Absolute *as cause*'. For attributing cause and effect to the Absolute does not fit in with the context. In the previous Book (vallī) the Upanishad had said that a person can become immortal through knowledge of the Self as the Absolute, free from all attributes of the universe of plurality, in the words: 'One who discerns that is freed from the jaws of death. It is without sound, impalpable, without form or colour, undecaying, without taste, without odour, constant and eternal; it is beginningless and endless, firm-fixed, beyond the Great Principle (mahat)' (Kaṭha I.iii. 15). In the present (second) Book, the same principle is described in pluralistic form to bring out how the Self does not shine forth if it is *only* described in pluralistic form. The verse under discussion itself decries vision of the Self in the midst of plurality — 'He goes from death to death who sees the appearance of plurality here' (Kaṭha II.i.11). It is not in the Absolute *as cause* that plurality might be found and therefore require to be decried. Therefore the correct view is: 'What the text negates is the plurality set up by Ignorance'.

(2) *'This Self is "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6, etc.):* This phrase occurs several times in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka. It is always 'the Self' that is so described, as in 'And so there is the teaching "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6).

In the first section of the third Book of the Upanishad the elements are described, beginning with earth and ending with the ether, with each succeeding element pervaded by the earlier ones and being presided over by such and such a deity. The penultimate text of this third Book (Bṛhad.III.ix.26) begins with the question 'On what are you and your body supported?' And the answer given is 'on the vital energy'. The text then goes on to mention a series of forms of the vital energy, such as the out-breath (prāṇa) and the down-breath (apāna), affirming that each is supported on the next in the series. The body and other components of the individual soul are not here mentioned or considered. At Bṛhadāraṇyaka IV.ii.2 there is first a consideration of the vital energies of Vaiśvānara and Taijasa, beginning with the words 'His name is Indha'. Later comes the text, 'This Self is "neither this nor that"', from

which we conclude that Vaiśvānara and other states are denied of the Self. Then again in the fourth section of the fourth Book the text speaks successively of the man of worldly desires being bound in transmigration, and of the one who wants the Self and gives up all other desires and obtains liberation, while the passage concludes with the teaching about the Self as 'neither this nor that' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22). In neither of these passages is anything found to suggest the discrimination of the Self from the body and other components of the individual personality.

Or consider the 'Maitreyī Brāhmaṇa' section of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka. There we have various successive teachings. There is the teaching about universals and particulars, illustrated by the sound of the drum and other examples (Bṛhad.IV.v.8, cp. M.V.37). There is the teaching about the rise of the universe of name and form from the Self and its dissolution in the Self, illustrated by the examples of the smoky fire, and the sea as the goal of all waters (Bṛhad.IV.v.11,12). And finally, having described the two kinds of vision, vision of duality and vision of non-duality, the text says, 'This Self is "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15). Here one can only say that, throughout all this, whatever was first attributed to the Self as a means to make it accessible to the mind is later denied of it from the standpoint of final truth. For the whole enterprise is intended to bring out in the end how there is no plurality in the Self. Nowhere does one find the attempt (spoken of by Bhāskara) to see the Self through disregarding the body and other elements of the not-self. For the Self cannot be known as an object in its true form. Therefore, it appears to us correct to conclude that the universe of plurality here negated is an illusory one.

(3) *'Where one sees the appearance of duality, there a subject who is one perceives an object which is another.... But where all this has become his Self...' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15):* Here Bhāskara spoke of the phrase 'the appearance of' in 'the appearance of duality' as either having no meaning, or else as having the meaning of precise determination, or else as expressing the idea of similarity. There is not the slightest foundation for any of these interpretations. Earlier in the Maitreyī Brāhmaṇa (Bṛhad.IV.v.1 ff.) there has already been the account of the Self as the cause of the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world (Bṛhad.IV.v.11-12). Then the Self has been spoken of as a mass of Consciousness, but as appearing to acquire differentiated consciousness through association with the body and organs composed of the elements, and finally as ascending from the elements and then no longer enjoying individualized consciousness, as expressed in the text 'There is no particularized consciousness after leaving the body' (Bṛhad.IV.v.13). And so, where there is the appearance of duality, there it is as if the Self were confined within

(a solid, limited shape, like) a lump of salt (before it is dissolved in water). There we find particularized consciousness, and the perception of an object, which is one thing, by a subject, who is another. But one does not find this in Non-duality, our true essence. This is the right way to interpret the teaching of Śri Yājñavalkya. This is shown by the text which limits reality to the Self. 'But where all this has become for him the Self *alone*' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15). The restriction 'alone' negates every state of duality; the force of 'iva' in this passage (translated above as 'the appearance of') is to reject a wrong view previously held. There is no text in the Upanishad about a person realizing the Absolute in its causal form (as taught by Bhāskara, M.V.165,4 *ad fin.*).

Bhāskara Ācārya further expresses himself on this topic as follows.

(5) Nor is it possible to suppose that the universe can be false or real, according to whether it is thought of in relation to this or that individual person — for example, to suppose that it was false for seekers of liberation but real for others. For you cannot say that a colour is unreal if thought of in relation to a blind man and real if thought of in relation to others. For objects do not correspond to the nature of the human beings observing them, that the answer to the question whether they were real or unreal should depend on the condition of their observers....

And again, there are the lines: 'How could one possibly accept the statement "The universe existed when he was ignorant, but now that he has become enlightened it no longer exists"? It would never be correct to say "A double-moon existed before, but it no longer exists now". But on the theory that we are combating (i.e. the Advaitin's theory) perception and the other means of empirical knowledge are placed on the same level as the illusory cognition of a double-moon'.... Further, in the case of the double-moon, the cause of the error is present in the form of the eye-disease of double-vision; but we are not aware of any such defect of perception that would enable us to dismiss the world as an illusion. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.17-8)

Here one has to ask, 'Whoever can it be that has said in this way that the same thing exists in relation to one person while not existing in relation to another?' The whole world accepts that the fluctuations of the notions of truth and falsity depend on knowledge and ignorance. One who is seeing illusory shell-silver does not think it to be false while he is seeing it. Nor does the fact that everyone who sees such illusory silver thinks that it is real make it in fact real. Nor does any previously apprehended real silver vanish when a person who had been seeing shell-silver comes to see the shell and loses his illusion. The same thing holds in the case of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge, along with the

universe of plurality that they reveal. All are false, but appear as if real to those under the sway of Ignorance, while the notion that they are real is eventually cancelled through metaphysical knowledge. You yourself (Bhāskara) accept in the same way that worldly people take their sense of identity with the body and so on as true, and then lose this idea through deeper metaphysical knowledge. On this topic the sages who knew the true tradition have spoken as follows.

(6) 'Just as the notion of the identity of the Self with the body is imagined at first to hold as valid, so are all the means of knowledge found in the world (including the Veda) imagined to hold as valid until the Self has been realized'. (Quoted at Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.28,10;161,3)

(7) If the world of plurality really existed, it would no doubt come to an end. But this duality is a mere illusion. Non-duality is the final truth. (G.K. I.17, M.V.47,3)

Nor is it right to maintain that no one ever has erroneous knowledge. Those who have attained deep metaphysical discrimination know that, because plurality disappears in dreamless sleep, mystical trance (samādhi) and kindred states, it is inconstant and therefore illusory. If plurality is illusory, how can we go on seeing it? In just the same way as we go on seeing the sun and moon as if they were little things we could hold in our hands.

So we conclude as follows. People who wish to display their ingenuity may explain away these Vedic texts affirming non-duality and denying duality, resorting to this theory and that. But when these texts are examined in their context, taking note of what comes before and follows, and with proper recourse to such reasoning as leads on to immediate experience of metaphysical reality, it will become obvious to the unprejudiced observer that everywhere in these passages the method of the Upanishads is false attribution followed by subsequent retraction.

166 THE DOCTRINE THAT THE SELF UNDERGOES REAL TRANSFORMATION

In the Sūtra, 'And the Absolute must be understood as the material cause of the world, or otherwise there would be a contradiction between the thesis and the example offered to illustrate it' (B.S. I.iv.23, M.V.33,8), the claim is that from the knowledge of one thing there can be knowledge of all, and the example is that through a knowledge of any piece of clay there is knowledge of all things made of clay. This claim and this example show that the Absolute is not only the ruler of the world, but also its material cause. The same point is also

made in the two following Sūtras. There is the creation-statement expressed as a determination of the will, in the form 'Let Me be many' (Chānd.VI.ii.3; Taitt.II.6). And there are the texts referring to the creation and dissolution of the world with the Absolute as its material cause. In a slightly later Sūtra we find, '(The Absolute is also to be regarded as the material cause of the world) because it creates itself, through transformation (pariṇāma)' (B.S. I.iv.26 for Śaṅkara, I.iv.25 for Bhāskara). On this Śrī Bhagavatpāda's comment is: 'The Self, although already existent and evident, transformed itself, assuming particular modifications. We see such a transformation into modifications in the case of other material causes like clay'. But in Bhāskara's Commentary we find the following:

(1) The meaning is that the supreme Self transformed itself into the (world as) effect. It made a projection of its powers (śakti). Its powers are infinite and inconceivable. It projects them at the time of the creation and maintenance of the world, like the sun projecting its rays; and it withdraws them at the time of world-dissolution in the same way. (Bh.B.S.Bh. I.iv.25, p.85)

Though the word 'transformation' is used by both authors (i.e. by Śrī Śaṅkara and Bhāskara), there is a great difference between the two conceptions. For Śrī Bhagavatpāda, the clay and other material causes stay what they are, while manifesting themselves as pots or in other forms. For him, the pots and other modifications are mere suggestions of speech. They do not have any existence other than that of the clay, which is their true nature. Similarly, the Self, too, manifests as the universe of plurality. The meaning is that the universe has no existence except as the Self. But on Bhāskara's view, the supreme Self really has an infinity of inconceivable powers. And the world of plurality, which is its effect, and which represents a projection of these powers, is perfectly real. That is the difference between the two doctrines.

(2) And there is a text in agreement with that (doctrine of the real transformation of the Self propounded by the Commentator and the author of the gloss on the Chāndogya Upanishad) which runs: 'There is a real transformation, as in the case of (milk transformed into) curds and the like'. As for those who propagate that reprehensible, unfounded Māyā Vāda proclaimed in the verses of the Mahāyāna Buddhists — they are deceivers of the people. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.25, p.85)

Here what is contradicted is the view that the effect, as a mere false appearance, is illusory. But the teaching here contradicted is quite evidently supported by the Veda (which says, 'A modification is a name, a suggestion of speech', (Chānd.

VI.i.4, M.V.33,1, etc.).

(3) Do you ask how there could be a real transformation of something which, like the ether, is partless? We reply: Because it is of the very nature of transformation, like milk. And one could also quite well say that, being omniscient and omnipotent, Being could transform itself by its own will. (Bh. B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.96)

Here there is a clear case of circular argumentation. The Absolute undergoes transformation because it is of the nature of transformation; and it has that nature on account of its transformation.

One who says that the Self can endue itself with real transformation because it is omniscient and omnipotent is claiming, in effect, that what is omnipotent can perform the impossible. Would something omnipotent, on this basis, be able to effect even its own destruction? Or would some omniscient being be able to know its own non-existence? These questions are not raised.

(4) But is it not the case that milk is able to undergo transformation because it is made up of parts? We reply: It is not the mere fact of having parts that enables it to undergo transformation. If it were, water would be able to undergo transformation into curds. So it is not the mere fact of having parts that is the critical factor. Milk undergoes transformation because it is of its very nature to do so. (Bh.B.S.Bh. II.i.14, p.96)

Oh, the habit of empty rational speculation! What will it not produce next? If transformation implied possession of parts, we are told, then water, too, would be able to undergo transformation into curds. What strange new rule of logic is this? Our logician should be asked: 'If what has the power to undergo transformation can (for that reason) become curds, then why cannot water (which has that power) become curds?' If he were to reply 'Because it does not have the nature to do so', then for philosphers who believed that the behaviour of things was explained entirely by their natures, what philosopher could fail to prove any point he fancied? All that would be required to prove any point one wished to make would be to say 'This happens because this is of this nature, that happens because that is of that nature'. And then, as there would be no need to go to the trouble of showing that the (unobserved) thing to be proved was invariably concomitant with the observed sign, all examination of reasons for proof or disproof could just be thrown into the sea.

(5) Here there is another point that requires reflection. In transformation, does the power (śakti) lie in the whole or in

the parts? The proponent of the Māyā theory does not accept the existence of a stable whole over and above the flow of transmigratory experience. So for him the power must lie in the parts, as that is the only alternative left. Now, on this theory, the parts themselves could not have parts. For, if they did, there would be a transformation of something having parts (and thus of a whole, which is excluded *ex hypothesi*). And even if one did assume parts of parts, would they undergo transformation or not? If they did not, you ought to find pure milk in curds. As this is not the case, it must be accepted that all parts undergo transformation. And again, if parts are assumed to have parts, the parts must also have parts, and you fall into infinite regress. And you could put the 'Ocean of Milk' (primeval waters before creation) into a small pot, parts being infinite in number. Therefore the principle that holds throughout, and holds also for the Absolute, is 'Transformation is only found in that which does *not* have parts'. And that is why the Veda teaches transformation with the help of such examples as that of the seed of the banyan tree (Chānd.VI.xii.1). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.96)

This is another example of showing off one's logical ingenuity to small purpose. If parts cannot have parts, and if you fall into infinite regress if you assume parts for them — very well then, let us accept that parts cannot undergo transformation, but how does that damage the case of the exponent of Māyā? He does not accept the reality of the cause-effect relation as you do.

And again, let us accept for argument that what has parts cannot undergo transformation. But how does that help in establishing that only that which is without parts undergoes transformation? If you say 'Transformation is perceived' we concede it willingly. But how can we accept that such transformation is real? The view of your opponent (i.e. the true expert) is, '(Since the real already exists), its birth through illusion is conceivable, but not its real birth' (G.K. III.27).

And again, even if it were conceded for argument that the partless Absolute could undergo real transformation, how could infinite regress be avoided? It is not right to claim that the 'Unborn' (aja) undergoes birth. Hence one must accept here, too, the reasoning of the expert (Śrī Gauḍapāda) who said, 'He who holds that anything is *really* born, necessarily holds (the absurd position) that what is already born is born' (G.K. III.27) and realize that the real birth of anything would involve infinite regress (i.e. the birth itself would have to be born, and that would involve another birth, which in turn would have to be born and so on in an infinite series, showing that real birth is inconceivable).

As for the example of the seed of the banyan tree given at

Chāndogya VI.xii.1, its purpose was not to illustrate real transformation, but only to point out how the world, as an effect made up of name, form and action, arose from the Absolute, which is of extremely subtle nature.

(6) A certain verse runs: 'Transformation (pariṇāma) is the projection of a power (śakti) on the part of a being that does not lose its original form in the process, like the projection of a cob-web by a spider'.

The sages adhere to this doctrine of the projection and withdrawal of powers, because there is evidence for it. They illustrate it from the examples of the threads which cohere to form a cloth without losing their nature as threads, and of the wind, which comes forth from the ether without the latter losing its nature as ether. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.96)

Here, the example of the spider has an implication detrimental to Bhāskara's system. That insect eats yet smaller animals, and its spittle solidifies into a cob-web. So it is not right to say that the spider does not lose its original form. It swells through eating other insects, and shrinks through expelling them externally in the web.

The threads of a cloth may not lose their form as threads. But when they are woven together they are perceived in a new form as the cloth, which excludes perception of their old one. They manifest as the cloth, which appears to be a separate new entity, though it is in fact not so. Thus the cloth is a modification and a mere name. Its true nature is revealed, under analysis, as the threads. One must also accept that the ether, while remaining in its true nature as ether, appears as wind. For the wind has never been perceived by anyone to be produced from the ether as something new, or as existing without being pervaded by the ether. One must accept, indeed, the authority of the Vedic text, 'Wind arose (from the ether)' (Taitt.II.1). But it is known that the purpose of that text is only to show that the wind does not exist except in the ether and as an illusory emanation from the ether. The evidence for this is the two texts which show that the ether is nothing other than the Absolute, namely 'The ether was born from the Self, the wind born from the ether' (Taitt.II.1) and '(The Absolute, the Indestructible is)... not the wind, not the ether...' (Bṛhad. III.viii.8). Then there is the statement in the Smṛti which shows that from the empirical standpoint the wind ever stands in the ether, though only as an illusory appearance. The Gītā first says 'All beings exist in Me' (IX.4) and then 'And yet they do not exist in Me' (IX.5). To illustrate this it says 'As the wind ever exists in the ether' (IX.6)

So we conclude that a transformation in which the thing undergoing the change does not lose its original form is in fact an illusory transformation.

(7) Nor is it true to say that transformation does not occur in the case of something that is without parts. For example, lust, anger, greed and bewilderment, each different from one another, arise in the (partless) mind like waves in the sea, without the mind losing its original nature. And this is shown in the text, '(Desire, determination, doubt)... are all mind' (Bṛhad.I.v.3, cp. M.V.79,2). It is like wind coming forth from the ether, and fire from wind. If you say that there is nothing to support the example, it means you must be deaf. Do you not hear the Vedic text which enunciates it? Perhaps you will say, 'I hear it. But it is not evidence. For, since it is contradictory, it is (not authoritative but) a mere explanatory passage (artha-vāda) that might be no more than eulogy'. 'Well then, dearest-beloved of the Creator, just take a look at a spider'. Perhaps you will reply, 'That example (the spider's web) is in order because it is perceived, (but it will not suffice to illustrate an incomprehensible matter that is beyond perception)'. But even then there is no difference, as the Vedic teaching is also part of what is perceived. Nor is there any difference between the various means of knowledge in point of the strength of their authority. Each is equally authoritative in its own field. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.98)

The account of mind here is out of harmony with the Upanishads. For we have 'The mind, my dear one, is composed of food' (Chānd VI.v.4) and 'One part was left over. That, when kindled with food, blazed into light' (Chānd.VI.vii.6). These texts prove that the mind has parts, because they teach that it expands and contracts. We have explained about the example of the spider already. As for the question whether or not the Veda teaches real transformation, that remains to be studied in the following pages. So we can say that on the present topic Bhāskara has not said anything of significance.

167 REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF MĀYĀ

The doctrine of Māyā is refuted by Bhāskara as follows.

(1) How can this claim that the world is a mere illusion be advanced without proof? For the supreme deity said with conscious intent 'Let Me make each of the three into a triad' (Chānd.VI.iii.3). Who, indeed, undaunted at his prospects from demerit in lives to come, would dare to raise the idea 'All is illusion', having misunderstood the meaning? If he thinks that the unseen future results of his deeds are of no account, being all of one piece with the illusory objects that he sees, he is landed in the contradiction of supposing that the seen and the unseen are one. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.99)

We have already explained the meaning of this upanishadic text above (M.V.164,5, note), when explaining the texts 'The fire-hood of fire disappeared' (Chānd.VI.iv.1) and 'A modification is a name, a mere suggestion of speech' (Chānd.VI.i.4). That the seen and the unseen are all of one piece (i.e. illusory) has been proclaimed by the Veda itself when it says 'The truth is, it is only clay' (*ibid.*).

(2) And where do you derive this idea? The author of the Sūtras nowhere uses the word 'Māyā' (to describe the world of waking experience). It is true that, in speaking of dream-cognition, he says 'It is a mere illusion (māyā-mātra), because its nature is to be an incomplete manifestation' (B.S. III. ii.3). But he also speaks of the essential difference between waking and dream, saying, 'On account of the essential difference between waking and dream, the ideas of the waking state are not to be classed with those of dream and the like' (B.S. II.ii.29). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.99)

It is true that the author of the Sūtras does not use the word Māyā (of the world of waking experience). But he quotes the upanishadic text which says that all this realm of modification is but a suggestion of speech, in the Sūtra 'Cause and effect are non-different, as we know from such texts as "a suggestion of speech"' (B.S. II.i.14). And here he evidently declares that this realm of modification is illusory. As for the Sūtra 'On account of the essential difference between waking and dream' (B.S. II.ii.29), we shall be explaining that when dealing with the treatment of the three states (M.V.172,4), so we may leave it for the present.

(3) If the world were a mere illusion, then that would have rendered useless the whole effort of the author of the Sūtras in quoting the objections raised by the Sāṅkhyas and others topic by topic in the second Book, beginning 'And if you think that on this view there is no place for the Smṛti...' (B.S. II.i.1). It would also have rendered useless the discussion of the rise and dissolution of the elements beginning in the third section of the second Book, 'Not the ether, as there is no relevant Vedic text' (B.S. II.iii.1). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.99-100)

What confusion! On the assumption of the Nature of the Sāṅkhyas (or on that of the eternal atoms of the Vaiśeṣikas) or on any doctrine proclaiming an objective principle as material cause of the world, it becomes impossible to establish the existence of the Self as one without a second. But on the doctrine that the Absolute is the one cause, the unity and sole reality of the Self is established through such texts as 'This whole world has this for its Self' (Chānd.VI.viii.7), 'All this is this Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.6) and 'There is no plurality here'

(Bṛhad.IV.iv.19). Why do you not take note of the refutation of your position made by Śrī Bhagavatpāda, following the hint given by the Sūtra 'It (the world as effect) is non-different from that (the Absolute), as is shown by such texts as "a suggestion of speech"' (B.S. II.i.14)? That would save you from describing flowering ebony when asked about mango trees.

Then there was the discussion about the creation of the elements set in train by the Sūtra 'Not the ether, as there is no relevant Vedic text' (B.S. II.iii.1). In fact this creation is illusory. For the elements never depart from their true nature as identical with the Absolute in the three periods of origination, maintenance and dissolution. Why Bhāskara cannot see that the sole point of the Sūtra is to support this point of upanishadic teaching is not clear.

(4) Perhaps you (Advaitin) will say, 'But is not the author of the Sūtras himself going to declare that everything except the Absolute is an illusion? For we have the Sūtra, "Nor does the supreme Being either have or not have finite characteristics, according to the conditioning adjunct under which it is viewed; for it is everywhere taught that it does not have finite characteristics at all" (B.S. III.ii.11)'. But you should not say so. For the topic of the present passage is something different. The Sūtra is not teaching how the Absolute should be meditated on with form; it is teaching how the Absolute should be meditated on without form. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.100)

Meditation is not the topic of the Sūtras here at all. The word 'meditation' (upāsanā) does not come up in the present Sūtra or in the ones that follow either. The topic of meditation comes in the third section of the third Book. You yourself say in your Commentary to Brahma Sūtra III.iii.1, 'This (topic of) meditation is introduced later, after the metaphysical truth has been ascertained'. Thus in the present Sūtra (B.S. II.i.14) the concern is only with establishing metaphysical truth. And this is exactly as you have yourself expressed it in commenting on Brahma Sūtra III.ii.11 with the words: '(Only the formless aspect of the Absolute, as cause, is the proper object of meditation. Why?) Because it implies the bringing to an end of the whole universe of plurality. What exists naturally and of its own accord is the eternal, changeless principle, one only without a second. The effect comes into action later, and is inconstant from the point of view of time.... Even when considered as limited by the adjunct of earth and the other elements, the supreme Being does not both have and not have finite characteristics. For its form brought about by the limiting adjunct of the earth and other elements is not different from itself, and comes adventitiously. The universe of name and form is the Absolute, but the Absolute is not the universe of name and form' (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.11).

But this being so, how can that which is by nature eternal

and changeless and without a second be a cause? The Absolute is void of the universe of plurality marked by the distinction of cause and effect. The Veda says, 'This Absolute is without a before (cause) or an after (effect), without anything inside it or outside it in space' (Bṛhad.II.v.19). In the case of the Absolute in this (its true) form, there can be no possible distinction between meditator and object of meditation. 'The Absolute is this Self', says Bṛhadāraṇyaka II.v.19; it is known only as the Self of the meditator.

(5) But this doctrine cannot be made out. So, if we should accept 'All this is an illusion', what it would have to mean would be that this effect in the form of the multifarious world does not exist *in the Absolute as (formless) cause*. But it is not taught that the universe of plurality does not exist. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.11, p.135)

What a display of attachment to the illusory world! How truly the great philosopher Gauḍapāda spoke when he said 'People feel attachment for what does not even exist. There is no duality at all' (G.K. IV.75). The Veda informs all of us in emphatic style that all this is in fact the Absolute, manifesting in an illusory way as the world. It says, 'This world is in reality the Absolute, immortal. The Absolute is to the east, the Absolute is to the west, the Absoluṭe to the south, the Absolute to the north, spread out above and below. All this world is verily the Absolute alone; the Absolute is the greatest' (Muṇḍ. II.ii.12). The meaning is that all this world is in truth the Absolute alone and nothing else, even now. All notions other than the Absolute are mere Ignorance, like the notion that a rope is a snake. This world is verily the Absolute. The Absolute is the real in the highest sense. What more could one want, when the world of plurality is demonstrably an illusion?

(6) The text 'Know that this Nature (prakṛti) is an illusory display (māyā)' was quoted (by Śrī Śaṅkara), but inappositely. The Nature here under consideration is that which is 'One and Unborn' (Śvet.IV.5) and made up of the elements fire, water and food (earth). That 'Nature' is known by the word 'Māyā'. Nature is called 'Prakṛti' because it 'projects' (kṛ) forth (pra-) its modifications. In the Gītā, too, Nature is real; for it is referred to as the true nature of the creatures (cp. Bh.G.III.5;XIII.21;XVIII.40. T.N.) Sometimes the word Māyā is used to mean Nature. And Māyā is sometimes called 'intellectual power' (prajñā), being that by which things are limited or determined. Māyā has this meaning in the passage 'Indra (goes about in many forms) through his magic powers (māyā)' (R.V. VI.47.18, quoted Bṛhad.II.v.19). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.100)

The upanishadic text 'One should know that Nature is Māyā' is

one in which Nature is called Māyā. This shows that Nature is not reality in the highest sense, as follows from the remaining part of the sentence, 'The Great Lord is the magician who operates this magic illusion (māyā)' (Śvet.IV.10). This text must be taken as forming one sentence along with the previous one, as it would not make sense to say we had a new topic saying 'The strolling magician (understood in a work-a-day worldly sense) is the Great Lord'. As the magic show obeys the command of the magician, so Nature obeys the command of the Great Lord. The point made is that Nature only exists as the Lord, just as the rope-snake only exists as the rope.

In the previous verse the text said, 'From this Indestructible Principle the magician projects this world, and the other (the individual soul) is confined within the world through Māyā' (Śvet.IV.9). The teaching is that the individual soul is affected by the illusion of Māyā, and that the Lord is independent of it and unaffected by it.

In the Gītā, too, we have the text 'This is My divine Māyā, composed of the three constituents, hard to cross. Those who devote themselves wholly to Me cross over this illusion' (VII.14). Here, the fact that Māyā is taught as something that has to be crossed over shows that it cannot be real in the highest sense. It is also said later (VII.19) that the enlightened person has the knowledge "Vāsudeva is all'. Here again, because it is the enlightened person (jñānavān, the person who has *knowledge*) who crosses over Māyā, it follows that Nature is not conceived as a reality. For knowledge is never found to remove anything real.

It is true that the word 'māyā' is sometimes used to mean 'intellectual power' (prajñā), as in 'Indra by his "māyā-s" (plural)...' (Bṛhad.II.v.19). But when the text is seen in context, it becomes clear that it is a form of 'intellectual power' pertaining to the realm of Ignorance that is meant. True cognition would not introduce plurality into what was originally one.

Thus the Advaita position is unimpeachably correct. If the Veda and Smṛti are to count as authoritative, then the Nature from which the world proceeds must be illusory. But that 'Māyā' is supported by a reality, the Absolute.

168 THE DOCTRINE OF THE REALITY OF THE EFFECT BEFORE PRODUCTION

Bhāskara's view of the reality of the effect before production can be seen from the following passages.

(1) There is non-difference of the effect from the cause. We have the text, 'Being only, my dear one, was all this in the beginning' (Chānd.VI.ii.1). Here, because the effect that is to come forth later, expressed by the word 'this', is affirmed

to exist in advance in the cause, it is non-different from it. How is this known? Because 'this' (the effect, the world) and 'Being' (the cause) stand in grammatical agreement as subject and predicate. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.15, p.100)

But what does standing in grammatical agreement really imply here? Does it imply that the effect (the world) is real in *the cause (Being)? Or does it imply that (in its true nature) the effect is real* as *the cause?*

(2) Thus the effect is real in the cause. For it can be shown by argument. By what argument? A pot may be produced from a lump of clay, but not curds or the horn of a hare. If the pot were originally unreal, and were nevertheless produced, then curds and the horn of a hare could also be produced from clay, because they also are equally unreal (i.e. equally non-existent in the clay).

Perhaps you will say that developments are determined by the laws governing the powers present in the material cause. But this is not so. We may ask the objector in return, 'How can there be laws governing the powers present in the material cause?' The power in the lump of clay being (on his theory) as unreal before its manifestation as the effect is before its manifestation, how can it be governed by law and limited to one place? Unless the effect is conceived as present in the cause prior to its production, no proposed causal law can get past that counter-question. Therefore it is as an already previously existing entity that the effect is produced. (Bh.B.S.Bh. II.i.18, p.101)

(3) The effect is definitely real prior to its production. Why? Because the effect is declared to be the cause itself assuming this or that state. And there is no absolute distinction between states and that which undergoes them. There is no absolute distinction between substance and attribute, between the cloth and its white colour. For they form one entity. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.18, p.101)

(4) We experience both difference and identity between effect and cause. The attribute of identity itself implies distinction, like the 'identity' of the ocean (which implies that the ocean persists as identical through its changes of form). This distinction is said to consist in the fact of being composed of waves and bubbles and foam and the like. For these are not found in stones and so on. They are powers of water only. Powers and their possessors are also found to be both non-different and different from one another. The powers of fire, such as burning and illumining, are distinct entities (even among themselves). Vital energy, too, is distinct according to its different modifications, such as the outgoing vital energy, the down-going and so on. Therefore everything is both

one and many. There is nothing either wholly without distinctions or wholly distinct. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.18, p.101)

(5) The states of manifestation and disappearance overcome one another successively, so that one or other of them supervenes, as the brilliance of an emerald prevails over that of its rivals. And there is the example given in the Veda of a partless, atomic seed of a banyan tree, which is perceived to undergo many changes of condition as it spreads and thickens. And the image is held out to us, 'A great banyan tree is standing'. Nothing that is perceived is impossible, as the maxim has it. And we have the case of virility, which must be already present earlier in latent form, even though it does not manifest till adolescence; if this is not admitted, we cannot explain why a eunuch cannot become virile. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.18, p.102)

(6) The meaning is that the supreme Self transformed itself into the (world as) effect. It made a projection of its powers (śakti). Its powers are infinite and inconceivable. It projects them at the time of creation and maintenance of the world, like the sun projecting its rays, and it withdraws them at the time of world-dissolution in the same way. Thus there is the verse of the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad: 'He has no body and no organs. There is none equal to Him and none greater. His supreme power is described in the Veda as operating in various ways. It is His natural and inherent power of knowing and acting' (Śvet.VI.8). (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.25, p.85; cp. M.V. 166,1, note)

(7) When this universe dissolves, it first returns back into its cause as a latent power of the latter. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.9, p.91)

(8) The Lord has two powers: one is His power to assume the form of that which is experienced, the other His power to become an experiencer. His power to assume the form of that which is experienced is able to assume the form of the ether and the rest of the non-conscious world. The power to experience, which is conscious, stands as the individual souls. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.27, p.105)

(9) The powers that things have cannot be understood by an untutored mind. For hypothetical reasoning has no secure footing anywhere, and it is never possible to demonstrate that one thing is either totally identical with or totally distinct from anything else. All the less, then, could the ordinary mind fathom the transformations of the conscious, omniscient, omnipotent, independent principle, the cause of the world, knowable only through Vedic revelation. For it transforms itself of its own free will according to its own independent powers for the

good of the creatures of the world. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.97)

(10) And this omniscient Being, (at the beginning of a world-period), knowing that the time for living creatures to undergo further experience has arrived, first of all projects the subtle, unmanifest ether, and afterwards Hiraṇyagarbha. He then enters what He has projected and abides within it as its Self. Next He projects the cosmos (lit. the 'egg'), starting with the ether-element and proceeding with the other elements in order. Then He projects the whole hierarchy of objects down to the vegetable and mineral realms, according to the merit and demerit of living beings. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iii.30, p.65)

(11) The controlling power of the Inner Ruler and the supreme Self is perfectly real. It is not the product of anyone's fanciful imagination, that it should be the result of Ignorance, like a mirage. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.35, p.107)

As the texts quoted from Bhāskara's Commentary reveal, the thrust of his argument is to show that only the real is capable of being produced, not the unreal. In the case of production, something that is already, even before production, existing in the cause in the form of a latent power, is brought out into manifestation, and the 'production' is really that manifestation. Since the Lord has infinite powers, He projects modifications in this form or that. What has been said so far will be accepted by every Vedantin, as there are a number of texts in the Upanishads in which it is taught. But there is another point that has to be considered here. Is this projection real or illusory? Here, on the subject of a cosmic power, serious students should attend to these words of Śrī Bhagavatpāda.

(12) And if he (the one who denies the pre-existence of the effect in the cause) assumes the existence of a power in the material cause which conditions it to produce one effect (e.g. clay pots) and not another (e.g. curds), then that power cannot be either different from the material cause or unreal. For if it were either unreal or different from the material cause the effect would also be unreal and different from the material cause (which is absurd). Therefore the power must be non-different from the material cause (in which it resides) and the effect non-different from the power. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.II.i.18; cp. M.V.36,4, with note)

One cannot, indeed, assume that the power of heat in fire has a different nature from fire and is something other than fire. In the same way, one cannot assume a power in the Absolute that is different from the Absolute. In fact, all talk of a 'power' turns out to be a mere figure of speech evoked by practical experience, as when we speak of 'the body of the stone statue'.

Bhāskara asks, 'Have we not hereby refuted that objection raised in sophistical reasoning which says "A power must be multifarious in nature, and also natural and not adventitious"?' To this we reply, 'Yes, indeed'. When we say of the power that it is 'natural' we mean that it is non-different from its own true Self. But the word 'power' is only mentioned relative to its products. When the effects of the power are seen to be non-different from the Self, it is seen that the power also is non-different from the supreme Self. So non-duality is in no way contradicted.

There is, however, another point made by Bhāskara:

(13) Perhaps you will say that the Veda is not concerned with teaching the historical reality of creation, but rather with teaching non-duality. For no human advantage would accrue from a knowledge of the nature of creation, and it cannot be the purpose of the Veda to teach facts about the realm of distinctions, as these are accessible through other means of knowledge (reading siddhatvāt). To this we reply as follows. You teach the unity and sole existence of the Self on the ground that cause and effect are non-different. But the argument for this is unfounded. If creation was not admitted, then the ether and all the other elements would have to be constant and eternal, just as the Mīmāṃsakas (who do not admit the doctrine of world-periods) say. Nor is it right to say that creation is not a topic of human interest. For teaching about it is needed so that the soul can know what is implied by human experience. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.14, p.98)

This statement has not been properly thought through. To say 'It is not the purpose of the Veda to teach the historical reality of creation' is not the same thing as to say 'Ether and the other elements are constant and eternal'. To understand this point, one should consider attentively the following texts of Śrī Bhagavatpāda.

(14) (To teach us about this creation and world-appearance is not at all what the Veda has in view.) 'For such knowledge would not be connected with any human end, either visible or revealed. Nor would it be in any way possible to assume that there was such a connection, for exegesis applied to the problem of the opening and closing of topics in the Vedic texts shows that the creation texts are mere subordinate elements that sometimes crop up in the course of teaching about the Absolute. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.iv.14)

The point being made is that no human advantage accrues from a knowledge of the details of creation. This is not to say that creation was not for the sake of human experience. We find that even dream-objects serve the purpose of experience during the time of the dream. But no reward is promised in the

Veda to follow from a knowledge of the details of creation.

(15) And the Veda itself shows that the accounts of the creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the world-appearance are given solely as a means to teach the existence of the Absolute. Consider Chāndogya VI.viii.4. 'With food (= the subtle earth-element) for the sprout, my dear one, seek for water as the root. With water as the sprout, my dear one, seek for fire as the root. With fire as the sprout, my dear one, seek for Being as the root'. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.iv.14, cp. M.V.33,3-4)

The idea is that with the help of the effect one should seek for the cause, which is in fact the effect in its true nature. That is why the texts about creation can be seen to be for the purpose of expounding pure Being, which is in fact the true nature of creation. Nor is this rule about seeking the cause through the effect confined to the realm of the real. Even when the objects are illusory, when they are part of a magic show, for instance, we see the audience curious to know who produced the magic illusion and how.

(16) And from the giving of such examples as clay, etc., we see that the purpose of teaching the creation of the world-appearance was really to expound the non-difference of the effect from the material cause. And thus a great authority on the tradition (Śrī Gauḍapāda) has declared, 'When creation is mentioned in the Veda and taught in various ways, through such examples as clay, iron and sparks, this is only a device for the introduction (of the idea of the sole metaphysical reality of the Self). In truth, there is no differentiation of any kind'. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.iv.14)

One must not suppose that these examples are given with the idea of showing that the clay and the like are really causes, or that their 'effects', the pot and so on, are real. The cause and effect relation is a popular conception already established through worldly experience, and so cannot be the content of Vedic revelation, as we already saw. What really accords with the context is the teaching 'Just as everything made of clay is known from the knowledge of one lump of clay, so all effects are known through knowledge of the Absolute'.

(17) But a *reward* is promised in the Veda for knowledge of the Absolute. 'He who knows the Absolute attains the supreme Being' (Taitt.II.1), 'He who knows the Self crosses beyond grief' (Chānd.VII.i.3), 'Only through knowing Him does one pass beyond death' (Śvet.III.8). And this reward is something immediately evident in this very life. For when through 'That thou art' one has direct and immediate knowledge that one is not the one undergoing transmigration, one is delivered from the transmigratory state. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.iv.14)

The various narratives about creation are a device to teach something else. No reward is mentioned in the Veda for knowing them, nor is there ever experience of any reward. In the case of knowing the Self to be one and the sole reality, on the contrary, a reward is both stated in the Veda and actually experienced. Thus the purpose of the creation-texts is not to teach creation; it is to help teach knowledge of the Self. This is what Śrī Śaṅkara is saying.

(18) Perhaps you will claim that, since there are Vedic texts speaking of the Absolute as the cause of the rise, maintenance and dissolution of the world, the Absolute must have a number of powers. But this would be wrong. For there are other texts denying all distinctions which cannot mean anything but exactly what they say. But will not the texts speaking of the creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the world also mean exactly what they say? No, it is not so. For their purpose is to teach that all is one. Texts which bring out by examples like that of clay and its modifications how the Absolute is one and the only reality, and how modifications are unreal, cannot be intended to teach the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world as true facts.

But why should the texts proclaiming the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the universe be regarded as subordinate to those denying any distinctions within the Absolute, and not the other way about? Our reply is that texts denying distinctions yield a form of knowledge after obtaining which nothing further remains to be known. For when once the unity, sole existence, eternality, purity and so forth of the Self are directly known, no further need or desire to know anything else arises.... Nor is it the case that the texts proclaiming the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world are able to communicate a truth leaving no further knowledge to be desired. On the contrary, we are forced to conclude that they are inserted for the sake of some other teaching. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.IV.iii.14, cp. M.V.36,2)

There are passages on the present topic by Bhāskara where he forgets what he said before and contradicts himself. For instance, we have had the passage 'This effect in the form of the multifarious world does not exist in the Absolute as (formless) cause. But it is not taught that the universe of plurality does not exist' (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.11, M.V.167,5). And Bhāskara expresses himself further as follows: 'After one has first learned that the Absolute has the form of the universe from the sections of the Veda that deal with creation, the Absolute is afterwards determined as formless, as that is the chief meaning in such texts as "Not gross, not subtle...". It is from the fact that examples like that of the lump of clay are cited that one sees that the purpose even of the creation-texts is to expound the Absolute as formless. Therefore one

should meditate on the theme, "I am verily the Absolute, of the nature of Being, without a second and with all modifications withdrawn in the state of dissolution (pralaya)"' (Bh. B.S.Bh.III.ii.14-5, p.166).

This is wrong. For when a person once knows that the whole Veda, together with the creation-texts, is concerned with determining the true nature of the Absolute as without form, and knows that nothing other than the Absolute exists, then he no longer has any meditation that he needs to perform as a duty. Anyone who can see this will have full faith in the system of Śrī Bhagavatpāda and will subscribe to the view that the Self, one only without a second, appears in variegated form as the world (lit. the effect), like a magician appearing to assume strange forms through his magic (hypnotic) power. The reality of the effect is its reality *as* the cause. Śrī Bhagavatpāda says 'But the effect, the world consisting of sound and the other elements, cannot exist except as the cause, either before creation or now' (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.II.i.7, M.V.35,4). And we have the Vedic text, 'Beyond which nothing else exists' (cp. Mahānārāyaṇa XII.28). So this doctrine of the reality of the effect (as the cause) before production has to be accepted whether one wishes to accept it or not. And it is only in this way that one can do justice to the Vedic method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction in regard to this topic. But we desist from further amplification.

169 THE RELATION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL AND THE LORD

We have studied Bhāskara's doctrine of cause and effect in some detail relative to the space available. And it has been shown that it stands in contradiction with the true upanishadic method of teaching. We now turn to a more brief examination of his view of the human soul. Though in general he follows Śrī Bhagavatpāda's system on this subject, there is the big difference that he accepts a real difference between the individual soul and the supreme Self. And thus (here also) we find Bhāskara's doctrine to be in contradiction with the true method of upanishadic teaching.

(1) Kāśakṛtsna did not hold (in the manner of Āśmarathya) that the individual soul was a modification of the supreme Self, the latter conceived as a substance undergoing modification. Nor did he hold (with Auḍulomi) that the individual soul began as entirely distinct from the supreme Self and obtained identity in liberation. He held that, even before the final emergence of the soul from the complex of bodies and organs at liberation, the supreme Self was non-different from the individual soul at the beginning, since the latter was only a 'state' it assumed. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.21, p.81 = M.V.157,6)

(2) You are right. There is a distinction between the individual soul and the supreme Self, due to the delimitation of the individual soul by the conditioning adjunct of beginningless Ignorance, along with actions and their results. The soul is a part of the supreme Self. The relation is like that of sparks coming from fire. Or again, the case may be likened to that of parcels of the ether of space apparently enclosed within apertures of the body (such as the ear-hole, cp. M.V.169,4) which are so perceived and referred to in speech (e.g. 'the ether in the ear'). (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.21, p.81; cp. M.V.157,7)

(3) A doctrine proclaimed in common in this way by many Vedic texts cannot be altered. The text on sparks from fire, therefore, must be interpreted so as not to contradict it. This latter text does not aim to teach that the individual soul is a *modification* (vikāra) of the supreme Self. Its aim is to teach that the distinction between the soul and the supreme Self is due to conditioning adjuncts (upādhi). The sparks are identical with the fire. And it is only divisions that are introduced into space by the separate positions of the earthen vessels, not qualitative distinctions. As the topic of the passage is dreamless sleep, it is not teaching a doctrine of creation. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.17, p.134)

(4) The word 'part' is used here to mean what is non-different from the supreme Self, merely divided by a conditioning adjunct, as a spark, though identical with the fire from which it proceeds, is separated from it by a conditioning adjunct. But how can the supreme Self, which is partless, have parts? It is from the Veda that we know it does so, for the Veda resorts to the example 'As small sparks fly out from a fire...' (Bṛhad. II.i.20). And then there are other examples, like the division in the ether of space made by the cavities in the body such as the ear-hole, or like the five different modifications of vital energy, such as the outgoing form and the rest, or like the modifications of the mind such as pleasure-desire and so on.

The soul is both different and non-different from the supreme Self by nature. Its non-different form constitutes its true nature, its form as different is due to a conditioning adjunct (the mind-body complex). The soul, stupefied by the power of the adjuncts, undergoes transmigratory life through being obsessed with them, though we accept that it is in fact non-different from the supreme Self. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.43, p.140-1)

It was not correct to say that the word 'part' referred to something non-different from the Self, merely divided by a conditioning adjunct. That does not agree either with worldly experience or with Vedic teaching. The word 'part' is used in a figurative sense to indicate the true non-difference of what is divided off by an apparent conditioning adjunct. If 'part'

is understood as 'apparent part', then it can stand. And words like 'part' are not used in the present context to show that anything is really severed from the Self, but rather to teach identity. On this the great authority Śrī Śaṅkara says:

(5) It is clear from such texts as 'He is not tainted by the evil of action' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23), 'Standing the same in all creatures' (Gītā XIII.27) and 'In a dog and also in a dog-eater' (Gītā V.18) that the supreme Self does not undergo transmigratory experience. And so one cannot suppose that the individual soul is a part or a modification or a power of the supreme Self or anything different from it, particularly as it is agreed that the Self is without parts. The texts in the Veda and Smṛti speaking of a 'part' and so on are intended to teach the *unity* of the soul with the Self, not its difference from it. For, as we have already just explained above (cp. M.V. p.24), the texts of the Upanishads co-operate like one sentence to teach the doctrine of non-duality that is here being expressed. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20)

(6) Perhaps it will be said that, since the example of sparks issuing from fire appears in the upanishadic texts themselves, this is enough to show that the supreme Self *must* undergo some form of real modification to produce the individual souls. But this is not so. For the function of the Veda is only to inform. It does not in any way exist to alter the constitution of objects, but only to give correct information about existing matters hitherto unknown.

You ask what follows from this? Listen and hear what follows. There are certain concrete and abstract entities in the world which have well-known characteristics and properties. What the Vedic teaching does is to take these well-known entities as examples and use them to convey information about other unknown things that have analogous properties. It does not take worldly examples to illustrate matters that are not analogous to what is found in the world. If it did this, the example would be useless, as it would not agree with what it was supposed to exemplify. You cannot teach that fire is cold or that the sun does not burn even by a hundred examples, as it would be clear from other ways of knowing (perception, etc.,) that what was being taught was not the case. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.i.20, cp. M.V.75,11)

Bhāskara claims that, although the soul is non-different from the Absolute, nevertheless the difference effected by the conditioning adjuncts is real. His argument runs in the following way.

(7) When a pot is broken, the ether of space in the pot becomes one with the ether of space in general, as this is what is seen to occur. And it is the same in this case too. The

individual soul and the supreme Self are by nature non-different, but they become different through conditioning adjuncts. When the conditioning adjunct comes to an end, the difference ceases too. (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.iv.4, p.243)

(8) The text 'That thou art' shows that the individual soul is both different and non-different from the supreme Self. The non-different form is natural and established once and for all as eternal and constant, while the other arises from a conditioning adjunct and is constant only while the latter continues — that is the difference between the two forms. (Bh.B.S. Bh.III.ii.6, p.162)

(9) The same rule has to be applied in the case of the text 'Two birds...' (Muṇḍ.III.i.1, M.V.43,4). In another context, this verse is also found in the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad (Śvet. IV.6). The next verse exhibits them again. 'The individual soul stands on the same tree (as the Lord), bewildered, grieving and helplessly drowned in sorrows. But when he sees that other one, the adored Lord, he knows "His glory is mine", and all his grief departs' (Śvet.IV.7, cp. M.V.43,4). Thus both the Veda and the author of the Sūtras teach that the soul and the supreme Self are different. But there are some (i.e. Śrī Śaṅkara) who turn their backs on the teaching of the Veda and the words of the Ācārya who composed the Sūtras and construct another doctrine, conceived privately by themselves, that all is mere illusion. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.ii.12, p.41)

(10) The souls are mutually different amongst themselves, but non-different from the supreme Self, as the foam and waves of the sea are different amongst themselves, but all are non-different from the sea. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.10, p.75)

(11) The image of the sun reflected in water is introduced. When the sun and the like are reflected in water, their small reflected images expand and contract with the movements of the water. In the same way, the supreme Self in its universal form remains unchanged, existing independently by its own power, within the individual souls, who conform, like reflections, to the modifications of their various conditioning adjuncts. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.21, p.168)

The notion that when a pot is broken the ether of space inside it *becomes* one with the ether of space in general is not to be commended. The ether of space is partless and never capable of being divided, so that the ether apparently 'in the pots' is always really one with ether in general. In the same way, even when the conditioning adjunct is present, the individual is, from the standpoint of the highest truth, ever identical with the supreme Self. But through Ignorance the soul fancies that the Self is different. This is the only correct explana-

tion. As the great sage (Śrī Gauḍapāda) said:

(12) The Self appears to undergo birth through the multiplicity of souls, just as the ether of space appears to undergo birth through the multiplicity of new forms into which it appears to be enclosed through the production of pots (cp. M.V. 27,4). The ether is also the example to explain the apparent rise of new objects like pots through the compounding of the elements (since the elements are taught to proceed as effects from the ether and the effect is nothing over and above the material cause). (G.K. III.3. cp. M.V.75,9)

Just as the ether is apparently 'produced' as 'pot-ether' and also as pots and other objects (through illusory modification), even so is the supreme Self apparently 'produced' as the soul and as the body-mind complex which houses the soul.

(13) Though there are no distinctions in the ether as such, yet there are apparent distinctions of form (shape), use and name (in different receptacles) at different places. One should see that it is the same in the case of (the Self and) the individual souls. (G.K. III.6)

Just as the distinctions that appear to exist in the ether of space, on account of the shapes and uses and so on of various receptacles of the ether of space, do not exist from the standpoint of the highest truth, so also in the case of the individual souls there is no real distinction from the Self.

(14) Just as the pot-ether is neither a modification nor a part of the ether, so the individual soul is never either a modification or a part of the Self. (G.K. III.7)

The soul's feeling that it is a part of the supreme Self has to be understood in the same way.

The text 'That thou art' is in the present tense. It implies that, from the standpoint of the highest truth, not even the apparent distinctions due to conditioning adjuncts exist. And it is in this sense that it is said that immediately the adjunct comes to an end the (apparent) difference comes to an end too. As the revered Commentator put it:

(15) But it would not be right to say that this absence of individual empirical experience (in enlightenment) is limited to any particular state. For the text 'That thou *art*' (Chānd. VI.viii.7) shows that the fact of one's true Self being the Absolute is not conditional upon any particular state. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.II.i.14, M.V.46,6)

Vedic texts like 'Two birds, (together, companions, occupy

the same tree...' (Muṇḍ.III.i.1, cp. M.V.43,4) and 'Both are lodged in the cave of the heart' (Kaṭha I.iii.1) do not serve to communicate the idea that the soul and the Lord are different. The first is engaged in demonstrating that the soul is the supreme Self, and is enunciated with the idea 'I shall be proclaiming their identity openly later on'. For the text goes on 'When a seer attains (true) sight... (he attains identity with the Lord)' (Muṇḍ.III.i.3). The second text also has a concluding passage which says, 'He reaches the end of his journey' (Kaṭha I.iii.9). We see that the passage as a whole is teaching the means to attaining the highest abode of Viṣṇu (with which the 'end of his journey' is equated, Kaṭha I.iii.9). One and the same passage cannot both teach the means to the attainment of the supreme human end (identity with the supreme Self) and also proclaim the difference between the individual soul and the supreme Self at the same time.

On this basis, it is quite explicable that the Sūtra should have proclaimed *initially* that the supreme Self was different from the individual soul and something to which the latter had to attain. In the first Book of the Sūtras, the nature of the individual soul is not expounded for its own sake: it is invariably brought in to illustrate some other matter (so that the teachings about the soul given in that part of the Sūtras are not an authoritative guide to its true nature). But we must leave the final decision about which system best harmonizes the Upanishads and Sūtras to properly qualified philologists and scholars.

170 THE EMPIRICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL

Bhāskara's view that all the experience of the individual soul is engendered through external conditioning adjuncts, and is not natural to it, is in harmony with the true Vedantic system. But this Ācārya forgets and fails to take into account the point that the conditioning adjuncts are not real in the highest sense, but are set up by Ignorance.

(1) The references we make in worldly parlance to the birth and death of the individual, says the author of the Sūtra, are figurative. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.16, p.134)

(2) The soul does not undergo birth. Why not? Because that is not the Vedic teaching. There is no mention of the coming into being of the individual soul in the passages which treat of the creation of the ether and other elements. (Bh.B.S.Bh. II.iii.17, p.134)

(3) And the consciousness of the individual soul is immediate self-consciousness. For the knower is always immediately

evident to himself. Pots and other objects, on the other hand, are only perceived occasionally and are perceived as distinct from the perceiver. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.18, p.135)

Where Bhāskara wrote 'For the knower...' it would have been better if he had referred to the Witness of the knower.

(4) In this state of transmigration, it feels to us as if the Self were minute, but this is not its true form even at the time. For there is the teaching that the Absolute is the Self, in the text 'That thou art' (and this means that our true Self is the Absolute even now). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.29, p.137)

(5) Power to act is not natural to the soul, or liberation would be impossible.... But if power to act is not natural but due to external adjuncts, that does not mean that it is not fully real. When a person experiences being burnt by the heat of fire, are we to say that that burn is not fully real just because the heat from which it proceeds does not come from the person himself? (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.40, p.139)

The heat of the fire belongs to the fire not to the Self. The burn, too, belongs to the body, not to the Self, its Witness. That is the correct reasoning. And the burn is not in fact experienced in the Self (cp. U.S.(verse) XVIII.204, T.N.).

(6) The individual soul's power to act derives from the 'supreme', that is, from the Lord; for that is what the Veda teaches. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.41, p.140)

(7) The objection that the soul's power to act must be independent has already been raised, and it has been established in reply that the soul's power to act depends on the Lord. As for the charge of unfairness and cruelty (brought against the Lord in these circumstances, because different creatures have different degrees of happiness and misery, and misery always predominates) — it does not apply, because He creates the world in accordance with the merits and demerits of living beings. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.42, p.140)

(8) The soul enjoys happiness as a result of its past good activity, but this is not the case with the supreme Self, as there would be no occasion for it. It is like light (and the ether of space and so on — where light is not really differentiated or made to move or change by the things on which it falls, and the ether of space is not really enclosed within any receptacles as it appears to be). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.46, p.141)

(9) If the individual soul is non-different from the supreme Self, to whom do permission and absence of permission apply?...

To this we reply that permission and absence of permission may very well apply to (the individual soul as) a part (of the supreme Self). For it is capable of relationship with a body. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.48, p.142)

Here 'relationship with a body' means the rise of the erroneous notion in the Self 'Verily, I am the body and so on', that is, 'I am the complex of body and organs'. And that is accepted in Bhāskara's system as well as in our own. But what is not accepted by Bhāskara is that the body and the other external conditioning adjuncts are caused by Ignorance.

(10) The soul, in company with the chief vital energy, with its sense-organs, organs of action and mind, leaves its previous body at death and goes to another one for further experiences of pleasure and pain, under the force of Ignorance* along with merit and demerit and the impressions of past experiences. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.i.1, p.152)

**(Avidyā-karma-pūrṇa-prajñā: on this phrase, where 'avidyā' is probably a corruption of 'vidyā', see the author's comments at Sac, V.P.P. English Intro. p.107. T.N.)*

Why waste words? We can say summarily that all the empirical experience of the individual soul is exclusively through adjuncts. But it is a special point in Śrī Bhagavatpāda's system that conditioning adjuncts are set up by an illusion imagined through Ignorance. One must pay attention to this special point if justice is to be done to the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction. Otherwise transmigratory life will be real and its abolition impossible, while liberation will be unreal and so never capable of attainment. And thus a great authority (Śrī Gauḍapāda) has said:

(11) The Self stands within all bodies, motionless and unaffected like the ether of space, whether they die or are born, whether they go, come or stand still. (G.K. III.9, cp. M.V. 46,2)

(12) All bodies are like dreams, empty projections arising from Ignorance of the Self. Their reality is inconceivable, whether they are taken as varying in eminence or as all the same. (G.K. III.10, cp. M.V.46,2)

How can there be two beings having knowledge in one body? Does not the Veda assert that there is no other 'seer' apart from the Inner Ruler, in the text 'There is no other seer... but He'? (Bṛhad.III.vii.23) Bhāskara raises this problem and then answers it as follows:

(13) To this we reply as follows. We have already explained

how this very text brings out the distinction with the phrase 'He who, dwelling in the body,...' (Bṛhad., Mādhyandina school, III.vii.22). Do you not see the point? This text cannot be just passed over as if it were a mere casual word of greeting, as it is just as authoritative as the text 'There is no other seer... but He' (M.V.162,3). So difference and identity must be accepted.

Nor can one claim that a distinction is introduced into the subject-matter in order to deny that there is any other Controller but the Lord, for the whole section is concerned with knowledge as the true nature of the Inner Ruler. There is no other Witness-of-all but He. And in any case, when it has been (solemnly) declared that He is the Witness of the deities and so on in the text 'He whom the earth-deity does not know' (Bṛhad.III.vii.3), this cannot afterwards be denied. (Bh.B.S. Bh.I.ii.20, p.45)

Bhāskara makes an innovation in adopting as the finally accepted view the very position that Śrī Bhagavatpāda has raised as an objection and refuted. Because all the opponents of the method of interpretation of false aṭtribution followed by subsequent retraction follow him blindly on this point, it ought to be refuted here. So we will say a few words on the subject. There is Brahma Sūtra I.ii.20, which says 'The individual soul is not the Inner Ruler, as the members of both schools teach it to be different'. That is, both the Mādhyandinas and the Kāṇvas teach it to be different. But that distinction is not real in the highest sense. And there is not a trace of the term 'difference in identity' anywhere in the vocabulary of the author of the Sūtras. So when the Sūtra says that the individual soul is not the Inner Ruler — it means just that and no more.

But in what sense does the author of the Sūtras first raise the objection that the individual soul is the same as the Inner Ruler and then deny it, in the words 'Not the other' and 'The Inner Ruler is different, because difference is taught' (B.S. I.ii.16-7)? Śrī Bhagavatpāda explains the resolution of the difficulty as follows.

(14) On the supreme Self, eternal, pure, conscious and free by nature, raised above all change, one and without relation to anything else, is erroneously superimposed the form of the limited individual soul, whose characteristics are the opposite, as impurities (like dust and clouds) are erroneously attributed to the stainless infinite ether of the sky. The author of the Sūtras therefore emphasized the difference of the supreme Self from the individual soul, knowing that he would be going to negate it later by quotations of Vedic texts teaching the unity and sole reality of the Self — such quotations being supported by reasoning and by independent rational refutation of the views of the dualists. There is no question of

his teaching that the individual soul is really different from the supreme Lord. All that the author of the Sūtras is doing is to conform initially to the general worldly notion that the individual soul is different, which is based on metaphysical Ignorance. On this basis, the author of the Sūtras holds, the Vedic injunctions for ritual, which conform to the natural human idea that one is an individual capable of individual action and experience, will not suffer contradiction. But in other places he shows that what the Veda really has to communicate is the unity and sole reality of the Self. We find this, for example, in such a Sūtra as 'But there may be teaching (about the identity of the soul with the Absolute) given by a sage who has himself attained the vision of the final Vedic standpoint, as in the case of Vāmadeva' (B.S. I.i.30, cp. Bṛhad.I.iv.10). (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.iii.19)

And he says in commenting on the Sūtra now under consideration:

(15) But how can there be two Witnesses (lit. seers) in one body, namely the Lord, the Inner Ruler, and also the individual soul, who is different from Him? Well, but what is the difficulty here? The difficulty is that it contradicts the teaching of the Vedic text 'There is no other Witness (lit. seer)... but He' (Bṛhad.III.vii.23). This text denies the existence of any Self as seer, hearer, thinker or knower other than the Inner Ruler, who is the topic of the passage. You cannot say that the text is (not meant to deny the existence of another Witness but) only meant to deny the existence of a second controller. For no one could suppose that a Controller needed another controller to control him, and the text does not specify that it is only meant to deny another Controller. (Śaṅkara's B.S. Bh.I.ii.20)

That is the passage in which Śrī Bhagavatpāda explains the objection that the Sūtra is answering. But Bhāskara acted as if he had not noticed it, and remarked, 'One can also say that the purpose of the Sūtra was to rebut the objection that there could be another Controller of the world'. How could anyone be so deaf as to raise the objection that there could be more than one Inner Ruler, when the Veda repeatedly and without exception identifies the Inner Ruler with the Self, as in 'He is your Self, the Inner Ruler, the immortal' (Bṛhad.III.vii.3, Māṇḍ.6)?

In explaining the answer that the Sūtra gives to the objection, Śrī Bhagavatpāda had written as follows:

(16) To this we reply as follows. This idea that the individual soul and the Inner Ruler are different is a result of the apparent conditioning adjuncts of bodies and organs set up by Ignorance. It does not represent the final truth. For the inmost Self is one. There cannot be two inmost Selves. Where

there is only one, practical experience of such a unity as if it were multiple, and verbal reference to it as such, arise through apparent conditioning adjuncts. It is as when we speak figuratively of the ether of space in the pot and the ether of space in general (as if the pot really circumscribed a volume of the ether of space and effectively cut it off from the rest of the ether, which it does not, since the ether is conceived as a continuum and as too subtle to be effectively circumscribed by gross objects). (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.ii.20; cp. M.V.27,4;49,6;140,8)

And there is not even the faintest suspicion that there could be more than one Inner Ruler. For the one who raised the original question, Uddālaka, was himself quite clear that there was only one Inner Ruler when he said, 'I know that. If, O Yājñavalkya, you do not know the subtle spirit (lit. thread) pervading the cosmos, and the Inner Ruler, and yet presume to drive away the cows that belong properly to knowers of the Absolute, your head will fall off'(Bṛhad.III.vii.1).

Nor is Bhāskara himself entirely unacquainted with the technique found in the Upanishads of establishing the true nature of the supreme Self by negating its aspect as individual soul. For he writes:

(17) Some schools expound the supreme Self and tell the pupil he is that directly, as in the text 'That thou art'. Others, on the other hand, start from the standpoint of the individuality of the soul, and, after successively negating several states of individuality, eventually expound its supreme form as the Self — for example the passage which begins '"Which is the Self?" "This conscious being among the sense-organs... "' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7) and concludes 'This great unborn Self, without bones, without a body' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7 and 22?). (Bh.B.S.Bh. I.iii.20, p.58)

In this connection Bhāskara does not accept that the individual aspect of the soul that is negated is imagined through Ignorance. Even though he admits that it is created by external adjuncts, he persists through sheer obstinacy in calling it perfectly real. But that is a different point.

171 THE METHOD OF DISCRIMINATION OF THE FIVE SHEATHS

Bhāskara's commentary on the Ānandamaya section of the Brahma Sūtras (B.S. I.i.12-9) mostly imitates the view of the author of the Vṛtti quoted by Śrī Bhagavatpāda. But Bhāskara refutes the teaching (of Śrī Śaṅkara, cp. M.V.39) that the Absolute is 'the tail' (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.19, p.27). The first thing to point

out here is that this view of the author of the earlier Vṛtti reproduced in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary does not actually agree with the tradition followed by Bhāskara. Śrī Bhagavatpāda quotes the doctrine of the author of the Vṛtti as follows.

(1) But you said earlier that it was wrong to accept it as the literal truth that pleasure, delight and great delight constituted the head and two wings of the true Self, with bliss for its tail (Taitt.II.5). But in fact it was not wrong. For the conception was based on the immediately preceding adjunct (i.e. on the 'self made up of knowledge', M.V. p.94), not on the Self in its true form. The notion that the true Bliss-Self (i.e. the Absolute) has a body at all is only set forth in the course of relating it to (the merely provisional teaching about) a series of bodies beginning with the material body made up of food. The true Bliss-Self (the Absolute) is not genuinely embodied, in the manner of the individual soul in transmigration. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.i,12)

The point is explained differently by Bhāskarācārya as follows:

(2) As for what was said about association with parts — the intention in bringing that up was to suggest that the Self was like a person, not to teach that it had a body with parts. So there is nothing wrong. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.12, p.25)

Though the general meaning is in line with the author of the Vṛtti, still this passage (in using a completely different argument) is another indication that the author of the Vṛtti here in question did not belong to the same tradition as Bhāskara.

(3) And again, if the Absolute were taken as 'made up of bliss', it would have to be the conditioned Absolute, endowed with head, wings and tail, and with different degrees of joy, such as pleasure, delight, etc. But the part of the text that follows refers to the unconditioned Absolute, in the words 'That from which words fall back without attaining access, together with the mind. He who knows the bliss of the Absolute does not fear anything from any quarter' (Taitt.II.9). (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.i.19)

From this we conclude that those who accepted that the Absolute was unconditioned in its true nature refuted the author of the Vṛtti. Otherwise there would not have been this refutation of his view here. Bhāskarācārya, however, answers the author of the Vṛtti in a different way, as follows:

(4) Though it has been said that it is the unconditioned Absolute that is referred to here, that also was wrong. For the Absolute is represented as having bliss for its attribute. At

a later point in the Upanishad, there are indirect references to the Absolute as a substance through the mere mention of its attribute of bliss, as in such texts as 'This is the analysis of bliss' (Taitt.II.8) and 'Verily from bliss are these creatures born' (Taitt.III.6). And when the text says 'from which words fall back' (Taitt.II.9), what it means is that the Absolute is not accessible to speech or minds that are sullied by attachment and other passions. But it is accessible to speech and minds that are pure. For we find other passages in the Veda that imply this, such as 'He is seen by those of keen vision through their subtle minds' (Kaṭha I.iii.12) and 'When a person's intellect has been purified through knowledge free from attachment and other passions (he sees the Self in meditation)' (Muṇḍ.III.i.8). (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.19, p.41)

Again, in his Commentary on the Sūtra 'And because there is the teaching of difference' (B.S. I.i.17), Śrī Śaṅkara quotes the view of the author of the Vṛtti as follows. 'The Sūtra teaches that the soul and the bliss-self are different. For one cannot be enjoined to seek that (one's own true Self, here interpreted as the bliss-self) which one already possesses (for example in such a text as "He who attains (comes to possess) the savour of the Absolute becomes truly blissful", Taitt. II.7)'. And Śrī Śaṅkara further mentions the objection against Advaita formulated by the author of the Vṛtti in the words, 'How otherwise (than by assuming the individual soul and the true Self to be different) could one explain such texts of the Veda and Smṛti as, 'He, the Self, it is who should be investigated' (Chānd.VIII.vii.1) and 'There is no greater gain than the gain of the Self' (Ā.D.S. I.viii.22.2)? And then he refutes this view of the author of the Vṛtti as follows.

(5) True, this looks like a difficulty. But what has happened is that the not-self, such as the body and its organs, has come generally to be seen as the Self, and this through Ignorance of the true nature of the Self, which latter never really falls from its true nature. And, from the standpoint of the 'self' thus constituted by the body and its organs, it is only right to speak of the true Self as something distinct, and not yet properly investigated and requiring further investigation, as not yet heard about and requiring to be heard about, as not yet pondered over and requiring to be pondered over, as not yet understood and requiring to be understood and so on.

And yet from the standpoint of the ultimate truth such texts as 'There is no other Witness (lit. seer)... but He' (Bṛhad. III.vii.23) deny that there is any other seer or hearer apart from the omniscient supreme Lord. But (in the sense that He is unconditioned) the supreme Lord is different from the individual soul, the one who has the power of individual action and experience, called also the 'knowledge-self' or 'conscious individual' (vijñāna-ātman). The case is parallel with that of

the mass hynotist's magic display, where the magician on the ground, the real figure, is different from his double, appearing with sword and shield, having climbed up into the sky on a rope.

Or again, the case is parallel with that of the universal ether, which, itself untouched by any external conditioning adjunct, is different from the 'pot-ether', apparently enclosed within such an adjunct. And it was on the basis of a distinction of this kind subsisting between the knowledge-self (soul) and the supreme Self that the author of the Sūtras speaks as he does in this and the foregoing Sūtra, and says 'Not the other (i.e. the Self is not the individual soul) because that would be illogical' and 'And because of the teaching that there is difference (between the individual soul and the supreme Self)'. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.i.17)

Here this author of a Vṛtti, though he maintained (contrary to Śrī Śaṅkara) that the bliss-self was the Absolute, nevertheless taught that the soul's embodied state and its powers of action and experience were imagined through Ignorance. Hence his position was clearly not very far removed from that of the Vedantic system approved by Śrī Bhagavatpāda. Ācārya Bhāskara, however, took the following line:

(6) Here some (i.e. Śrī Śaṅkara), with a view to safeguarding their own privately hatched theory, offer the following explanation which totally obliterates the meaning of the Sūtra. 'There is no other being undergoing transmigration apart from the Lord. He and He alone is the transmigrant'. If you ask them, 'In that case, what are we doing with the two Sūtras "The supreme Self is not the other, because it would be illogical" (B.S. I.i.16) and "Because of the teaching that there is difference" (B.S. I.i.17)?', they reply that there is nothing wrong. Such expressions about difference are only made (these Advaitins say) on the basis of accepting distinctions set up by apparent conditioning adjuncts, just as such expressions as 'the ether in the pot' or 'the ether in the cloth'* refer to distinctions in the ether that are only set up by imagination. This view is wrong. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.17, p.26; cp. M.V.199)

**(Should the reading be maṭhākāśa = the ether in the hut or monastery in which the pot stands? T.N.)*

And so forth. Bhāskarācārya criticizes the view of the author of a Vṛtti that the bliss-self is the Absolute, either because he did not know that it was that of an author of a Vṛtti, or else because, with his well-known animus against Śrī Śaṅkara, he misattributed the view to him. He says as his last remark on the subject:

(7) Therefore, that stands as the most commendable explanation,

handed down as it is by tradition. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.19, p.29)

In both cases the early author of a Vṛtti on the Brahma Sūtras upheld the doctrine that the Absolute was unconditioned. It is only here in the Ānandamaya section of the Brahma Sūtras (I.i.12-9) that Śrī Bhagavatpāda subjects him to criticism, but only in order to set aside one part of his view. But the tradition of Difference in Identity followed by Bhāskara was fundamentally different from that of the author of the Vṛtti and from that of Śrī Bhagavatpāda, whether it was the Difference in Identity tradition followed by Bhartṛprapañca arrayed in a different dress, or whether Bhāskara was the founder of a new method of interpretation. This has been well shown.

Śrī Bhagavatpāda described the method of discriminating the Five Sheaths by first attributing them to the soul and then denying them, in the belief that, through effecting this discrimination, the pupil would have the reward of establishment in the fearless state of the Absolute in its true nature as unconditioned bliss. The text on plumbing the depths, 'He plumbs the depths of this bliss-self' (Taitt.II.8), is well explained as saying 'Through knowing that bliss-self thoroughly, he attains at one plunge to the Absolute, its true essence' (cp. M.V.39, intro.).

The Absolute, as the 'tail' or 'prop' (M.V. p.93) is without distinctions. Two texts following on, one of which pretends to raise a doubt about the existence of the Absolute, agree with this. They are, 'Verily, if one thinks that the Absolute is non-existent one becomes oneself non-existent' (Taitt.II.6) and'From which words fall back, together with the mind, without attaining access' (Taitt.II.9).

But Bhāskara says, 'The Absolute is accessible to speech and minds that are pure' (M.V.171,4). In saying this he affirms (the absurdity) that even the Witness of All falls within the scope of speech and mind. He turns his back on the repeated statements in the Veda that speech and mind cannot encompass the Absolute, texts like 'He who is the mind of the mind, the speech of speech' (Kena I.2), 'Neither speech goes there, nor mind' (Kena I.3), 'That which cannot be uttered by speech' (Kena I.5) and 'Which cannot be thought by the mind' (Kena I.6). Thus turning his back on the Veda, he laid a claim to be the author of a new metaphysic, hitherto unknown. What a strange presumption and audacity we find in those who are inordinately enamoured of their own opinions!

172 BHĀSKARA ON THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE THREE STATES

In the system of Bhāskara, discrimination of the three states on its own is no more able to establish the Absolute in its pure form than discrimination of the five sheaths is. Here are

quotations of a few of his texts to illustrate his view.

(1) We take up the study of the dream-state to show how the self-luminosity of the soul is familiar to all from the self-luminosity of the dream-state. And we study the state of dreamless sleep to show the true nature of the Self as free from all external limiting adjuncts, beyond danger and fear. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.1, p.160)

(2) The projections in dream are only an illusion (says the author of the Sūtras). He uses the word 'only' to show that there is no external object.... Perhaps you will object that this presupposes an idea without an object, which is an absurdity. But there is nothing wrong here. It is a case of remembering what has been experienced at other times and places. In dream, it is the mind, charged with the impressions born of previous experience of objects and moving about in the subtle canals within the body, that produces a species of memory-knowledge. The fact that dreams have varying pleasure-pain content, such as joy and fear, shows that the mind is prompted to produce them by the merit and demerit arising from former deeds. It is the remembered object that forms the basis of the dream-cognitions. So our theory is not open to criticism. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.3, p.161)

There is no attempt here to deal with the problem that there is experience of erroneous perception in dream as well as in waking, while memory is also distinguished from perception in dream. How is that possible? Other questions that are not answered are: 'What is meant by "at other times and places"?' and 'How do you account for the appearance of space and time that is experienced in dream?'

(3) And so the author of the Sūtras said, in the section containing refutations on the basis of logic, 'And not as in dream and the like, on account of the essential difference between waking and dream' (B.S. II.ii.29). (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.3, p.161)

(4) The exponents of the doctrine of Māyā who follow the Buddhist teachings should also be regarded as having been refuted by the author of the Sūtras with this argument. If he did not believe in the existence of external objects, why did he take the trouble to affirm it? Perhaps you will reply that the author of the Sūtras was not prepared to accept (in the manner of the Vijñāna Vādin Buddhist) that the world consisted merely in the modifications of consciousness if no other permanent reality were admitted, but that, if the Self were admitted as an eternal reality, he was prepared to deny the reality of the universe. But what sort of logic is it that says that, if one thing is known to exist, another thing (equally well known) does not exist? The correct position is that earth and

the other elements do in fact exist as perceived, being effects of the Absolute. (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.ii.29, p.124)

On this topic, Śrī Śaṅkara quotes the Buddhist argument negating external objects as an ill-advised view, later to be refuted by the author of the Sūtras in the words 'On account of the essential difference between waking and dream' (B.S. II.ii.29). He expresses the ill-advised view in an earlier passage in the following words: 'The nature of experience of objects in the waking state has to be seen to be analogous to the experience of dreams and the like. For just as in the case of dream-fantasy, or of a mirage, or of the hallucinatory vision of a city in the clouds, consciousness assumes the twin form of subject and object without the actual presence of any external object, so does it also do the same, we must conclude, in the case of cognition of objects like pillars in the waking state. For dream-cognition and waking cognition are alike in point of being cognitions' (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.II.ii.28 *ad init.*).

The idea was to show that one who holds that dream and waking are different will not want to try to establish by inference that the ideas of waking experience lack external objects simply on the grounds that they are similar to the ideas of dream in point of being ideas. Dream is a state which, when remembered in waking, is seen to have been contradicted and cancelled by waking experience. Who but a lunatic would make inferences about waking being equivalent to dream once he admitted that?

Nor was the revered Commentator concerned to show that the author of the Sūtras did not accept the reality of external objects; for the inference of the Commentator was that everything should be accepted as experienced. All that he is saying here is that the Buddhist is wrong when, having established *some* points of similarity between waking and dream, he goes on to argue that the cognitions of waking are in *all* respects like those of dream and similar states of fantasy.

Nor does the revered Commentator make any inference to the effect that if one thing is known to exist another (equally well known thing) does not. For when refuting the exponents of the doctrine of the Void, he says:

(5) This ordinary empirical experience of the world, solidly established as it is through all the various means of knowledge, cannot be argued away without prior knowledge of some other real principle. For where no exception can be shown, an established rule holds. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.II.ii.31)

The meaning here is this. Shell-silver and the like are accepted as real by their perceivers as long as they manifest. But when such perceivers have the cognition 'This is shell', then they reject the experience of silver as contradicted and cancelled, saying 'This is not silver, it appeared as silver

through illusion'. In the same way, if the exponent of the Void wishes to negate all this world which depends upon accepting the objective validity of the play of the means of knowledge and their objects, then, since he says that everything is imaginary, he must be able to point to some totally real principle guaranteed in immediate experience to stand as the real substratum of all this imagination — or else drop his obstinate claim that all is void.

Bhāskara also said that it was correct to maintain that earth and the other elements were real, since they were effects of the Absolute, and to this the author of the Sūtras and the revered Commentator would readily assent. The reality of earth and all other effects is accepted on the basis of their being non-different from the Absolute. For we have the Vedic text, 'Verily, all this is the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12). But this does not mean that their reality can be known through the form in which they are known empirically. For the latter, like the shell-silver and so forth, does not exist when it is not being perceived. On this we have such Vedic texts as 'A modification is a name, a mere suggestion of speech' (Chānd.VI.i.4) and 'The firehood of fire disappeared' (Chānd.VI.iv.1).

(6) But those who say that the waking state, too, is a mere illusion (māyā) obliterate the meaning intended by the author of the Sūtras and deceive the students who listen to them. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.3, p.161)

The author of the Sūtras made his own understanding of this matter clear in the Sūtra II.i.14 in the words, 'As is shown by such texts as "a modification of speech"'. The author of the Sūtras held (as this Sūtra in its complete form shows, cp. M.V.33,8) that the whole world was non-different from the Absolute. So it cannot be claimed that he said that the waking state and the universe of plurality that it contained were different from the Absolute. Therefore the 'being a mere illusion' that he is speaking of here in the present Sūtra (B.S. III.ii.3 — which refers to the dream-state) does not determine the waking state as being a mere illusion too.

Everyone agrees that from the standpoint of empirical experience dream is dream and waking is something different from it. Thinking that the opponent, too, must accept this as certain, the author of the Sūtras himself affirms this difference between the two states (B.S. III.ii.3). But when the matter is considered from the metaphysical standpoint, the difference between waking and dream cannot be established. For in dream itself, just as in waking, there is experience of a distinction between subject and object as long as there is experience of the dream at all. There also, in the dream, there is the sense of being awake, just as in waking, until the dream is finally contradicted. Therefore the saying of the great authority (Śrī Gauḍapāda) 'The wise say that the states of

waking and dream are one' (G.K. II.5) is hard to contradict. Taking his stand on his own immediate experience of the truth of what he said in that verse, Śrī Gauḍapāda establishes, after extended discussion in the second Book of his Kārikās, that both the dream-state and the waking state are mere illusion, and that the Self alone is real. To see the way he does so, one must examine that actual work.

And this teaching is eminently Vedic. The three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep are each known to be dreams from the upanishadic teaching 'three dreams' (Ait.I.iii.12). So this teaching is not a case of deceiving students. On the contrary, it is a boon to seekers of liberation. For it blends the teaching of the Upanishads and the Sūtras together with experience by exhibiting the traditional method whereby the three states are first falsely attributed to the Self and then afterwards denied of it.

From the standpoint of ordinary waking experience, however, one should accept this statement by the author of the Sūtras that dream is (by contrast with waking) a mere illusion. The revered Commentator says: 'But, before the practical realization of the fact that the Absolute is one's own Self, the world-appearance, beginning with the ether and the other great elements, has a lasting coherent structure, whereas the world-appearance in dreams is effaced daily. So it is significant if the author of the Sūtras here refers to dream as "a mere illusion", as in the case of dream the words have a special (intensified) sense' (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.III.ii.4, cp. M.V.152,7).

If we turn to the topic of dreamless sleep, Bhāskara has the following observations:

(7) The phrase 'There is absence of that' means that in dreamless sleep there is absence of dream, and this is turn implies that there is not then the alternative for the soul of abiding *either* in the Self (in the ether of the heart) *or* in the subtle canals (nāḍī) within the body.... He sleeps having attained the supreme Self as the ether in the heart through the avenue of the subtle canals.... If the one in dreamless sleep could *also* be in the subtle canals, he could not be without subject-object consciousness, as there would be no explanation for its absence. But on the other hypothesis (that he is exclusively in the ether of the heart) we have the text 'When they have attained Being (in dreamless sleep), they have no knowledge' (Chānd.VI.ix.2, cp. M.V.42,4). (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.7, p.162-3)

(8) Next the author of the Sūtras gives the answer to the question 'How can it be claimed that there is a connection with external adjuncts in dreamless sleep and cosmic dissolution?' And the answer he gives is, 'But this connection can be assumed to exist (in latent form) like virility (in a child), as it is capable of manifestation (later)'. The word 'but' is for

emphasis. That connection with the mind could only manifest in the waking state if it already existed (in dreamless sleep). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.iii.31, p.138)

But, in that case, how could there be the union of the soul with the Absolute in dreamless sleep (spoken of at Chānd. VI.ix.2, M.V.42,1;172,7)? Through any conditioning adjunct, the soul assumes a form in which it is differentiated from pure Being. If the soul retained a conditioning adjunct in dreamless sleep and cosmic dissolution, there could not be total union with the Absolute (in dreamless sleep).

(Contrast Śrī Śaṅkara (M.V.45,6), who can explain the identity with pure Being in dreamless sleep, since for him the adjuncts are products of Ignorance and only exist when seen (M.V.47,5). They lapse in dreamless sleep when the soul rests in its identity with the Absolute. But they re-appear on waking in the case of those still ignorant of their true nature as the Absolute, and in this sense are said figuratively to lurk in dreamless sleep as a 'seed' or a 'potentiality' (śakti). Even the notion of a potentiality here is a concoction of Ignorance, which supervenes later in the waking state. Bhāskara, however, cannot explain the Chāndogya texts affirming identity with the Absolute in dreamless sleep at all, as for him the adjuncts are not set up by Ignorance but are real. Cp. M.V.169,7;170 intro.;172,11, note; also 45, 6. T.N.)

(9) 'This universe enters the Absolute (at the cosmic dissolution) losing its modified form. It loses its solid form, like salt dissolved in water'. (Quoted in Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.9, p.91)

The verse quoted means that even at the cosmic dissolution there is no total dissolution of the world into the Absolute, as the world does not give up its nature as the world.

(10) Because the subtle body, the abode of the sense-organs and the powers of action, remains in being until there is dissolution, that is to say, until there is liberation through right knowledge.... The soul does not dissolve into the Absolute at the time of the death of the physical body. (Bh.B.S. Bh.IV.ii.8, p.229)

It is true that in all such places the revered Commentator, too, agrees that the individual soul remains in being, yet there is a difference on the point, as the following passage from Śrī Śaṅkara shows.

(11) Thus, although there are no distinctions in the Self in its true nature, we see that this dream-like empirical experience of distinctions continues regularly during the period of world-manifestation (even though punctuated by intervals of

dreamless sleep when wrong knowledge is in abeyance). Therefore we should infer by analogy that a potentiality (śakti) for future distinctions remains in the period of world-dissolution, too, this potentiality itself being a mere appearance conditioned by wrong knowledge. (Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.II.i.9, cp. M.V.45,8 and note)

The supreme Self, though in reality ever bereft of the experience of distinctions, appears to become the object of empirical experience of distinctions in the waking and dream states through wrong knowledge. But when wrong knowledge has been abolished by right knowledge all empirical experience is annihilated. This was the view of the revered Commentator. On Bhāskara's view, however, there cannot be a refutation of distinctions through right knowledge, since the persistence of a potentiality for differentiation is real in all states. That is the difference between the two views.

173 REFLECTION OVER THE MEANS TO LIBERATION

In Bhāskara's teaching, the doctrine of a combination of knowledge and action for liberation accompanies the doctrine of Difference in Identity, as in Bhartṛprapañca.

(1) And that word 'then' affirms that both action and knowledge are needed for knowledge of the Absolute, both in regard to beginning the discipline and for earning its reward. They are needed for beginning it, since one can only begin the enquiry into the Absolute if rituals have already been performed first; and they are needed for earning the reward of the discipline in that salvation (kṣema) can only be achieved through knowledge combined with ritualistic action. (Bh.B.S. Bh.I.i.1, p.4)

(2) For here the author of the Sūtras teaches that liberation is achieved through a combination of knowledge and ritualistic action. For it is in this sense that he will say, 'Members of all stages of life must resort to ritualistic action and knowledge for liberation, on account of the text "Him the true Brahmins seek to know... through sacrifice, through charity, through austerity..." (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22, M.V.55,1;100,2, note — a text which implies that action and rituals are an aid in travelling the path) like a horse' (B.S. III.iv.26). And unless one knows the ritualistic science thoroughly one cannot decide which actions have to be combined with knowledge and which do not. But when thorough knowledge of the ritualistic science has been achieved, one can affirm that the daily obligatory ritual should be combined with knowledge, while optional ritual and forbidden acts should be avoided. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.1, p.2)

(3) Others, however, explain the relationship between action and knowledge differently. First there must be fulfilment of one's (five) debts to the gods and the rest,* and the thorough digestion of the healing medicine of spiritual knowledge. The word 'then' implies 'after this'. Why is that so? A person can only engage in ritualistic acts through the Veda when he goes through his prescribed daily texts, repeating them with understanding. Then there must be conquest of desires, both those that are engendered by the promises of the Veda and those that are natural. Then there must be accumulation of merit and purging of demerit. After that, a person becomes fit to carry out the injunctions placed on the highest and best qualified student.

But what is the injunction laid on the highest and best qualified student?... 'It (the Self), verily, should be seen, should be heard about, should be pondered over, should be subjected to sustained meditation' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5)....

However, the true experts do not accept this interpretation of the relation between action and knowledge. For there is no evidence to prove that one becomes fit for the highest injunctions of all through self-purification and that this state transcends all qualifications for meritorious work. (Bh.B.S. Bh.I.i.1, p.5)

(Fulfilment of debts to the Ṛṣis, whose vision provided the Vedic texts, by teaching the texts to others — of debts to the gods by offerings in the sacred fire, and of debts to the ancestors by offerings on the ground. Where five debts are spoken of, propitiation of malicious spirits and fulfilment of debts to mankind by hospitality to guests are also included. Manu Smṛti III.70. T.N.)

The method for refuting the doctrine of liberation through a combination of ritualistic action with knowledge is well known to those who have studied Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries on the Upanishads, Brahma Sūtras and Gītā (cp. M.V.68). The fact that a person can purify himself through ritualistic action is also well known. Śrī Śaṅkara quotes (at Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.) the text 'By this do I purify this part of my body' (Ś.B. XI.ii.6.13). The view that a person can purify himself by ritual is accepted even by Ācārya Maṇḍana Miśra, who taught that liberation was achieved through a combination of ritualistic action and knowledge (B.Sid. p.36, cp. M.V.105,3 and 7).

(4) In the same way, the ritualistic section of the Veda does not depend on the knowledge-section. But the knowledge-section depends on the ritualistic section, since the Upanishads themselves teach that the obligatory daily ritual is required for liberation in co-operation with knowledge in the text 'Him the true Brahmins seek to know through the repetition of the Veda...' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22, cp. above, M.V.173,2). (Bh.B.S.Bh.

I.i.4, p.16, cp. M.V.161,7)

(5) The phrase 'There must be resort by all' means 'there must be resort to ritualistic action and knowledge for liberation by members of all stages of life'. Why? Because of the text, 'Him the true Brahmins seek to know through the repetition of the Veda, through sacrifice, through charity, through austerity and extreme moderation in the enjoyment of sense-objects' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22). Here sacrifice and the rest, since the words denoting them are in the instrumental case, are enjoined as auxiliaries to knowledge for meditation, like the fore-sacrifices enjoined as necessary auxiliaries for a Soma sacrifice.... Therefore, just as those who have acquired metaphysical knowledge still have to observe inner and outer control and the other disciplines as long as they continue to live, if they wish to make sure of liberation, so must they continue with the rituals and duties of their stage of life. They cannot drop them in the interval between enlightenment and death. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.207)

What the upanishadic text actually teaches here is that ritualistic action is a factor in the rise of desire for knowledge or at best a factor in the rise of knowledge. It does not say that action can ever be combined with metaphysical knowledge.

(6) On the strict Vedic doctrine (say the Mīmāṃsakas) there is only one stage of life (householder), and knowledge of (i.e. meditation on) the Self is taught as an aid to ritual. Its basis is (not truth but) eulogy of the performer of ritual. According to the Smṛti there are other stages of life (wandering monk, etc.), and knowledge of (i.e. meditation on) the Self is taught to enable those who are disabled, and so cannot perform ritual, to realize their ends (through meditation on the ritual instead of physical performance of it). This view of the Mīmāṃsakas will be refuted in the course of the present section of the Brahma Sūtras (B.S. III.iv.1 ff.; cp. M.V.55,12). And the author will show at B.S. III.iv.26 (cp. M.V.173,5;174 *passim*) how, granted that the supreme human goal is metaphysical knowledge, that knowledge must be combined with action. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.1, p.201)

(7) The Sūtras also say (quoting Bādarāyaṇa's view), 'But equal examples can be given on the other side' (B.S. III.iv.9). It means that there are also examples of texts to show that knowledge of the Self is not a mere auxiliary of ritual. 'This is what the enlightened Kāvaṣeya Ṛṣis said of old. They said, "Why should we go through the Vedic texts? Why should we offer sacrifices?"' (text untraced). And there is the text, 'The knowers of the Absolute, verily, having known this Self, rise above the desire for sons, rise above the desire for wealth, and live on alms' (Bṛhad.III.v.1). The phrase 'Why should we...?'

is not an exhortation to give up the practice of going through one's texts each day. It is an eulogy of knowledge of the meaning of the texts. 'In all respects knowledge is the most important thing' is the idea. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.9, p.203)

The Vedic text here speaks of rising above worldly ends, which implies giving ritual up, not combining it with knowledge.

(8) Rising above the householder state, the state typified by possession of sons, they attain to another stage of life. This simply accepts and repeats the teaching of the Smṛti. If one took no regard of the rules for wandering monks set out in the Smṛti (the only place where rules for wandering monks are found), then there would be nothing to show that the living on alms practised by Buddhist and Jaina monks was not under Vedic sanction. And it is from the Law-Books such as that of Manu (reading mānavādau) that the true nature and characteristics of the highest stage of life may be learned, and this from the rules about the threefold stave* and sacred thread and so on. So we forbear to say any more on the matter ourselves here. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.208)

**(Bhāskara was a monk of the Tridaṇḍin (threefold staff) Order, and retained the sacred thread for the performance of rituals. Śrī Śaṅkara and his followers are Ekadaṇḍins (Single Staff Order) who destroy their sacred thread at their initiation and abandon ritual. T.N.)*

In his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1, trans. Mādhavānanda, p.482 ff.;487 ff.) Śrī Śaṅkara treats the texts on renunciation in the Veda and the Smṛti as applying to different classes of candidate. As for the Buddhists and so on, disregard of the Smṛtis on their part would not suffice to give them Vedic sanction, as they pay no regard even to the Veda.

(9) Being devoted to the Absolute means being wholly absorbed in contemplation of the Absolute. It is a state that is available to members of all the different stages of life without distinction.... And so, (in the context of liberation) action and knowledge are not mutually contradictory, because they co-operate towards the same goal. And it is in this sense that the Veda says, 'He who meditates on the Self alone as his true realm finds that his action is never exhausted' (Bṛhad.I.iv.15). Though the act is in itself momentary, it is called everlasting because its reward is everlasting.

And if someone (the Advaitin) were to make the objection that immortality cannot come merely from a connection with (meritorious) action, we reply that immortality could not accrue to the total renunciate (to the parivrājaka whom you champion) either. For he too must perform the physical, mental and vocal activity associated with attending to the needs of

nature, sipping water, bathing, begging for alms and so forth. And since no embodied being can avoid action of this sort, liberation as conceived by the Advaitin would be impossible. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.20, p.205-6)

Not so. The total renunciate (parivrājaka) is not subject to the rules about attending to the needs of nature and the like, and no combination of ritualistic action and knowledge applies to him. More on this can be found in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries on the Gītā, Chāndogya and Brahma Sūtras. (E.g. see Bh.G. Bh.V.1; Chānd.Bh.II.xxiii.1; B.S.Bh.III.iv.20, M.V.55,10. T.N.)

(10) In the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad (VI.21) we hear how the sage Śvetāśvatara gave teaching to the 'atyāśramins'. Yāska's Nirukta I.i.4 declares '"Ati" may be used in the sense of "venerable"'. So it was venerable members of a (high) order of life (āśrama), who led virtuous lives devoted to the repetition of their appointed Vedic texts, who were being taught. So the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad says that it was to them (i.e. to members of a particular caste and order of life) that Śvetāśvatara gave the (high metaphysical) teaching. (Bh.B.S.Bh. III.iv.26, p.208)

It hardly needs pointing out that a venerable stage of life can be obtained by reaching the actionless state too.

(11) As for the reading of Jābāla Upanishad 5 which says 'How can he be a Brahmin if he has no sacred thread?' — that is a case raising a doubt, and is itself a doubtful reading. For there is no previous mention of depositing or abandoning the sacred thread. How could a doubt suddenly arise in this way from nowhere? And the word 'Brahmin' is meaningless. For how could the person mentioned here as being 'without a sacred thread' be a Kṣatriya (given that the succeeding sentences explicitly treat the Kṣatriya as different)? Our suspicion is that this passage is an interpolation by a very unskilful person. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.208)

The later part of the passage from the Jābāla text in question says 'Shaven and without possessions'. So the text did not 'come from nowhere'. The correct deduction is that it is a further development from the earlier phrase 'Let him renounce even in the midst of life as a celibate student'(Jābāla 4; M.V.57,4). Nor is the word 'Brahmin' meaningless. For it indicates that the Brahmin has a special (though not an exclusive) right to renunciation. There are other Vedic texts on the point, such as '(Scrutinizing the worlds won through action, the Brahmin should come to view them with indifference' (Muṇḍ. I.ii.12, cp. M.V.66,2). From a passage in the sequel we see that an injunction to become Paramahaṃsas affects even monks (of Bhāskara's order) with the threefold staff. It says, 'They

have no visible insignia, their ways are unknown' and 'such an one should throw his threefold staff and his coconut water-pot and his sling and his begging-bowl and his holy water and his sacred tuft and sacred thread — all of them — into the water saying "Bhūḥ svāhā!" and should seek to know the Self' (Jābāla 6).

(12) The alleged 'knowledge' of the Sāṅkhyas to the effect that 'Nature is the cause of the world' is a piece of pseudo-Smṛti. The doctrine of those same Sāṅkhyas and others that liberation comes from knowledge alone, with action playing no part, is also a pseudo-tradition. Those (of our own Vedanta school, i.e. the Advaitins) who follow it and speak of the renunciation of all rituals and all action also teach a pseudo-doctrine. And thus their doctrine is mentioned and refuted in the Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra in the words 'That is contradicted by the Veda. If liberation were attainable through mental enlightenment, he who attained it would cease to feel pain even here in the world (which is not the case)' (Ā.D.S. II.xxi.16). (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.209)

This is not a pseudo-tradition. It is rooted in such Vedic texts as 'Let him renounce even in the midst of life as a celibate student' (Jābāla 4; M.V.57,4). And there are such Smṛti texts as 'Neither acting nor causing to act' (Gītā V.13). There is also the practical example given, 'Thus spoke Yājñavalkya, and left (the world for the forest)' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15). Nor was the text quoted from the Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra intended to express the finally accepted view. For both criticism and praise for all the stages of life can be found in that work. If the phrase 'If salvation were attainable through mental enlightenment...' was intended as an objection against Advaita, it was wrong. For there are Vedic texts, such as 'He becomes immortal here' (a text of the Taittirīyas) which declare that the enlightened man does attain salvation (kṣema) here below. Nor does experience of pain contradict metaphysical knowledge. For pain that is experienced (is an object and so) cannot be an attribute of the subject who experiences it.

174 THE REWARDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

Bhāskara held that action too, as well as knowledge, put an end to the obstacles to transcendence (kaivalya).

(1) And here it has to be explained how knowledge is of service for liberation. Perhaps it will be claimed that knowledge of multiplicity is Ignorance. Metaphysical knowledge, on the other hand, is of service for liberation by putting an end to Ignorance. But this view is wrong. For it contradicts what we

actually perceive. For nobody's knowledge of duality comes to a total halt on the rise of knowledge of the meaning of a text. The embodied one has body, mind and senses, and these means of knowledge give him cognitions of colour and the rest. No means can remain in being without supplying its end. When fire and fuel come together, it is certain that they will produce smoke. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.209)

What is the meaning of 'cessation of the knowledge of duality?' Is it cessation of all cognition of duality? Or is it cessation of the belief that duality is real? If it means cessation of all cognition of duality, then the Advaitins themselves do not accept it. But if it is cessation of the belief that duality is real, then this cessation is just what the Advaitins affirm. One who has known the shell in its true form no longer continues to believe in the illusory appearance of silver.

(2) And if you say that there is (in enlightenment) no appearance of multiplicity, and also that divine attributes like omniscience and so on supervene, then all secular and Vedic activity would come to an end in a single flash. (Bh.B.S.Bh. III.iv.26, p.209)

This is wrong. Omniscience and other divine attributes do not come to anyone while they are alive. If you say, 'Then they must do so after death, because they are the stated reward for certain meditations' — well, if so, their reality can be no more than a matter of faith. For they will only have been attained on the plane of personal conviction attained through brooding.

(3) And how could the Self be a performer of action on your (Advaitin's) theory, since it is pure Consciousness alone by nature? How, then, could it act, for instance, in your own ordinary worldly actions? And, in any case, the power to act that derives from external adjuncts lasts as long as the adjuncts. Fire goes on acting to produce smoke as long as it is in contact with fuel. And because the portion of merit and demerit from past lives that initiated the present body is not destroyed (but must work itself out until exhausted, reading avināśāt), the power to act and experience lasts as long as the body does. There is, however, this difference between the enlightened person and the metaphysically ignorant one. The enlightened person regards his power to act as derived from extrinsic adjuncts, and does not accept it as being his own; the ignorant person accepts it as belonging to himself by nature. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.210)

On Śrī Śaṅkara's view, the power to perform action in the world arises from mere illusion. You ask what I gain from saying that? Well, if it were not so then we would have your

theory according to which the enlightened man rejects his power to act because it derives from external adjuncts, and yet he continues to accept it and to conform to it at the same time. And what is the sense in a theory like that?

(4) Perhaps you will ask how action is a means to liberation. Just in the same way that knowledge is on your theory, we reply. You (Advaitin) will say, 'But knowledge puts an end to Ignorance'. We agree. But, as we have already explained, it does not put an end to cognition of multiplicity. And if you reply that knowledge puts an end to the obstacle of supposing the not-self to be the Self, we reply that ritualistic action helps to do the same.... The removal of forms like that of a saffron robe and so on (Bṛhad.II.iii.6), which have been shown to blur the true nature of the Self, is effected by knowledge and action combined. For freedom from rebirth arises from (obeying) the Veda (in its totality). If you ask how action helps, we reply, 'Who could know? The Veda has been compared to a compassionate mother'. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.210)

We have shown that the true function of metaphysical knowledge is to cancel the notion that duality is real. The theory that action puts an end to the false notion that the not-self is the Self contradicts plain evidence. For metaphysical Ignorance is, precisely, the false notion that the not-self is the Self. That is seen to be cancelled by knowledge only, not by action. On Bhāskara's system it is appropriate to say 'Who knows?', since the theory assumes that liberation is the result of the occult future effects of action after this life (adṛṣṭa). What needs to be noted is that, apart from prescribed meditation, there exists also such a thing as metaphysical knowledge conditioned by the nature of reality, the results of which are immediately evident in this very life.

175 REPEATED PRACTICE OF HEARING, PONDERING AND SUSTAINED MEDITATION

Bhāskara says that metaphysical knowledge alone is not enough to effect liberation. For that, prescribed meditations (upāsana) are deemed necessary.

(1) Through repeated hearing of and pondering over the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads there arises that knowledge of the Self which dispels ignorance, doubt and erroneous knowledge about it. We know that this is so because the discipline for knowledge of the Self (as opposed to final liberation) is pursued like the pounding of the paddy (cp. M.V. p.197), for an end that is perceptible in the present life. (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.i.1, p.218)

(2) The statement that immediate concrete knowledge can arise from hearing and pondering over the metaphysical texts of the Veda only once is nonsense. Even Śvetaketu failed to overcome his ignorance and doubt after hearing the teaching many times. What will be the case with people whose minds are still sullied by attachment and other defects? (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.i.1, p.219)

(3) When a sound knowledge of the true nature of the Self has been derived from the texts, then meditation in the form of returning again and again to that same conception has to be practised for the rest of one's life. (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.i.1, p.219)

(4) Metaphysical Ignorance is the false idea in regard to the body and other aspects of the not-self that they are the Self, allied to a failure to apprehend the true nature of the Absolute. When right knowledge arises, Ignorance comes to an end. Once right knowledge has arisen it has to be re-affirmed for the rest of one's life and so matured. It then provides for liberation (at death). This we know from the Veda. (Bh.B.S.Bh. IV.i.1, p.219)

This also demonstrates that Bhāskara paid no attention to the fact that true knowledge is conditioned (not by the activity of the knower but) by the nature of the reality known.

176 THE RELATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND YOGA

Yoga is also partly accepted in this system.

(1) That part of the teaching of the Yoga school that explains the means to right knowledge may be accepted as correct, because it agrees with the Vedic teaching. But the part that does not agree with Vedic teaching is wrong. For the nature of the Puruṣas is explained differently in the Yoga system (and not in the same way as in the Veda). (Bh.B.S.Bh.II.i.3, p.89)

(2) In the Yoga Śāstra of Sanaka and others, this yoga is taught. It has the stages of dhyāna, dhāraṇā and samādhi. Dhyāna is said to be the one-pointed concentration of the mind effected for the sake of some desired goal. Dhāraṇā is the simultaneous concentration of breath, sense-organs, mind (manas) and higher mind (buddhi, M.V.43,6, T.N.). Samādhi is continuous contemplation with faith and effort. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.1, p.72)

(3) When a person has attained abundant knowledge, he should practise yoga, to mature his knowledge. Then the author of the Sūtras says, 'As in the case of injunctions and so on'. Just as the Agnihotra and other rituals are enjoined on the ignorant one who wants an abundance of worldly and heavenly rewards, so this

(yoga) is enjoined on the person of enlightenment, the renunciate, who desires (final) liberation (at the death of the body) and is totally dedicated. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.45, p.216)

(4) (The supreme Self is not totally different from the individual soul.) It is like the light of the sun. By the words 'and so on' the author of the Sūtras refers also to the ether of space. The sun and the ether of space conform to the external adjuncts within which they appear to be contained — the sun to the motion of the water in which it is reflected, the ether to the shape of the hollows of the empty vessels which appear to 'house' it. When the conditioning adjuncts have gone, non-difference supervenes (in the sun or the ether of space). Thus this individual soul 'attains' the form of the supreme Self (when the conditioning adjunct is discarded) even though it was non-different from the supreme Self even before. By 'the light of the supreme Self' the author means 'the manifestation of the supreme Self'. And this is realized when the supreme Self is made the object of meditation, through yogic and devotional practice (saṃrādhana), and not otherwise. This being so, those who think 'We have become the Absolute without continuous contemplation with faith and effort (samādhi)' are victims of false pride. This is what is indicated by the author of the Sūtras here. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.ii.25, p.170)

As a general rule, there are no injunctions to perform yoga in those passages of the Upanishads which treat specifically of metaphysical knowledge. The words 'He knew' (Chānd.VI.xviii.3) show that effective concrete knowledge can arise from mere teaching (i.e. without yoga practice), and this also shows that Bhāskara's theory that yoga is also required is wrong. And if realization of the Absolute depended on the attainment of samādhi, it would be something temporary and fitful. Therefore the teaching of the Sūtra is that the experience of samādhi is a proof of the fact that there is no internal differentiation in the Self; the Sūtra does not contain an injunction to perform samādhi. There is no word conveying an injunction or command of any kind in the Sūtra.

177 THE DESCRIPTION OF LIBERATION

A few quotations are subjoined to bring out Bhāskara's views on the subject of liberation.

(1) Cessation of metaphysical Ignorance does not mean cessation of vision of difference. It means the cessation of the notion that the body and other elements of the not-self are the Self.... When that notion ceases, a person becomes omniscient and omnipotent and possessed of unsurpassable bliss after the death of the body. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.4, p.21)

(2) Liberation is of two kinds. While a person is still alive in the body, liberation for him means liberation from attachment, aversion and infatuation, and their offspring such as conceit and the like. After the death of the body, there is total and final liberation. (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.i.14, p.224)

No notice has been taken here of the upanishadic teaching 'Then he attains the Absolute here in this very body' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7).

(3) There are two kinds of liberation, immediate liberation and liberation by stages. Those who meditate directly on the Absolute may receive immediate liberation. The others reach Hiraṇyagarbha with purified hearts. There they attain yet greater knowledge, as we know from the mention of the rise of clear knowledge in the text 'The Self is as clearly visible in the world of Brahmā as the distinction between light and shade is here' (Kaṭha II.iii.5). And they are liberated with Brahmā (at the end of the world-period). (Bh.B.S.Bh.IV.iii.14, p.240)

(4) In the case of him who has attained his identity with the supreme Self, the state of performing actions and undergoing experiences comes to an end (i.e. after the death of the body). And on this we have such upanishadic texts as 'Him who is without a body, pleasure and pain verily do not touch' (Chānd. VIII.xii.1, cp. M.V.67,4) and 'having risen up from this body' (Chānd.VIII.xii.3).

There is no escape from experiencing the whole of the portion of merit and demerit which initiated the body through which liberation is attained. And one who supports a body inevitably undergoes pleasure and pain. Therefore those who say that there can be liberation for one who is yet alive go beyond the teaching of the Veda. They (also) contradict perceived experience. (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iii.20, p.58)

He should have remembered the upanishadic teaching, 'Then the mortal one becomes immortal, he attains the Absolute in this very life' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7, cp. M.V.59,9). And we find a little later in the same upanishadic passage 'and so this bodiless one...'.

(5) And if you (i.e. Śaṅkara) were to become liberated while alive, then because you would be omniscient you would know the minds of other people.* Perhaps you will say that 'omniscient' means (not 'all-knowing' but) 'being the all, and the "all" is "the knower"'. But this cannot be so. For on your view the 'all' will have disappeared, so that only pure Consciousness is left. Liberation would then have to be accepted as absence of subject-object consciousness.

Or else you might say on the basis of following the Veda that liberation implied omniscience and omnipotence. But in that case there could not be liberation during one's life as

an individual, and the meditation and ritualistic action that are the means to liberation would have to be continued until the death of the body. (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, p.210)

*(Reading paracittavedanam with the Chowkhambā text. T.N.)

Omniscience is not knowledge of all objects. Omniscience is being the non-dual Consciousness in its true nature. As for what was said about the 'all' having disappeared, that was correct. But the 'all' can very well just be Consciousness. The statement 'Liberation is absence of subject-object-consciousness' was also correct. Yet the true nature of such a state is in fact pure Consciousness, so that our doctrine is in no way open to censure.

178 SUMMARY OF THE EXAMINATION OF BHĀSKARA'S SYSTEM

Of the systems that oppose the method of false attribution followed by later retraction, Bhāskara's is the earliest that has survived in complete form. It by no means follows Bhartṛprapañca's system point for point. Some new arguments in favour of the system of Difference in Identity are produced. And Śrī Śaṅkara's arguments are in places subjected to a virulent attack. The latter's arguments, however, are not always reproduced exactly as they stood in their original form. In particular, it is clear that the difference between Śrī Śaṅkara's doctrine and those of the schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism was not properly appreciated.

Amongst the peculiar features of Bhāskara's system we may note the following. Texts are twisted in favour of the interpretation that the author wants to give them. Only arguments in favour of his own view are adduced when he wishes to draw attention to sameness or difference through examples. Upanishadic texts are quoted as authority simply on the basis of their being Vedic texts (contrast Śrī Śaṅkara, M.V.31,3, note).

The reader must see that there are a number of points in Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's teaching which Bhāskara did not wholly grasp. For example, Bhāskara did not at all understand that, for Śrī Bhagavatpāda, enquiry into the Absolute must culminate in immediate experience (cp. M.V.31,3, note). Other points also escaped him. There cannot be alternatives in the determination of reality — as is implied by the teaching that there is *both* difference *and* identity — in the way that there is choice in regard to things to be done. The function of a Vedic text is to inform, not to bring about a result.

In Vedanta philosophy after Bhāskara's day, authors of almost all the other schools tended to follow this path. We shall be illustrating this here and there in the pages to come.

CHAPTER X
THE BHĀMATĪ

179 PADMAPĀDA, SUREŚVARA AND VĀCASPATI AS SUB-COMMENTATORS ON THE COMMENTARIES OF ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA

We find in the Śaṅkara Vijaya of Mādhava a story intended to throw light on the inter-relationship of the systems of Sureśvara, 'Padmapāda' and Vācaspati Miśra. Sureśvara (it is there said) had a desire to compose a sub-commentary on Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, and had obtained his Guru's permission for it (Śaṅkara Vijaya XIII.4,5). But other pupils of Śrī Bhagavatpāda were not prepared to accept this. They went to the Ācārya in secret and said, 'This man's mind is still attached to rituals. If he writes a long verse sub-commentary on your Brahma Sūtra Commentary, that whole Commentary will be seen as teaching rituals. So let Padmapādācārya, Giri or Hastāmalaka write a sub-commentary with your permission' (XIII.19,20,22). When Sureśvara heard that an obstacle had been placed in the way of his cherished plan, he uttered the curse 'If anyone else writes a commentary, let it not gain currency in the world'. The Ācārya, seeking to alleviate his disappointment, gave him the order 'Go ahead and write verse sub-commentaries on my Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Taittirīya Commentaries'(XIII.66). Meanwhile Padmapāda wrote a gloss on the Brahma Sūtra Commentary, by permission of his Guru (XIII.71). The Ācārya saw it and was satisfied. But he knew what would happen with the passage of time, so he told Sureśvara to modify his curse and say, 'Let the sub-commentary on (the first) five sections (pañca + pāda, i.e. up to Brahma Sūtra I.ii.31) only gain currency, and, even of this, only the part on the first four Sūtras' (XIII.72). And then to ameliorate matters further he added: 'By the force of the maturation of merit and demerit already in operation to initiate your present birth, you (Sureśvara) will be reborn on earth as Vācaspati, equipped with mastery of learning (vācaspatitva). You will write a gloss on

my Brahma Sūtra Commentary that will live till the elements dissolve in destruction' (XIII.73).

It is surely obvious that all we have here in the Śaṅkara Vijaya is a bit of poetic sleight-of-hand intended to excite wonder in the reader's mind and supply some kind of reason why the Pañcapādikā in its current form should be limited to only four Sūtras, whereas Vācaspati's gloss on the Brahma Sūtra Commentary is complete, and to explain why Sureśvarācārya did not write a sub-commentary on the Brahma Sūtra Commentary, though he commented on many subtle points of Vedanta doctrine in his Vārtikas on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Taittirīya Commentaries. For though the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika of Sureśvara is a long work, the author does not once consider the Pañcapādikā or bestow even a glance on those of its arguments which disagree with his own system. Nor is there any particular similarity between the systems of Sureśvara and Vācaspati in the way they handle problems, even on the most important topics. In fact there is a considerable difference, as we shall sometimes have occasion to point out in the course of our exposition. These authors, therefore, are clearly each propounding different systems. And this hard fact cannot be contradicted merely by stories in a poem.

180 THE WORKS OF VĀCASPATI MIŚRA

A number of famous works in Sanskrit literature are credited to Vācaspati Miśra. It has been shown by other evidence that not all of them are the work of the same author. But from the evidence of the Bhāmatī sub-commentary itself, the work under consideration in the present chapter, we may be confident that the following other works were written by the same author — namely, (1) a gloss on Maṇḍana Miśra's Vidhiviveka called Nyāyakaṇikā; (2) a commentary on the Brahma Siddhi called Tattvaparīkṣā; (3) an independent treatise analysing how sentences convey their meaning, entitled Tattvabindu; two works on the system of the Logicians, namely (4) the Tātparyaṭīkā gloss on the Nyāya Vārtika and (5) the Nyāya Sūcī; (6) a gloss on the Sāṅkhya Kārikās entitled the Tattvakaumudī; and (7) a gloss called the Tattvavaiśāradī on Vyāsa's Commentary to the Yoga Sūtras. It is surmised that the works were written in this order, and that the gloss on Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary called the Bhāmatī was written last. The reason is that, if the books are placed in this order, the later ones are nowhere mentioned in the earlier ones.

This shows that the highly respected figure, Śrī Vācaspati Miśra, was thoroughly conversant with a number of different systems and inspired by a longing to explain them to others. And in fact we sometimes find him subjecting the texts of the original works he is quoting to slight alterations, according to the requirements of the text he happens to be commenting on

at the time. For example, there is a text of (the Sāṅkhya Teacher) Vārṣagaṇya which he quotes as follows at Tattva-vaiśāradī IV.12, 'The highest form of the constituents (guṇa) is not within the range of perception. What can be perceived is like an illusory magic display (māyā), quite insignificant'. He comments on it there, '*Like* an illusory magic display, but not *actually* an illusory magic display. "Quite insignificant" means transient. As an illusory magic display quickly changes, so the modifications of Nature appear and disappear and are different every instant. But Nature itself, because it is eternal and constant, is not of the same order of being as an illusory magic display and is perfectly real'.

Yet he used the same pen in the Bhāmatī (II.i.3) to demonstrate the *unreality* of the constituents (in the light of the same text). First he changed the reading from '*like* an illusory magic display' (māyeva) to '*verily* an illusory magic display' (māyaiva), and so reading 'verily an illusory magic display, quite insignificant'. He then continued, 'Here the expositor of Yoga (Vārṣagaṇya) speaks of the constituents (guṇa) only as a device for teaching; he does not treat them as realities. This is because they are not in fact real'. He had himself elsewhere spoken of Nature as 'perfectly real'. How he could here disregard (read anādṛtya) the wording of Vārṣagaṇya's text and interpret 'Nature' in the very opposite way as 'unreal' is a source of astonishment to the reader.

181 THE PLACE OF THE BHĀMATĪ SCHOOL IN VEDANTA

We have to infer that at the time the Bhāmati was composed the school of Bhāskara had acquired wide currency at the expense of the school of pure Advaita. For we see that great efforts are made by Vācaspati Miśra to answer the objections raised by Bhāskara against Advaita and to reveal the defects in the doctrine of Difference in Identity. From this point of view, an examination of the Bhāmatī may be helpful even today to Advaitins aiming to rebut the objections raised against Advaita by other later schools which were influenced by Bhāskara. But the more immediate reason for examining the system of the Bhāmatī here is to try to discover to what extent it is helpful to those who want to learn to recognize the true method of the Vedanta.

Another point is that, at many places in the Bhāmatī, on the pretext of giving a gloss on Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, the author actually introduces the ideas of Maṇḍana as though they were those of the revered Commentator. The Brahma Tattva Samīkṣā (another name for Vācaspati's Commentary on the Brahma Siddhi) has not yet appeared in printed form, but fragments of it are quoted in the Bhāmatī. It is true that Maṇḍana's opinions, with slight verbal alterations, find their way into

the body of Sureśvara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika, especially the Sambandha Vārtika portion. But what we see in the Bhāmatī is something new. Here the current of Maṇḍana's thought is made to flow into that of Śrī Śaṅkara like the Jumna flowing into the Ganges. And the two ways of thinking are blended together to issue in a new system, given out in the world for the first time in the Bhāmatī, in a form attractive to spiritual enquirers.

It has also to be remembered that there are many new points of teaching in the Bhāmatī that are not found in the Pañcapādikā. And many scholars who have fallen under the influence of the Bhāmatī have written sub-commentaries on it and sub-commentaries on these. So those who want to be sure about the method of the Vedanta through a study of the Brahma Sūtra Commentary must certainly enquire into the Bhāmatī.

182 THE TWO 'IGNORANCES' IN THE SYSTEM OF THE BHĀMATĪ

In the opening verse of the work, Ācārya Vācaspati Miśra speaks of Ignorance as follows.

(1) (We pay reverence to that Absolute) which is the source, when accompanied by the twofold indeterminable Ignorance, of these illusory manifestations, ether, wind, fire, water and earth....

Here the claim is made that there is an indeterminable twofold Ignorance. Again and again in the Bhāmatī there are references to the twofold Ignorance as cause and effect. For example:

(2) '(The inmost Self), the support of the twofold Ignorance as effect and cause, the substratum of the ego-sense, the one subjected to transmigration...' (Bhā.I.i.1, p.45/59),* 'And metaphysical knowledge is the means to liberation simply through removing the obstacle of the twofold Ignorance...' (Bhā.I.i.4, p.121/180), '"Darkness" (tamas) means "the twofold Ignorance"'. (Bhā.IV.iv.22)

(Page-references are only required and given for the Bhāmatī on the first four Sūtras of the B.S. They refer to the 1938 Bombay edition, with the page-reference to the Madras English translation of that portion of the work given after an oblique stroke. The Madras translation is a model of accuracy, but the versions here offered are in freer style, in keeping with the rest of the present book. T.N.)

The two aspects of Ignorance are also referred to in the Bhāmatī under the names of dissolution and projection. For example:

(3) 'Where Śrī Śaṅkara says that the soul has the form of purity in dreamless sleep he means that it *seems* to have the form of purity, not that it *actually* has it. For in dreamless sleep the impressions of dissolution and projection are present' (Bhā.I.iv.18). 'But when the impression of projection awakens, supported by Ignorance in the form of the impression of dissolution, then, through the rise of particularized knowledge, the dreaming state and waking state supervene, and from this there comes a return from the state of (being one with) the supreme Self, a return which is of the nature of a fall' (Bhā. I.iv.18). 'When Śrī Śaṅkara says, "Nor can Ignorance alone... (be responsible for differences of pleasure and pain in different individuals without the added factor of merit and demerit)" he refers to Ignorance *qua* dissolution' (Bhā.II.i. 36). 'Name and form are set up by Ignorance. Causal Ignorance is of the nature of dissolution (laya), associated with the impressions of projection derived from world-projection in previous world-periods. Name and form so conceived constitute "Māyā"'. (Bhā.II.ii.2)

(4) It is the superimposition of the not-self onto the Self that is the cause of all evil, and that alone is metaphysical Ignorance properly-so-called, not silver-errors and the like. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.40/44)

(5) 'Superimposition is invariably accompanied by a (prior) failure to distinguish difference' (Bhā.I.i.1, p.8/7). 'By "failure to distinguish one from the other" Śrī Śaṅkara means "non-perception of the difference"'. (Bhā.I.i.1, intro., p.16/14)

From the texts above quoted, it could be inferred that two forms of Ignorance were accepted in the Bhāmatī, as in the Brahma Siddhi, and that they were of the nature of non-perception and wrong perception respectively. For they are found referred to in the Brahma Siddhi by the same two technical terms, 'dissolution' (laya) and 'projection' (vikṣepa), as the following passage shows.

(6) Perhaps it will be said that Ignorance is of two kinds, that which conceals the light and that which makes projections. The projecting form of Ignorance occurs in dream and waking; the concealing form, which is a kind of dissolution, occurs in dreamless sleep. The cessation of the concealing form of Ignorance is the reward promised for obeying the Vedic injunction to acquire knowledge.

But this view is wrong. For a human being does not need the cessation of the concealing kind of Ignorance, but rather that of the projecting kind. For it is the latter that brings sufferings of various kinds. Indeed, one should actually aim for (and not seek the cessation of) dissolution. For disso-

lution (i.e. the dissolution of dreamless sleep, explains Ānandapūrṇa) is often praised in the Veda as being bliss (cp. Bṛhad.IV.iii.33), due to the cessation of all the various forms of suffering. And again, for him who did not recognize positive wrong cognition, there could not be any distinctions in Ignorance at all; for the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep would consist equally of bare non-apprehension. (This position being obviously untenable), one must therefore accept that there are two forms of Ignorance, of the form of non-perception and wrong perception, related as cause and effect respectively. (B.Sid. p.149 f.)

It is clear that in this passage it is only the negative form of Ignorance as non-apprehension that is accepted as constituting Ignorance, since that is spoken of as being of the nature of dissolution and as being the cause. And one may also infer that it is this same non-perception and wrong perception, also there called dissolution (laya) and projection (vikṣepa), that are referred to in the Bhāmatī by the term 'the twofold indeterminable Ignorance'.

But we also find the term 'power of Ignorance' used sometimes in the Bhāmatī. This term does not occur in the Brahma Siddhi or in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, and was taken over from the Pañcapādikā. We subjoin a few texts in which this phrase occurs.

(7) Therefore, in texts such as 'Then He thought' (Chānd. VI.ii.3), being the womb of the world is figuratively attributed to the Absolute by making it the seat of the power of Ignorance. But here the (Sāṅkhya) exponent of the provisional view (pūrva-pakṣa) maintains that, since the power of Ignorance can very well be the womb of the world on its own, it is not right to assume that here both an agent and an instrument are in play: in this sort of text it is Nature alone that is declared to be the womb of the world. (Bhā.I.ii.21)

Here it is clear that the phrase 'power of Ignorance' is used to mean Nature (prakṛti).

(8) Although at the time of a great cosmic dissolution (mahāpralaya) there are no modifications such as mind in evidence, nevertheless they lie present, dissolved in their cause, indeterminable Ignorance; they remain in being, together with the impressions of Ignorance that will eventually generate action, in the form of a subtle (imperceptible) power. (Bhā.I.iii.30)

Here too, we collect that the Ignorance in which minds and so on are dissolved is Ignorance in the form of dissolution, also called Nature.

(9) This power of Ignorance possessed by the Absolute is

known as Māyā and by other names. It is indeterminable either as identical with or different from reality. The fact that it is indeterminable in this sense is what makes it 'The Unmanifest'. This is the difference between our doctrine which speaks of 'the Unmanifest' and that of the Sāṅkhyas who speak of 'Nature'. (Bhā.I.iv.3)

It is quite clear that the phrase 'power of Ignorance' is being used to designate the primary material cause of the world (jagat-prakṛti), also here called 'the Unmanifest'.

From the above quotations we see that, as in the Pañcapādikā, the primary material cause of the world is referred to in the Bhāmatī by the phrase 'power of Ignorance'. But why is non-perception, which may be called the 'cause aspect' of Ignorance, not taught to be the pre-condition for Ignorance as superimposition? Is it even admitted, after the manner of the Brahma Siddhi, as a form of Ignorance, of the nature of dissolution? This is not clearly explained anywhere in the Bhāmatī.

183 THE DEFINITION OF SUPERIMPOSITION

In Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary superimposition is defined as 'the false appearance in one place of what has previously been seen at another place of the nature of a memory'. This text of Śrī Śaṅkara's was explained in the Pañcapādikā as implying, fundamentally, the superimposition of an illusory *object* (as opposed to a mere idea, cp. M.V.138,3). It is not so explained in the Bhāmatī.

(1) A 'false appearance' (avabhāsa) is an appearance (bhāsa) that has either disappeared (avasanna) or been rejected as unreal (avamata). It is its contradiction and cancellation by another idea that constitutes the 'disappearance' or the 'rejection' of the false appearance. That is why the false appearance is called 'erroneous knowledge'. (Bhā.I.i.1, intro., p.18/16)

Here superimposition is explained as erroneous knowledge, and from this we see that superimposition is fundamentally regarded as superimposition (not of a thing but) of an idea. The Bhāmatī does not follow the Pañcapādikā in explaining Śri Śaṅkara's words 'And from that there results this natural worldly experience, based on wrong knowledge and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as "I am this" and "This is mine"' as meaning 'that which is "false" (indeterminable) and which is Ignorance' (cp. M.V. 132,3). Nor does it follow the Pañcapādikā in identifying

superimposition with experience (M.V.140 *passim*).

(2) By 'wrong knowledge' Śrī Śaṅkara means superimposition. Then he says, 'based on that'. This means that the presence or absence of empirical experience depends on the presence or absence of superimposition. Then, having thus stated the nature and results of superimposition, he goes on to state its cause as 'the failure to distinguish one from the other' (the Self and its attributes from the non-self and its attributes), and by this he means 'non-perception of their difference'. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.16/13-4)

Here superimposition is identified with wrong knowledge. Vācaspati explains what he means by the 'indeterminability' of the superimposed element in the superimposition, in his gloss on the passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary immediately following the definition of superimposition.

(3) The 'false appearance' is a false appearance at one place of what has previously been seen at another place. Now, there cannot be an erroneous idea without the synthesis of the superimposed idea with the object onto which the superimposition is made. Hence the phrase 'what has previously been seen at another place' implies that the superimposed element is false. The word 'seen' here is used to show that the superimposition is something merely seen, not an existent reality. And the word 'before' is added (in 'seen before') because what is being actually seen now cannot be being superimposed. What was previously seen was real in its true form when seen; but as superimposed now, it is indeterminable or false. He inserts the words 'at one place' (in the phrase 'a false appearance at one place') to show that the object onto which the superimposition is made is (empirically) real. 'At one place' refers to the piece of shell or whatever stands as the substratum of the superimposition, and that is empirically real. This is why Śrī Śaṅkara spoke of 'a synthesis of the real with the false'. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.18/17)

And Vācaspati uses his opportunity in explaining the definition of superimposition to affirm that the object of which the idea is superimposed lies at a distance.

(4) 'Of the form of a memory' means that the nature of a superimposition is *like* a memory (though not identical with one). And being like a memory implies having an object that lies at a distance. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.20/17)

184 CONSIDERATION OF SUPERIMPOSITION AS SUPERIMPOSITION OF AN OBJECT

Thus the Bhāmatī describes superimposition as fundamentally the superimposition of an idea. But the author does not want you to think that the notion of superimposition as superimposition of an object has been forgotten. So he says:

(1) The rays of the sun in a mirage are not water, and their nature as water is not real. They are indistinguishable from absence of water, and so cannot be accepted as existent water. Nor are they unreal. For you yourself (Kumārila, as objector) hold that the absence (non-existence) of one thing implies the presence (existence) of another. For you say, 'The non-existence of one thing is simply the existence of something else. It is not anything else, as it has never been proved to be such' (Ś.V. Nirālambana Vāda 118).

And the form that is superimposed is not itself an additional entity. If it were, it would have to be either the sun's rays or the water of the Ganges or whatever was appearing in the mirage. On the first hypothesis, the illusory cognition would take the form 'rays of the sun' not 'water'. On the second hypothesis, the cognition would be of the form 'water in the Ganges' not 'water here'. Nor would it be right to say that the form that was superimposed was *totally* non-existent, a mere phantom with no identifiable nature of any kind. For in that case it would be impossible to explain how it entered into experience at all, as we have already pointed out. So the water superimposed onto the rays of the sun in a mirage cannot be either real or unreal. Nor can it be *both* real *and* unreal, for real and unreal are in mutual contradiction. Hence it is indeterminable. The water is like real water, and therefore like what has been previously seen. But in reality it is not water and is not anything that has been previously seen. On the contrary, it is something deceptive, indeterminable. (Bhā. I.i.1, p.23-4/22-3)

185 HOW FAR DOES THE DEFINITION OF SUPERIMPOSITION AGREE WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT HAVE TO BE DEFINED?

The Bhāmatī demonstrates that the above definition extends to dream and other states.

(1) Dream-cognition, too, is like erroneous perception in point of being a kind of error of memory. There also one may remember one's parents or other relatives, but fail to recollect that they are not present, due to the overpowering effect of sleep. One may then superimpose onto them that proximity

with oneself in time and space that was formerly seen. (Bhā. I.i.1, p.20-1/18)

One must wonder whether the words 'that was formerly seen' are intended to be taken seriously or not, as Vācaspati said in the passage quoted just above (at the end of M.V.184,1), which dealt with the water of a mirage, 'But in reality it is not water and is not anything that has previously been seen'.

(2) Illusions like 'the conch is yellow' (seen by a man with jaundice) and 'the sugar is bitter' (felt when there is a disordered liver) may be brought under this same definition. A person will say 'The conch is yellow' under the following conditions. He is aware of the yellow colour in the bile which (due to his jaundice) taints the exceedingly pure white rays of light emanating from his eyes, without being aware that it is due to his bile. He perceives and experiences the conch, but with its white colour concealed by the defect in his sensory apparatus. He is unaware of the fact that the yellow colour is unrelated to the conch. He then superimposes onto the notions 'conch' and 'yellow' the same subject-predicate relation that he has previously apprehended in such experiences as 'the lump of gold is yellow' and 'the plum is yellow', because of the similarity of all cases where (yellow is perceived as an attribute of a substance and) it is not perceived as unrelated to it. Finally he has the experience 'The conch is yellow'. This also explains 'Sugar is bitter'. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.21/18)

(3) In a similar way, when the light from the eye of someone looking into some bright object like a mirror or water reaches the object but is reflected back to the observer by the more powerful rays of the sun, then it comes into contact with the face of the observer and causes him to perceive his own face. But, due to a natural defect, it does not reveal where the face is or the fact that it is not in front of the observer. In such a case, it superimposes onto the face of the observer both the spatial position and also the appearance of facing the observer, features that belong properly to the mirror or water already previously perceived. Thus the definition of superimposition covers the case of the illusion of reflection too. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.21/18)

This seems to conflict with the account of reflection given in the Pañcapādikā, p.23, trans. Venkataramiah p.78 f.; fragments of this are given above, M.V.144,2-3: for more detail on the reflection theory of P.P., see Potter, 1981 pp.574 ff.

(3) And in this way the definition should be applied as required to other illusions such as the double-moon, the loss of sense of direction, the appearance of lines produced by the flames of whirling torches, cities seen in the clouds, the

illusion of a bamboo appearing as a snake (said to arise from a certain form of ophthalmic treatment) and others. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.21/19)

Here all would agree that the great Teachers of Vedanta (Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara, Sureśvara) have pointed to the universal experience in the world that erroneous knowledge is superimpostion, and used it as an example to implant in the minds of students that the universe of plurality is a superimposition. But it is not clear why this should have been thrown away in the vain attempt to answer the question how erroneous knowledge arises by demonstrating that it always implies vision of the indeterminable — 'indeterminability' being a private conception not found (directly applied to Ignorance) in the traditions of the great early Teachers. Many of the arguments found used here are the same as those used by Maṇḍana Miśra to establish (his own peculiar theory of) erroneous knowledge (viparīta-khyāti) (B.Sid. pp.138-47). It is clear that no attention has been paid to the characterization of superimposition as arising from a threefold cause given in detail in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.138, 2 and 3).

In the same way, the passage near the beginning of Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary beginning 'Some say that superimposition is the transference to one thing of attributes that belong to another', where the revered Commentator mentions a few different views about superimposition, is here in the Bhāmatī (as in the Pañcapādikā) made an excuse for the detailed examination of the topic of theories of error. As this topic is of no use for determining the true nature of the method of Vedanta, which is our main subject, and is of small interest in itself, we omit any examination of it. Vācaspati sums up his intentions in the following sentence.

(4) This superimposition thus defined, which is in fact indeterminable, is admitted by all investigators. But because there is disagreement about different conceptions of it, Śrī Śaṅkara says more to strengthen the idea that it is indeterminable. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.25/23)

The revered Commentator himself sums up his own view about superimposition in the words 'And we have already said that superimposition is the notion of one thing in something else' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.). On this the author of the Bhāmatī comments, 'This is a shortened version of the earlier formula "the false appearance in one place of what has previously been seen at another place, of the nature of a memory"' (Bhā.I.i.1, p.44/56-7). This being so, it is not clear why there was any need for the insertion of a further discourse explaining the indeterminability of superimposition. It is true that on the revered Commentator's own view it is accepted that all the not-self is indeterminable either as the Self or as anything

different. But there was no need to make a special mention of that here. All that was required was to say, 'All is superimposed on the Self'. But in the Bhāmatī the doctrine of indeterminability is introduced again and again, the concern being more for the supposed needs of the student than for the accurate interpretation of the text. Thus when the Commentary says, 'Superimposition is an erroneous idea', the Bhāmatī says, by way of elucidation, 'The nature of erroneous ideas is indeterminability. What *has* that, *is* that, i.e. is indeterminable' (Bhā.I.i.1, p.45/59-60).

According to the system expounded in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, when it is said 'Every notion other than that of the Absolute is false' the meaning is 'This is really the Absolute and nothing else'. It was not intended to speak about the notion and affirm that it had the attribute of falsity. As it is said in the Commentary on the Chāndogya Upanishad, 'We hold that it is invariably real Being that is perceived, only it is perceived under the distinctions of duality and hence as different from what it really is. Thus we do not maintain that anything anywhere is non-being (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.3, M.V.47,1). So we do not see that there is anything further to be gained from investigating the exact meaning of 'indeterminable'.

186 THE BEGINNINGLESSNESS OF IGNORANCE

We have already mentioned that the word 'Ignorance' is not exclusively used in the Bhāmatī to mean non-perception and erroneous cognition. Sometimes the word is used to indicate the seed power which manifests the world (cp. M.V.182,9). From this we infer that here in the Bhāmatī, as in the Pañcapādikā, this 'power of Ignorance' is accepted as the pre-condition for superimposition. The fact that there is no explicit avowal of this in the Bhāmatī is a separate point. If this supposition is correct, then Vācaspati Miśra's doctrine would be that the power that produces superimposition is Ignorance, the fundamental nature of the latter being dissolution (laya). But in that case the conception of superimposition in the Bhāmatī would be different from that found in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary. For the beginninglessness of superimposition mentioned in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary could not be accepted in the Bhāmatī except in a figurative sense, as superimposition (in the Bhāmatī) is the effect of the world-creating seed-power, spoken of as 'the Unmanifest' and referred to by other such names. What Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says is:

(1) This natural (i.e. uncaused) beginningless and endless superimposition, which is of the nature of false supposition and promotes the sense that one is an individual able to act and undergo experience, is directly familiar to everybody.

(Śaṅkara's B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

The Bhāmatī, it is true, explains this as follows: 'The cause of its being beginningless and endless is stated, namely that it is "natural"' (Bhā. p.45/59), and thereby appears to accept that superimposition is beginningless. But from what the author has said a little earlier it is clear that this beginninglessness is not absolute. For he says that superimposition and being an individual soul are beginningless in the same sense that the cycle of seed and sprout is beginningless.

(2) The inmost Self, apparently delimited by the mind and other organs, being both an object and a subject at the same time, conscious, the individual doing action and undergoing experience, the support of the twofold Ignorance as effect and cause, the substratum of the ego-sense, the one subjected to transmigration, accepting the burden of every imaginable evil, is the individual soul. The individual soul has the superimposition of Self and not-self for its pre-condition (upādāna, cp.M.V.189, intro.), and superimposition has the individual soul for its pre-condition. Because this process (whereby the mutual superimposition of Self and not-self conditions the individual soul and the individual soul conditions superimposition) is beginningless, like that of seed and sprout, the theory does not suffer from the defect of implying mutual dependence. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.45/59)

(The argument appears to run as follows. It is true that there can only be an individual soul if superimposition pre-exists to bring such a soul into being. And it is also true that there can only be superimposition if an individual soul pre-exists to perform it. But these two conditions can always be satisfied because both the soul and superimposition are beginningless. See also M.V.186,3 and 4, and Śrī Śaṅkara's powerful criticism of such arguments, M.V.186,5, and 6, note. T.N.)

There is an earlier occasion, too, when superimposition, though taken as the source of all empirical experience, is treated as fitful, and where the individual superimpositions are represented as being set in time, through the introduction of the example of seed and sprout. It comes where Śrī Śaṅkara is answering the objection 'Since the inmost Self is accepted as a non-object because of the entire absence in it of any notion of an object (lit. of any "you-notion" as opposed to an "I-notion"), how can there be superimposition onto it of objects and their attributes (since superimpositions are normally superimpositions of objects onto objects)?' In replying to this Śrī Śaṅkara says, 'We reply that the Self is not altogether a non-object, for it is the object of the ego-notion (aham-pratyaya)'. In explaining this sentence, Vācaspati writes as follows:

(3) Nor is it correct to say that the argument is circular because it is saying 'The Self can only be the object of the ego-notion if superimposition already exists to render it into such an object, while superimposition can only occur if the Self already exists in individualized form as the object of the ego-notion to produce it'. For the process is beginningless, like the cycle of seed and sprout. This has already been shown in the passage of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary under comment, where he speaks of 'this natural worldly experience' (cp. M.V. 22,4). For the implication is that there is no self-contradictory circularity, because each later superimposition takes for its object previous superimpositions and the impressions they have left. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.39/41)

The example of the seed and sprout is occasionally found in the Pañcapādikā (cp. M.V.142,2, with note), but not repeatedly, as in the Bhāmatī. It is found again in the Bhāmatī, for example, when the object is to explain Śrī Śaṅkara's phrase 'this natural worldly experience':

(4) 'Natural'. This worldly experience is natural or beginningless. If one says that empirical experience is beginningless, it is as much as to say that its cause, superimposition, is also beginningless. Each later superimposition can make use of the mind, sense-organs and body, etc., set up by some previous erroneous cognition. And as the process is beginningless, like the cycle of seed and sprout, the problem of circularity does not arise. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.17/15; cp. Sac, Misconceptions, p.59)

Attention must be paid here to the following point. In empirical experience, the beginninglessness of certain cycles of things such as seed and sprout that exist in time is sometimes accepted. But this way of thinking is not applicable when one is considering merit and demerit and the gross and subtle bodies and physical and psychical instruments of a human being. On this, Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary says:

(5) For there is circularity involved in attributing to the Self either relationship with a body or the power to perform meritorious or unlawful acts (because having a body depends on previous karmic merit and demerit, and karmic merit and demerit depend on having a body). Nor will it avail to say that the existence of any given body is made possible by earlier merit and demerit earned in a previous body, arguing that transmigration is a beginningless process, like the cycle of seed and sprout. For this assumption is like a row of blind men (in that, just as you can go on indefinitely adding new blind men to the row of blind men grasping each other's skirts without getting anyone with sight anywhere, so you can push back the alleged cause of embodiment to deeds performed in earlier and

earlier lives indefinitely without ever accounting for embodiment anywhere). (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

In the Kārikās of Gauḍapāda, too, we find the following point made in the course of discussing the relation of body, substance and attribute, etc.

(6) The example called 'the seed and the sprout' is always based on a 'law' that is itself as unproven as the hypothesis it is used to 'prove'. No unproven law can prove the truth of a hypothesis. (G.K. IV.20)

On this Śrī Śaṅkara comments as follows: 'As the new sprout, just produced, originated from a seed, so will any other new seed have originated from a sprout, and both will have originated because they belong to a series. Similarly, every previous sprout and every previous seed will have originated in the same way. And as every single seed and sprout will have had an origin, nothing (in the series) can be beginningless anywhere. What is true of seed and sprout is true also of cause and effect.

'Perhaps you will say that, even though no single seed or sprout is beginningless, the series as a whole is beginningless. But this idea is wrong, too, as no series can be established as a single entity. The (Buddhist) philosophers who claim that the seed and the sprout and the cause and the effect are beginningless do not themselves accept the existence of a series of seeds and sprouts, considered as a real entity over and above the seeds and sprouts themselves, or of a series of causes and effects over and above the causes and effects themselves' (G.K.Bh.IV.20).

It is in these terms that Śrī Śaṅkara discredits the example of the seed and sprout. It is not clear why Vācaspati Miśra did not examine this argumentation before he fell into the habit of always adducing the example of seed and sprout in the context of proving that something or other was beginningless.

Consider, in particular, the treatment here of superimposition. Superimposition is treated as the cause of all empirical experience. It is regarded here as being always an individual act, each individual act coming before and after others of the same kind, like seed and sprout. This conception is not only false in itself, but it destroys the whole basis of the method of false attribution followed by later retraction, and has to be avoided at all costs. For there cannot be communication of the true nature of the Self through negation unless everything other than the Self (including time) is first superimposed and then retracted. But if the basic metaphysical superimposition which makes empirical experience possible were regarded, like the superimposition of silver onto shell, as set in time, then time itself would not be superimposed. And that would contra-

dict the non-duality that is the special point of the Vedic teaching.

187 THE SEAT OF IGNORANCE

We have already cited the objections raised against the Advaitins on the topic of Ignorance by Bhāskarācārya (M.V.160). We saw there (M.V.160,8) the objection, 'Whose is this Ignorance? It does not belong to the individual soul. For (on the Advaitin's theory) the soul is not real. Nor does it belong to the Lord. For in his case Ignorance would be contradictory, since He consists of the light of eternal Consciousness'. To answer these and other objections, the Bhāmatī resorts to the arguments of Maṇḍana Miśra. Maṇḍana Miśra says:

(1) As for the question, 'To whom does Ignorance belong?' — we reply, 'It belongs to the individual soul'. You will say, 'But are not the individual souls identical with the Absolute?'... We reply, 'Yes, this is so from the standpoint of the highest truth. But they are falsely imagined as different'. You may say: 'But whose false imagination is it that introduces differences? It cannot be the false imagination of the Absolute. For the Absolute is of the nature of knowledge, and hence free from false imagination. Nor can it be the false imagination of the individual souls. For they depend on false imagination for their existence. The argument would be circular'...

Others explain the matter differently. They say, 'Ignorance and the individual soul are both beginningless like the seed and the sprout. So the question of circular argument does not arise'.(B.Sid. p.10, cp. M.V.94,1 and note)

Vācaspati Miśra says:

(2) Ignorance does not have its seat in the Absolute, but in the individual soul. And it is indeterminable, as we have said. The purity of the Absolute is thus safeguarded. (Bhā. I.i.4, p.126/194)

(3) It is the supreme Self which, acquiring the nature of the individual soul through apparent delimiting factors deriving from beginningless Ignorance, manifests in differentiation through its own power. And Ignorance pertains to these individidual souls thus constituted, not to the Absolute in its true nature, void of conditioning adjuncts. Nor would it be right to say that there was here circularity of argument, inasmuch as there could only be a distinction into individual souls if Ignorance already existed, and Ignorance could only exist if the distinction into individual souls was already in force. For Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul. And

one cannot dismiss this theory as impossible, since the soul and Ignorance are both beginningless, like seed and sprout. (Bhā.I.ii.6)

Here Miśra's (Vācaspati Miśra's) account is (by a play on words) 'faulty' (doṣa-miśra) whichever of the two ways you take it. Neither Ignorance nor the soul can come into being on such a theory, as neither could come into being without the other, any more than a seed could come into being without a sprout (and yet each is asserted to be beginningless and so to precede the other). The explanation which falls back on a beginningless *series* of seeds and sprouts is faulty for the reasons already explained above (M.V.186,6, with note).

(4) Though the Self is partless, yet the variegated universe of plurality is superimposed on it through beginningless, indeterminable Ignorance and its impressions, and it appears to have parts. Through the non-perception of a certain 'part' of this kind there arises the appearance of erroneous cognition. But from the standpoint of the highest truth there is no error, and there is no transmigratory life. All that, we think, should be dismissed as inexplicable, as it contains logical impossibilities at every point. (Bhā.IV.i.3)

Here again, he begins by accepting the beginninglessness of Ignorance, and then, on the basis of that, he explains how the Absolute can have parts. The same fault of reasoning already mentioned arises here.

188 THE PLURALITY OF IGNORANCE

Maṇḍana Miśra refuted the theory of those who held that Ignorance had its seat in the Absolute by saying, 'Or if you maintained that it was the Absolute which underwent transmigration and the Absolute which was liberated, then, when one person was liberated, all would be liberated — which is absurd' (M.V.95,1). On the other hand Bhāskarācārya attacked the theory that Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul, doing so in the following terms: 'If Ignorance were a plurality, it would have to be something real, and that would contradict the theory that it was indeterminable either as the reality or as anything else. And if it were one, then that would mean that everyone would be liberated at the same time' (M.V.160, 10). Vācaspati Miśra, for his part, offers two different pieces of apologetic.

(1) Apparent differences are introduced into the Self by the various individual souls, complexes of gross and subtle body with senses and mind, all set up as appearances by Ignorance. The Self, having these various complexes as its apparent

conditioning adjuncts, though really one, appears to be many, and, though really pure, appears to be impure. And when one of these individual complexes comes to an end, the Self appears (there) to be liberated, while appearing elsewhere to remain bound. The case is like that of the simultaneous reflection of a face in a variety of different surfaces such as gems and swords; in some it will appear long, in others round, in some swarthy, in others fair. And so, if one of the conditioning adjuncts of the Self comes to an end and it appears there to be liberated, it will still appear to be conditioned by adjuncts elsewhere. And so our theory does not imply that if one is liberated all are. (Bhā.II.iii.40)

This, also, is simply Maṇḍana's system, B.Sid. pp.11 and 12 (cp. M.V.95,1).

Here there is no explicit statement whether Ignorance is one or many. Vācaspati produces another piece of apologetic to ward off the objection 'If Ignorance were one, then when it was destroyed all apparent conditioning adjuncts would be destroyed with it'.

(2) You cannot raise this objection against us, as we do not say that Ignorance is one and the same in all souls, like the Nature of the Sāṅkhyas. We say that Ignorance is different in each individual soul. Therefore, it is only the Ignorance of the soul in whom metaphysical knowledge has arisen that is removed, not the Ignorance of other souls. Ignorance and metaphysical knowledge are not contradictory when they apply to different individual knowing subjects. (Bhā.I.iv.3)

Here one must conclude that Vācaspati ignores Bhāskara's other criticism, 'If Ignorance were a plurality it would have to be something real' (M.V.160,10), on the ground that it has no substance whatever. As for the question whether it is the plurality of Ignorance that creates the plurality of individual souls, or the plurality of individual souls that creates the plurality of Ignorance, the Bhāmatī solves it with its universal panacea of the doctrine of beginninglessness.

(3) Nor would it be correct to say 'The distinctions between the individual souls depend on distinctions in their adjunct, Ignorance, while distinctions in their adjunct, Ignorance, depend on the distinctions between the individual souls — so that neither of the distinctions can be proved, since the whole conception rests on the fallacy of mutual dependence'. This is not correct, since both sets of distinctions stand proved, because the process is beginningless like the cycle of seed and sprout. (Bhā.I.iv.3)

In the world there are many individual souls. Each is

delimited by a separate complex of gross body, subtle body and organs. The Ignorance that occasions this must be characterized by plurality. In this way one can well account for the fact that some souls are in bondage while others have been liberated. On these grounds the plurality of Ignorance is accepted in the Bhāmatī school. It is not clear why no attention is paid to the fact that the notion of plurality is *itself* a creation of Ignorance, so that the question of whether Ignorance is one or many is a question that can never properly be raised.

189 THE CAUSE OF IGNORANCE

Since Ignorance is regarded in the system of the Bhāmatī as beginningless, the question of its cause is not investigated. But superimposition, referred to by the word Ignorance is spoken of, along with the individual soul, as forming a beginningless cycle in the manner of the beginningless cycle of seed and sprout. Again, the primary material cause of the world is also referred to as the power of Ignorance (avidyā-śakti). And because of this the misconception could easily arise that the author of the Bhāmatī thought that the power of Ignorance was the material cause of superimposition, just as the author of the Pañcapādikā did. But no such claim is in fact found in the Bhāmatī. It is perfectly clear that when the Bhāmatī says (M.V.186,2) that mutual superimposition is the pre-condition (upādāna) for the individual soul, and that (an earlier) superimposition is the pre-condition (upādāna) for that, the reference is only to a pre-condition (upādāna) and not to a material cause (upādāna-kāraṇa). Therefore when Vācaspati says:

(1) Nor is it correct to say that the argument is circular because it is saying 'The Self can only become the object of the ego-notion if superimposition already exists to render it into such an object, and superimposition can only occur if the Self already exists in individualized form as the object of the ego-notion to produce it'. For the process is beginningless like the cycle of seed and sprout. This has already been shown in the passage of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary under comment, where he speaks of 'this natural worldly experience' (cp. M.V. 22,4). For the implication is that there is no self-contradictory circularity, because each later superimposition takes for its object previous superimpositions and the impressions they have left. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.39/41; = M.V.186,3)

It seems reasonable to suppose that he is following (not the Pañcapādikā but) the passage in Maṇḍana which says:

(2) What then is the cause of erroneous vision? Not non-

perception, but, as we have already said, beginningless, purposeless Ignorance. It is useless to ask for a cause of beginningless Ignorance. Because erroneous vision and the impressions it leaves act on each other mutually as cause and effect, our theory can stand. (B.Sid. p.33; cp. M.V.92)

190 HOW THE INTERPLAY OF THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE AND THEIR OBJECTS IS BASED ON IGNORANCE

Śrī Śaṅkara wrote: All commerce between the attested means of knowledge (perception, inference, etc.) and their objects, whether in the Vedic or secular sphere, proceeds on the basis of this same mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self called Ignorance, as does all Vedic tradition, whether concerned with injunctions and prohibitions or with liberation' (M.V.23,2). The Bhāmatī explains this as follows:

(1) When Śrī Śaṅkara said earlier '... there results this natural worldly experience, based on wrong knowledge, and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as "I am this" and "This is mine"', he referred explicitly to 'worldly experience' in the form of verbal affirmations. And now (i.e. in the passage just quoted above, 'All commerce...') he shows what that worldly experience is that was hinted at by the use of inverted commas (lit. by the use of the word 'iti'). (Bhā.I.i.1, p.40/46)

It is not clear why Vācaspati did not just say 'All experience, whether consisting of ideas or of expressions of ideas in speech, is covered by the single word "experience" (vyavahāra)'.

The passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary that follows on immediately after that quoted above runs: 'But in what sense do we mean that perception and the other means of knowledge, together with Vedic tradition, belong to those in the realm of Ignorance?' Here the Bhāmatī explains the objection and the answer that follows it in the manner of the Pañcapādikā (cp. M.V.146,4). The conclusion is drawn as follows:

(2) Hence (as Śrī Śaṅkara has argued) it is possible to account for the occurrence of cognitions for a conscious individual subject on the basis of mutual superimposition. And when that is accounted for, you have accounted for the possibility of the existence of an individual knowing subject. A means of knowledge can only be applied on the assumption that a cognition will follow. Where Śrī Śaṅkara speaks of an individual knowing subject, he implies the existence of correct cognition. No means of knowledge would be applied where no cognition could result. A means of knowledge would then cease to be a means of knowledge (which is absurd). (Bhā.I.i.1,

p.42/50)

Here the passage from Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary which is being explained is made to refer back to answer two objections that had been raised earlier, not by Śrī Śaṅkara himself but only by Vācaspati. These were, first: '(How can the means of knowledge belong to those in the realm of Ignorance?) Means of knowledge cannot belong to an ignorant being, since their result, knowledge, contradicts Ignorance' (Bhā.I.i.1, p.40/47). And secondly, in the immediately preceding passage: 'Cognition is knowledge determining the real. How can the means of knowledge which lead to it belong to those in the realm of Ignorance?' (*ibid.*).

But in Śrī Śaṅkara's actual Commentary, the main and really the sole objection raised is 'How can there be any commerce between means of knowledge and objects of knowledge in the presence of Ignorance?' No objection is raised about cognition or about how the means of knowledge could be supposed to function. It is clear that Śrī Śaṅkara's treatment of the question is not identical with that of the Bhāmatī. The point that Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary makes is that being an individual experiencing subject is only possible through Ignorance, and that (since metaphysical Ignorance therefore exists) it makes sense to begin the study of the metaphysical portions of the Veda, as that is the way to put Ignorance to an end. This point is not clearly brought out in the Bhāmatī. Other relevant texts in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries are the following.

(3) For when there has been direct, concrete knowledge of the non-dual Self, which is not subject either to rejection or acceptance, the means of knowledge no longer have any objects or an individual knowing subject to operate them. They cease to exist. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

Here, when there is no longer an individual knowing subject, it is not just a question of the means of knowledge not being able to function. The means of knowledge can no longer be means of knowledge.

(4) It is only when the Self has first been established as an individual knowing subject desiring empirical knowledge of an object that there can be enquiry through a means of knowledge. (Bh.G.Bh.II.18)

Here again it is implied that the means of knowledge can only function when the existence of an individual knowing subject has been established first.

(5) For the final means of knowledge (the highest texts of the Veda, which yield knowledge of the Self), brings to an end the notion that the Self is an individual knowing subject employing

means of knowledge. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69, cp. M.V.46,11)

Here again, what is primarily brought to an end by metaphysical knowledge arising from the Veda is the role of the Self as an individual knowing subject. But it is also implied that, when that has been brought to an end, all commerce between means of knowledge and objects of knowledge is also brought to an end, as it depends on the knowing subject.

191 THE VALIDITY OF THE VEDA

The following passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary is clearly intended to explain how the ritualistic portion of the Veda operates in the context of metaphysical Ignorance, just as the metaphysical portion does. It runs: 'In regard to practical activity laid down in the Veda, the performer, to be duly qualified, must know the connection of the soul with an after-life, and act with a clear knowledge of what he is doing. He does not require to know the true metaphysical nature of the Self as... not subject to transmigration, knowledge which comes from the upanishadic texts. For such knowledge is useless for ritualistic action and in fact *disqualifies* one for it. And the relevance of the Veda, which has its scope before direct knowledge of the Self in its true metaphysical nature has been attained, is confined to the realm of those afflicted with metaphysical Ignorance'. The meaning is made quite clear by the concluding phrase, 'Is confined to the realm of those afflicted with metaphysical Ignorance'. But the explanation in the Bhāmatī omits the point about necessary association with Ignorance, and raises and answers a different objection as follows:

(1) Objection: Knowledge of the Spirit (puruṣa, true Self) taught in the Upanishads is not needed to qualify one for ritualistic activity, because it is both contradictory (to the idea that one is doing action) and useless. In fact, when the Spirit is known from the Upanishads, this actually disqualifies one for ritualistic action. What is more, the whole Veda would lose its validity, as its texts (concerned respectively with action and metaphysical knowledge) would fall into mutual contradiction. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.44/55)

An examination of the context shows that Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary does not here raise the objection that the validity of the Veda might be undermined. What his Commentary says is that only a person who supposes that his Self is capable of individual action and experience will engage in action. And the function of the Veda is to enlighten a person who is labouring under metaphysical Ignorance, since he can only have this notion that he is an individual capable of action and

experience on the basis of superimposition. That part of the Bhāmatī's explanation which points this out is relevant and in harmony with the true Vedantic method. But this is not the case with that part of the Bhāmatī's explanation which is concerned with establishing and defending the validity of the Veda. In fact the author practically admitted this when he was earlier explaining Śrī Śaṅkara's preliminary claim.

(2) The part of the Veda that deals with injunctions and prohibitions has in view the person who has received from beginningless Ignorance the idea that he is capable of individual action and experience, and is a member of the Brahmin or other caste. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.43/54)

Here the Bhāmatī points out quite correctly that even the upanishadic teachings presuppose metaphysical Ignorance.

(3) And in the same way the Upanishads are concerned only with people afflicted with metaphysical Ignorance. For their meaning cannot be understood unless the distinction between an individual knowing subject and the objects of his knowledge and so on is in force. The only difference between the upanishadic and the ritualistic texts is that the upanishadic texts give metaphysical instruction to the one afflicted by Ignorance, and they establish him in his own true nature when he has absorbed that instruction and is purged of all Ignorance by doing so. So it stands proved that all Vedic texts are only concerned with people afflicted by Ignorance. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.43/54-5)

It should be understood that, in order to remove metaphysical Ignorance, the Veda operates by the method of false attribution followed by later retraction.

Consider the first two sentences of the opening of Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary (M.V.22,4), running from 'When it is clear...' to '... must be erroneous'. Here the Self, as 'I', is established by direct experience, indubitable, correct and immediate. The objects and their attributes are clearly perceived as different from that. There cannot logically be a mutual superimposition (involving identification) of these two (subject and object) as they are clearly distinct. This is explained by the Bhāmatī as constituting the objection. The passage that follows is taken as establishing the finally accepted view through the refutation of this objection. Here the Bhāmatī says:

(4) All this might be so if the real Self manifested in immediate experience as 'I'. But it does not do so. The true Self is taught in the Vedas, Smṛtis and Purāṇas to be unlimited by any external adjunct, infinite, homogeneous Consciousness, of the nature of Bliss, one without a second, standing in sover-

eign indifference to the apparent world of plurality. Not even Indra himself could reduce the statements that declare the nature of the true Self to be such to mere figurative teaching, repeated as they are, and strengthened by introductions, reflective observations and concluding summaries. For repetition implies emphasis, as in 'Oh, she is beautiful! Oh, she is beautiful!' It does not imply minimization, still less does it imply that what is being said is to be dismissed as mere figurative use of language. But the experience of 'I' is fragmentary and exhibits the Self as overwhelmed with a vast complex of pain and suffering. How can it lead to the Self in its true nature? How can it be anything but a disaster? (Bhā.I.i.1, p.8-9/7-8)

On this we would comment as follows. The non-dual Self in its true nature is admittedly the Self of all, and the Witness of all, and accessible only through the Vedic texts. But the revered Commentator did not justify the superimposition of Self and not-self merely on the authority of the word of the Veda, as if it could be proved merely by that. Why do we say this? Well, he showed that all commerce between means of knowledge and objects of knowledge rested on superimposition. He composed the introductory section to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary (the Adhyāsa Bhāṣya) to explain why one must turn to the Upanishads in their totality as the final means of knowledge to destroy this evil, namely superimposition. Then, since he had first quoted Vedic and other traditional texts as authoritative against the philosophers who denied superimposition, how could he then later deny their authority? The answer is that the objections against metaphysical Ignorance have ultimately to be stated and answered in the light of immediate experience (anubhava), which is its own authority. Indeed, all valid means of knowledge derive their validity purely from their power to lead to immediate experience.

Accordingly our opinion is that the argumentation that appears afterwards in the Bhāmatī, aimed at deciding which of the two authorities, the Veda and perception, carried the greater weight (and would prevail in case of contradiction), was unnecessary and out of place. It runs:

(5) Nor would it be right to say that because the Veda, in its metaphysical texts, is in contradiction with perception, an anterior means of knowledge on which it depends, it is inauthoritative where it conflicts with perception, or requires to be interpreted according to some figurative meaning. For the Veda is of superhuman origin, and therefore beyond possibility of reproach. As a source of knowledge it is self-guaranteed, and it is independent in its special function of conveying knowledge unobtainable from any other source.

Perhaps you will object as follows. It may well be, you will say, that the Veda is independent in its special function

of conveying knowledge of its own peculiar subject-matter. But it depends on perception for its existence as an authoritative means of knowledge. And for this reason, if it were to contradict perception it would render itself inauthoritative in the sense of undermining perception, without which it cannot itself exist as an authoritative means of knowledge.

But this objection is wrong. For the Veda is never in conflict with that form of perception that brings it into existence. The knowledge arising from the Veda does not undermine the authority of perception at the empirical level in such a way that the Veda could not itself exist as an authoritative means of knowledge for lack of (perception as) an effective cause. The knowledge arising from the Veda only conflicts with the ultimate validity of perception, but it is not absolutely valid perception that stands as a cause for the Veda, but only empirically valid perception. For it is found that absolutely valid knowledge can arise from means of knowledge that are only empirically valid and are not themselves absolutely real....

And there is another point. An earlier cognition stands to be corrected and cancelled by a later contradictory one, if that later one does not depend on it. For we see that the later knowledge of shell contradicts and cancels the earlier knowledge of silver. If the earlier silver-cognition were not cancelled, the rise of the later cancelling-cognition (the cognition of shell) would be unintelligible. We have shown above how the Veda does not depend on the absolute validity of perception to be known. And in this sense the great Ṛṣi Jaimini has said 'When contradictory instructions come, one earlier, one later, the earlier one is superseded by the later, just as the instructions for the derivative form of a ritual supersede those of the original form' (P.M. Sūtra VI.v.54). And it has also been said (by Kumārila, Tantravārtika p.819) 'Where there is a contradiction in texts giving instructions, the later is to be regarded as a weightier authority than the earlier, except where the ideas are mutually dependent'. (Bhā. I.i.1, p.9-11/8-9)

Most of this reasoning is taken from the introductory part of the second Book (Tarka Kāṇḍa) of the Brahma Siddhi (pp.40-3; Potter, 1981, p.374 f; some fragments at M.V.98,1-3). There it is explained, following the traditions of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, how an earlier perception is a weaker authority than a later one that contradicts it, how Vedic revelation is an incontrovertible authority, how we may infer the possibility of defects in perception and the other means of empirical knowledge from the mere strength of Vedic authority alone, how the fact that perception is prone to error can be seen from our indentification of our Self with the body, how perception and the other empirical means of knowledge can be valid on the empirical plane because this is not contradicted by the Veda — which is an authority for absolute truth in the metaphysical sphere

only — how the Veda is not dependent on perception and other means of empirical knowledge for conveying its own peculiar kind of valid knowledge. All this and more is set out there in detail.

It is quite evident that none of this is needed or wanted on the occasion of explaining a passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary devoted to expounding superimposition without appealing to any other authority but immediate experience. And there is a further point about this path followed by our two good 'Miśras' (Maṇḍana Miśra and Vācaspati Miśra) of elevating the authority of revelation above that of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge. There are other religious works which stand outside the Vedic tradition, and which follow this same path and claim to stand above the authority of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge (including reason). Why should not they, too, have their claim accorded? This is a question that our 'Miśras' might find difficult to answer.

The Mīmāṃsakas regard the Veda as being eternally beyond possibility of reproach on the ground of its superhuman origin. This same doctrine of the superhuman origin of the Veda is adopted in a somewhat different way here in the Bhāmatī.

(6) The followers of Jaimini (Pūrva Mīmāṃsakas who reject the doctrine of world-periods) do not accept that the world ever underwent creation or that it will undergo dissolution. They teach that there has been an unbroken line of human teachers and pupils like ourselves for handing down the Vedic texts in a beginningless tradition. But those who follow the teachings of Vyāsa (the author of the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas) accept that the eternal supreme Self is the source of the Vedas, endowed as He is with omnipotence and omniscience proceeding from the adjunct of beginningless Ignorance, and that the Vedas are projected and dissolved anew at the beginning and end of each world-period, according to the doctrine of repeated creations and dissolutions of the world attested by the Veda, the Smṛti, the Epics and so on. But they do not hold that He is free to alter them as He likes; each new projection of the Vedas has to accord with the previous one....

When the followers of Jaimini speak of the 'superhuman' origin of the Vedas, they only mean that they are not created according to characteristic human arbitrary free-will. We, too, accept this, though our reason for doing so is not the same.

Further, it is not right to say that there cannot be faith in what is only revealed by one person. Faith in what was revealed by many people would be unjustified if they were ignorant, or if they were well-informed but ill-willed. But faith in one person is justified if he knows the truth and is free from faults of character. It is quite intelligible that Prajāpati and the Divine Ṛṣis (devaṛṣi) who existed at the beginning of the world-period, who had merit, knowledge, dispassion and sovereign

powers, should have had knowledge of the true nature of the Self. Because they had faith, those who came after them, too, were able to have faith. Because it is possible that it should have been transmitted in this way, we may speak of the Veda as 'having its origin in the Absolute', and also as of superhuman origin and as authoritative. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.99/141-3)

(7) For the Lord fashioned the Veda at the beginning of the present world-period in the same form as He had done at the beginning of the previous world-period. And each earlier projection of the Veda at the beginning of a world-period agrees with the previous one, and that with the one previous to itself. So that this relation of cause and effect between the Lord and the Veda is beginningless. (Bhā.II.i.1)

(8) Because the relation of cause and effect between the Lord and the Veda is beginningless, the Lord does not use his knowledge of the content of the Veda to project it. He is not free in the matter, as Kapila and other sages are in the construction of their systems. Though his knowledge of the content of the Veda manifests itself at the time of the Veda's projection, it is not part of the cause of that projection. The Veda and the knowledge of its content manifest simultaneously as identical. (Bhā.II.i.1)

The argumentations in the Brahma Siddhi (B.Sid. p.82,155) about the superhuman character of Vedic revelation follow the Mīmāṃsakas' tenets as if they were taken to be proved. The Pañcapādikā, for its part, raises the objection that, if the Veda is to have the Absolute as its source (as B.S. I.i.3 demands), then the Veda must arise dependently — and meets it as follows:

(9) This being so, must there not be intelligence and will behind the Veda, and must it not arise in dependence on these? No. For it is beginningless, like the Absolute itself. Indeed, the Veda is eternal and changeless. In what sense, then, is it said to have the Absolute 'as its source'? In the sense that it is dependent for its existence on the Absolute, which is other than itself, as the rope-snake is dependent for its existence on the rope. And there is the Vedic text 'All these (Ṛg Veda, etc.) are breathed forth' (Bṛhad.II.iv.10). Breathing forth, in the world, is a spontaneous (independent) activity; in the same way, the breathing forth of the Ṛg Veda and other traditional texts is a spontaneous act (and so not dependent on intelligence and will on the analogy of a deliberate human act). (P.P. p.315 f./82)

This is all it says, which is brief. And so we have what is a long and probably original piece of argumentation from Vācaspati, in which he demonstrates how the Veda can have the Absolute for its source and be of superhuman origin, and this

without any logical contradiction and in agreement with the Sūtras and Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. Śrī Śaṅkara says:

(10) And in support of this there is a Ṛg Veda verse, 'They sought the traces of (the eternal deity) Speech through sacrifice, and found her in the form in which she entered the hearts of the ancient seers (ṛṣi)' (R.V. X.71.3), which shows that the deity Speech (vāc) was found already existent (and hence fixed and eternal). (B.S.Bh.I.iii.29)

(11) The cosmic dissolution admittedly breaks off the continuity of all experience. But cosmic overseers like Hiraṇyagarbha and others can enjoy continuity of experience through the grace of the supreme Lord. It is true that ordinary mortals cannot enjoy continuity of experience with their states in previous births. But the cosmic overseers are not in the same case as ordinary mortals. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.30, cp. M.V.45,7)

Here it is said that the Vedas, regarded as already established in previous world-periods, were discovered by the seers (ṛṣi) through investigation. And in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary we find:

(12) The Veda is authoritative, not in the manner of other authoritative texts, but because it came forth effortlessly from the Absolute like a person's breath. (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iv.10)

That was how Śrī Śaṅkara conceived and taught the authority of the Veda. But there is a further point to be noted. Śrī Bhagavatpāda did not just quote the upanishadic texts on the most important upanishadic topics as if they were in themselves an authority from the mere fact of being upanishadic texts. Not at all. The reason for the authority of the upanishadic texts was not their mere existence. The reason for their authority was the fact that, because they expounded the non-dual Self, the knowledge arising from their teachings culminated in a direct experience which satisfied all demands and left nothing over for further enquiry.

(13) And because knowledge brings its reward immediately, there can be no question of any delay. In the case of action, the reward, such as heaven, may not be immediately evident, and in such cases there will be doubt whether it will come or not. But the reward of knowledge of the Absolute is immediately evident, for the Veda speaks of 'the Absolute which is immediately and directly evident'(Bṛhad.III.iv.1) and teaches 'That thou art' as an already accomplished fact. (B.S.Bh.III.iii.32, cp. M.V.75,7;148,9)

(14) And this is the final means of knowledge, which reveals that the Self alone exists. After that, nothing further is

required. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.161,1, note)

At one point (B.S.Bh.I.i.4) Śrī Śaṅkara uses the phrase 'because the Veda is concerned with bringing to an end the distinctions imagined through Ignorance'. The Bhāmatī, it is true, comments upon this passage as follows:

(15) Not every sentence can inform one about a distinct reality designated as a 'this'. One cannot express in words the variety of different sweet tastes yielded by the sugar-cane, a milk-pudding, molasses and so on. And this inability of speech to express what we want to say is a common phenomenon, found everywhere. Hence, if this is the case with speech in regard to worldly things known through other means of knowledge, how will speech fare in regard to the inmost Self, which is transcendent? (Bhā.I.i.4, p.125/188)

We contend, however, that this explanation does not touch the heart of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The mere fact that one cannot straightaway find a single word to express the different varieties of sweet taste in sugar-cane, milk-pudding and so forth does not mean that those tastes are beyond expression in words altogether. These distinctions of taste do in fact evoke speech in the natural course. The inmost Self is inaccessible to speech only because it is transcendent (and inaccessible to objective knowledge *in principle*). The holy Veda, which may be considered omniscient, cannot be at a loss for words (to express fine shades of meaning) that it should proclaim its own poverty and say 'The inmost Self is inaccessible to words because of the poor vocabulary at our disposal'. And so the inmost Self is inaccessible to words *in principle*. It is beyond all conceptions. The force of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary in this passage is to point out that, though the Self is transcendent and not available as an object of knowledge, it is nevertheless self-revealed. It is only by getting rid of the superimposed distinctions of knower, knowing and known, and of speaker, speaking and object spoken of, that the Self reveals itself to itself (in the case of a person gaining liberation).

192 THE RELATION BETWEEN REVELATION AND REASON

Śrī Śaṅkara raises the question in his Commentary: Is the Absolute already known or not already known? If it is already known, it is not a fit subject of enquiry. So let us suppose that it is not already known. But in that case it is not a *possible* subject of enquiry. And after raising this difficulty, he gives the following answer: The Absolute exists. It is eternal, pure, conscious and free by nature, omniscient and omnipotent. For when the word 'brahman' is analysed etymolo-

gically, the meanings 'eternal' and 'pure' and so on emerge, for they are included in the meaning of the root (bṛh, to expand) (B.S.Bh.I.i.1).

On this the Bhāmatī comments as follows:

(1) Even before entering formally on enquiry into the Absolute, and without practising philosophical reflection, the one who has learned his Vedic texts by heart, and has learned the rules for establishing context, etymology, grammar and kindred sciences, has a superficial knowledge of the nature of the Absolute, with its eternality and other characteristics, from the passage beginning 'Being only, my dear one, was all this in the beginning' and ending 'That thou art' (Chānd.VI.ii.1 - VI.xiii.3). (Bhā.I.i.1, p.79/111)

The doctrine here promulgated by the Bhāmatī is that after one has gained a superficial knowledge of the existence of the Absolute from the upanishadic texts one proceeds to determine its true nature afterwards through reasoning in the form of etymological enquiry according to the traditional rules (mīmāṃsā).

Śrī Śaṅkara closes his Commentary on that Sūtra with the words: 'An investigation is opened... into the meaning of the texts of the Upanishads. This enquiry is supported by dialectical reasoning not in conflict with the upanishadic texts, and its purpose is the attainment of supreme beatitude' (M.V.31,8).

Several passages in the Bhāmatī offer comment on this.

(2) Exegetical enquiry into the meaning of the upanishadic texts is itself the 'reasoning'. Other forms of reasoning, not in conflict with the texts, are those of exegesis according to the rules for the ritualistic texts and those of logic, which are used for bringing out the validity of the Veda and other means of knowledge like perception and so on in their respective spheres. These are mentioned here as aids to the main exegetical enquiry into the meaning of the upanishadic texts. (Bhā. I.i.1, p.83/118)

(3) Pondering is analysis through reasoning which is not merely not in contradiction with the text but positively supports it; and 'reasoning' in this context may be either working out what the text must mean when considered in relation to other texts and brought into harmony with them, or plain inference of the secular kind. (Bhā.I.i.2, p.89/128)

(4) The purpose of reasoning is to clarify the content of a prior means of knowledge; it is an operation to be performed on such a content, and depends on the prior existence of the latter. If no means of knowledge has been at work beforehand, then reasoning has no foundation on which it is working, and such

reasoning is dismissed as worthless and called 'empty logic'. But the text 'It should be pondered over' is a positive injunction to carry out reasoning founded on the texts of the Veda as the prior means of knowledge. The purpose of such reasoning is to analyse their meaning; and it should not be conducted in such a manner as to contradict them. (Bhā.II.i.6)

(5) Śrī Śaṅkara says 'in support of the Vedic texts'. The reference (says Vācaspati) is to reasoning taken up as a duty following upon the 'hearing' made possible by the Veda. Again, Śrī Śaṅkara says 'Reasoning is resorted to as an auxiliary to immediate experience'. 'Pondering' (says Vācaspati) is an auxiliary to immediate experience, because it is only that which has been first pondered over that eventually becomes known immediately as an object of meditation (bhāvanā). (Bhā. II.i.6)

(6) In subjects that are only knowable through the Veda and are not within the scope of independent reason, one should not resort to that form of reasoning that is confined to the search for agreements and differences, as practised by the Sāṅkhyas and other rationalist schools, and through which they establish 'Nature' and other (arbitrary) concepts. That is called 'empty reasoning' because it has no foundation anywhere. (Bhā.II.i.11)

(7) And this knowledge (which secures liberation) comes from the Veda and concerns the Being who stands as the cause both of the world and of consciousness within the world. Such knowledge is 'Vedic' in the sense that it consists in reasoning applied to the Vedic texts and pursued as a duty. Logicians who try to determine the cause of the world through independent reasoning conducted without regard to the Veda invariably fall into mutual dissension and fail in their objective. No final conviction is to be obtained from that, and it does not lead to right knowledge. (Bhā.II.i.11)

Our own view here is that Vācaspati does not draw any clear lines between reasoning as exegesis and other forms of reasoning, between reasoning in support of the Veda and reasoning not in conflict with it, and between all these forms of reasoning and 'empty reasoning'.

Exegesis is an activity undertaken primarily to determine the nature and character of the texts under examination. There is, however, another activity (apologetic), the task of which is to analyse this subject-matter further. It uses reason either to explain and defend the texts, or else to advance independent logical arguments in their favour. Argumentation used to explain and defend the texts should lead on to direct experience of the truth of the metaphysical teachings they contain, so that attempts to clarify the meaning of the texts for others should invariably follow from and depend on immediate

experience (anubhava). Though independent reasoning derives its authority initially from secular practice, its special use in Vedanta, where it is not allowed to conflict with upanishadic teaching, is to support the arguments already used to explain and defend the texts. The use of bare logic or dialectic is different again; its task is to take this or that doctrine as a hypothesis, and, after reviewing it in the light of experience and establishing agreements and differences, to accept or reject this or that part of the hypothesis. Thus in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, textual exegesis, explanation and defence of texts, independent logical argument in support of upanishadic teaching, and the use of bare logic or dialectic are all taken as different from one another.

193 THE TRUE SUBJECT-MATTER OF VEDIC TEACHING

In his explanations of the last two Varṇakas of the Catuḥsūtrī of Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary (the two Varṇakas which cover B.S. I.i.4), Vācaspati Miśra mostly follows the line of Maṇḍana. Before going on to state the finally accepted Advaita view, he expounds at length the doctrine of those who insist that the Veda is primarily concerned with action, and that it is an authority for the existence of the Absolute only as a subordinate element, namely as the theme for meditation in certain injunctions to meditate (where the true authority of the text lies in its word of command enjoining the act of meditation). Their view is briefly summarized in the following verse, which he quotes: 'Certitude as to the existence and true nature of the Absolute can only be obtained from a text enjoining something to be done. For "the Absolute" is not a word whose meaning is known in advance. The topic falls within Vedic tradition and has a practical purpose. And we know that there are the injunctions to ponder and so on' (Bhā.I.i.4, p.108 f./160). Against this he argues as follows.

(1) (The Veda is not an authority for the existence of the Absolute only through its texts involving command, as we know from the fact that the rewards for action follow after death, whereas the result of metaphysical knowledge from the informative texts of the Veda is immediate in this very life. Further, the future results of different acts are different, and therefore conditioned and impermanent in time.) The result of the metaphysical knowledge of the Self, on the other hand, is total and final transcendence of the body, with no possibility of any different state to come, eternal, established by nature, not the result of action (and so not impermanent). It is only figuratively spoken of as a 'result' as it is simply what manifests (as having always been the case) when Ignorance is removed. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.114/169)

(2) Thus the fact that one is the Absolute becomes evident simply on the removal of the covering of Ignorance. And the removal of Ignorance arises from a direct knowledge of the metaphysical teaching of the upanishadic texts and occurs only where this knowledge culminates in immediate intuition. Further, the fact that meditation produces a mental impression (saṃskāra) that is helpful in this regard, and the fact that the mind has to take part in the production of this impression, are both facts that are quite evident without prompting from the Veda. For all these reasons, the text 'His only meditation should be "It is the Self"' (Bṛhad.I.iv.7) is not an injunction; it is only the appearance of an injunction (on account of its grammatical form). (Bhā.I.i.4, p.115/172)

We shall reserve the remarks we have to make about the conception of 'impression' here until we come to consider the experience to which it gives rise (at M.V.204,5 ff.;206,4-5; 207,2 and 11).

(3) Thus, it might have been possible to have claimed that words could not refer to anything except what had to be done, were it not for the fact that they are used to relate facts in ordinary worldly experience, and for the fact that it is possible to infer (from their reactions, etc.) that people who know the language used have understood the meaning. It is not possible to deny that words are so used in ordinary experience. For sentences are frequently found in the world (couched in the indicative mood) which are not concerned with urging anyone to do anything, but rather with satisfying curiosity or allaying fear.... For example, people may give glowing descriptions of Mount Sumeru, or they may say 'That is not a snake, it is a rope', and so on. Nor is it the case that no idea of an existent object can arise in the mind of a listener who knows the meaning of the words when he hears such sentences couched in the indicative mood. For joy and other emotions are seen to arise from such sentences (as evidenced by the expression on the faces of those that hear them)....

And so statements of fact are useful, and it is therefore intelligible that they should be used by sensible people. Thus it has been shown that, even where they do not prescribe action or withdrawal from action, the Upanishads constitute a genuine traditional science (śāstra) of the highest benefit to man, because the knowledge of the true nature of the Absolute to which they lead enables man to achieve his highest end. (Bhā. I.i.4, p.131/207-8)

The opponent's view 'Words in the Veda can only refer to things to be done' is rejected in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary out of hand. Vācaspati first sets it out tentatively as a defensible view, and then refutes it on lines laid down by Maṇḍana (B.Sid. p.23-6, also cp. M.V.99,1). There is no harm if this

form of refutation is carried out by later Vedantins, as it helps to clarify the mind of the student.

(4) It is true that, unlike cows and other worldly objects, the Self is not an object of other means of knowledge apart from speech. Yet it can constitute the meaning of a sentence if that sentence eliminates this or that conditioning adjunct, since it is luminous and self-evident by nature. It is like arriving at the idea 'gold' through the elimination of the various conditioning adjuncts such as 'bracelet', 'ear-ring' and so on. Consciousness, being self-luminous, is always manifest; and the psycho-physical organism is manifest as its apparent conditioning adjunct. The text 'This Self is "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26) can convey the self-luminous principle as 'the Self' and 'the Absolute' through negating all external adjuncts, as that principle has immensity (bṛhattva, as 'Brahman') and pervasiveness (āpana, as 'Ātman'). (Bhā. I.i.4, p.133/210)

This is also in imitation of Maṇḍana. The latter has the verse 'That is why the Self as a universal is described as that from which all distinctions have been withdrawn. It is like the case of indicating the gold itself by eliminating the ornaments and other objects fashioned from it' (B.Sid. p.37, cp. M.V.102,2). In Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, on the other hand, neither the words 'the Absolute' nor 'the Self' nor negative phrases like 'neither this nor that' are regarded as directly denoting the Absolute. His contention is that there are portions of the Veda which are concerned with giving information about existing reality. That reality, being the Self of all, is self-evident. It can neither be rejected nor acquired. It is the only reality that can be taught. It is at the point above where the author of the Bhāmatī introduces the word 'self-luminous' (M.V.193,4, ad fin.*) that we may say his present passage refers to the supreme reality in its true form.*

The following passages from the Bhāmatī are also worthy of remark. They are on the theme 'Should the texts of the Upanishads be taken as mere subordinate explanatory matter?'

(5) In a single sentence, the individual meanings of the words are merely instrumental, while it is the sentence-meaning as a whole that the speaker really wishes to convey. Similarly, when two sentences are joined to form a single passage, one conveys the speaker's basic meaning, while the other is only instrumental in specifying that meaning further.... Where the merely instrumental element is contradicted by some other piece of evidence, it has to be interpreted figuratively.... In ordinary human discourse, when the main point of a speaker's address is contradicted by another piece of evidence his words are simply regarded as being without authority. The case with the

texts of the Upanishads, however, is different. They are not of human origin. If they are considered in their totality, it is seen that their main intention is to proclaim the Absolute, void of all differentiation. They are the means of knowledge giving access to a metaphysical principle that is in fact self-evident. They dethrone perception and the other secular means of knowledge and relegate them to the provisional realm of empirical experience. As for texts like 'The sacrificial post is the sun', they are not meant to affirm that the sun is the sacrificial post (which would be contradicted by other evidence, e.g. of perception), but are intended to eulogize the (glittering) sacrificial post....

Therefore the following stands proved. An explanatory or eulogistic sentence in the Veda is different in kind from the sentence conveying the main injunction or affirmation of the passage. The function of each of these two different kinds of sentence is first determined by an understanding of the intrinsic meaning; then their mutual connection is established afterwards, relative to some end. (Bhā.I.iii.33)

Here the teaching is that those upanishadic texts which directly proclaim the main point of a passage are a more powerful authority than perception. Even texts that are only instrumental in specifying further the main point in a passage are affirmed to be meaningful in their literal sense in conveying some minor point if there is nothing to contradict them. As for the true teaching of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara that the different means of knowledge cannot conflict with one another — it is clear that this is not found mentioned in the Bhāmatī. (For Śaṅkara on this point, cp. M.V.48; for Maṇḍana, M.V.97; for Sureśvara, M.V.116.)

(6) Here, too, the text begins with the Absolute, saying '"Being only, my dear one, (was all this in the beginning, one only without a second)"' (Chānd.VI.ii.1). And it concludes with the affirmation that the true Self of the individual soul is the Absolute in the words '"That thou art"'. Hence the passage as a whole has the Absolute for its topic. And there are other texts, too, which, if the implications of what is said at the beginning and at the end are taken into account, can be seen to have the Absolute as their fundamental topic. (Bhā. I.i.4, p.103-4/150-1)

194 THE TREATMENT OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

In the Bhāmatī, the treatment of the topic of cause and effect follows Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, and brings the doctrine of false attribution followed by later retraction into play.

(1) When a rope is mistaken for a thin stream of water, the rope together with Ignorance of the rope is the material cause of the stream, and the stream exists only in the rope and dissolves in the rope. And thus it is shown that the world has the Absolute together with Ignorance of the Absolute as its material cause in the same way, and that it exists only in the Absolute and dissolves in the Absolute. (Bhā.I.i.3, p.95/136)

(2) Though the Self is already established as existence, it can undergo (apparent) transformation through a modification that is of a reality-grade indeterminable as real or unreal. For, since the modification is of indeterminable reality-grade, it is as if non-different from the Self. In this sense the Self, though already established as existent, can be (apparently) the object of its own productive action. (Bhā.I.iv.26)

(3) And this talk of material cause and transformation and so on is not for the purpose of affirming that modification actually takes place. It has to be understood, rather, that the Absolute is the material cause of the world in the same sense that the rope is the material cause of the snake for which it is mistaken. The Absolute is eternal, changeless and partless. It cannot undergo real transformation either wholly or in part, since, as explained, it is eternal, changeless and partless. The dishes and so on that are fashioned from clay are not different from the clay, nor are they identical with it, nor are they both different and identical. They are altogether indeterminable. And it is in this sense that the Veda says, 'The truth is, "It is only clay"' (Chānd.VI.i.4). Therefore, because all (the metaphysical) passages of the Upanishads begin and end with affirmations of non-duality, they are solely concerned with proclaiming non-duality. Sometimes they teach non-duality openly. Sometimes they teach it indirectly by negating duality. Sometimes they affirm it figuratively by teaching that the Absolute is the material cause of the world. But this only amounts to the negation of all distinctions. One is not justified in insisting on the real existence of modifications merely because the Absolute is spoken of as a material cause. The meaning of a passage as a whole is not to be deduced from one small (subordinate) element in it. (Bhā. I.iv.27)

(4) When considered in itself, the effect is indeterminable as real or unreal. But it can be called real when considered as its material cause. For this reason, the reality of the effect is in fact the reality of the material cause and nothing else. So how could the effect be unreal before its production (= manifestation), seeing that the material cause would be (existent and) real? But if the effect be considered in itself, then before its production it would be indeterminable as real or unreal, either as 'produced' or as 'destroyed'. There would

therefore be no production of anything either real or unreal. And in that case the denial of the doctrine that the effect pre-exists as real in the cause would be irrelevant for lack of any subject-matter. (Bhā.II.i.7)

Here it is claimed that the perceived world is indeterminable as real or unreal. And it is also denied that the world, so considered, is 'produced'. It seems that in this system (in contrast to the system, for instance, of the Pañcapādikā, M.V. 138,2 and 3) there is no 'production' of indeterminable entities like purely phenomenal shell-silver. But we must leave the final decision on this point to professional investigators.

On this theory, the effect is real *as* the material cause. In itself, however, it is indeterminable as real or unreal. So far, therefore, the doctrine of the reality of the effect (in and as its material cause) prior to production (= manifestation) is safeguarded. What Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says, however, is: 'But the effect, the world consisting of sound and the other elements, cannot exist except as the cause, either before creation (= manifestation) or now' (B.S.Bh.II.i.7, M.V.35,4). He held, therefore, that in all conditions of the world the effect was real as the cause. This was all he said. He did *not* say that the effect was indeterminable as real or unreal (cp. M.V.93,1, note).

It is true that there is another point in the Brahma Sūtra Commentary where he says:

(5) Name and form, imagined through Ignorance as if they were the very nature of the omniscient Lord, indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything (independent and) different from it, the seed of transmigratory experience and of the differentiated world, are spoken of in the Veda and Smṛti as 'The Power of Māyā' belonging to the omniscient Lord and as 'Nature'. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, M.V.45,1;139,6)

Nevertheless there is a certain difference between the theory of indeterminability propounded in the Bhāmatī and that of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The Commentary speaks of 'indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything different'. In the Bhāmatī, however, which follows Maṇḍana on the point (cp. M.V. 93), there is mention of 'indeterminable as real or unreal'. The revered Commentator explains in the Upadeśa Sāhasrī how he understands the term 'indeterminable'.

(6) And in this way the element called 'the ether' was born from the supreme Self, like the impure (cloudy) foam from clear water. And yet it is not completely different from water, for it is never found apart from water. But water is clear and different from foam, which is of the nature of impurity. In the same way, the supreme Self is different from

name and form, which answer to foam in the example. For it is pure and clear and of a different nature. (U.S.(prose) section 19)

Here, when there is mention of name and form being indeterminable either as the real principle itself or as anything different (U.S.(prose) section 18) the purpose is to indicate that the Self is different from name and form as perceived, not to affirm that what is perceived is (existent and) of indeterminable reality-grade. This is clearly stated in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary:

(7) He who is the cause of the whole universe, He who is the real nature of that unmanifest name and form which come to manifestation like cloudy foam from clear water, He who is different from that manifest name and form, by his very nature eternal, pure, conscious and free... (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

Here it is laid down that the Self is different from name and form, without any mention of the latter being indeterminable. It should be noted, however, that in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad Commentary it is asserted that name and form have no existence in the supreme Self.

(8) But if the external conditioning adjuncts name and form really exist, will not this contradict such upanishadic texts as 'One only without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1) and 'There is no plurality here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19)?

No, for this objection has been refuted already (cp. M.V. 194,7) through the example of foam and water as well as through clay and other similar examples. From the standpoint of ultimate truth, however, no name and form really exist for the followers of the Upanishads. No name and form, at any rate, such as could be determined as distinct from the principle of supreme reality. They could no more exist as distinct principles over against the principle of supreme reality than the modifications of clay and other such substances (the pots and so forth into which the clay is fashioned) can exist as distinct entities separate from those substances. For name and form are only modifications of the supreme reality, as foam is of water and pots are of clay. And from this standpoint it is seen that texts like 'One only without a second' and 'There is no plurality here' can apply with perfect validity to the supreme reality.

The case is different, however, as long as the Absolute remains, under the influence of natural Ignorance, unperceived in its true transcendent nature, and in clear discrimination from the body and organs, which latter are only conditioning adjuncts consisting of name and form. This true nature, indeed, stands untouched by the imputed adjuncts, just as the shell is untouched by the silver for which it is mistaken, and

as the colourless ether of the sky is unaffected by the colour and shape that are falsely attributed to it when it is seen as blue and tent-formed. For here the natural (unregenerate) vision conditioned by the organs consisting of name and form continues, and it is under this condition that all this world is presented to us as a reality separate from ourselves. (Bṛhad. Bh.III.v.1)

Here name and form are not called 'indeterminable'. Because they are affirmed to have the Self for their true nature, the passage agrees with the upanishadic teaching of non-duality. But from the standpoint of natural unregenerate Ignorance, there is practical experience of them as existent. As Śrī Śaṅkara here explains, it is like the practical experience of silver, and use of the name 'silver', that occur through the erroneous vision of shell-silver; as long as the latter lasts.

There will be no conflict with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, therefore, when it is maintained that there is no contradiction of the doctrine of the reality of the effect, because the world, in its true nature is verily the Absolute — and when it is accepted that we know that the world as effect is real from the fact of its being non-different from Being. But the Bhāmatī also argues (M.V.194,4) that the doctrine of the reality of the effect (as the material cause) is not wrong because, since it is indeterminable as real or unreal, the effect is never really produced. On this point it is out of harmony with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary.

Further, the author of the Bhāmatī ought to state what he means by the phrase 'indeterminable as real or unreal'. Does the 'real' (sat) here mean the Absolute? If so, the world is certainly not 'indeterminable as real or unreal'. For we have the text 'All this world is verily the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12). In this text, even what is referred to by the word 'unreal' is included under the word 'all' (and so it is to be identified in the end with the Absolute and accounted, not 'neither real nor unreal', but 'real').

On the other hand, if we follow Śrī Śaṅkara's formula, the world can very well be 'indeterminable as the Absolute or as anything different'. For the world *in the form in which it is perceived* (i.e. in the form of plurality) is not the Absolute. And yet it is not distinct from the Absolute either, in the way that a buffalo is distinct from a horse. For it is never perceived except as permeated by the Absolute.

195 THE UNMANIFEST

We have already shown above (M.V.182,7-9), in the course of the description of the nature of Ignorance, that the phrase 'the power of Ignorance' is sometimes used in the system of the Bhāmatī to designate the condition of the world before its

manifestation, known as 'the Unmanifest' and by other names. Here something further will be said on the subject in the context of the treatment of cause and effect.

(1) Although at the time of the great cosmic dissolution at the end of a world-period (mahāpralaya) no modifications such as mind arise and assume manifest form, nevertheless they lie present dissolved in their cause, indeterminable Ignorance; they remain in being, together with the impressions of Ignorance that will eventually generate action, in the form of a subtle (imperceptible) power. (Bhā.I.iii.30)

Here the Bhāmatī speaks of mind and so on persisting in the form of a power (potentiality) in indeterminable Ignorance and not in anything else (such as the Unmanifest principle that is imagined through Ignorance). So it seems that it is in fact the Unmanifest that is here referred to by the term Ignorance.

(2) Those who are experts in the science of the Absolute aver that the true tradition about the world is that its material cause is Consciousness associated with the beginningless indeterminable power of Ignorance. (Bhā.I.i.5)

Here it is taught that beginningless Ignorance is an auxiliary to the Self enabling it to stand as the material cause of the world.

(3) And so all modifications everywhere are so many transformations undergone by the Lord's power of Ignorance. That does duty for his body and organs (and enables Him to function as the controller of the individual soul). (Bhā.I.ii.18)

This is said to rebut the charge that the Inner Ruler has no body and organs wherewith to control the body and organs of the individual soul.

(4) You cannot raise this objection against us, as we do not say that Ignorance is one and the same in all souls, like the Nature of the Sāṅkhyas... (cp. M.V.188,2). And because it is all only Ignorance it is treated figuratively as one and labelled 'the Unmanifest' and 'the Undeveloped' (avyakta, avyākṛta). (Bhā.I.iv.3)

Here the Unmanifest is clearly referred to by the word 'Ignorance', and it is spoken of as consisting of many different units.

(5) For what is non-conscious cannot produce any effects unless it is prompted, guided and supervised by a conscious being. Ignorance, therefore, requires the Lord both to prompt it as efficient cause and to support it as material cause. The Lord

is the substratum (adhiṣṭhāna) of the world-illusion as the rope is the substratum of the snake-illusion. Therefore the Lord is the material cause of the world-illusion, just as the rope is the material cause of the snake-illusion. (Bhā.I.iv.3)

Here the conception clearly is that the world is superimposed onto the supreme Self, as the illusory snake is superimposed onto the rope. So it is not said here that a modification is a transformation of the power of Ignorance.

(6) Therefore, although Ignorance is located in the individual soul, it depends upon the Lord to stand as its efficient cause and as the object which it conceals. It is in this sense that it is said to have its 'foundation' (āśraya) in the Lord. But it does not mean that it has the Lord for its 'support' (ādhāra — i.e. that the Lord is the conscious being whom it afflicts). That would be impossible in the case of the Lord, who is knowledge by nature. (Bhā.I.iv.3)

The passage from Śaṅkara's Commentary which this is supposed to be explaining runs: 'For the seed-power is of the nature of Ignorance, referred to by the term "the Unmanifest", having its foundation (āśraya) in the supreme Lord'. Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary speaks of a power of the nature of name and form, which, though merely imagined through *Ignorance, appears to be a conditioning adjunct of the supreme Lord and hence is referred to as 'having its foundation in the supreme Lord'. It is clear that superimposition and its potentiality (śakti) called the Unmanifest are treated here in the Bhāmatī as identical, and are said to have their seat (āśraya) in the individual soul.*

(7) And again, the Veda declares that the effect (the world) is non-different from the cause at the time of maintenance, production and dissolution alike. Few followers of the Veda would show much inclination to raise objections against this. The defence (against the objection that, if the Absolute is taken as the material cause of the world, it will be infected with the impurities of the world when the latter is dissolved back into its material cause) is the same in regard to dissolution as it was in regard to the creation and maintenance of the world (during which the latter was also to be taken as non-different from the Absolute). The defence is that the effect is merely superimposed through Ignorance (and so does not touch the Absolute in any way). So in considering this question one should not limit the enquiry to dissolution alone. (Bhā.II.i.9)

Here again the Bhāmatī speaks of the effect (the world) being superimposed through Ignorance, in each of the three states of the effect, namely production, maintenance and withdrawal. And

by so speaking it affirms that the power of Ignorance, synonymous with the Unmanifest, is itself superimposed through Ignorance. Here the author respects the intention of the text in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary that he is explaining. That passage runs: 'Therefore we should infer by analogy that a potentiality (śakti) for future distinctions remains in the period of world-dissolution, too, this potentiality itself being based (equally) on wrong knowledge' (B.S.Bh.II.i.9, M.V.45,8). Therefore the phrase 'power of Ignorance' is only used so long as one is referring to a power whose existence is only inferred in the state of metaphysical Ignorance.

(8) Since the power of Ignorance is regular in its operations, the projection of the world at the beginning of each world-period is also regular. (Bhā.II.i.9)

Here the phrase 'power of Ignorance' clearly refers only to the power of introducing differentiation on the cosmic plane that is itself imagined through Ignorance.

(9) The possibility of liberated souls undergoing rebirth is ruled out by the fact that the power of introducing differentiation on the cosmic plane, which arises ultimately from (Ignorance in the form of) erroneous knowledge (and its impressions), operates regularly and appropriately in each individual case. The idea is that there is a regular law that where there is no cause there is no effect; and that (in the case of the liberated souls) erroneous knowledge with its latent powers will have been destroyed root and branch by metaphysical knowledge. (Bhā.II.i.9)

It means, 'erroneous knowledge and the latent powers imagined through it'.

(10) The Absolute (even though in itself partless and changeless) can be understood to be the ground of the perception of transformation and other changes, through manifest and unmanifest name and form, imagined through Ignorance, indeterminable as the real principle or as anything different. (Bhā.II.i.26)

This follows Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. In the sequel the Bhāmatī expresses even more clearly its agreement with the view that the Unmanifest is imagined through Ignorance. For it says, 'Śrī Śaṅkara puts into the mouth of an objector the words "But is it not the case that the Veda cannot declare anything contradictory?" to prepare the way for the statement that the Unmanifest is imagined through Ignorance' (Bhā.II.i.27). But how can the author of the Bhāmatī reconcile this (admission of the correct view that the Unmanifest is imagined by *Ignorance) with his other statements that Ignorance* is *the Unmanifest?*

(11) Name and form are set up by Ignorance. Causal Ignorance is of the nature of dissolution (laya), associated with the impressions of projection derived from world-projection in previous world-periods. Name and form so conceived constitute 'Māyā' (cp. M.V.182,3 *ad fin.*). And we have already several times refuted this objection against non-dualism which says that Consciousness, on such a theory, cannot prompt any action for lack of anything other than itself to prompt. We refute it by pointing out how Consciousness stands connected with Māyā by false superimposition. What the Commentary means is this. It is not that this creation is real, so that one could raise the objection that the real, being non-dual, cannot have any second thing standing over against it. As the creation is only imaginary, the non-dual principle can very well have an imaginary, illusory duality as its companion. As the saying goes, 'Companionship obeys the laws of necessity'. And it does not mean that the Absolute is not, ultimately, the material cause of the world. For it is the Absolute as penetrated by Māyā that is the material cause. The Absolute, indeed, is the substratum of the world-error (is that on which we superimpose the erroneous notion that a world of plurality exists). This is correct, because we speak of the shell both as the 'substratum' and as the 'material cause' of the shell-silver. (Bhā.II.ii.2)

The argument in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary runs as follows. Let us suppose, it says, that you object that if the Self is one there cannot be a prompter of action (which the Lord is said to be) for lack of anything other than Himself to prompt. We say 'No'. This has several times been refuted already on the grounds that He stands connected through superimposition with the illusory display (māyā) of name and form set up by Ignorance. The author of the Bhāmatī first agrees that manifest and unmanifest name and form are imagined through Ignorance. Why he even then goes on to bring in new concepts like that of the impressions of Ignorance existing before the start of a new world-period is not clear.

If we take the common thread in the texts here quoted from the Bhāmatī, it is clear that the teaching has the following points in agreement with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The world is a manifestation of name and form. Name and form are imagined through Ignorance, and form the seed-state or state of potentiality (śakti-rūpa) of the world. The Unmanifest can be referred to (in a loose sense) by the word Ignorance because it is imagined through Ignorance. But, as we have already explained, the statement in the Bhāmatī that Ignorance is many (one for each individual soul) is to be ignored (M.V.188). It was made without pausing to reflect that Ignorance itself is the source of all empirical concepts, including substance, attribute, number and so on.

196 THE SUPERIMPOSITION OF THE NOTION THAT ONE IS AN INDIVIDUAL SOUL

In this system there is an examination of how the notion that one is an individual soul is superimposed on the Absolute in order to establish how the soul and the Absolute appear as distinct in practical experience.

(1) Even those (the Mīmāṃsakas) who hold that the ego-sense reveals the soul should not (on their own principles) take it as a true representation. For they (hold that the soul is all-pervading, and yet like anyone else they) perceive what is all-pervading through the ego-sense as local, in the form 'I am here, having knowledge in this particular dwelling-place (body) alone'. It is an illusion like that whereby great trees on the top of a high mountain appear to one standing on the ground below as tiny blades of grass. Nor is it the case that it is only the body that is felt to be local, and not the soul. For if it were, there would not be the feeling 'I'. Or again, if it is claimed that self-identification with the body is mere figurative speech-usage (employed for practical purposes, though known to be untrue), we reply that in that case there would not be the feeling (you speak of) 'I am here'. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.11/9-10)

(2) But there is no experience of any direct meaning of 'I' manifestly separate from the complex of gross and subtle body and organs, that is to say, clearly separate from it as a baby is separate from its mother once it has been delivered from the womb. In these circumstances, there cannot be a direct meaning of the word 'I' as the Self and a figurative use of the same word to mean the complex of the gross and subtle bodies. Nor can it be accepted that the use of the word 'I' to mean the body is one of those figurative terms so long consecrated by conventional use that the original primary sense has been forgotten, as the word 'taila', which originally meant sesame-seed oil, has come to mean mustard-seed oil. For one can only know that it is the word that originally stood for sesame-seed oil that is being used for mustard-seed and other oils if one knows that sesame-seed oil is different from the others, on account of its peculiar sticky character and the fact that it comes from sesame-seeds; when such a piece of figurative usage is established, it does not lead to the conclusion that sesame-seed oil and mustard-oil are identical. Thus it is clear that there can only be primary and figurative usage where a person knows both the primary and the secondary meaning and also the difference between the two. In the case of the pure Self and the complex of the gross and subtle body, the absence of any apprehension of them as separate entails the absence of primary and figurative usage. (Bhā.I.i.1,

p.13/10-11)

(3) Nor is it correct to say that, because one reflects 'I am that same' throughout the bodily changes from childhood through to old age, it follows that one has direct experience of oneself as different from the body, senses and mind. This is only philosophers' talk; it is not the talk of people who engage actively in worldly life. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.13-4/11)

Here there is the reflection 'I am that same'. But there is nothing to prove that this reflection really bears on the Self. Vācaspati does not raise the possibility of its being an error, even though he quotes Śrī Śaṅkara's phrase 'And because there is no difference, in this respect, between the behaviour of men and animals' (cp. M.V.140,6).

(4) Nor is it correct, in order to safeguard the validity of the ego-sense, to say that the Self is limited in size and localized in a particular place like the body. The Self would then have to be either atomic or of the size of the body. If it were atomic, one could not account for such feelings as 'I am stout' or 'I am tall'. And if it were the size of the body, it would have parts like the body, and thus would not be eternal. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.14/11)

Here the doctrine of the Materialist, who would welcome the last position reached (the non-eternality or non-existence of the Self) should have been considered; one cannot refute the provisional thesis through mere quotation of the authority of the Veda.

(5) In the same way (the passage leads on from M.V.184,1) the complex of the gross body, subtle body and organs is also indeterminable as real or unreal. Though it is a novel product, it is correct to say that it is 'superimposed elsewhere' onto the Self as Consciousness, just like what had been presented in previous erroneous cognitions, since the definition of superimposition applies. We shall explain later how the abolition and final cancellation of the complex of the bodies and organs takes place.

The Self as pure Consciousness, on the other hand, is in the province of the Vedas, Smṛtis, Epics and Purāṇas. It can be determined as real, since it can be shown by reasoning based on these authorities, and not in conflict with them, that it is by nature pure, conscious and liberated. Its reality consists in its uncontradictable self-luminosity. And that is the very nature of the Self as Consciousness. Reality is not anything different from that. It is not inherence in the universal called Being (as advocated by the Vaiśeṣikas, in whose system Being and inherence and that which inheres in Being are all totally distinct from one another). Nor is it

the power to produce effects through action (which - the Buddhist test of reality, rejected because action is a mere appearance within changeless Being, and its effects are impermanent anyway). So all objections, we would claim, have been answered. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.24-5/23)

Here it would have been enough to have mentioned that the Self was self-luminous and never contradicted. There is no mention in the Commentary of its being known from the Veda and the other sources mentioned. As we have already pointed out (e.g. M.V.191,15, note;193,5, note) these considerations are not relevant to this topic.

(6) For it is the Self as Consciousness that appears in the ego-notion to be capable of action and experience. In truth it is totally withdrawn, and cannot have the power of acting or experiencing. As for the complex of the gross and subtle body and the organs, beginning with the intellect — that is potentially able to act and have experience, but it does not have consciousness (as becomes clear, for instance, at death). So it is the Self as Consciousness, (apparently) united with the complex of the two bodies and the organs, that acquires the power to act and experience. Though it is the self-luminous principle, it appears to become painted over with the intellect, organs and body. Somehow it becomes the object of the I-notion, and is called 'support of the ego', 'the soul', the 'living creature' and (cp. M.V. p.35) 'the Knower of the Field'. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.39/40-1)

Like the Pañcapādikā (M.V.142,3), the Bhāmatī explains the ego-notion as figurative, using the term 'somehow'. The effect of this is to weaken the force of the words in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, 'But it (the Self) is not altogether a non-object, since it is the object of the ego-notion'. This passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary is an answer to the objection 'How could an object be superimposed on something that is not an object?' One should only say of the Self, he replies, that it is not the object of the notion 'you'; it is not right to say that it is not an object in any sense whatever. For here the words of the Commentary accept that the Self is the object of the notion 'I'. Note also that the opponent is not here made to raise the difficulty of how the Self could be a knowing subject having the notion 'I' for its object — nor is anything said by the exponent of the finally accepted view to dispel this difficulty.

197 THE RELATION BETWEEN THE ABSOLUTE AND THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL

In the short succession of Sūtras beginning with Brahma Sūtra

I.iv.19 ca[illegible] the Vākyānvaya Adhikaraṇa (M.V. p.14), three different theories of the relation between the soul and the Absolute are described, beginning with that of Ācārya Āśmarathya. Āśmarathya's doctrine takes the supreme Self and the soul as constituting a primary substance and its modification. Auḍulomi holds that in the state of transmigration the soul is totally distinct from the Absolute, while in liberation it becomes identical. The third view is expressed by the next Sūtra in the words 'Because the soul is identical also in the state of transmigration — so said Kāśakṛtsna' (B.S. I.iv.22). On this Sūtra, Śrī Śaṅkara remarks in his Commentary: 'The Teacher Kāśakṛtsna holds that, since that which assumes the form of the individual soul is (in the end) none other than the supreme Self, it is appropriate to begin with this doctrine of their non-difference'. The Bhāmatī quotes Bhāskara's refutation of Śrī Śaṅkara's view (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.21, not quoted in the M.V.) and then defends Śrī Śaṅkara. In the course of his preliminary exposition of the finally accepted view, he sets Kāśakṛtsna's doctrine out as follows:

(1) The soul is not different from the Self. Nor is it a modification of the Self. It is indeed the Self, but imagined as limited by the adjunct of Ignorance. It is like the ether of space, which is imagined to have delimitations, being apparently (but not really) enclosed, say, within a small pot and a large jar. But here the pot-space and the jar-space are not different from absolute space, and they are not a modification of it either. And so, to start from the individual soul is the same thing as to start from the supreme Self, since the latter is not different from the former. (Bhā. I.iv.22)

(2) In truth, the individual soul and the supreme Self are entirely identical. The difference between them is imagined through the adjunct of beginningless Ignorance. And it can be rooted out through immediate knowledge, which arises through a high degree of the practice of hearing, pondering over and meditating on the text 'That thou art', a text which teaches the identity of the soul with the Absolute. It is the same process as that whereby the erroneous idea of a snake in a rope may be expunged by knowledge of the rope, and the same process whereby a prince, who grew up in a forest in a family of outcasts and supposed himself to be an outcast, lost that idea on being told by an authority 'You are a prince' (M.V.75,11). Even if it were meditated on hundreds of times over as 'clay', a modification of clay like a clay dish could not be brought to an end by direct vision of clay arising from this practice. Why is that? It is because its true relationship with clay is that of difference in identity. Nothing that is real can be uprooted by knowledge. (Bhā. I.iv.22; cp. M.V.205,5, note)

The doctrine of immediate and direct knowledge will be examined later in its proper place (M.V.205-7). Here, the example of a modification of clay seems to have been cited in agreement with the doctrine of Āśmarathya, who held that the effect was both different from and identical with the cause. For according to the Veda, the clay dishes and other modifications of clay perceived by the eye are never perceived apart from the clay of which they are composed, and hence are unreal (the reality being the clay). One can put an end to one's notion that they are real through the text 'The truth is "It is only clay"' (Chānd.VI.i.4).

(3) There are two further difficulties if the soul is taken as a modification of the Self. On this view, the result of applying to the discipline of metaphysical affirmation and meditation and so on will be a dissolution of the individual soul into the Absolute, its material cause. The soul will then have no hope of immortality, and the discipline will fulfil no genuine human end. There will also be a contradiction with the Vedic teaching that the soul is immortal. Neither of these difficulties arise on the doctrine of Kāśakṛtsna. (Bhā.I.iv.22)

The reply given in the Bhāmatī to Bhāskara's objection is as follows:

(4) And if all the upanishadic texts are taken into account in their proper context, with due regard to what has gone before and what comes afterwards, it is seen that their purpose is to teach absolute non-duality through denunciation of duality. Note in this connection that reflections of a pure white object are in strict truth non-different from their pure white original. The imagined distinctness of the various reflections of one pure white original, arising from distinctions in the different objects in which it is reflected, say a blue gem, a sword-blade and a piece of glass, all happening to lie close by, sets up the notion of distinct entities, and causes us to think and speak of one as different from another. We say, for instance, 'This, the original object, is pure white, these other reflections are tinted, either blue like a lotus or orange like a palāśa-flower, and are all different shapes, some round, some oblong and so on'. In the same way, the individual souls are in truth entirely identical with their pure original, the Self. But they are imagined to be different on account of differences in their adjuncts, which latter proceed from beginningless indeterminable Ignorance. And this imagined difference sets up the notion of distinct entities, and causes us to think and speak of one as different from another. And we have the idea 'This is the supreme Self, pure Consciousness and Bliss by nature, while these are the individual souls, with ignorance, sorrow, pain and other

disasters for their lot'. It is true that no adjunct born of metaphysical Ignorance can, properly speaking, exist in the supreme Self, which is knowledge by nature. But we do in fact attribute such adjuncts to the Self, because of the individual soul, which appears to be a reflection in such an adjunct. But this conception does not imply the fallacy of mutual dependence, expressible in the form 'The existence of Ignorance depends on the prior separation of the various individual souls (without which there would be no one to be ignorant), while the separation of the various individual souls itself depends on Ignorance. There is no fallacy of mutual dependence, because the process is beginningless, like the cycle of seed and sprout. (Bhā.I.iv.22)

Here the dependence on Maṇḍana's system is clear, both in regard to the example of gems and sword-blades (B.Sid. p.7) and in resort to the argument of absence of mutual dependence on account of beginninglessness, supported by the example of the cycle of seed and sprout (B.Sid. p.10, M.V.94,1).

(5) The soul, which in its true nature is the Absolute, eternal and changeless, cannot in that true nature be affected by desire, aversion and attachment. But because there is superimposition of identity with the mind, there is the superimposed notion that one has these attributes of the mind oneself. It is like the case of the moon being superimposed by way of a reflection in a shallow dish of water. When the water trembles, trembling is falsely superimposed on the moon, the reflected original. (Bhā.II.iii.29)

(6) The individual soul can only exist at all when nonduality is established as the reality on which it depends. For its (appearance of) difference from the Absolute is due to the adjunct of beginningless, indeterminable Ignorance. The case is parallel with that of the different reflections of one original that may occur on account of the different surfaces in which it is reflected, such as mirrors and other shiny objects.

And this theory enables us to account for the fact that we favour one thing and oppose another in our worldly dealings, while the Vedic texts recommend some things and dissuade us from others. It also enables us to account for the unequal distribution of pleasure and pain, and for the fact that some are liberated while others are condemned to further transmigration. Not one of the whole variety of evils affects liberation. For it is only in their state of individuality that the individual souls are connected with the variety of different forms of pain. Only the reflections, and not the original, are tinted dark or light according to the darkness or lightness of the reflecting media. But the Absolute is like the original; it is not affected by the different forms of pain

that affect the individual souls.

Further, when a mirror is removed, whatever had been reflected in it survives as the original; and the reflection of the original in the sword-blade is not affected by the disappearance of the reflection of the original in the mirror or the removal of the mirror. In this way, it can be shown how the soul survives as the Absolute when its adjunct set up by Ignorance is removed. (Bhā.II.iii.43)

This shows that in this system the real reason for accepting a plurality of Ignorances is to explain how different souls differ in their circumstances of life, and how some do and some do not attain liberation.

(7) It is true that the supreme Self, because He is omniscient, sees the individual souls as without real difference from Himself, but He does not identify Himself with them (in their finite aspect) or feel attachment or aversion for their pleasures and pains. They, however, do feel this attachment, through the force of Ignorance. Even while they are undergoing sensations of pleasure and pain, He has the feeling of being withdrawn, in the form 'Though I dwell in the midst of their house of bondage, no harm results to Me from this'. (Bhā.II.i.22)

(8) (Are the omniscience and omnipotence of the Self real or imaginary?) If they were real, nothing could arise from Him, as He would be non-dual, and not associated with anything else. No real effect is produced by Him who is pure, conscious and liberated by nature.... If, however, the omniscience and omnipotence were not real but imaginary, then one might think that, because there would be no efficient cause totally different from the material on which the work was taking place, as there is when a potter is working on clay, there could not be a material cause either. But exceptions to this rule (that there must be an efficient cause if there is to be a material cause) are provided by substances like milk and others. For milk and the like are found to undergo a new transformation of their own accord and through the mere passage of time, without the aid of a conscious being as external efficient cause. On these grounds we suppose that the Lord is independent of any secondary cause. But the view is wrong, as He is associated with the indeterminable seed of name and form. And there is the Vedic text, 'Know that Nature is an illusion (māyā) and that the Great Lord is the magician who operates this magic illusion' (Śvèt.IV.10). Because that seed expands in an orderly fashion, it must be assumed to contain that order in latent form. We see, too, that a multitude of effects can proceed from a single power in which variety is latent, as, for instance, fire, which is one, has the two powers of burning up and cooking, and one act leaves impressions which lead both to

joining and separation. (Bhā.II.i.24)

(9) And again, the creation of this world is not real from the standpoint of the highest truth, that one should question the Creator's purposes (and charge Him with madness, partiality or cruelty). Its cause is beginningless Ignorance. Ignorance produces its effects according to its nature; it does not consider ends and purposes. Errors like the vision of two moons, the false vision of lines of light set up by whirling torches, or the vision of cities in the clouds do not proceed under the dictates of any declared purpose. Nor is there any purpose attached to their effects, such as amazement, fear and trembling. And we speak of the womb of the world as being conscious only because it consists of Ignorance as blended with Consciousness. (Bhā.II.i.33)

The Bhāmatī advocates two different theories in different places. Sometimes it says that Ignorance alone is the material cause of the world; sometimes it says that the Absolute is the material cause, through the instrumentality of Ignorance, in the same sense that the rope is the material cause of the illusory snake and other things for which it is mistaken.

(10) This has been said in the context of deliberately conceding that creation was real. But, even here, one should not forget that creation is of indeterminable reality-grade. When a mass-hypnotist puts on a magic show, we do not accuse him of partiality if some of the living creatures that appear in that magic show are stout of limb while others are disabled or crippled (cp. B.Sid. p.11, Potter, 1981, p.353). Nor do we accuse him of cruelty when he suddenly brings the whole show to a halt. The same holds true of the Lord when He exhibits and withdraws this variegated universe of indeterminable reality-grade, whether because it is his nature to do so automatically, or whether He does so as a piece of deliberate artistic creation; no fault attaches to Him in either case. (Bhā.II.i.34)

It is clear from the quotations adduced above that on the question of the relation of the Absolute and the world and on that of the relation of the Absolute and the individual soul Vācaspati Miśra's system is very largely influenced by that of Maṇḍana Miśra, and that the traditional epithet 'tied to the apron-strings of Maṇḍana' (Prakaṭārtha Vivaraṇa III.iv.47) is justified. The procedure everywhere is to proffer different applications of the one doctrine that Ignorance is indeterminable as either real or unreal, and use that as a panacea for every doubt.

198 REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DIFFERENCE IN IDENTITY

In the course of defending the proposition 'Eternity associated with change cannot be absolute reality', Bhāskara's doctrine of difference in identity is refuted as follows.

(1) Where there is association with change there cannot be absolute reality. For consider. Does the changing entity undergo total transformation, or is the transformation only partial? If the transformation is total, does not that amount to destruction? Let us suppose, then, that the transformation is partial. In that case, is the part that undergoes alteration different from or non-different from the whole? If the part undergoing alteration is different from the whole, how can the whole be undergoing any alteration whatever? When one thing undergoes alteration it does not follow that something else that is different does likewise. And if the part undergoing alteration is non-different from the whole, how can one avoid the conclusion that the whole is undergoing alteration (which, as we have seen, implies its destruction).

It might be possible here to claim that the part was both different and non-different. The part, as effect of its material cause, the whole, is non-different from the whole insofar as it *is* the whole, while it is different insofar as it is the effect, as bracelets and other ornaments made of gold are non-different from gold insofar as they *are* gold, but different insofar as they are bracelets and so on. Nor (you might claim) is it correct to say that, since difference and non-difference are contradictories, they cannot inhere in the same entity. For when do we have knowledge of contradiction? That is contradictory which stands in contradiction with a cognition derived from valid means. That, however, which is known through a valid means of cognition really exists in the form in which it is known. In the cognition expressed by the subject-predicate judgment 'This bracelet is gold', there is a clear manifestation both of difference and identity. If there had been total non-difference, there would simply have been the manifestation of one of the terms twice (as both subject and predicate). And if there had been total difference, then the two could not have been linked as subject and predicate, any more than cow and horse can. If two things are different, but have a relation of supporter and supported or abide in a common support, this does not mean that they are joined in a subject-predicate (i.e. substance-attribute) relation. We do not say of a plum standing in a dish 'The plum is the dish'; nor do we say that Caitra is Maitra if the two are sitting on the same couch. What establishes the difference and non-difference of the material cause and its effect is the uncontradicted, indubitable judgment of all who perceive them that they stand in substance-attribute relation. Thus effects are

of the nature of their material cause, and the cause is everywhere Being. In this sense the effect, the world, is non-different from its cause, Being; and yet in its nature as effect, as cow or pot or whatever it may be, it is different. And so there is the verse: 'In their nature as effect, effects are various and different from each other and from the cause; but *as* the cause, they are non-different; thus bracelets and other ornaments made of gold are different, as ornaments, from each other and from the gold, while being non-different from their cause, or from one another, as gold'.

To this whole suggestion we (pure Advaitins) reply as follows. What, exactly, is this thing called difference, that exists in the same place together with non-difference? Do you say that it is mutual exclusion? If so, does this mutual exclusion subsist between effect and material cause, between ornament and gold, or does it not? If it does not subsist, then there is identity and no difference. If it does subsist, then there is difference alone, and no identity. Nor is it true to say that there can be no contradiction between being and non-being (and so no contradiction between difference and non-difference). For the two cannot apply together at the same time. Or if they could, then it would follow that the bracelet and the svastika-ornament were identical, since difference would not be in contradiction with identity.

Further, because the bracelet is non-different from the gold, then, since bracelets, crowns, ear-rings and other things made of gold are not different as gold, they are not different from the bracelet *even as a bracelet* either, for the bracelet is non-different from gold. And thus only gold is real, and not the bracelets and the rest, since no difference is manifest anywhere.

To this you will no doubt reply that it is only as gold that the bracelet is non-different from other things made of gold, not as bracelet. As bracelet, you will say, it is evidently different from ear-rings and the rest. And you may perhaps argue further as follows. If the bracelet is non-different from the gold, why is it that gold is found in gold ear-rings but the bracelet is not found in them? And if the bracelet is not found in gold ear-rings, how can the bracelet be non-different from gold? Those things that give way while something else persists are different from what persists, as the flowers of a garland are different from the string on which they are thread. Gold persists, while the ear-rings and the rest do not persist. They must therefore certainly be different from gold. If, on account of the common presence of gold, the bracelets and crowns and so on made of gold were somehow present in the ear-rings, then, because all things are accompanied by Being and non-different from it, they would be non-different from each other (which is absurd). There could not then be such distinctions as 'This is what we have here and not that, this comes from this and not that, there is this

now and not that, this is the case and not that'. For one could not distinguish one thing from another anywhere, at any time or in any way. A further (absurd) consequence would be that when gold in some form was perceived at a distance no one would feel any desire to know what particular form it had, whether it was an ear-ring or something else, because none of these forms would be anything but gold, and the fact that gold was in evidence would already be known. So we conclude that there must be a difference between the ear-rings and other effects proceeding from gold on the one hand, and the gold on the other; for there are cases where the gold is known and the effects are not (e.g. when gold is seen vaguely from afar).

Or let us ask, since there is also non-difference (as well as difference) between the effects of gold and the gold, why are the effects not known? Surely they ought to be known. Wherever there is a cause there must be an effect, and here the cause of knowledge — namely, non-difference from the known gold — is present, so that the effect, knowledge of the modification of gold, be it ear-rings or whatever else, should follow. But this would result in the absurd consequence that, when gold was vaguely seen in the distance, our desire for further determinate cognition of what the gold had been made into would be useless. Hence the principle holds that whatever is not known when something else is known is different from the thing that is known. When one perceives a camel but does not perceive a donkey, this shows that the donkey is different from the camel. And when gold is perceived vaguely at a distance, distinctions within it, such as ear-rings and the rest, are not perceived. Therefore the latter are different from gold.

In these circumstances (i.e. when the effects of gold are seen to be different from gold) we have to ask how the subject-predicate judgment 'The ear-rings are gold' can arise. We have already said that the subject-predicate relation does not apply to supporter and supported or to those abiding in a common locus. How, then, can we explain how some things persist while others fall away? And how can we explain why, when gold has been known, there is the further desire to know whether it has been formed into an ear-ring or some other artefact? As we have shown, these two points are inexplicable if it is taken that there is non-difference between the gold and its effects, either absolute non-difference or non-difference associated with difference. Now, one cannot have both difference and non-difference simultaneously; one or the other must be rejected. One must therefore argue as follows. The notion of difference depends on non-difference, while the notion of non-difference does not depend on difference. Difference depends on things being differentiated, and the differentiated things must each be one. If there were no unities there could be no differences, as there would be nowhere for them to be located. But the existence of unity does not

depend on difference. The perception 'not this, but this' depends not only on the perception of difference but also on the perception of that which the difference is different from; but perception of unity does not depend on anything else. Hence we conclude that imagined distinctions of indeterminable reality-grade arise as appearances on a substratum of non-difference, (which is the underlying reality). And thus we have the Vedic text, 'The truth is, "It is only clay"'. (Bhā. I.i.4, pp.117-9/174-9; cp. B.Sid. pp.63-9, summarized Potter, 1981, pp.382-5)

It is not clear why Bhāskara's doctrine of transformation as projection through a creative power was not taken up for examination here (see Bh.B.S.Bh.I.iv.25, M.V.166,1 and 2; 168,6).

(2) Although the individuals comprehended within the universal 'cowhood' are of indeterminable reality-grade and not real in the highest sense, so that one is bound to ask 'How can the whole universal be comprehended in each one of them?'— still, one should realize that this whole conception of universals and individuals is only put forward at all as a concession to the theories of the Logicians. (Bhā.II.i.18)

This is said in commenting on Śrī Śaṅkara's sentence at B.S. Bh.II.i.18, 'Suppose we say that there is nothing wrong, since the whole can be present totally in each part, as the universal "cowhood" is totally present in each individual cow', a remark he attributes to the opponent in the course of discussing the relation of wholes and parts.

(3) But there is another type of causality (other than the atomic) in which the material cause assumes new particular states to stand as the effect, while itself remaining universal. Clay and gold, for instance, are universals perceived as present in all the pots and necklaces and other artefacts into which they are formed. And, as we shall explain later on, the pots and necklaces are nothing over and above the clay and gold from which they are fashioned....

Thus the universal, Being, is absolutely real. But its particular states are of indeterminable reality-grade. They are appearances, having Being for their substratum, as the snake and the like, for which a rope is mistaken, have the rope as their base. Such (illusory) states can very well have the character of coming into being and passing away. (Bhā.II.ii.15)

(4) In reality, the effect in its true nature is not different from the material cause. Its true nature *is* the material cause. The effect-form of the material cause is indeterminable, but manifests both as if different from the cause and

also as if the same as the cause.... In truth, merely manifesting as a particular does not amount to being different from the principle of absolute reality. As perceived in empirical experience, however, the effect is in some inexplicable way both the real principle and also different from it. (Bhā. II.i.18)

To anyone who has laboured away at reading the Tarka Pāda (second Book) of the Brahma Siddhi (summarized in Potter, 1981, pp.374-87), it will be clear that, in the above arguments refuting the doctrine of Difference in Identity, Vācaspati Miśra is not a little indebted to Maṇḍana Miśra. The reader will be able to see how the reasoning in the criticism of the doctrine of Difference in Identity developed if he compares the treatment of this topic in the Brahma Siddhi, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika and the Bhāmatī. But it is a point peculiar to the Bhāmatī in the context of refuting Difference in Identity that effects of causes, particular instances of universals and parts of wholes should all be treated as if they were indeterminable as real or unreal.

199 THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE FIVE SHEATHS

In the section called 'The Topic of the Bliss-self' (B.S. I.i.12-9), and in the course of explaining the topic according to the doctrine of the author of the Vṛtti, the Bhāmatī first introduces an opponent who speaks as follows. 'The individual soul is (said) not (to be) another knower, distinct and separate from the supreme Lord. But in this case the supreme Lord, by the same token, would not be different from the individual soul. And then, since the individual soul is of indeterminable reality-grade, the supreme Lord would be of indeterminable reality-grade too. In that way He would not be real'. The Bhāmatī replies as follows:

(1) The superimposed silver is not different from the shell. For it is indeterminable as either identical with it or different. But the shell can be determined as being perfectly real. It is therefore different from the indeterminable silver. (Bhā.I.i.17)

We glean here that the author of the Vṛtti was a strict Advaitin and an adherent of the doctrine that the Absolute was without internal differentiation. This agrees also with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, when it says: 'Therefore (he holds) one cannot attribute the slightest distinction to the Absolute, or claim that, when it is taken in its true nature, "Pleasure is its head"' (cp. Taitt.II.5). Nor is it the Absolute as associated with distinctions for purposes of

meditation that is the subject of this upanishadic passage. For it speaks of the Absolute as beyond speech and thought. So in the phrase "the Bliss-self" (ānandamaya-ātman) the suffix "-maya" should be understood as implying a modification, just as it does in "the Food-self" (annamaya-ātman, = the physical body, a modification of food) and the other members of the series (M.V.39). It should not be taken to imply "the supreme Self, superabundant in Bliss"' (B.S.Bh.I.i.19). And so, if the author of the provisional view (i.e. the author of the Vṛtti) had not agreed that the Absolute was undifferentiated, it would not have been right for him to accept in this way what went against his own doctrine.

So far so good. The author of the Vṛtti was an Advaitin. But what is he doing propagating the view championed in the Bhāmatī that shell-silver and the like are indeterminable as real or unreal? This anachronism passes all comprehension. It is noteworthy that the following verse is quoted in the Bhāmatī in the course of showing the superiority of the finally adopted view to that of the author of the Vṛtti.

(2) On this question, we have a verse that runs as follows. 'On the first (provisional) view (that of the author of the Vṛtti), the terms "the Absolute" and "Bliss" and "made up of Bliss" are each understood in a figurative sense. The term "the Absolute" (brahman) is understood figuratively as a (part or) limb. The term "Bliss" (ānanda) is understood in a figurative sense as "made up of Bliss". The phrase "made up of Bliss" is itself understood in a figurative sense as "superabundance of Bliss" and applied in a unique way to the Absolute. The theory abandons the series of five "selves", each a modification (of some entity known objectively in the world, food, vital energy, mind... bliss) as indicated by the suffix "-maya" (annamaya, prāṇamaya... ānandamaya). (It does so because it identifies the last member of the series with the Absolute, thereby destroying the series of "selves" which are modifications of objectively known entities.) On the second (finally accepted) view, the (preliminary) upanishadic teaching about limbs or parts (left wing, right wing, tail, etc., Taitt.II.5) is afterwards negated (because the Absolute is taken in its true form as undifferentiated, and the teaching about limbs is rejected as preliminary false attribution)'. (Bhā.I.i.19)

Vācaspati explains this as follows:

(3) On this we observe that the primary meaning of the word 'puccha' is 'tail', and it is being understood in a figurative sense if it is taken to mean a part, and a part, moreover, which is 'made up of Bliss'. The primary meaning 'tail' is rejected equally, whether, as in the provisonal view (of the author of the Vṛtti), it be taken to mean a part, or whether,

as in the finally accepted view (of Śrī Śaṅkara), it be taken to mean 'foundation'. The provisional view contradicts the series of five modifications occurring to form five 'selves' (by taking the Bliss-self out of the series and identifying it with the Absolute); the finally accepted view, while safeguarding the series of five 'selves' mentioned in the Upanishad, also contradicts the literal teaching of the text where the latter appears to demote the Absolute to the status of a limb (tail, Taitt.II.5). But the provisional view is quite on its own in interpreting *all three* terms, 'the Absolute', 'made up of Bliss' and 'Bliss' in a figurative sense.

On account of this threefold resort to figurative interpretation, the provisional view is weak and must be rejected. But the finally accepted view is correct, because it does justice to all three of these terms in their primary meanings. (That is, the Absolute is the Absolute in its true, undifferentiated form; the term 'made up of Bliss' finds its rightful place describing the last of the series of five finite selves, each being a modification of some larger principle; and the term 'Bliss' is used in its primary sense to mean the Absolute — (cp. Bṛhad.III.ix.28) — and is not reduced to a mere 'modification of Bliss' on the pretext of its being repeated several times). (Bhā.I.i.19)

But although Vācaspati claims in his final summing up, 'The Absolute is here expounded as the foundation, as that which has to be *known* (and not merely meditated on) and as the main subject of the section', he does not anywhere explain how knowledge of the Absolute as the foundation arises from discrimination of the five sheaths (contrast Śrī Śaṅkara at M.V.39).

One might further ask how Vācaspati knew that the author of the Vṛtti regarded the Absolute as made up of (superabundant in) Bliss and an object of religious worship and meditation. Vācaspati shows that he thought that the author of the Vṛtti held this view when he writes, 'So we must conclude (against the author of the Vṛtti) that the principle called Brahman (taken by the Advaitin of Śaṅkara's school as the Absolute in a sovereign and transcendent sense) is not a limb (the tail) of the modification called the Bliss-self. Hence we must also conclude that the Sūtra did not intend to teach that the Bliss-self was to be meditated on as the Absolute, the latter regarded as a limb (the tail) of the Bliss-self' (Bhā.I.i.19). But he does not explain why he thought that the author of the Vṛtti held this view.

Our own view is that the author of the Vṛtti believed that the Absolute transcended all differentiation. For the revered Commentator, as previously explained (cp. M.V.171,3), showed how the author of the Vṛtti contradicted his own doctrine that the Self was without attributes when he taught that it had 'pleasure for its head' (cp. Taitt.II.5) and therefore had

attributes. Nor did the author of the Vṛtti regard the Absolute as an object of worship and meditation only (as opposed to direct knowledge). How do we know this? Because of the arguments attributed to him — the argument, for example, that the Veda first accepts from worldly experience the idea that the Food-self (the physical body) is the true Self, and then, on that basis, goes on to teach successively that the Vital Energy-self and the others are the true Self, in the manner of a person pointing out the tiny star Arundhatī (Alcor) in the sky by successive approximations (cp. M.V. p.13). He also established that the Absolute was without parts (or limbs) by saying that the series of notions that it had pleasure for its head and the rest each resulted successively from the last external adjunct of the series. He held that the expression 'the notion of the true Bliss-self having a body at all...' (M.V.171,1) did not imply that the Self actually existed in a body. It was part of the teaching that the true Self was without a body, expounded through the dialectic of the rejection of the series of bodies beginning with the body made of food. And the author of the Vṛtti refuted the idea that the Bliss-self was a modification, on the basis of Vedic texts that used the suffix '-maya' in the sense of 'superabundance' And he added his own personal argument that something could only be superabundant in Bliss if it was the cause of Bliss.

There was also the passage in which the author of the Vṛtti set out the opening and other marks that showed how the section II.1 ff. of the Taittirīya Upanishad had to be interpreted. That which is taught as being interior to all in the upanishadic text 'Being, Knowledge, the Infinite' (Taitt.II.1) is the subject of the section, and this is recognized in the explanatory passage that follows. All this shows that the author of the Vṛtti held that at Taittirīya II.5 the term 'Bliss-self' was used to refer to the Absolute in its supreme transcendent form beyond differentiation, with the implication that it had to be *known* (and not merely treated as an object of prescribed meditation).

Thus he held that, in the last analysis, the Absolute was non-dual. But he held that it was different from the 'Knowledge-self' (vijñānātman, cp. Praśna IV.11), the embodied soul capable of action and experience, itself imagined through Ignorance, and that this difference was pointed out in the two Sūtras 'The supreme Self is not the other (is not the individual soul), as this would be illogical' and 'Because of the teaching that there is difference' (B.S. I.i.16-7).

So we conclude that the author of the Vṛtti had the erroneous theory that what had to be known was the Absolute, undifferentiated in itself but different from the 'Food-self' and the rest up to the 'Knowledge-self' (vijñānamaya-ātman, the self made up of exact, determinate cognitions, cp. Taitt.Bh. II.4), *and that this was what was referred to in the Taittirīya Upanishad by the phrase 'Bliss-self'*. If we follow the version

of the teaching of the Vṛtti reproduced by the revered Commentator, it did not anywhere say that the Absolute was a mere object of meditation. Bhāskara, who himself taught that the Absolute was an object of meditation, made the error of supposing that what was actually the teaching of the author of the Vṛtti was the genuine teaching of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara. Having found the Sūtras (B.S. I.i.12-7) explained in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on the lines of the author of the Vṛtti, Bhāskara was greatly incensed to come accross a reference to the example of the mass hypnotist (māyāvin) at Sūtra I.i.17 (reducing all differentiation to illusion), and exclaimed: 'Here some, with a view to safeguarding their own privately hatched theory, offer the following explanation which totally obliterates the meaning of the Sūtra' (Bh.B.S.Bh.I.i.17, M.V. 171,6). Intent on combating this, Vācaspati, too, erroneously attributed to the author of the Vṛtti here the view that the Absolute should be regarded as an object of worship and meditation (not of direct knowledge). The truth is that the phrase 'the Absolute, the tail, the foundation' can most logically be connected with the text about the Absolute having to be *known* when the latter is conceived as being taught independently in its own true nature, and not when it is taken as the 'tail' of the Bliss-self. This was all that the revered Commentator meant to say in his refutation of the doctrine of the author of the Vṛtti.

Be this as it may, there is another more serious point. We have a body of traditional teaching concerning five 'sheaths' (cp. M.V.39). Each is taught successively to be the Self with the phrase 'There is another "self" within this one', the purpose being to dissolve them (that is, for the student to realize through pondering and meditation that each was but an illusory modification of something greater). The point of teaching the Absolute through the method of the discrimination of the five sheaths is to show that it can be known as the substratum of all false ideas constituting the universe of duality, by dissolving all such ideas in the Absolute (i.e. realizing that they are nothing over and above the Absolute), as the illusory notions of a snake and so on are 'dissolved' in the rope (when the latter is known). When the Taittirīya refers to the Absolute as 'the tail' (or foundation), that is undeniably part of this procedure. That this is the true traditional doctrine there can be little dispute. But it is never clearly brought out in the Bhāmatī. This should be noted.

200 DREAM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE THREE STATES

The Bhāmatī does not give the same fundamental importance to

the doctrine of the three states that is given to it in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary and Sureśvara's Vārtika. Consider, however, the Sūtra 'And not as in dream and the like, on account of the essential difference between waking and dream' (B.S. II.ii.29, cp. M.V.172,3). On this Sūtra, Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary remarks, 'What we call a dream-vision is really a kind of memory'. The Bhāmatī comments on this explanation as follows:

(1) Memory is a kind of cognition born of latent impressions alone. Knowledge properly-so-called is called perception (in a wide sense) and contrasted with it. Knowledge arises only when the proper conditions for it are present. These consist in the means of valid knowledge, which are perception (or sense-contact), inference (conceived as based on perception of an inferential sign that is connected by a universal law with something at present unperceived), speech (either uttered by a trustworthy person with authoritative knowledge or consisting in sacred texts), similarity (as when a yak is recognized and named simply through first-time perception added to the previous theoretical knowledge that it is *like* a cow), presumption (as when a perceived state or event or text-meaning is deemed inexplicable on any other hypothesis) and knowledge of absence (meaning the non-perception of something where one would expect it). But here, in the case of one asleep, none of these conditions is present, so that only previous latent impressions are left as a possible source of cognition. Hence dream, because it is born of latent impressions, is a kind of memory. And that memory born of impressions, perverted by the defect of sleep, makes one's parents and others who are not present appear to be present. There is thus already a distinction between memory and perception (reading upalabdheḥ); and a dream implies a perversion even of memory. So the difference between perception and dream is very considerable. (Bhā. II.ii.29)

In this connection, it is clear that people in the world distinguish verbally between waking and dream, and they experience waking directly, and, having done so, recognize that dream is a kind of memory. It is on the basis of accepting this very distinction between waking and dream that the Buddhist makes the inference that the ideas of the waking state, such as those of a pillar and so on, lack an external object, just like those of dream. This inference is wrong, since it contradicts immediate experience. For one who has immediate experience of the fact that perception and memory are different is not in a position to make an inference that they are not different. This is all that the revered Commentator intended to say here. There is no teaching here in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary that dream is a form of memory. For the similarity between dream and waking is established elsewhere

(e.g. G.K.Bh.II.5 and 6; cp. Sac, Salient Features p.74).

It is also relevant on the subject of dream to consider Brahma Sūtra II.i.28, together with some remarks at Bhāmatī III.ii.1 and 3, and Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on Brahma Sūtras III.ii. 3-4. Sūtra II.i.28 says, '(Many may come forth from one without destroying its unity.) For it happens thus with the soul in dream; and (gods and magicians produce) variegated creations'.

(2) This Sūtra makes the doctrine of Māyā explicit. The soul, when beholding a dream, projects chariots and other objects through the mind alone, without forfeiting its own true form. (Bhā.II.i.28)

It will become clear at every stage below how no projection really takes place (see especially M.V.200,6).

(3) The projected worlds of the waking state and the dream-state are both of indeterminable reality-grade and illusory. In this sense they are both different from the Absolute. However, the projected world of the waking state continues consistently until the attainment of direct vision that one's true Self is the Absolute; with that it comes to an end. Is that also the case with the projected dream-world? Or is it that the latter comes to an end daily? This is the topic under discussion. (Bhā.III.ii.1)

This is not the topic that was originally under discussion. For the fact that dreams are cancelled and known to have been unreal every day is known to everyone. The conception 'of indeterminable reality-grade... and therefore different from the Absolute' is peculiar to the system of the Bhāmatī and does not agree with the doctrine of Śrī Śaṅkara. It would have been better to have said that, since nothing is different from the Absolute, the vision of both the waking world and the dream-world is set up by Ignorance and is illusory. The subject of projections coming to an end with direct vision of the Absolute will be dealt with at its proper place below (M.V.204).

(4) Here the reference is to all erroneous cognitions in general. They are thought of as real at the time they are perceived. Dream-cognition is only referred to here as a special case illustrating the general point being made. (Bhā.III.ii.1)

It is true that in considering dream-cognition one also considers erroneous cognitions like that of shell-silver. But it does not seem that Śrī Śaṅkara intended all erroneous cognitions to be under discussion at this point. People in the world do not insist on the truth of illusory perceptions such as shell-silver. And Vedanta does not undertake any general

enquiry into the nature of empirical knowledge.

However, there does have to be an investigation into dream here. For if what was seen at the time in dream was real, the Self would not be relationless (as the Upanishads claim, Bṛhad. IV.iii.15, etc.). So we conclude that what was seen in dream must have been false, as there are no difficulties over this. The case of erroneous perceptions like that of shell-silver is different. They do not exclude the occurrence of perception of real objects at the same time. For at the time of an error one may well be aware of empirically real things at the same time, in such a form as 'That is a stone there, this is silver here'. In the case of dream, on the other hand, there is the difference that in reflection on waking it is seen that nothing *existed in the dream at all. At the time of the dream itself, however, there is no chance of discovering that it is all an illusion, as in the course of a dream one has the notion that one is awake. And then again the upanishadic text says 'projects' in regard to dreams, which suggests that they are real at the time of their projection. So it appears correct to say that there is occasion to investigate whether dreams are real at the time of their projection or whether they are in fact false and only have the power of suggesting that they are real.*

In his Bhāmatī sub-commentary to Brahma Sūtra III.ii.3, 'But dream is a mere illusion, because its nature is to be an incomplete manifestation', Vācaspati writes:

(5) Curds are a transformation of milk. But there can be no such transformation of silver back into shell.... The passage ends: 'And thus the Buddhists say: "The object of a judgment is always a series of point-instants (never the single point-instant, which can be apprehended but not represented)"' (Dharmottara, p.16; trans. Stcherbatsky p.34). (Bhā.III.ii.3)

This whole refutation of the doctrine of the alleged 'reality' of the shell-silver and the rest was irrelevant and unnecessary. But when he goes on from there, in the style of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, 'This shows that dream-cognition is false...', everything he says is acceptable.

There is a passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary here, concerned with refuting the opponent's view, 'The projections of the intermediate state (i.e. dream) have absolute reality', on which the Bhāmatī does not comment. It runs:

(6) (This being so, when the author of the Sūtras said (B.S. III.ii.1) 'There is a projection (of a world) in dream, as the Veda says so', this has to be understood in a figurative sense.) It is like when we say 'The plough keeps the oxen going'. Here it is not literally true that the plough carries the oxen along with it, but we say it because the plough is the occasion for

keeping the oxen going. Similarly the Veda teaches figuratively that the sleeper projects chariots and the like, and says 'He is the creator (of the dream)' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.10), meaning that he was the occasion for them, in the sense of being the one who formerly did the good and bad deeds which were the cause of deserving the experiences of delight and fear occasioned by the dream-visions of chariots and the like — not that he literally projected (created) real chariots and so on while he was asleep.... This also explains how we should understand the upanishadic texts (Bṛhad.IV.iii.9 and Kaṭha II.ii.8) which speak of 'fashioning' (nirmāṇa) in dream. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.4)

Here it is said that in dream the sleeper does not create anything. He is said figuratively to be a 'creator' on the basis of our experience of delight and fear and other emotions in dream, due to our deeds performed in earlier lives.

(7) The same reasoning (showing the unreality of dream) applies to the other Vedic text (Kaṭha II.ii.8) quoted above (at B.S. III.ii.2) in favour of a real creation of dream-objects. The statement made at the same place (B.S. III.ii.2) that the 'creator' of the dream was the Self as 'the conscious one' (prājña) was also wrong. For in another text we are taught that this is an activity performed by the individual soul (jīva), which itself kills (the body of waking consciousness, in the sense of depriving it of consciousness) and itself creates (a dream-body and dream-world) with its own light and reveals it with its own vision (Bṛhad.IV.iii.9). Even the passage (from the Kaṭha Upanishad) quoted here earlier, beginning 'He is awake in those who are asleep' (Kaṭha II.ii.8), refers to the individual soul alone as 'the creator of its desires', as it is a passage appealing to ordinary empirical experience. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.4)

This emphasizes that the creation of dream-visions is the work of the individual soul, not that of the Self as the conscious one (prājña). But this is also only admitted in a figurative sense, for the reasons given above (at M.V.200,6).

(8) Moreover, in the waking state it is difficult to discern how the Self is of the nature of pure self-luminous light, as it is in direct contact with the senses and their objects, and is inextricably confused with external lights such as the sun. Attention is drawn to dream in order to enable us to discern the light of the Self as pure and self-luminous. In this connection, if the text about the creation of chariots were taken literally it could not teach self-luminosity (because it would teach that the external objects of dream, including the dream-sun and its light, were real, so that the light in dream would come from outside). Hence the text speaking of the absence of any chariots, etc., in dream must be taken as fundamental, and

the texts speaking of the creation of chariots, etc., must be taken as figurative. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.4)

The Veda is primarily concerned, in its teachings about dream, to explain the self-luminosity of the Self, and in this capacity it emphasizes the absence *of chariots and so on. It speaks of a 'projection' by the individual soul where the latter is in fact a mere occasion, in the manner explained above (M.V. 200,6).*

(9) Nor does our theory contradict the awareness we have of the presence of the light of the Self as the 'conscious one' (prājña) even in dream. For, as the Lord of all, it can preside in all states. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.4)

All that is denied is that the Self as the 'conscious one' (prājña) is an arbitrary projector of dreams. It is not denied that it distributes to the soul the results of its deeds in previous lives in the form of experiences of delight, fear and so on. It is instrumental in ensuring that the individual souls experience the results of their deeds performed in previous lives, because it is the overseer presiding over the distribution of the rewards of action.

(10) But the sole purpose of the passage now in question (Bṛhad.IV.iii.9) is to show that this creation that occurs in dream is not real like the creation of the cosmos beginning with the ether and other elements. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.4)

The Veda does not speak of a dream 'being born from the Self' in the same way that it teaches (for its special purposes) a creation wrought by the Self as the 'conscious one' (prājña) in the text 'The ether was born from the Self' (Taitt.II.1). So one cannot proclaim that dreams are perfectly real on the authority of the Veda.

(11) It is not that the creation of the cosmos itself is real in the absolute sense. For it has been explained in commenting on the Sūtra 'It (the world as effect) is non-different from that (the Absolute), as is shown by such texts as (Chānd. VI.i.4) "a suggestion of speech"' (B.S. II.i.14) that such texts affirm that the whole pluralistic world-appearance is a mere illusion. But, before the practical realization of the fact that the Absolute is one's own Self, the world-appearance beginning with the ether and the other great elements, has a lasting coherent structure, whereas the world-appearance in dreams is effaced daily. So it is significant if the author of the Sūtras here refers to dream as a 'mere illusion', as in the case of dream the words have a special (intensified) sense. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.4)

The 'conscious one' (prājña) is not the creator of dreams in the way that He is the creator of the ether and the cosmos. However, both cosmos and dreams are illusory.

Even if one were to admit that the world of waking consciousness was real, the chariots and other dream-objects would be non-existent relative even to that. But it is taught here that they are mere empty phantoms. When all the phenomena of dream, external and internal alike, are shown to be false, this establishes the self-luminosity of the Self. We have also explained how even the creation of the cosmos beginning with ether is a mere illusion, basing our arguments on the non-difference of the effect from its material cause (M.V.33). The account given in the second Book of the Kārikās of Gauḍapāda (G.K. II.4-5) showing that waking and dream are both equally illusory agrees with the present portion of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. There is not so much as a hint of this in the system of the Bhāmatī.

201 DREAMLESS SLEEP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE THREE STATES

On the subject of dreamless sleep, the Bhāmatī chiefly follows Maṇḍana.

(1) Though we do not accept that there is in dreamless sleep a mental cognition bearing on non-existence as its object, we do accept that there is a mental modification in the form of the latent impressions (saṃskāra) resulting from previous projection (vikṣepa). (Bhā.II.iv.12; cp. B.Sid. p.149-50, Potter, 1981, p.415)

(2) There is this difference between dreamless sleep and cosmic dissolution, namely that in dreamless sleep the vital energy alone is left functioning, while in cosmic dissolution even that is at an end. Nevertheless, it should be understood that dreamless sleep and cosmic dissolution are both the same insofar as they each consist in Ignorance in its form as dissolution, but accompanied by the latent impressions of previous action and projection. (Bhā.I.iii.30)

Here it should not be forgotten that dreamless sleep can only be observed by someone else other than the person alseep, not by the sleeper himself. From the standpoint of the dreamless sleep experience itself, there is no difference between dreamless sleep and cosmic dissolution. One should ponder here what Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Māṇḍūkya Commentary: 'It is evident that dreamless sleep and the Unmanifest are identical, as neither contain any distinctions' (Māṇḍ.Bh.3 ad fin.*).*

(3) Therefore, because this Self, when it loses empirical consciousness in dreamless sleep, is said by Śrī Śaṅkara to have the form of purity, he means that it *seems* to have the form of purity, not that it actually has it. (Bhā.I.iv.18, cp. M.V. 182,3)

(4) The ether in the pot, indeed, is non-different from the universal ether, but it appears to be different insofar as it appears to conform to the shape of the pot. There is no difficulty in distinguishing its apparently limited form, as its apparent conditioning adjunct, the pot, is clearly distinguishable. In the same way, the individual soul, imagined through a conditioning adjunct consisting in beginningless indeterminable Ignorance, is not really different from the supreme Self. But it appears to come into being and undergo suppression with the coming into being and suppression of its apparent conditioning adjunct. In dreamless sleep and other states where empirical consciousness lapses, the soul appears to be suppressed, and in waking and dream, where empirical consciousness resumes, the soul appears to come into being once again. This individual conditioning adjunct consists of Ignorance and its impressions. It is beginningless, and flows on continuously as cause and effect. Being itself easily distinguished, the soul which it apparently delimits is easily distinguishable too. (Bhā.III.ii.9; cp. Sac, Misconceptions p.57 f.)

Here waking and dreamless sleep are represented as standing in the relation of cause and effect, proceeding respectively from Ignorance as effect, and from its impressions as cause. But cause and effect depend upon a flow of time, and in dreamless sleep there is no time whatever. The Bhāmatī nowhere explains how causality could operate in these circumstances.

(5) It is the supreme Self only that is the locus of dreamless sleep, as the soul then glides into the pericardium through the subtle interior canals (nāḍī) of the body. Because of the absence of wrong knowledge there is partial realization of the supreme Self. For the soul only has that state for that time. Since there is then no knowledge of reality, Ignorance is not completely uprooted. Hence there is a re-awakening of the soul in the form of waking and dream. (Bhā.III.ii.7; cp. Sac, Misconceptions p.52)

But no explanation is given here to show how the locus of dreamless sleep could be the Self when the barrier of Ignorance remains.

(6) Thus there is union with the Absolute both in dreamless sleep and swoon. But since the union in swoon is not the same as that in dreamless sleep it is called 'half-union'. (Bhā. III.ii.10; cp. Sac, Misconceptions p.65)

In fact there are no distinctions of degree or anything else in 'union' in this context. For our experience of it is not characterized by any distinctions whatever. And acceptance of the view that there is 'half-union' with the Absolute in swoon contradicts the words of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, which say 'We do not say that in swoon there is half-union of the soul with the Absolute' (B.S.Bh.III.ii.10). The doctrine that in dreamless sleep there is union with the Absolute, and the same union also in swoon, is part of the provisional teaching, but it is a part of the provisional teaching that Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary accepts. An unjustified distinction of grade between sleep and swoon, however, is introduced by the Bhāmatī when it maintains that in dreamless sleep the soul has partial realization of the supreme Self, whereas swoon is half-union.

Here the following is to be noted. There are places in which the Vedic texts take up the examination of the three states in order to show the distinction between the states on the one hand and the self-luminous light of the Self that illumines them on the other, the assumption being that this light is not distinguished by those who identify themselves with the body and its organs and so on with feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. In the course of such argumentation, various objections are brought up as provisional views and are answered by appeals to what obtains in other states of the soul, until finally the texts proclaim the supreme Self in its true nature beyond all particular states. There is an example of this in the eighth Book of the Chāndogya Upanishad, called the Dahara Vidyā.

First of all objections are raised showing the defects that afflict the Self when it identifies itself with the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. 'His body in the waking state is (i.e. may be) blind... they seem to strike him (eva = iva) in dream)'... '(in dream) he seems to weep' (Chānd. VIII.x.10-11) and 'Verily, (in dreamless sleep) he does not know himself' (Chānd.VIII.xi.2). And then the nature of the true Self is depicted, separate from its bodies and free from any of the states, in the words 'rising above this body it attains the supreme light and manifests in its true form' (Chānd.VIII.xii.3).

The explanation in the Bhāmatī mistakes the order in which the terms appear. It says, 'The text "He is blind..." refers to the dream-state, as in that state the external sense-organs are not active; the text "He seems to weep" refers to the waking state, because that state is characterized by pain and suffering' (Bhā.IV.iv.1). If you compare this with the way the matter is actually set out in the upanishadic text you would presume it must be the result of a copyist's error.

There are other places where the Upanishads first associate the Self in the three different states each with its particular

cosmic conditioning adjunct, so that the individuality of the soul is contradicted and it assumes the cosmic forms of Vaiśvānara, Hiraṇyagarbha and the Unmanifest Self, when considered in the waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep states respectively. Then afterwards they exhibit it in its form as Turīya, untouched by any of the states, free from all conditioning adjuncts. As, for instance, in the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad the Self is first imagined as having four quarters (cp. M.V.43,6); but this is only a means whereby it is finally exhibited in its true nature as bereft of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep in the passage beginning 'Without consciousness directed inwards...' and continuing later 'The sages regard this Self as "The Fourth"' (Māṇḍ.7).

There are other passages which exhibit the soul in the state of dreamless sleep itself as free from Ignorance, desire and action, as pure and present in its own true form. For example, in the meditation on 'Being' in the Chāndogya we hear, 'Then, my dear one, (in dreamless sleep) he is merged in pure Being, he has become one with his own Self. That is why they say of him, "He sleeps", meaning that he has become one with his true Self (svam apīto)' (Chānd.VI.viii.1, cp. M.V.40,5). Or again, we hear in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka (of the state of dreamless sleep) 'This, verily, is his form in which he is free from craving, free from evils, free from fear.... Embraced by the Self as Consciousness, he has no knowledge of anything, within or without' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.21).

In this connection, if the author of the Bhāmatī holds that 'the Power of Ignorance' (avidyā-śakti), otherwise known as 'Ignorance in Dissolution' (laya-lakṣaṇāvidyā), is cancelled when (Ignorance in the form of) wrong knowledge is cancelled, then there is no contradiction on this point between the systems of Śrī Śaṅkara and the Bhāmatī. For both maintain that belief in the existence of 'the Power of Ignorance' is only based on an inference depending on the experience of wrong knowledge. We have already heard the author of the Bhāmatī say the following:

(7) The possibility of liberated souls undergoing rebirth is ruled out by the fact that the power of introducing differentiation on the cosmic plane, which arises ultimately from (Ignorance in the form of) erroneous knowledge (and its impressions), operates regularly and appropriately in each individual case. The idea is that there is a regular law that where there is no cause there is no effect; and that (in the case of the liberated souls) erroneous knowledge with its latent powers will have been destroyed root and branch by metaphysical knowledge. (Bhā.II.i.9, = M.V.195,9)

Both Śrī Śaṅkara and Vācaspati hold equally that the examination of the three states is not intended to affirm the existence of the three states. For instance, Śrī Śāṅkara's Commen-

tary says: 'For the purpose of the texts in expounding the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is not to declare that the Self is subject to these states or to transmigratory experience in any form, but to show, on the contrary, that it is entirely *bereft* of these three states and that it is *not* subject to transmigratory experience in any form' (B.S. Bh.I.iii.42, M.V.44,5). On this the Bhāmatī comments as follows:

(8) The intention here is not to teach that the Self has the three states. On the contrary, the intention is to teach that the supreme Self is different from these states and devoid of them, because they come and go while it remains stable. This is clear from the context in the subsequent passage. (Bhā. I.iii.42)

Sureśvara's Vārtika brings this point out even more clearly. Through dreamless sleep the falsity of dream and waking are revealed, since the three states not only exclude one another but also contradict one another (M.V.122).

202 LIBERATION IS ETERNAL AS IT IS ONE'S STATE WHEN ONE HAS REALIZED ONE'S OWN TRUE NATURE

Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says 'The bodiless state called liberation is constant and eternal' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4). On this the Bhāmatī makes the following comments.

(1) For whatever is natural is constant and eternal, like Consciousness. And this (the 'bodiless state' called liberation) is natural, so it is constant and eternal. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.116-7/173)

(2) A goal that is achieved will necessarily vary to some extent with the means adopted to achieve it. But liberation is constant and eternal, since it is establishment in the Absolute in its true nature. Hence, being eternal, it cannot be a goal subject to achievement. (Bhā.III.iv.52)

(3) It is true that liberation transcends worldly perception. But it is known from the Vedic teaching to be establishment in the Self in its true nature through the abolition of Ignorance along with its impressions. (Bhā.IV.i.1)

(4) The Buddhists say that the Self is the momentary cognition. And since they regard liberation as the engendering of a pure cognition (free from subject-object duality), they regard it as something that has to be achieved. Others have the view that liberation is the assumption by the Self of a *state* of

transcendence, after throwing off the *state* of transmigration. For them, liberation is the result of a modification.... Liberation cannot be eternal on either of these views; for it will be an effect, like curds or a pot (and so have a beginning and an end in time).... Ignorance does not rest in the Absolute, but in the individual soul. As we have already said, it is of indeterminable reality-grade. The Absolute is therefore eternally pure. However, conceding for argument's sake the supposition that the Absolute might be impure, Śrī Śaṅkara refutes the teaching that it could (even then) be purified by action. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.126/190-4)

203 LIBERATION IN LIFE

Vācaspati admits liberation in life (jīvan-mukti) just as Maṇḍana Miśra does (B.Sid. p.132, M.V.101,1, *ad fin.*). He accordingly disregards Bhāskara's refutation of the concept of liberation in life (M.V.177,4-5). Following Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, he establishes that the 'attainment of the Absolute' achieved through the Path of the Flame (M.V.127,2, note) is that of the knower of the Absolute in its lower form, not that of the person of perfect enlightenment.

(1) The truth is expressed in a verse which runs: 'Any *path*, such as the Path of the Flame, which takes the one proceeding upon it to somewhere he has not been before, must take one to the Absolute in some aspect of its lower form as an effect. The Absolute in its supreme form is already present, as it is the very Self of the universe'....

Some say that the enlightened person, as a person of 'steady wisdom' (Gītā II.54-5), is admitted to conform to the conditions of the transmigratory world before the fall of the body, even though only in appearance. Similarly, he would surely conform to the characteristics of the subtle body until its final destruction. Going on a path and reaching something hitherto not attained (read aprāpta-prāpter) would then become explicable. And there would be the authority of the Veda to say that on reaching his goal (at the end of the Path of the Flame) he would lose his subtle body and become liberated. But this idea is wrong. For the Veda expressly denies that the one who has the highest knowledge 'goes forth' on any path on the death of the physical body (cp. Bṛhad.IV.iv.6). (Bhā. IV.iii.7)

(2) For how could there be a distinction between a person going, and a place to which he had to go, in the case of an enlightened person who had totally uprooted Ignorance through direct knowledge that the soul in its true nature is the Absolute, knowledge based on the unshakable conviction 'All this world is the Absolute' and 'The Absolute am I'? And in the

absence of that distinction, how could he travel on a path like the Path of the Flame?...

Nor is it correct to suppose that a metaphysically ignorant person is taught meditation on the Path of the Flame to the end that he might attain the Absolute in its supreme form, nor, again, that he should engage on it with the same spirit and for the same reasons that the faithful perform their obligatory and other ritual. For the following dilemma will be found insoluble. If meditation on the Path of the Flame is a means to realization of the Absolute in its supreme form, is it dependent on knowledge of the Absolute in its supreme form, or is it independent of that? It cannot be independent. For the Upanishads openly deny that there is any other means to liberation apart from knowledge of the Absolute in its supreme form. 'Only when one has known Him can one pass beyond death; there is no other path for the journey' (Śvet.VI.15).

So we must suppose that it is only as a mere auxiliary to metaphysical knowledge that meditation on the Path of the Flame is a means to attainment of the Absolute. But in that case, in what way is it helpful? Is it helpful in fulfilling the purposes of knowledge, or is it helpful in producing knowledge? It could not be helpful in fulfilling the purposes of knowledge of the Absolute. For once knowledge of the Absolute had arisen, meditation on the Path of the Flame could never co-exist with it; for such knowledge bears on non-duality, and could not co-exist with the duality implied by the meditation, the two being in mutual contradiction. Nor can meditation on the Path of the Flame be a factor in the production of knowledge, as ritual sacrifice and the like are, through preliminary purification of the mind. For the Veda teaches that this meditation has another direct purpose of its own. It leads to attainment of the Absolute (in its lower form as 'The World of Brahmā'), as we know from the text 'He leads them to the Absolute' (Chānd.IV.xv.5). It is ritual sacrifice and the like (and not the meditations practised on the Path of the Flame) that is an auxiliary helping towards the rise of metaphysical knowledge, as the Vedic texts connect such acts with the rise of the *desire for* metaphysical knowledge (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23, cp. M.V.53,7).

Therefore, if there is to be agreement with the many Vedic texts that could be advanced, and agreement with reason, the term 'the Absolute' cannot have its primary meaning here. It must be interpreted figuratively to mean the Absolute in its lower form (as the World of Brahmā), for that is near the Absolute. (Bhā.IV.iii.7)

Here it is denied that one can attain the Absolute in its supreme form, the means to (direct) liberation, on the Path of the Flame (Chānd.V.x.1).

(3) Immediate apprehension of the Absolute as pure non-duality

contradicts the whole world-appearance of plurality displayed by beginningless Ignorance. And by contradicting that world-appearance, it contradicts all action within it. Further, it puts an end instantly to all merit and demerit arising from deeds in previous lives that have not begun to fructify in the life in which immediate apprehension of the Absolute is obtained, but not to the stream of successive experiences of pleasure and pain arising from the merit and demerit from previous lives that has begun to fructify in that life, and which determines its length, and the caste of the body in which it takes place. For that stream of action and experience goes forward as an entirely excellent way of life, totally different from the lives of those who are still metaphysically asleep. Otherwise we could not explain the continued luminous existence after liberation of divine sages like Hiraṇyagarbha, Manu, Uddālaka and others, whose pure minds shed light on all around them, since they were divested of the whole veil of the web of the passions. And the Vedas, the Smṛtis, the Epics and the Purāṇas speak of them as both knowing the metaphysical truth and also surviving through world-periods such as a Day of Brahmā, a Year of Brahmā and even cycles of such Years of Brahmā (manvantara). Nor is it in any way credible that people of such great intellect should not have known the Absolute, and should have been mere humans, ignorant of the metaphysical truth, and without holiness or intelligence. Hence, if we are to follow tradition, we must assert that, even when the metaphysical reality has been known in immediate apprehension, one still has to wait and experience all the results of the acts from previous lives which have begun to fructify in the life in which illumination is attained. Otherwise they will not be exhausted. (Bhā.IV.i.15)

(4) The text 'He has to wait only so long...' (Ṣhānd.VI.xiv.2) does not affirm that he has to wait a long time, but, accepting from other texts that there is a certain time to wait, affirms that this wait is limited till the death of the body. (Bhā. IV.i.15)

This was also a view adopted by Maṇḍana. He says that 'waiting only so long' means that liberation comes soon (B.Sid. p.130, M.V.101,2). But Vācaspati does not appear to pay attention here to the doctrine of immediate release (sadyo-mukti) also mentioned by Maṇḍana (B.Sid. p.131, M.V.101,2).

(5) We see in worldly experience that two contradictory things can sometimes co-exist for a certain time; hence we have no ground for contradicting revealed teaching when it says that in some contexts they do so for a long time. There can be no argument about what is firmly established by an authoritative means of proof. (Bhā.IV.i.15)

Here no explanation is given as to what the contradiction actually is. And that is indeed what one would expect. For there is no contradiction between knowledge of the Self, in which there is no individual capable of action, and merely conforming to the manifestations of erroneous knowledge without being deceived into the belief that they are true. The contradiction lies between knowledge of the Self and erronesous knowledge (where the person in error believes his knowledge to be true). But erroneous knowledge in this sense is cancelled simultaneously with the rise of knowledge of the Self. So where is the contradiction?

(6) And the man of steady wisdom is not a mere aspirant. For in the case of an aspirant, his earlier ideas do not stay with him steadily. He progresses with each successive improved meditation. But the man of steady wisdom has reached the summit. He is no longer aspiring, but has attained perfection. (Bhā.IV.i.15)

This is said to clarify Śrī Śaṅkara's teaching at B.S.Bh.IV. i.15 to the effect that liberation in life certainly occurs, and takes the form of the 'steady wisdom' mentioned in the Veda and Smṛti. Maṇḍana had a different view. He said: 'The man of steady wisdom is not one who has attained perfection and divested himself of all Ignorance. He is only a student, one who is still undergoing discipline and has reached a certain (advanced) stage' (B.Sid. p.130, M.V.101,2). Vācaspati's present text has the additional aim of contradicting that.

However, Vācaspati's view that the aspirant progresses through a series of more and more advanced meditations, while the person of steady wisdom has reached the summit of excellence, does not agree with Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The revered Commentator does not admit that an aspirant rises to steady wisdom through any upward change in the type of discipline he practises. He rises to steady wisdom through discrimination of the true nature of the Self associated with 'nididhyāsana' (which should not be flatly identified with sustained meditation, see references given above at the T.N. to M.V.53, intro.). For we find him saying in his Gītā Commentary, 'Steady means "soundly established". It refers to the wisdom that arises through discrimination of the Self from the not-self. He who has it is "a person of steady wisdom, an enlightened person"' (Bh.G.Bh.II.55).

(7) Nor are fear and trembling and the like results of knowledge; they do not arise from mere knowledge alone. It is knowledge falsely determined as a snake and the like that causes fear and trembling. And since such knowledge is not real or true but of indeterminable reality-grade, it cannot produce any real result. Its results, such as fear and trembling, are not themselves real. Such results, too, dissolve upon critical

enquiry and are inexplicable in character. And there is nothing impossible in an inexplicable result coming from an inexplicable cause. 'One must offer the food appropriate for the sprite for whom it is intended' (similarly, cause and effect must agree in nature). (Bhā.IV.i.15)

'Awakening, through cancellation of wrong knowledge, to the fact that one is not an individual able to perform action, puts an end to action. But wrong knowledge, though cancelled, may continue for a time through the force of impressions, as in the case of double-vision of the moon. The enlightened person, however, does not have any doubt about whether he does or does not have a body' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.15, cp. M.V.59,15). From a consideration of this and similar passages of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, we would derive the impression that, since the sense of being an individual capable of acting and experiencing was due to wrong knowledge, all actions and their results would be completely cancelled for the enlightened person. The true view was expressed at B.S.Bh.IV.i.13 (M.V.58,7): 'For the conviction of one who knows the Absolute is, "I am the Absolute, by nature incapable of individual action or experience eternally through past, present and future time, quite contradictory to the notion which prevailed before, namely that I was an individual, capable of action and experience"'.

But there is a Sūtra (B.S. IV.i.15) which was composed from the ordinary common sense standpoint, from which one might suppose that an aspirant, a person possessing a body and pursuing discipline in it, should attain liberation after acquiring knowledge through pursuit of that discipline. It runs, 'Only those actions (are destroyed by metaphysical knowledge) whose effects have not begun to fructify'.... And it was in commenting on this that Śrī Śaṅkara said, 'For if anyone, even though he be only one person, nevertheless has the conviction in his own heart that he has immediate knowledge of the Absolute and is also possessed of a physical body at the same time, how can anyone else shake him from this conviction?' (M.V.101,4).

If you say that the truth must be understood in this way, or else we shall have to say that transcending the body occurs only at the death of the body, not during life — we reply 'No'. For it is made clear in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary that from the highest standpoint the notion that one is embodied is due to metaphysical Ignorance (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, M.V.265,3). And as the arguments for and against have already been given (M.V. 25,1;28,10;47,2;59,10;61,7;67,4, etc.) there is no occasion to rehearse them now.

In the system of the Bhāmatī, however, the answer to objections is given on the basis that the liberating knowledge, the fear and the trembling and so on, are all inexplicable (i.e. of indeterminable reality-grade). It will be clear to anyone who studies the parallel passage in the Brahma Siddhi (B.Sid. p.131) that this derives from Vācaspati's weakness for

following the methods of Maṇḍana.

204 THE MEANS TO LIBERATION

The Bhāmatī describes the steps leading up to liberation as follows:

(1) From the performance of the daily obligatory ritual there arises merit. As a consequence, demerit is brought to an end. It is this demerit which stains the purity of the luminous quality in the intellect through the wrong idea that transmigratory life, which is impermanent, impure and of the nature of pain, is eternal, pure and of the nature of joy. With the cessation of demerit, the doors of perception and reason are opened, and through them one discovers without hindrance that transmigratory life is impermanent, impure and painful. From this arises dispassion or indifference to worldly life, and from this the desire to get rid of it; consequently one seeks the means to achieve this. When such a seeker hears that the means is metaphysical knowledge, he strives to acquire that. Finally, through the systematic execution of the discipline of hearing the texts, pondering over them and subjecting them to sustained meditation he acquires metaphysical knowledge. It is therefore correct to say that performance of ritual is a remote auxiliary aiding the rise of metaphysical knowledge through purifying the luminous element in the mind. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.62-3/85)

(2) It is the one deeply desirous of knowledge and equipped with self-discipline who can undertake hearing of and pondering over the texts with a one-pointed mind. For such an one, indubitable conviction arises from the text 'That thou art'. One who has this conviction (read nirvicikitsaṃ) is no longer in a position to undertake ritual. For him, rituals are of no use for immediate apprehension of the Self, either by way of promoting meditation or of promoting the quick fruition of the results of meditation. When once there is a certain (extraordinary) idea (vṛtti) of the mind (in the form of direct apprehension of the Absolute) this brings liberation, and one should understand that the possibility of rituals being performed in these circumstances has been totally refuted. Bhāskara's statement (Bh.B.S.Bh.III.iv.26, M.V.173,5) that the duties and rituals of one's caste and stage of life have to be continued until death, just like inner and outer control, was therefore an ill-considered one. (Bhā.III.iv.26)

Here the doctrine of a combination of metaphysical knowledge with action is refuted. The view of the Brahma Siddhi is ignored. There it was maintained (B.Sid. p.35, M.V.100;107,1, note) that even after metaphysical knowledge had arisen from

the upanishadic text, a shadow of erroneous knowledge would continue through the force of powerful impressions earlier built up, and that there was still need for the practice of affirmation of the metaphysical truth and the performance of ritualistic sacrifices and other such duties in order to bring all erroneous knowledge to an end. As for Bhāskarācārya's doctrine, that is openly denounced.

(3) Perhaps you will claim that there is need of ritual to support meditation if immediate awareness of the Absolute is to be generated in the vṛtti (modification) of the mind. But this would be wrong. For meditation on the Self is incompatible with ritual, so that the latter cannot stand as an auxiliary to it. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.58/79)

(4) One could make the following objection. It is seen that empirical experience based on erroneous cognition is found to continue even after the metaphysical truth has been known.... And so, since an impression of Ignorance continues in force, it is logical that there should be performance of rituals and caste duties, and that it should be these, with metaphysical knowledge as an auxiliary, that root out the impression of Ignorance. It would not be right to ask how action can destroy Ignorance when it is itself of the nature of Ignorance, or to ask how, if action did destroy Ignorance, action, the destroyer, could itself be destroyed — for there are many examples of things destroying themselves and other things together (as a poison may neutralize another poison while itself becoming neutralized in the act)....

To this objection we reply as follows. What you say is true up to a point. There may be undubitable awareness of the reality as the inmost Self, and as different from the physical body and other phenomena engendered by Ignorance, such awareness arising from the discipline of repeated enquiry into the meaning of the Absolute from the upanishadic passage which begins 'All this was Being only in the beginning, my dear one' and ends 'That thou art' (Chānd.VI.ii.1 - VI.viii.7). And yet the impressions of Ignorance may continue, and the practical experiences that go with them. Even so, the enlightened person takes such ideas and experiences as illusory. He does not believe in their reality. He is like the man with a disordered liver, who does not believe that sugar is really bitter, even though its taste to him personally is such that he has to spit it out onto the ground. One who has ascertained the unreality of the whole complex of the act, its performer, his instruments, the procedure and the results is not a fit candidate to perform an act. Only one who knows all these things (and takes them to be real) can perform an act....

Indeed, the enlightened man is not wholly free from the conviction that he is a human being; the conviction continues up to a point, while the impressions of Ignorance last.... And so

even the one who knows the truth about the Absolute may still, if he continues to have the conviction that he is an individual, incur demerit if he commits unlawful acts — just like the one still in transmigratory life. We do not accept any double standard in regard to the laws of action.

Thus (in the case of one who has known the Absolute, only prohibitions, not commands, apply and) there is no dependence on activity for getting results through meditation or even for taking up meditation at all. For, as we have explained, after the rise of indubitable metaphysical knowledge, the enlightened person is no longer a fit candidate for action. And we have the upanishadic text: 'Just a few obtain immortality, and not through ritual or progeny or wealth, but through renunciation' (Kaivalya 2).

Are rituals then entirely useless in this context? For, if so, that would contradict such texts as 'They seek to know through sacrifice...' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22). No, for actions like ritual sacrifices are remote auxiliaries to knowledge (since their performance purifies the mind). (Bhā.I.i.1, p.58-61/80-3)

Here Maṇḍana and Vācaspati are alike in point of making knowledge derive from verbal revelation dependent on repeated affirmation; but they clearly do not agree on the topic of combining knowledge with meditation and ritual (cp. M.V.100,1;107,1, note). And Vācaspati's view that there is no possibility of action after the rise of metaphysical knowledge (abandons Maṇḍana and) follows Śrī Śaṅkara.

(5) It is not every kind of knowledge of the Absolute that puts an end to the attributes of the transmigratory life; it is only that form of knowledge that culminates in immediate intuition that does so. And immediate intuition of the Absolute is a particular state assumed by the mind. It arises in the mind when the latter is associated with certain impressions derived from hearing, pondering and sustained meditation. It is comparable to the power to apprehend the exact pitch of the notes of a scale that appears in the mind schooled in the art of music and trained through practice. We have already explained how this (extraordinary) mental idea conveying immediate intuition of the Absolute destroys the vision of the whole magic show of the universe, together with (Ignorance) its cause, and thereby destroys itself as well, as it is itself an indistinguishable part of the phenomenal universe. And here this immediate intuition of the Absolute is spoken of as brought about by the means of knowledge called 'the Veda', because it is based on the authoritative revelation of the Vedic texts. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.150/231-2)

Śrī Śaṅkara wrote here in his Commentary, 'No one can demonstrate that the one who has known that his true Self is the Absolute is subject to transmigratory life as before. For that

would be in contradiction with his conviction that his true Self was the Absolute, derived from that authoritative means of knowledge called "the Veda"' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, M.V.229,17). His purpose was to silence the doubt raised by the opponent about whether any purposes could be served by statements of fact in the way that they could by commands and prohibitions. It is clear that the extract from the Bhāmatī just quoted (M.V.204,5), which was supposed to be an explanation of this passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, does not in fact follow it. There is nothing in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, for instance, to say that the conviction that one's true Self is the Absolute is the result of direct intuition brought about by repeated affirmation *of knowledge based on the authority of those texts. Here Vācaspati is following the doctrine of the Brahma Siddhi (sākṣātkāra, B.Sid. p.87; cp. also M.V.98,4).*

(6) Well, be all that as it may. But Ignorance, being shot through with thick and deeply-rooted impressions, will arise again through the power of its own impressions, even after having been contradicted and cancelled by knowledge. And it will engage in its own characteristic activities, such as the formation of more impressions.

'This being so', continues Śrī Śaṅkara, meaning that the truth had been established as being so, 'that onto which a superimposition is made is not connected even in the slightest with the qualities or defects of the superimposed appearance' (cp. M.V.140,5, note).... The point being made is the following. It is of the very nature of the act of repeatedly re-affirming the truth that it should remove false notions, even when the latter are beginningless and shot through with thick and deeply-rooted impressions. The mind has a natural bias towards the truth. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.40/45-6)

All that Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary in fact says here is that Ignorance is the superimposition of a false appearance due to lack of discrimination, whereas knowledge is determination of the true nature of the real through discrimination. It is clear that it does not say that, when the truth has been ascertained through a discriminating cognition, the latter will have to be repeatedly re-affirmed. There is not a shadow of doubt, however, that the author of the Bhāmatī, through his prejudice in favour of Maṇḍana, takes Maṇḍana's doctrines of the persistence of an impression of Ignorance (B.Sid. p.35, M.V.100,1) and the need for repeated re-affirmation of knowledge and passes them off as explanations of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. It is declared repeatedly in the Bhāmatī that (even in the case of the enlightened person) the impression (saṃskāra) of Ignorance, understood as synonymous with vāsanā, had to be suppressed by direct intuition obtained through repeated re-affirmation of knowledge of the truth (Bhāmatī, Eng. trans. p.61,108,127 and also p.80-1 = M.V.204,4). This

doctrine is expressly refuted by Śrī Śaṅkara in his Commentary on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad I.iv.7 (trans. Mādhavānanda, p.131 ff.; cp. M.V.67,1).

(7) Hence it is correct to suppose that the mind matured by meditation on the meaning of the great indubitable text ('That thou art') will reveal, by the successive removal of all external adjuncts, the identity of the immediately evident principle of Consciousness denoted by the word 'thou' with the transcendent Absolute denoted by the word 'that'. This experience is not itself the Absolute, or it could not be anything that came into being at a particular point in time. It is an (extraordinary) idea generated in the mind, an idea having the Absolute for its content. This does not imply that the Absolute requires to be illumined by anything else. It is agreed that the Absolute is in one sense illumined by revelation; but it does not follow from this that it is not self-illumined. It is the Self void of all conditioning adjuncts that is said to be self-luminous, not the Self as associated with adjuncts. As the revered Commentator said, 'This (Self) is not altogether a non-object' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.).

Now, one cannot claim that when the mind assumes the form of immediate intuition of the Self there is transcendence of all adjuncts; for the intuition is itself an adjunct, about to be destroyed; it is opposed both to itself (which it will destroy) and to other adjuncts. If it were not itself an adjunct of the Self, it could not receive a reflection of the Consciousness of the latter. And since any form assumed by the mind is non-conscious in itself, it could not, without receiving a reflection of the Consciousness of the Self, be self-luminous, and so could not be an immediate intuition.

Nor can we deny that immediate intuition is genuine knowledge by making the claim that it is a mere phantasm, like the image of fire we might have when its existence was merely being inferred. For there the fire was by definition remote and inapprehensible; but in the present case there is immediate knowledge from the outset, as the individual soul is itself the Absolute, blurred by adjuncts. The attributes of purity and enlightenment and so on are all present within that same Absolute. It is the individual soul itself, when successively divested of all its attributes, that is said to be the Absolute, pure and conscious and so forth by nature. Nor is the absence of the various adjuncts anything separate from the Absolute standing over against it. Just as one whose sensibilities have been heightened by study and repeated training in the art of music can catch the notes of the scales of the various musical modes, even so the soul which has heightened its sensibilities by repeated re-affirmation of the metaphysical knowledge conveyed by the Upanishads is able to experience its own nature as the Absolute, through the instrument of the disciplined mind. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.47-8/78-9)

Here we find the doctrine of immediate intuition as approved by Maṇḍana (M.V.98,4) complete with all its appendages. It might therefore be a good thing to examine whether these teachings do or do not agree with the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara.

Consider first the following statement of Vācaspati: THERE IS A CERTAIN (EXTRAORDINARY) IDEA FORMED IN THE MIND CALLED 'IMMEDIATE INTUITION' WHICH BEARS ON THE ABSOLUTE AS ITS OBJECT.

Our own view is that no such assertion is ever made anywhere in the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara. In Śrī Gauḍapāda's Kārikās on the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad (III.41,48, etc.) a spiritual discipline called 'restraint of the mind' is taught (M.V.56;57,5). Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary does in that connection declare that the mind may assume the form of the Absolute. But he does not speak of an immediate intuition of which the Absolute is the *object*. And even what he does say is for the benefit of students of weak or middling calibre, who are not continuously awake to the reality of the Self.

(8) Those who take the mind, sense-organs and so on as imagined like a rope-snake and as having no existence at all except in their true nature as the Absolute — they have become the Absolute. They feel no fear and have natural certitude that they are enjoying the indestructible peace called liberation, which depends on nothing external. (G.K.Bh.III.40)

At that point, it is clear that Śrī Śaṅkara was teaching that attainment of the final human goal did not necessarily depend on the discipline of restraint of the mind (mano-nigraha).

Consider in the second place Vācaspati's teaching: REPEATED RE-AFFIRMATION OF METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE SOUL IN ORDER TO EXPERIENCE ITS NATURE AS THE ABSOLUTE — LIKE ONE TRAINING HIMSELF TO RECOGNIZE THE NOTES OF THE SCALES IN MUSIC — IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE IMPRESSION OF IGNORANCE AND TO REALIZE HIS NATURE AS THE ABSOLUTE, ALTHOUGH (IN ONE SENSE) IT WAS ALREADY IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT.

It is clear that this description of the discipline does not follow the Vedanta technique of false attribution followed by later retraction. For Śrī Śaṅkara, who does follow that technique, teaches in the introductory section to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary that after 'discriminating' what has been superimposed, and knowing it to have been superimposed, nothing further remains to be done. Nor do people in the world think that anything more has to be done, in order to know the true nature of anything onto which a superimposition has been made, apart from discriminating what has been superimposed and knowing it to be such. As for the immediate intuition of the notes of scales, that was not a proper parallel example, as this intuition belongs in the realm of objects. It is right to say that that requires practice to give the mind the necessary training, as that intuition arises from the activity of the cognitive organs. But it is not reasonable to say that the Self as

Consciousness and immediate experience, which is already immediately evident, depends on anything else to reveal itself. Śrī Śaṅkara says:

(9) When we receive a cut or a burn on the body, we find that we have the immediate but false notion 'I am receiving a cut' or 'I am receiving a burn'. And we find that when people's sons or friends are suffering they sometimes feel that they themselves are suffering, even though their sons and friends are completely external to themselves. And the case of feeling oneself to be the sufferer and so on can perfectly well be the same. For 'being the sufferer' and similar notions are perceived as objective ideas falling outside consciousness, just like the body. In dreamless sleep, swoon and similar states they are not perceived at all. But the upanishadic texts declare that consciousness is present even in dreamless sleep in the words, 'Verily, when there (in the state of dreamless sleep) he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, though he does not see (for there is no break in the seeing of the seer' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.23). Therefore immediate experience of the Self has the form 'I am of the nature of the one Consciousness, free from all pain'. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

This demonstrates that no mental idea is required for immediate apprehension of Consciousness. For a mental idea, being an object for Consciousness, is itself apprehended as external, and in dreamless sleep, swoon and other such states there are no mental ideas at all. Śrī Śaṅkara states clearly in his Gītā Commentary that knowledge of the Self is the halting of the process of making false superimpositions upon it and nothing else.

(10) Therefore, all that is required is the negation of what has been falsely superimposed onto the Absolute through Ignorance. No effort is required actually to know the Absolute, as it is perfectly familiar already. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.50)

(11) But in that case the correct course would be that knowledge of the Absolute should be conveyed by the negation of the illusory universe of plurality that had been superimposed on it through Ignorance. (This, however, could not occur through injunctions, but only) through (purely metaphysical) texts like 'One only, without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1) and 'That is the real, that is the Self, that thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7). When knowledge of the Absolute has been thus conveyed, enlightenment will arise automatically, and metaphysical Ignorance will stand abolished. Then this whole universe of name and form superimposed through Ignorance will be dissolved like a dream. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21, cp. M.V.70,2)

Consequently it appears correct to say that the Bhāmatī follows

a different tradition (in regard to the present teachings), not the classical tradition of false attribution followed by later retraction.

205 HEARING, PONDERING AND SUSTAINED MEDITATION

The Bhāmatī also follows the school of Maṇḍana in regarding hearing, pondering and sustained meditation, and other aspects of the discipline for metaphysical knowledge, as being based on texts having the grammatical form of injunctions, and as helping towards immediate intuition. And yet the Bhāmatī follows Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary when describing how they lead to a special kind of activity.

(1) The student is prompted to hearing and the other parts of the discipline by the Vedic texts themselves, though his motives for doing so are already established from another source; and the texts that appear (from their grammatical form) to be enjoining these activities upon him are in fact only conforming to the desires that he has already conceived. But if they only conform to desires already conceived, this does not mean that they are useless; for they prompt him to a special kind of activity (about which he would not otherwise know).... The texts having the appearance of injunctions to carry out hearing of the metaphysical texts and so on have the function of blocking the stream of mental desires flowing towards objects and opening up the stream of mental desires bearing on the attainment of the inmost Self. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.130/204)

One should compare this with Brahma Siddhi p.155 (quoted in part at M.V.123 and 148,8, note).

(2) Hearing means hearing of the truth through the traditional texts and the words of the Teacher. Pondering implies the use of reasoning that does not conflict with the traditional texts. And the result of such pondering, allied to conversations between Teacher and pupil and fellow-students (brahmacārin) who do not chafe at the discipline, is that the pupil feels deeper faith in the texts. With the coming of deeper faith, he acquires a deeper insight into the defects of worldly objects other than those connected with the spiritual life. And with the coming of this deeper insight he turns away from worldly objects and practises repeated re-affirmation of the metaphysical truth contained in the supreme upanishadic texts. After this there arises immediate concrete experience of metaphysical reality. Even those outside the tradition (the Yogācāra Buddhists) have said the same thing in the words 'The knowledge of the yogī arises from intense meditation on the

truth'. (Bhā.I.iii.8)

In this connection, it is to be noted that the Brahma Siddhi says that the phrase 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) means 'repeated affirmation of the metaphysical truth' (B.Sid. p.35, M.V.100,1). Immediate concrete experience is spoken of as the reward of repeated re-affirmation of revealed truth (cp. B.Sid. p.154, M.V.98,4), and when Vācaspati quotes a text from the Yogācāras to show that the 'sustained meditation' of Advaita agrees with the 'Bhāvanā' part of their discipline it is clear that he is following the Brahma Siddhi throughout. Note that in the latest edition of the Bhāmatī we find the reading 'repeated meditation (dhyāna) on the metaphysical truth'.

(3) Hearing takes place through the traditional texts and the words of the Teacher. Pondering is the further enquiry into what has been heard with the help of logical reasoning that is not in conflict with it. And concrete knowledge (vijñāna) or immediate intuition (sākṣātkāra) arises through the maturation of repeated practice of reverent and continuous and prolonged meditation on the content of previous hearing and pondering. It is called 'concrete knowledge' (vi-jñāna) because it is superior (vi-śiṣṭa) to the earlier forms of knowledge.(Bhā.I.iii.14)

The force of the word 'vijñāna' here is to teach repeated meditation (dhyāna) according to the system laid down in the Yoga school. There is no mention of the simple immediate vision of truth that comes through the one-pointedness of the mind that is taught in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary (dealing with dhyāna) on the sixth Chapter of the Gītā (Bh.G.Bh.VI.8). Nor is there any mention of Śrī Śaṅkara's point made in the sequel to the section on the 'Meditation on the Cave', the topic now under discussion in Bhāmatī I.iii.14. Śrī Śaṅkara there says, 'The regular result is the cessation of wrong knowledge, a reward that comes in this very life'. The text on the cave refers to meditation, but the section which follows it is concerned with metaphysical knowledge. Hearing and the rest are clearly prescribed in due order for the text on the cave; but there is no place for pondering (i.e. logical reflection) when one is practising bhāvanā or repeated meditation on prescribed themes (practised not for metaphysical knowledge but for spiritual merit). Here the words of Sureśvara are relevant: 'It is clear from the command "It must be pondered over" that what is being taught here is reality in its true nature. In the case of mere symbolic meditations prescribed for merit, such as "Woman is fire" (Bṛhad. VI.ii.13), we do not find any injunction to ponder over the meaning' (B.B.V. II.iv.215, M.V.124,4).

(4) By this Śri Śaṅkara says that first of all discriminating knowledge arises from hearing, pondering and repeated

meditation. The result of this discriminating knowledge is immediate intuition of one's Self as the sole existent, in which one emerges in one's true nature. This immediate intuition has the form of a mental idea, which dissolves the universe, and dissolves itself with it, as it is part of the universe, like the kataka nut (which, placed in fluid, dissolves the impurities in the fluid and dissolves itself along with them). That is how one's own true Self is realized as Light — independent of any other principle, without any external accretions, free from the entire network of the world. That is what is meant by the upanishadic text 'Having reached the supreme Light...' (Chānd.VIII.iii.4). (Bhā.I.iii.19)

Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary raises the question, 'What does rising up from the body imply? What does it mean to emerge in one's true nature?' and answers by way of the example of a piece of transparent crystal. 'Before the introduction of a discriminating cognition, the true nature of the crystal, which is really light and transparent, does not seem to be different from such external adjuncts as the red or blue colour of the objects near which it is placed. But after the rise of a discriminating cognition, the crystal becomes distinct, and is said to have "attained" its true nature as light and transparent, although it was really exactly the same all along'.... And then he adds quite clearly: 'In the same way, when the true nature of the soul does not yet appear to be discriminated from the body and other external adjuncts, the cognition arising through the Veda that does effect this discrimination is what constitutes "transcending the body". And the "attainment of the soul's true nature" is nothing more than the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, the result of the discriminating cognition' (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19; cp. M.V.101,3;144,5). The original text speaks only of emerging in one's true nature through a discriminating cognition; it hardly needs pointing out that the notion of repeated meditation, and of immediate intuition as its result, have been dragged in through an inherent bias in Vācaspati towards dependence on Maṇḍana.

(5) In truth, the individual soul and the supreme Self are entirely identical. The difference between them is imagined through the adjunct of beginningless Ignorance. And it can be rooted out through immediate knowledge, which arises through intense and sustained application to hearing, pondering over and meditating on the text 'That thou art', a text which teaches the identity of the soul with the Absolute. It is the same process as that whereby the erroneous idea of a snake in a rope is expunged by knowledge of the rope. (Bhā.I.iv.22, cp. M.V.197,2)

Here the teaching follows the view of Kāśakṛtsna, who held that acceptance of non-difference between the soul and the

supreme Self was justified because the soul was a state (avasthāna) assumed by the supreme Self. And Vācaspati is explaining Śrī Śaṅkara's view that Kāśakṛtsna's doctrine is in line with upanishadic teaching. But it is not clear why he drags in the point about immediate and direct knowledge arising from intense application to meditation sustained for a long time. Even in the example that he himself introduces, that of the rope-snake, immediate and direct knowledge of the rope and its true nature does not arise from regular and sustained meditation. There is no law to prevent one saying that knowledge of the true nature of the rope comes simply from hearing from a competent authority 'This is a rope'.

(6) By the word 'concentration', the author refers to the yogic practice called 'saṃyama' (see Yoga Sūtras III.1-4). The word 'saṃyama' covers fixing the mind on an object (dhāraṇā), meditation (dhyāna) and concentration carried to the point of trance (samādhi). As the Yoga Sūtra says, 'The three collectively are called "saṃyama"'. In this connection, the text 'The Self should be heard about, pondered over...' (Bṛhad. II.iv.5) teaches 'fixing the mind' (dhāraṇā). The text 'It should be subjected to sustained meditation' (*ibid.*) teaches meditation (dhyāna). 'It should be seen' (*ibid.*) teaches concentration carried to the point of trance (samādhi). For 'samādhi' is defined in the Yoga Sūtras in the words, 'Samādhi is that same meditation when it illumines the object alone, and the mind is virtually eliminated in the object'. (Bhā.II.iii.39)

The Sūtra says 'Otherwise there could not be concentration' (B.S. II.iii.39). The revered Commentator quotes the upanishadic texts, 'The Self, verily, should be seen, heard about, pondered over, subjected to sustained meditation' (Bṛhad. II.iv.5) and 'He (the Self) it is who should be investigated, Him one should desire to know' (Chānd.VIII.vii.1) and 'Meditate on the Self as Om' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.6), and says that this is the way that concentration is taught in the Upanishads. Clearly he took nididhyāsana, vijijñāsana and dhyāna as synonymous in this context, and as meaning meditation on the metaphysical reality alone.

All that the Sūtra intended to teach was that an injunction amounting to 'The supreme Self should be seen through sustained meditation' cannot be carried out by the soul unless it has the feeling that it is an individual able to perform actions. One has the right to ask why the whole Yoga Śāstra discipline for obtaining samādhi through saṃyama should be dragged in here, where it has no place at all. The teaching 'It should be seen' cannot possibly amount to instruction to perform samādhi. For one must conclude that the reference of the Brahma Sūtra was to the immediate experience (anubhava) of the Self denoted by the word 'vision', the result (not of the practices of the Yoga school but) of hearing the supreme upanishadic texts,

pondering over them and subjecting them to sustained meditation.

206 REFUTATION OF THE NOTION OF AN INJUNCTION FOR KNOWLEDGE: THE DOCTRINE OF IMMEDIATE INTUITION

There is a refutation of the notion of an injunction for knowledge in the system of Vācaspati just as there is in that of Maṇḍana, and the exposition by Vācaspati in places follows Maṇḍana word for word.

(1) And there are four different kinds of apprehension of the Absolute. The first, called 'hearing', comes from merely hearing the texts of the Upanishads. The second, called 'pondering', comes from the same upanishadic text considered in the light of strict scriptural exegesis (mīmāṃsā). The third, called 'sustained meditation', consists in a continuous train of thought. The fourth is a state assumed by the mind that entails immediate intuition. And that is not anything different from liberation (kaivalya). (Bhā.III.iv.27)

Commenting in the Bhāmatī on the section comprised by Brahma Sūtra III.iv.26-7, Vācaspati raises the question whether any of the four different kinds of apprehension of the Absolute mentioned above require to be accompanied by action. He answers by saying that knowledge is only dependent on action (remotely) for its rise, inasmuch as the desire for knowledge is promoted by action. Here is one place where Vācaspati's system differs from Maṇḍana's. (For Maṇḍana, knowledge must always be accompanied by action, cp. M.V.100,1.) The definition of pondering differs a little from that given earlier (M.V.205,3 — there logical enquiry, tarka, here scriptural exegesis (mīmāṃsā) is emphasized). But the definition of sustained meditation is virtually the same.

(2) There cannot be an injunction for anyone to have a direct intuition of the Absolute. For direct intuition of the Absolute is eternally available, being the very nature of the Absolute; it is not anything that either has to be produced or can be produced. There cannot be an injunction for meditation in the context of knowledge of the Absolute either. For meditation cannot be the object of an injunction in this context, since the need for it is already implicit without one, as meditation is known by a universal rule to be the invariable cause of any high degree of knowledge. There cannot be an injunction to acquire knowledge from the revealed texts either, for that arises without any obstacles in a person who has learned his Veda by heart, who knows the words and their meanings and who knows the rules governing the interpretation of revealed texts....

Again, there cannot be communication of the true nature of the Self in the upanishadic texts enjoining knowledge of the Self. For they are not concerned with stating the true nature of the Self, but with enjoining knowledge of it. Their significance is limited to their main purpose (i.e. to injunction). Nor can one argue that one must derive knowledge of an objective reality from a text enjoining a meditation, on the ground that meditation presupposes a knowledge of what is to be meditated on. For an injunction to meditate is intelligible also as enjoining a mere act of fanciful supposition (as in 'One should meditate on speech as a cow'). So we conclude that the Upanishads are not concerned with enjoining knowledge. (Bhā. I.i.1, p.71/93-4)

The last two extracts are in fact summarized reproductions of the teaching of the third Book (Niyoga Kāṇḍa) of the Brahma Siddhi. That Book is concerned throughout with a detailed refutation of the view that knowledge of the Absolute depends upon an injunction. Summarizing the opening statement of the opponent's case, the Brahma Siddhi proceeds as follows:

'Our intention is to refute those who hold that an injunction only conveys information about past, present and future realities incidentally in the course of communicating what has to be done. And in fact there are three different ways of access to the Absolute. The first is merely hearing the words of revelation. The second is that meditation called dhyāna or bhāvanā or upāsanā which holds what has been learned from hearing continually in the mind. The third implies completion. It is immediate vision, to the exclusion of all mental ideation' (B.Sid. p.74, cp. summary at M.V.98,4). From this starting-point, the Brahma Siddhi continues throughout the third Book with its refutation of the view that knowledge of the Absolute depends upon an injunction. But what Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Commentary is:

(3) An injunction which gives information about the nature and results of an act of merit only gives a person this information incidentally in the course of enjoining him to do the act. A text affirming the existence of the Absolute, on the other hand, only gives a person information. As immediate apprehension (of the Absolute) arises directly from (hearing) the (affirmation contained in the) text, the person hearing it cannot be enjoined to carry the immediate apprehension out (as if it were the result of some subsequent act). On the contrary, the knowledge just springs up automatically, as in the case of an object standing before one's eyes. (B.S.Bh. I.i.1 = M.V.68,1)

Thus Śrī Śaṅkara's view was that knowledge of the Absolute arises from some upanishadic text in the manner befitting the subject-matter and means of knowledge involved, just as

knowledge comes from perception and the other secular means of knowledge. There is no prompting to action through any injunction. Knowledge arises from the authoritative means of knowledge without dependence on any other factor. But when the Bhāmatī says that there is no need for a categorical command in the case of verbal knowledge, meditation and the immediate knowledge that results from these two, it is clear that we have an incorrect and laboured explanation, brought in by a mind greatly attracted towards another school.

And there is another point. In firing off the arrow 'There cannot be communication of the true nature of the Absolute in the upanishadic texts enjoining knowledge of the Self', Vācaspati failed to see that it would turn round and boomerang upon his own doctrine. For one could make the counter-claim that one who said 'This immediate intuition of the Absolute is spoken of as brought about by the means of knowledge called the Veda because it is based on the authoritative revelation of those texts' (M.V.204,5) was also saying that there could not be direct intuition arising from revelation (because, on his view, direct intuition arises from hearing, pondering and sustained meditation, which depend in turn on *injunctions* like 'The Self should be heard about', and such texts would be ruled out by the 'arrow' mentioned above).

(4) You admit that the Upanishads contain injunctions to meditate. And you also hold firmly to the view, derived from the Upanishads, that the true nature of the individual soul is identity with the Absolute, which is eternal, pure and conscious. Now, realization of one's identity with the Absolute cannot be the reward for obedience to an injunction to meditate, because it is eternally in being and not subject to achievement. Nor is removal of the veil of beginningless Ignorance the reward, for that comes automatically with the rise of knowledge, which is contradictory to Ignorance. Nor could the rise of knowledge be the special reward for obedience to an injunction to meditate; for that arises from the mind itself, associated with the impressions of meditation based on hearing and pondering.

Perhaps you will claim here that the occult power generated by meditation as obedience to an injunction helps the mind here, as well as the mere psychological impressions arising from meditation. For occult rewards for obedience to Vedic injunctions, you may argue, are found to occur in this very life. For the injunctions to perform the Citrā and Kārīri sacrifices bring their rewards in this very life, the Citrā sacrifice (for rain) regularly, the Kārīri sacrifice (for cattle) occasionally. But we do not accept this argument. The psychological impressions generated by meditation on the teachings in the science of music produce the power to discern the notes of the scale in immediate intuition without dependence on occult forces; and the psychological impressions

generated by the soul in its meditations on the teachings in the Upanishads have the power to lead it to an immediate intuition of its own true nature as the Absolute, without dependence on occult forces either. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.114/169-70)

In places like this, the cause of bringing in such misplaced argumentation is the seduction of the erroneous theory of immediate intuition (depending on meditation, etc,) coming from the system of Maṇḍana. For Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary shows that the results of action and of knowledge of the Absolute are different and incompatible.

Śrī Śaṅkara speaks of 'this freedom from embodiment, called liberation'. He calls this freedom from embodiment 'real in the highest sense, eternal and constant', 'all-pervading', 'free from all modification', 'ever brimming with joy', 'partless', 'marked by self-luminosity' and 'of such a kind that, after its attainment, it would be inconceivable that it could be taught that there was anything further to be done'. He also said: 'The upanishadic texts expounding how liberation arises from knowledge themselves deny that any other action is required, and show that the result of knowledge of the Self is merely to put an end to the obstacles preventing the manifestation of liberation, (the latter being already existent)'. How could an Ācārya who spoke thus countenance even the possibility that metaphysical knowledge arising from the authoritative texts of the Upanishads required to be enhanced by further pondering and meditation?

(5) In the case of the injunction 'He should meditate on the deity to whom the offering is being made before saying "Vaṣaṭ"' (Ait. Brāhmaṇa III.viii.1), one would never have known that there was a duty to meditate on a deity without the injunction. But, in the case of one who has learned the upanishadic texts by heart and knows not only the words but their meaning as well, and also the rules for interpreting revealed texts generally, knowledge that his true Self is the Absolute arises automatically from the passage of the Chāndogya Upanishad (VI.ii.1 ff.) beginning 'Being only, my dear one, was all this in the beginning...' and ending 'That thou art'. It arises from the power of the authoritative spoken word to convey knowledge, just as direct experience of a pot standing in bright light arises automatically, for one who is paying attention, from the power of the contact of sense-organs with their objects. This experience arises automatically from causal factors. It cannot be altered arbitrarily by human will, like the form assumed by a meditation on a deity. So an injunction would be meaningless in this context. Nor could such an injunction cover either meditation or the culmination of the discipline in immediate experience. For it is found that these two lead to immediate intuition, or the abolition of metaphysical Ignorance, by a universal rule, so that one is

prompted to pursue them naturally and without an injunction, so that they do not belong to the sphere of what can be done otherwise or left undone according to human will. Therefore knowledge of the Absolute, though a mental act, is not subject to injunction. (Bhā.I.i.4, p.128-9/200-1)

Here it is inexplicable why Vācaspati should have accepted the idea that metaphysical knowledge was a kind of act when it was clearly taught in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary to be a result, as is shown by the phrase 'but knowledge arises from an authoritative means of knowledge'. In fact it is clear that the notion that metaphysical knowledge has the form of protracted meditation has been borrowed from the system of Maṇḍana and introduced here by force. (Cp. B.Sid. p.74, M.V.206,2, note, above p.633.) The same is true of the doctrine that immediate experience arising from meditation follows according to a universal law.

The teaching that meditation and the culmination of the discipline in immediate experience follow by a universal rule also stems from Maṇḍana, and is a revival of the doctrine of Prasaṅkhyāna in a different form, like uttering an incantation to revive a tiger whose fate has already been settled by death.

And Maṇḍana also accepted the following view: 'You will claim, perhaps, that when knowledge of the Absolute has been first attained through another text specifically devoted to affirming its existence, there has to be an injunction as well, an injunction to effect a stream of repeated re-affirmations of this knowledge. Very well, let it be so if you wish; there would be no contradiction. The text "Once he has acquired knowledge of the Self alone, he should practise repeated affirmation" (Bṛhad.IV.iv.21) shows how an initial knowledge of the Self through words has to be brought to fruition'. Then for fear of his own doctrine getting mixed up with those of his opponents, he adds later: 'Or it could be maintained that an injunction would be useless here, as the desirable end which it promised would already be attained' (cp. above, M.V. 98,4).... But, as we have already explained, immediate intuition so conceived would not be genuine Vedic revelation (cp. M.V.98,4, note).

(6) It is true that liberation transcends worldly perception. But it is known from the Vedic texts to be establishment in the Self in its true nature through the abolition of Ignorance along with its impressions (M.V.202,3). Ignorance, for its part, is contradicted by the rise of knowledge. Metaphysical Ignorance is abolished by the rise of metaphysical knowledge, just as the snake-error is abolished by direct knowledge of the reality of which it is an appearance, namely the rope. It is recognized in the world as a universal rule that the repeated practice of hearing the supreme upanishadic texts,

pondering over them and subjecting them to sustained meditation brings its proper reward in the form of immediate intuition of reality (because repeated practice of the discipline laid down in all the sciences, such as music, leads to direct intuition). It is moreover reasonable to suppose that it is only *repeated* practice of hearing and the rest that could be the means to such a sublime goal as immediate experience in the form 'I am by nature the one Consciousness, free from all pain'. So for all these reasons we conclude that hearing and the rest bring a tangible reward (in the form of intuition of reality) in this very life.

But if these disciplines have a tangible reward in this life, it is not right to suppose that they are performed for the sake of merit leading to occult results in future births (in the manner of the ritual sacrifices). Nor could they possibly lead, as we have said, to such a sublime experience as immediate intuition of reality if they were not performed earnestly and for a long time and without intermission. And if they did not lead to immediate intuition of reality they could not abolish metaphysical Ignorance. If a person is experiencing the taste of sugar as sour on account of a disorder in the bile, not even a thousand arguments will furnish him with the immediate sensation that it is sweet. For anyone who does not actually have the sensation of sweet taste will spit the sugar out, even though he pay careful attention to the words of others and listen to thousands of arguments. We conclude, therefore, that because meditation and worship (in this context) have a tangible reward in this life they have to be repeated, because this is the general belief in the world, and because repetition is inherent in the very ideas of meditation and worship. (Bhā.IV.i.1)

This passage is a kind of pot-pourri of the doctrines of Maṇḍana Miśra. The following three points are worthy of consideration.

(1) We start initially with the doubt whether the hearing and so on taught in such Vedic passages as 'the Self should be heard about, pondered over and subjected to sustained meditation' should be performed once or repeatedly. The provisional view says that they only have to be performed once, as the requirements of the text would be satisfied by that alone. The finally accepted view says that they must be done repeatedly, first because they are taught more than once, and secondly because they are performed for the sake of a goal to be obtained in this very life (so that the general conditions that obtain in the secular sciences apply).

On this point Śrī Śaṅkara writes, 'because the affirmations have to be continued until there is direct vision' (B.S.Bh. IV.i.1, cp. IV.i.12, M.V.56,8). The author of the Bhāmatī holds that Śrī Śaṅkara was here speaking about a result to be

obtained in this very life, meaning that we should infer that direct experience of the Self followed from the practice of hearing and so on. Worldly experience shows that it does so, as can be illustrated by such examples as that of the rope. But did Śrī Śaṅkara really mean to say that, or did he only mean that direct experience came from hearing and the rest because it was established by the Veda that they did so? Our own view is that there is no place for inference here, as texts like 'the Self should be seen, heard about...' enjoin hearing and the rest with immediate experience of the Self as the goal, expressed by such words as vision (darśana), wisdom (prajñā) and concrete knowledge (vijñāna). Once it is known from the Veda that the affirmations should culminate in direct vision, it is known that they have to be repeated till vision arises, even though they are only taught once. It is like the act of pounding the paddy, which has to be repeated until the rice has actually been husked. The example adduced is 'because the injunction for pounding is for the sake of producing the visible result of having husked rice'. When it has been established that hearing and the rest are for the sake of vision, then it is implicitly established by the Veda itself (without dragging in inferences from analogies with worldly practice) that hearing and the rest have to be repeated until vision is attained.

(2) Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary introduces the example of the rope-snake. The Bhāmatī maintains that the rope-snake is abolished by immediate intuition of the rope in its true nature, and that the case with the Self is to this extent parallel that Ignorance is extirpated by immediate experience of the Self. But did Śrī Śaṅkara really mean this? Or did he mean that knowledge of the true nature of the rope was attained through removal of the snake-error, and that knowledge of the Self occurred in the same way through the removal of the non-self element superimposed onto it?

Our own view is as follows. The Self is ever immediately evident. It is only concealed by metaphysical Ignorance. When the superimposed not-self is abolished by the upanishadic text, certitude as to the true nature of the Self automatically supervenes, just as certitude as to the true nature of the rope automatically supervenes when the superimposed snake has been abolished by the word of a trusted and competent authority. Emphasis was placed by Śrī Śaṅkara on the certitude about the Self that supervened automatically after abolition of the snake. For, unlike the rope, the Self is not an object that it could require to be known through an act of immediate experiencing.

(3) The revered Commentator says: 'Hearing and the rest are performed for the sake of a tangible end in this world, and have to be carried out until vision (of the Self) super-

venes' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1). The Bhāmatī says that the implication here is that no knowledge which is not immediate can abolish metaphysical Ignorance, since the latter is immediately evident. Is that really what Śrī Śaṅkara meant (cp. M.V.69,7)? Or did he not rather mean that, since hearing and the rest had been enjoined for the sake of vision as shown by the expression 'The Self should be seen', they should be carried on till vision occurred?

Here again we have our own view to express. It is not the case that Ignorance is anything (real and) immediately evident that forces itself into manifestation by overpowering immediate vision of the Self, as immediate sensation of sour taste overpowers the immediate sensation of sweet taste in the case of one who eats sugar when his bile is in a disordered state. It is not (any physical blockage like) this that is the reason why the words of a proper authority, supported by arguments, cannot produce knowledge of the Self. The truth is that the Self, though remaining immediately evident, appears not to be immediately evident through metaphysical Ignorance. Metaphysical Ignorance is essentially superimposition of the not-self, which does not really exist, onto the Self. What occurs (at liberation) is therefore an *appearance* of an immediate intuition (as if it were something new), due to what is in fact only the negation of the superimposed not-self and remembrance of the Self brought about by the Vedic texts and the teachings of the Ācārya. There is thus a certain difference between metaphysical realization of the Self and the example offered to illustrate it, where a new cognition of the rope as an object takes place after the negation of the rope-snake. For the revered Commentator says:

(7) If you say that there must be a distinction in the Self according to whether Ignorance has or has not been put to an end, we reply 'No'. For we hold that the notion that the Self is afflicted by Ignorance itself belongs to the realm of the false imagination of Ignorance. As we have already explained (Bṛhad.Bh.III.v.1, M.V.34,5), the Self is not affected by Ignorance, any more than the rope, desert, shell and sky are affected by the imputed snake, mirage, silver and impurities of dust or cloud. If you say that there must be a distinction in the Self according to whether it is or is not afflicted by double vision — again we say 'No'. For the Upanishads deny that the Self, in its true nature, is an individual capable of any form of action, by saying 'It only seems to think, it only seems to move' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.7). And the error of metaphysical Ignorance is the product of many different factors.

Further, it may be argued that Ignorance is witnessed as an object. And he whose error of Ignorance can be perceived objectively like a pot cannot himself be afflicted by the error of Ignorance. And if you say that people do have the error of Ignorance, since they say 'I do not understand what

you are saying, I am confused', again we say 'No'. For even Ignorance in that form is perceived to be distinct from the perceiver. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iv.6, cp. M.V.30,12)

This shows how Śrī Śaṅkara's view was different from the theory that could be illustrated by the example of immediate sensations of sour and sweet taste. There the immediate sensation of sour taste totally obliterates the sensation of sweet taste. Here, even when metaphysical Ignorance is in force and the soul belongs to its realm, Consciousness is separate from that Ignorance as its Witness. Hence immediate experience of the Self can arise merely through being informed about it. One does not have to perform any further activity to obtain an immediate intuition.

(8) From the standpoint of the highest truth, the individual soul is already the Absolute. But he identifies himself with the Food-self (the physical body) and other finite external organs composed of the elements. His mind becomes engrossed in these, and resembles the mind of the villager who, engrossed in counting the number of his external confederates, failed to take note of his own Self, which would have completed the number, though he was in no way separated from it (cp. M.V. p.156).

Like the villager, the individual soul takes his own true Self, the supreme reality, to be non-existent. And on account of this Ignorance, he identifies himself with various external 'selves' such as the physical body, and will not admit that he is anything different from the aggregate of them. In this way the Absolute remains 'unattained' through Ignorance, even though it is one's own Self.

The villager we are considering, who was counting the numbers of the party, failed, through his own ignorance, to 'attain to' himself, the one who would have completed the number. But when he was afterwards reminded by someone 'You are the tenth' he 'attained to himself' through his own knowledge. In the same way, one who fails, through metaphysical Ignorance, to attain to his own true nature as the Absolute may very well attain to it later, when instructed by the Vedic texts, through enlightenment in the form of direct intuition that he is the Absolute, the Self of all. (Taitt.Bh.II.1, cp. M.V. 59,14)

This disposes of the whole theory that immediate intuition of the Absolute is something that has to be obtained, *like obtaining the immediate sensation of the sweet taste of sugar. For, unlike the sweet taste of sugar, the Self has not been interrupted by anything, that immediate intuition of it should have to be obtained by removal of the interrupting agency. All that has happened is that one's own true Self has been forgotten through Ignorance, like the self of the counter in the story of the villagers, the forgotten self that would have*

completed the number.

207 THE SCHOOL WHICH HOLDS
THAT IMMEDIATE INTUITION
CANNOT ARISE MERELY FROM
HEARING THE SUPREME TEXTS

Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary makes an opponent raise the objection that repetition of the discipline of hearing and so on would be useless in the case of the Absolute in its true form without adjuncts, and then answers the objection. It seems to us that in explaining that answer the Bhāmatī is really adhering to the doctrines of a different school. In this connection, the arguments raised by the opponent are the following.

(1) If a text like 'That thou art' does not engender the conviction that one's true Self is the Absolute at one hearing, what guarantee is there that it will do so when repeatedly affirmed? (2) If the Advaitin claims that the texts will only engender direct experience of the fact that one's true Self is the Absolute as supported by reasoning, then any such reasoning will produce direct experience in regard to its content if performed only once — what is the need for repetition? (3) Perhaps the Advaitin will say that knowledge obtained through hearing or through reasoning will only be abstract and general. But concrete particular experience, he will say, is required to put an end to metaphysical Ignorance, so the discipline must be repeated for the sake of that. However, this is also wrong, for if hearing the texts and reasoning over them only produced abstract general knowledge to begin with, they could not produce concrete particular knowledge even if repeated many times. (4) Nor can it be roundly affirmed that hearing and reasoning never produce immediate experience in anyone when only performed once, as people differ widely in their intuitional powers. (5) In the case of an entity that had many parts, one might ascertain the nature of one part through one act of attention and the nature of another part through another act of attention. Here repetition would be useful. But that is not the case with the Absolute in its undifferentiated form.

We shall now give Śrī Śaṅkara's answers to these objections together with Vācaspati's explanations of them to show clearly the difference of standpoint between the two Teachers.

(1) *Śrī Śaṅkara on the first and fourth points:* Repeated resort to hearing and the rest is indeed useless in the case of the person who can attain immediate experience of the fact that his Self is the Absolute from merely hearing the text 'That thou art' spoken once. But it is perfectly appropriate in the case of the person who cannot do so (cp. M.V.55,4).

This replies to the opponent's first and fourth objections. Here it is agreed that the upanishadic text can engender the conviction that one's true Self is the Absolute even when heard only once.

(2) *Vācaspati on the first and fourth points:* Śrī Śaṅkara says 'from merely hearing the text spoken once'. It means that, after hearing and thinking for an instant, the knowledge will come through the impressions derived from repeated practice in previous lives. (Bhā.IV.i.2)

Vācaspati starts from the assumption that conviction cannot arise from one hearing. On this basis the impressions of pondering and sustained meditation performed in previous lives are accepted as being an auxiliary. This follows the doctrine of Prasaṅkhyāna. For in describing it, with a view to refuting it, Śrī Śaṅkara makes its exponents say, 'Even he who understands the meaning of the holy texts does not do so at a single hearing' (U.S.(verse) XVIII.10) and 'And even if someone were found to become free from pain through merely hearing the content of a text, it would be inferred that he had performed meditation on it in past lives' (ibid. XVIII.15-6).

(3) *Śrī Śaṅkara on the second and third points:* Again, in the text 'That thou art', the word 'thou', too, expresses identity with what is indicated by the word 'that'.... There are some for whom the meanings of the words 'that' and 'thou' are obscured by ignorance, doubt or misunderstanding. In their case, merely hearing the text 'That thou art' will not yield knowledge of its true meaning.... In the case of such people, repeated hearing of the texts and reasoning over them is appropriate in order to discern the true meaning of the words (the first step to understanding the meaning of the sentence). (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2, cp. M.V.55,6)

Here all that is being said is that ignorance of the meaning of the words is an obstacle which prevents an understanding of the meaning of the sentence.

(4) *Vācaspati on the second and third points:* Thus it is taught that one cannot arrive immediately at the meaning of any sentence. But in the case of the sentence 'That thou art', the meaning even of the component words is extremely hard to grasp. There is no quick understanding of the meaning of such a sentence preceded by the quick understanding of its words. On the contrary, because it takes a very long time to arrive at the meaning of the words, it takes a long time to understand the sentence. (Bhā.IV.i.2)

The teaching here is: One cannot immediately understand the meaning even of a sentence heard in ordinary secular life. The

meaning of the text 'That thou art' arises even more slowly than that of any sentence heard in secular life. (The author here records two small changes made in the second edition (1938) of the Bombay text of the Bhāmatī, remarking that the meaning remains doubtful on either reading. T.N.)

(5) *Śrī Śaṅkara on the fifth point:* The Self that has to be known has no parts. But the nature of having many parts, such as body, sense-organs, lower mind, higher intellect, experience of objects and so forth is superimposed onto it through Ignorance. A person may eliminate one part through one conviction, another through another. In this sense, knowledge of the Absolute is a progressive process. (But this is only the preliminary form of knowledge of the Self.) (B.S. Bh.IV.i.2, M.V.31,10)

This is a reply to the fifth objection. Though there are no real parts in the Self, there are imagined ones.

(6) *Vācaspati on the fifth point:* This Self is immediately evident and partless. Through the superimposition and subsequent withdrawal of all the various bodies and so on it appears as if it had parts, and as if it was (not evident but) utterly transcendent and remote. Therefore it can be known as the meaning of the text by stages.

This explanation is in tune with the Commentary. But the author of the Bhāmatī should not have added the words 'as the meaning of the text'.

(7) *Śrī Śaṅkara on the third point:* But this process is only the preliminary form of knowledge of the Self. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2, M.V.31,10)

The notion that the Self has many parts is only a preliminary notion. An understanding of the Self by stages is admitted only for the benefit of those who see it with many parts superimposed over it.

(8) *Vācaspati on the third point:* But why seek this idea of the Self engendered by the text, which is only an abstract idea? For such an idea would bring no results (reading anāgama-phalatvād). To answer this question Śrī Śaṅkara says, 'But this process is only the preliminary form of knowledge of the Self', that is, of knowledge accompanied by immediate intuition. What he means is as follows. After hearing and pondering over the supreme texts, meditation serves for immediate intuition of the Absolute if it is performed for a long time, without intermission, and with an earnest spirit. For this reason, a (mere abstract) idea of the meaning of the texts is the preliminary form of direct intuition. (Bhā.IV.i.2)

This is not the literal meaning of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. For we do not find it taught there that efforts have to be made for direct intuition after the meaning of the text has been understood.

Here the teaching of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary is that the gifted students can have direct experience that their true Self is the Absolute after only hearing the upanishadic texts once. And he clearly says that repeated recourse to the Vedic texts and repeated recourse to reasoning are only for those who are unable to enjoy direct experience of the meaning of the supreme texts after hearing them once. When he says 'But this process is only the preliminary form of knowledge of the Self' the reference is to the preliminary form of understanding the meaning of the texts, where the Self is associated with many parts. The idea is that an understanding of the Absolute by stages applies only to those who do not properly understand the meaning of the texts. We gather this from the sequel, which runs as follows:

(9) *Śrī Śaṅkara on the fourth point:* Meanwhile, those gifted persons who are not afflicted by any ignorance, doubt or erroneous knowledge to obstruct their comprehension of the meaning of the *words* can have direct experience of the meaning of the *sentences* like 'That thou art' after hearing them only once. For them repetition would be useless. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

This shows that repeated practice of the discipline of hearing and the rest is appropriate only for him who does not understand the meaning of the words. And there is no mention here of any special form of immediate intuition other than understanding of the meaning of the supreme texts.

(10) *Śrī Śaṅkara on the fourth point:* But the case is different with the person who is of dull intellect and who is about to lose the meaning of the text for lack of insight. Such a person is quite justified in working to strengthen his convictions as to the meaning of the text, with a search for the right meaning based on repeated hearing and other ancillary practices. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2)

Thus for Śrī Śaṅkara this practice of repetition was only engaged in for one purpose — to clarify one's idea of the meaning of the words, so as to strengthen one's understanding of the meaning of the supreme texts. It did not, for him, refer to meditation on the meaning of the texts on the part of one who already understood their meaning, practised for the sake of a new knowledge called immediate intuition. This is stated clearly enough in Śrī Śaṅkara's texts.

But the Bhāmatī introduces here a doctrine of repeated meditation not taught by Śrī Śaṅkara.

(11) *Vācaspati on the fourth point:* Even when the meaning of the text is evident only in an abstract way, there are greater and lesser degrees of clarity. How much more will this be the case with the stream of ideas culminating in immediate intuition that ensue in the period after pondering, and which derive from the practice of repeated meditation, itself by nature variable in quality at different times — that is Śrī Śaṅkara's meaning here. (Bhā.IV.i.2)

This is all the result of an inclination to cling to the apron-strings of Maṇḍana — of that there can be no doubt. Vācaspati's doctrine of immediate intuition is Prasaṅkhyāna Vāda in a new dress. And those who have studied the eighteenth chapter of the verse section of the Upadeśa Sāhasrī of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara (see Potter, 1981, pp.241-54) will know well that that teaching is not the message of the Upanishads, which follow the method of false attribution followed by later retraction. There are passages in his other commentaries, too, apart from the Brahma Sūtra Commentary, where Śrī Śaṅkara has very clearly said that the seekers of liberation have done all that has to be done simply by coming to know the true meaning of the texts. Consider, for instance, the following:

(12) When the subject-matter of a Vedic passage is an injunction to act, such injunctions treat of something like the Agnihotra or other ritual, that has to be performed at a different time, after the meaning of the text has been understood, and with the help of various factors, such as the person doing the act along with his various materials and instruments. But when the subject of the texts is knowledge of the supreme principle, the case is different. The aim of the text is then fulfilled as soon as its meaning is properly understood. (Muṇḍ.Bh.I.i.6, intro., M.V.101,6)

(13) After he has understood the meaning of the injunction to perform the Agnihotra and other ritual, the metaphysically ignorant person finds that he has to gather together various kinds of materials and perform various kinds of rituals, which he does with the feeling 'I am the person doing this, and this is my duty'. But there is nothing left over to be done in the future in this way after understanding the meaning of metaphysical affirmations like 'The Self is never born and never dies' (Gītā II.20). Nothing further then arises apart from knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Self, and of the fact that it has no empirical characteristics such as capacity for action, all this being expressed in such convictions as 'I am not an individual capable of action, I am not an individual capable of empirical experience'. (Bh.G.Bh.II.21)

(14) In such texts as 'That thou art', which convey the true nature of the Self, since the vision is conveyed at the time

of hearing them, one does not have to carry out any further action in obedience to the injunction saying 'the Self has to be seen'. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

208 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The effect of the appearance of Vācaspati's Bhāmatī sub-commentary was to undermine the authority of Bhāskara's doctrine of Difference in Identity. While the expositions in the Bhāmatī sometimes partly resemble those of the Pañcapādikā, it very much more often sets forth minor points from the system of Maṇḍana as if they were the teaching of Śrī Śaṅkara. Maṇḍana's doctrine of immediate intuition (sākṣāt-kāra) is often resolutely intermixed with and supported by teachings from the Yoga school. And on account of this teaching the idea has taken firm root amongst students of Vedanta that immediate experience of the Self can never arise from mere reflection on the meaning of the texts, even if supported by logical reasoning.

As far as reasoning goes, the great means for the defence of Non-Duality in the Bhāmatī is the argument that duality is indeterminable. Reasoning about the nature of Ignorance, the seat that it occupies and the object that it conceals takes a prominent place. With reason thus employed, the original Vedanta method of false superimposition followed by later retraction fell almost into eclipse. It will become clear in the course of our examination of the later schools how the stream of Vedantic thought began to run in new channels, so we need not go into further details for the present and can close our account of the system of the Bhāmatī here.

CHAPTER XI
THE IṢṬA SIDDHI

209 REFUTATION OF THE BHĀMATĪ SCHOOL ALONG WITH REVIVAL OF THE DOCTRINE OF ROOT-IGNORANCE

While the system of Maṇḍana, with some modifications introduced by others, was being blended with the system of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary and gradually assuming the form of the doctrine of the Bhāmatī, the reaction on the part of the followers of the Pañcapādikā's doctrine of Root-Ignorance (mūlāvidyā) was going on unabated. There came a time when even those who had formerly accepted Ignorance as being essentially superimposition were eventually forced to accept a 'Power of Ignorance' (avidyā-śakti) as well. This point was already reached in the time of the author of the Bhāmatī, who agreed that Non-dualism could be established through the teaching that the Power of Ignorance was the material cause of the universe. And then came Ācārya Vimuktātman, who thought 'Why be so pretentious as to offer a new system under another name?' The Bhāmatī, while defending Advaita over some points on which it had been attacked by Bhāskara Ācārya, had brought out many indefensible weaknesses in the doctrine of Difference in Identity. Ācārya Vimuktātman, however, was not satisfied with showing that the system of Difference in Identity was a prey to indefensible errors. He sought to show that these were to be found in the systems accepted by Maṇḍana and Vācaspati as well. And he wrote his Iṣṭa Siddhi to establish this and also to support the doctrine of Root-Ignorance.

210 HIGH REPUTATION OF VIMUKTĀTMAN, AUTHOR OF THE IṢṬA SIDDHI

We know from the colophons at the end of each chapter that the author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi was one Vimuktātman Ācārya, pupil of

Avyayātman. And we know that he was also the author of another work called the Pramāṇa Vṛtti, as he refers to it on page 37 in the body of the Iṣṭa Siddhi. As the Pramāṇa Mālā (p.4) by Ānandabodha refers to him by the word 'Guru' in the honorific plural, it is possible that he was the Guru of Ānandabodha.

Like the Brahma Siddhi, the Iṣṭa Siddhi remained for some time unlocated, until it was eventually published about thirty years ago (1933 A.D.) by the Government Oriental Institute at Baroda. Like the Brahma Siddhi, this work, too, consists in verses explained by the author in a prose commentary.

211 THE MAIN POINT IN THE BOOK IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDETERMINABLE IGNORANCE

In the Brahma Siddhi, all the topics of Vedanta are examined in order. But that is not the case in the Iṣṭa Siddhi. There the whole doctrine is compressed into the opening verse and its commentary, and the general course of the rest of the book is to explain it further and refute other opinions. Although in the course of the explanation the author says, 'This work is a compendium of the essence of the Vedantic teaching on all subjects' (I.S. p.37), yet it is clear that a critical account of indeterminable Ignorance was what really lay nearest to his heart.

(1) On the question whether Ignorance is real, unreal or indeterminable as either, and on the question whether it inheres in the not-self or the Self, I have established that it is indeterminable and inheres in the Self, for that is what sound logic shows.... As has already been indicated, the various means of knowledge such as perception cannot be either authoritative or free from contradiction, whether in the realm of ritual or metaphysics, except in the context of metaphysical Ignorance. The four ends of life, too, merit, welfare, pleasure and liberation, along with all other desirable and undesirable results of action, belong to the realm of Ignorance. So do the contradictory systems of the great philosophers and the whole amazing variety of the universe. Therefore I have reflected over Ignorance and laid down its true nature, that all may attain their desired ends.... I have given special consideration to the supreme bliss on which the experts in the Veda ponder, and which is known from the Upanishads to be the Self, in the belief that this bliss is what all desire. The truth on this subject becomes clear if metaphysical Ignorance is seen to be indeterminable. Therefore I have treated of that Ignorance in depth, so that the desired end may be attained. (I.S. VIII.15,22-4,27-8; p.377 f.)

Here in the conclusion to the work the author says that all

ends are realized when it becomes clear that metaphysical Ignorance is indeterminable, so that his main effort was to lay down the truth about that. This is an explicit statement that the chief topic of the work is metaphysical Ignorance.

212 THE DIVISION OF SUBJECT-MATTER IN THE BOOK

The work has eight chapters. In the first, almost all the topics with which the work is concerned are stated in brief form. It therefore occupies over half the bulk of the book. It contains a protracted account of how the whole world is the effect of indeterminable Ignorance, as illustrated by the example of shell-silver.

The next four chapters set out how those who hold different theories of error will have to accept in the end that their theory implies that error is indeterminable. The sixth chapter refutes the theory that Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul. The seventh chapter shows that only he who accepts metaphysical Ignorance can establish a distinction between the Self and the not-self — no one else can. The eighth chapter answers objections on the topic of the cessation of Ignorance. From this examination of the contents, one can see that the author would not have objected to the work also being called 'The Demonstration of Indeterminable Ignorance'.

213 THE OPENING VERSE CONDENSING THE TEACHING OF THE WHOLE WORK

(1) I bow to that principle of Immediate Experience, which is unborn, immeasurable, infinite and of the nature of the bliss of the Self, and which serves as the wall on which is painted the fresco of this illusory appearance of a world, beginning with the Cosmic Intellect (mahat). (I.S. I.1)

The explanation of this verse occupies just under thirty-eight pages of the Sanskrit text. The gist of it is as follows.

Immediate experience is self-established and self-revealed. For if immediate experience had to be illumined it would be an object like a pot, and so not immediate experience. Being self-established, immediate experience is free from birth and the other changing states of empirical existence.

Nothing knowable as an object can be an attribute of Consciousness; Consciousness is therefore not knowable as an object. It is thus unlimited in space and time or by an object. For since space, time and objects are open to objective cognition, they cannot be attributes of Consciousness or immediate experience (I.S. p.1,2). Being infinite, immediate experience can be none other than the supreme Self (I.S. p.25).

Hence it is of the nature of Bliss. For there is no difference between Consciousness and Bliss. It is true that they are referred to by different words. But inference is powerless to establish that there is any difference in their nature. Even if there had been any such argument, it would have been in contradiction with Vedic revelation (I.S. pp.25-6).

A further point made is that the Absolute (brahman), the Self (ātman) and Bliss (ānanda) are all one. The argument is as follows. The Brahmānanda Vallī of the Taittirīya Upanishad begins with a reference to the Absolute (satyam, jñānam, anantam brahma, Taitt.II.1). Referring back to this, the same text later says 'The ether was born from the Self' (*ibid.*). Here, since the term 'the Self' is used and the context is a consideration of the nature of the Absolute, the Absolute and the Self are designated as the material cause from which the world arose. Then later the Absolute and Bliss are identified in the text 'He had the knowledge "The Absolute is Bliss"' (Taitt.III.6), while the text 'Verily, from Bliss are these creatures born' (*ibid.*) shows that the Absolute as Bliss is the material cause of the world (I.S. p.27).

And it is this immediate experience that is the cause of the rise, maintenance and withdrawal of the whole universe, resorting to its magical power of illusion (māyā) called Ignorance. Nor does this involve any contradiction with duality. For the magic power of illusion is indeterminable as either different from or identical with immediate experience (I.S. p.32-3).

214 PREDOMINANCE OF DIALECTICAL ARGUMENTATION

The opening benedictory verse (M.V.213,1) begins (in the Sanskrit) with the word 'which', referring to what is admitted to be the self-established and self-revealed principle of immediate experience. And yet the Iṣṭa Siddhi paradoxically starts off on a course of negative dialectic, demonstrating the untenable consequences for those who do not admit this principle. The author never pauses to ask here 'Why is there doubt over something that is self-established and self-revealed?', nor does he ask in what way the implanting of a new doubt through negative dialectic could lead a doubter to a knowledge of truth. Indeed, nothing outside immediate experience exists that could lead to a knowledge of it or to a knowledge of its attributes. One cannot claim that immediate experience can be established by negative logic. For negative logic itself depends for its existence on immediate experience. Sureśvara says in his Naiṣkarmya Siddhi (II.59, prose intro.) 'For all philosophical schools take their stand on immediate experience'; and he follows this up by saying:

(1) The logicians bemuse each other with a web of wherefores

and therefores, heavily afflicted with the fever of debate. But it is to this experience that they make their final appeal. (N.S. II.59)

Even a piece of argumentation like 'For if immediate experience had to be illumined it would be an object like a pot, and so not immediate experience' (M.V.213,1, note; I.S. p.1) can only be carried out on the basis of some piece of immediate experience. Otherwise neither of the disputants would understand what the other was saying and the argument could not begin. And there is no place in Vedanta for argumentation not based on or ignoring immediate experience as an instrument for establishing its own doctrine. As Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Commentary:

(2) But this should not be used as a pretext for allowing empty hypothetical reasoning to gain entry. For in the present context only those arguments that are sanctioned by the Veda may be resorted to, and that only as an auxiliary to the attainment of direct experience. (B.S.Bh.II.i.6, cp. M.V.31,11)

215 REFUTATION OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUBJECT AND OBJECT

An opponent raises objections against the infinitude of immediate experience and says: Now, is it not the case that the object of consciousness appears as a 'this', while consciousness is 'not this'. Hence consciousness and object of consciousness are universally regarded in the world as different and mutually exclusive.... The distinction between consciousness and its object must therefore be accepted, as it is familiar to all (I.S. p.2). The nerve of the opponent's argument is that as there is a real distinction, the infinitude of immediate experience is unproved.

Here the Iṣṭa Siddhi launches into an examination of the relationship between subject and object in order to parry this objection. As that examination is very long (I.S. pp.2-24), only the gist of it is taken in so that we can explain the general line of our author's thinking.

(1) Though there can be (at the level of uncritical perception) vision of the difference of two objects (reading yadyapi dṛśyor with Jñānottama), there cannot be vision of difference between subject and object, since the subject is not perceivable as an object. It is not possible to perceive the difference of the unperceived from the perceived or of the perceived from the unperceived, because perception of difference depends on perceiving both the different thing and the thing that it is different from.

Again, what is this thing called difference? If you say it

is the nature of the different thing, then perception of difference ought not to depend on perception of the thing that the different thing is different from (though in fact it does depend on it). For perception of the nature of a thing cannot depend on that from which it is different. Or otherwise, since perception of a second thing from which the first thing was different would entail perception of a third thing from which the second was different, perception of difference would fall into infinite regress; or else (if it was claimed that the second thing was known through its difference from the first) perception of difference would fall into the fallacy of mutual dependence (since the first thing could only be known through its difference from the second, while the second could only be known if the first had already been known beforehand).

Perhaps you will say that, if difference cannot be the nature of the different thing, it can be its attribute (reading bhedino, not bhedinor, cp. I.S. p.3,line 5). If so, the attribute of difference cannot itself be taken as non-different (reading abhinna, cp. I.S. p.3,line 14) from the different thing, or otherwise it could not be established as difference, since there would be no perception of any difference between itself and the (allegedly) different thing. So we conclude that if difference is the attribute of a thing that is different, it must itself be different from that thing, and be established by a separate cognition. Otherwise the thing and its difference would be identical.

However, we cannot perceive the difference of a different thing as really different from that thing, even by a separate cognition. And if the difference between two things is accepted as different from the two different things it differentiates, then there is still the problem of infinite regress (since every perception of difference would depend on a further perception of something different to establish that difference, and the further perception of difference would itself entail a further perception and so on).

Mutual exclusion (anyonyābhāva) between two things is also impossible in the same way, if it is non-different from difference. And if it is taken as different from difference, the difficulties about difference in general still apply. Thus there cannot be either difference or mutual exclusion between subject and object.

Again, if difference and exclusion are perceptible and so belong to the side of the object, they cannot be attributes of the subject, any more than any other perceptible entity or object can. But if they are not perceptible, then their existence cannot be proved. If they were self-evident (that is, if they did not require proof) they would not be different from the subject. Therefore difference and exclusion are not characteristics of the subject, nor are they its nature. Nor can one thing have two forms. Nor are difference and exclusion different from each other. (I.S. pp.2-10, summarized)

The procedure used here for the refutation of difference should be compared with that in Section Two (Tarka Kāṇḍa) of the Brahma Siddhi, the Section that deals with dialectic (see Potter, 1981, pp.376-87).

(2) Nor should it be supposed that, because subject and object are thus non-different, it follows from that that they are identical. For there is no manifestation of their non-difference, while their appearance of difference is universally evident. Nor is the non-difference of subject and object due to their being invariably perceived together. For they are not invariably perceived together, seeing that the subject is not perceived at all. Nor can it be said that they always manifest together. For the subject is constant and eternal, being self-luminous. But objects like lightning and so on are not of this kind.

But is it not the case that I have myself said that no difference between them can be cognized? And does not this mean that they are non-different? No. It does not mean it. All I have said is that no difference between them can be *cognized.*

Therefore there cannot be non-difference between subject and object on the basis of perception, as they are not so perceived; nor can there be non-difference between them on the ground of rational argument, since they are contradictory, like darkness and light. (I.S. pp.10-18, summarized)

(3) Nor is it right to say that subject and object are different in themselves (reading nābhedaḥ, cp. I.S. p.18, line 4), although non-different as the Absolute. For if they were both non-different from the one Absolute, there could be no difference between them.

Suppose you said that subject and object are different in their own intrinsic forms, and non-different only when thought of in a form that is not their own (i.e. when conceived as identical with the Absolute). To this we would reply as follows. If it be said that there is identity between imagined forms of subject and object, which do not really belong to them, and the Absolute — is it being said that the Absolute is the forms or that the forms are the Absolute? As you are clearly not saying that the Absolute is the forms, the Absolute remains different from subject and object as before; or, if subject and object are not different from the Absolute, then they cannot be mutually different at all. Of course, if even the imagined forms themselves are different from the Absolute, subject and object (being mutually different) must be different from the Absolute too. Nor can subject and object really have two forms through one of which they are identical. The subject cannot have the form of the object; neither can the object have the form of the subject. Nor is there any third possibility (since subject and object, Self and not-self, are contradictories, like cow and not-cow, and

exhaust reality between them by the Law of the Excluded Middle).

Therefore, since neither subject nor object can have two forms, they must either be different or non-different; they cannot be (as the theorists of Difference in Identity would have it) both different and non-different, as they cannot have two forms (in the manner that this theory would require). Nor can the two notions 'different' and 'not-different' each apply to both subject and object if the latter do not have more than one form, as it would imply the absurd consequence that difference and non-difference meant the same thing. And the notion that one thing has two forms is itself also contradictory. For if you say that one thing has two forms, are you saying that the variety of forms are non-different from the one thing, or different, or both different and non-different? On any of these alternatives it will be hard to make out how one thing can have two forms. So the Difference in Identity theory, too, is defective — that which seeks to maintain that subject and object are non-different as the Absolute, though different in themselves. (I.S. pp.18-22, summarized)

216 THE AUTHOR'S DIALECTICAL METHOD

The portion of the work dealing with the relation of subject and object has been set forth in extremely abbreviated form to show the manner of the Iṣṭa Siddhi's approach to the topics of Vedanta, and to give a taste of its logical methods. The sort of formulae we find very often throughout the work are: 'Is this real, unreal, or both real and unreal? In relation to "x" is it different, non-different or both different and non-different?' Alternatives are brought forward and the defects of each alternative exposed. We now cite another portion of the work to help bring home to the reader the essence of the method employed.

(1) And so, because it is free from difference and the rest, the subject is not tainted by even a suspicion of any defect like coming into being (existence, growth, development, decline, destruction, etc., cp. M.V.121, intro.). In fact, these defects cannot be proved to exist even in the object. How much less can they be attributed to the subject!

For consider. There can be no relation of substance and attribute, whether the substance and attribute be taken as different from one another, or as non-different. The whole concept of difference and non-difference has already been refuted (cp. M.V.215). And how could an entity that had no attribute, and consequently no contact with qualities of any kind, have contact with defects?

Again, no difference of any kind can touch a reality. For if the difference be taken either as different from the reality that is supposed to be different, or as both different and

non-different from it, then this will imply a new difference, and this new difference will imply a new difference and so on to infinity in vicious regress. But if the difference is taken as non-different from the thing that is supposed to be different, then the difference and the thing will be one. And that one will be the thing and not the difference, since without the thing there could be no difference.

If you say it is the unity here that is the reality, we are agreeable. But the reality is one only. And that is not an object. For objects depend for their existence on another, and are incompatible with non-duality. The reality must therefore be the subject. For the latter can be a true unity, since it is self-established and self-revealed (and so independent and also capable of being non-dual). And its unity is not an attribute, or the above-mentioned difficulties about difference would apply. And so when we use the word 'one' in this context we mean an entity that is without differentiation and without attributes. When the attribute of difference is absent, there can be no other attributes, since they all depend on that for their existence. For attributes are mutually different, and a mutual difference can only subsist between two different things. It cannot subsist where there is no difference whatever. And since the presence within reality of a combination of being and non-being is unintelligible, reality is one and homogeneous. The presence of a combination of being and non-being is unintelligible because, if being and non-being are taken as mutually different, we fall into the above-mentioned infinite regress, which characterizes all difference; while if being and non-being are not taken as mutually different, there will be (no difference between them and so) no combination of one with the other.

But without some form of non-being, nothing can come into existence, remain or pass away. For nothing can be known to come into existence unless its previous non-existence is known. The mere perception of something not previously perceived is not of itself enough to prove that it has come into existence. Nor can one prove that a thing has not been previously perceived unless such absence of perception is critically established. Since their previous non-existence cannot be established, neither objects nor perceptions can come into being. When there is no coming into being, the other modifications that follow (existence, growth, development, decline, destruction, etc.) cannot take place, since they presuppose coming into being. So the real is raised above all change, of one form, self-established and self-revealed — or, if not, its existence could not be proved. For it cannot have two forms (one proved and one not). If you claim that it exists but that its existence is not proved, that is as good as saying that it does not exist. If it is self-established, (and it *is* self-established), then it must be the subject only that is the real....

And so our view is that nothing can come into being anywhere

in any way. Destruction, and other modifications that follow coming-into-being, therefore, do not come into the question. Hence it was only right to say that, when these defects do not even apply to the object, there can be no thought of their being related to the subject. It therefore stands proved that immediate experience is infinite. (I.S. p.23-4)

This passage should be compared with the part of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on the Taittirīya Upanishad (Gambhīrānanda,1957, pp.301-6) which deals with the infinitude of the Absolute. It will then clearly be seen how top-heavy with independent intellectual arguments the present work is in comparison with (Śrī Śaṅkara's) reasoning based on immediate experience. The dialectic of the Iṣṭa Siddhi is also quite evidently different from the purely negative dialectic (avīta-nyāya) of the fourth Book of Gauḍapāda's Kārikās, intended only to refute wrong opinions.

217 BECAUSE THE WORLD IS INDETERMINABLE, NON-DUALITY IS SAFEGUARDED

If the whole realm of the objective is neither a reality nor an unreality, is neither different from the Absolute nor non-different, and is not 'both different and non-different' — then what is the status of the world-appearance of duality? One cannot say that the universe does not exist, or, if we did, it would imply that perception and all the other means of empirical knowledge existed but that there were no objects for them, and it would be impossible to find a place for the ritualistic teaching as well as the metaphysical teaching of the Veda. On the other hand, if there is a universe, it must be either different from the Absolute, or else non-different or else both different and non-different. It cannot be anything else. Facing the objection formulated in this way, which implies the charge that the existence of the Absolute is indefensible on any of these three hypotheses, Ācārya Vimuktātman said:

(1) There is no defect at all in our own view. For we accept that the universe is the work of Māyā. And Māyā and its effects are indeterminable either as a reality or as an unreality. On our system, there is not even a suspicion of the defects that affect the doctrine that the world is totally real and the doctrine that it is totally unreal. (I.S. p.32)

On the theory that the world is of indeterminable reality-grade, perception and the other means of empirical knowledge retain their authority as sources of valid cognition.

(2) The whole experience of a dreamer, including his means of

valid cognition and their objects, is of indeterminable reality-grade; but it remains uncontradicted until he awakens. And there are cases (such as that of the roaring of a dream-lion) where the awakening to reality which destroys the dream-world occurs through causes belonging to that world. So it should be understood that there is nothing contradictory if we maintain that the same kind of awakening can occur from the waking state. (I.S. p.34)

(3) Thus the Absolute is as we have defined it (M.V.213,1). And yet, through resort to its illusory power of Ignorance it becomes the cause of the projection, maintenance and withdrawal of the whole world, and assumes as its body all the multifarious and variegated forms beginning with the Cosmic Intellect (mahat), and thereby becomes a fit and intelligible object for perception and the other means of empirical knowledge, and an appropriate field for carrying out the injunctions of the Vedic texts on ritual and meditation. This being so, one should not imagine that there is even a hint of a contradiction in our doctrine. (I.S. p.35)

The Iṣṭa Siddhi adopts and uses the same formula as the author of the Bhāmatī when the latter maintained that he was eliminating all defects by accepting that all this world is indeterminable. You could say that he virtually followed the same course.

218 PROOF THAT THE UNIVERSE IS THE EFFECT OF THE INDETERMINABLE ILLUSORY POWER OF IGNORANCE

How is the world the work of Māyā?

(1) We know that the world is the work of Māyā from such traditional texts as 'One should know that Māyā is the material cause of the world' (Śvet.IV.10), 'Indra goes about in many forms through his magic powers (māyā)' (Bṛhad.II.v.19) and 'This illusory appearance was projected by Myself' (M.Bh. XII.339.45-6, G.P. Ed.). (I.S. p.36)

(2) Ignorance, indeterminable as real or unreal, is known as 'Māyā'. But is it not a contradiction in terms to say 'It is called indeterminable?' No, there is nothing wrong here, as 'indeterminable' is qualified by 'as real or unreal'. When it is rationally considered, one cannot say of it either 'It is' or 'It is not'. For neither of these phrases will characterize it, as it is different from either the real or the unreal. Hence it is called 'indeterminable' but not 'inexpressible'. It was typical of you (Bhāskara, cp. M.V.160,3) to raise this objection even though you heard the qualification 'as real or

unreal'. (I.S. p.35)

This is a reply to Bhāskara's criticism 'If you say "indeterminable as real or unreal" we reply that this would have consequences that you yourself would not accept' (M.V.160,3).

(3) Perhaps you will object to the formula (for describing the world) 'the effect of Ignorance, which is indeterminable as real or unreal' on the ground that we do not encounter anything of this kind in worldly experience. 'If anything of such a kind existed', you might say, 'then you might claim that the world, too, was indeterminable. But nothing of this kind does exist'. This objection, however, will not hold. For we find shell-silver and other illusions which match this definition. (I.S. p.38-9)

In Vimuktātman's system Avidyā and Māyā are accepted as synonymous terms. There is an unambiguous claim that the two words mean the same when it is said that the Absolute resorts to the illusory power (māyā) of Ignorance (avidyā), and becomes the cause of the projection, maintenance and withdrawal of the whole world, and assumes as its body all the multifarious and variegated forms beginning with the Cosmic Intellect (M.V. 217,3). In Śrī Śaṅkara's system, however, we find:

(4) Name and form, imagined through Ignorance... are spoken of in the Veda and Smṛti as the 'Power of Māyā' (māyā-śakti) belonging to the omniscient Lord and as 'Nature'. (B.S.Bh. II.i.14, M.V.45,1)

(5) For the seed-power is of the nature of Ignorance, referred to by the term 'the Unmanifest', having its foundation in the supreme Lord, illusory through and through (māyā-mayī), the great sleep. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.3, cp. M.V.195,6, note)

What is taught here (by Śrī Śaṅkara) is an illusory display (māyā) of name and form imagined through Ignorance. And that is correct and reasonable. For it is correct to accept Ignorance as resting in the Self in its aspect as delimited by the mind, in order to relate knowledge and Ignorance to the same being. And it is also correct to place the illusory display (māyā) of name and form on the side of the object, as it is taken as the object of an act of unfolding in such upanishadic texts as 'Let Me unfold name and form' (Chānd.VI.iii.2).

(6) And because, when the matter is examined critically, it is found impossible to determine whether it is one or many, a reality or an unreality, differentiated or not differentiated, with or without parts... (I.S. p.63)

What is lacking in this system is a clear statement of how

Māyā could be indeterminable. In the case of the shell-silver, we may say that it is not existent like the shell, nor completely non-existent like a horn growing from a human forehead and other fantasies never met with in practical life. So here there are grounds for speaking of indeterminability. But the case with Māyā is different. For one cannot point to anything non-existent outside Māyā in order to establish that Māyā is neither existent nor non-existent. Since all is an effect of Māyā, there cannot be anything outside it.

219 THE RELATION BETWEEN THE ABSOLUTE; MĀYĀ AND THE WORLD

We have mentioned (M.V.213,1) that the words in the benedictory stanza with which the Iṣṭa Siddhi begins, 'I bow to that... which serves as the wall on which is painted the fresco of this illusory appearance of a world, beginning with the Cosmic Intellect' are a description of the Absolute. The image is explained further as follows:

(1) The phrase 'the fresco of this illusory appearance of a world' implies that the fresco is painted by Māyā. 'The fresco' means something like a fresco, not an actual fresco. 'The wall' means something like a wall, not an actual wall. And what is here referred to is immediate experience as the support of Māyā. That is the wall on which the illusory appearance of the universe, beginning with the Cosmic Intellect, comes into being. The word we use for 'fresco' (citra) is etymologically cognate with 'cāyana', meaning 'what is capable of being perceived', that is, the realm of the objective. The realm of the objective is said to have its support in immediate experience, and this shows its essential nullity. It is like saying 'Darkness has its support in the sun' or 'Coldness has its root in fire'.

Or we may take 'citra' in its conventional (non-etymological) sense of 'many-coloured and multiform'. To say that its support is immediate experience, which is uniform, is to emphasize further that nullity. It is like attributing touch, colour, taste and smell to the subtle imperceptible ether, or like saying that the various different illusions for which a rope may be mistaken — such as the illusory snake, streamlet, slit in the ground, stick or streak of urine from an ox — are all 'supported by the rope'.

A fresco painted on the absolutely smooth surface of a wall evokes the erroneous notion of heights and depths that are not there. The world, too, is 'strange' (citra) like a fresco (citra). On immediate experience, which is uniform, it generates erroneous ideas, such as the idea that it has distinctions and is a realm of change, that it is not-self, that it is not happy, that it has spatial distinctions such as in front and

behind and inside and outside. And just as the fresco has no reality except as the wall, and undergoes production, maintenance and destruction only on that location — so does the world relate to and depend on immediate experience alone, and hence it is aptly called a fresco.

But when the verse speaks of 'this illusory appearance of a world' (māyā-citra) the point being made is as follows. Although the fresco has no separate reality of its own, the colours from which it is made have their own reality separate from that of the wall; but this is not the case with the material cause of the fresco of the world (i.e. with Māyā). For Māyā is indeterminable either as different from or non-different from immediate experience. We know that the world is the work of Māyā from such texts as 'One should know that the material cause (prakṛti) of the world is an illusion (māyā)' (Śvet.IV.10). And just as the Absolute is known according to its definition through such texts as 'The Real, Knowledge, the Infinite' (Taitt.II.1), so one should conclude that it is only through resorting to Māyā that it projects the world and assumes a plurality of forms. For this knowledge comes on the authority of the Veda. If it were not accepted, Non-duality would be contradicted. (I.S. p.35-6)

Because of the use of the examples of the fresco and the rope-snake, we gather that whatever is perceived is superimposed on the Self. Here one might raise the question, 'Why is the problem of the cause of the world tackled first, without a previous enquiry into the nature of superimposition, which would appear to be the logical procedure?' The answer seems to be, 'Because this system is one of those which equate (reading abheda) Ignorance and Māyā as material cause of the world' (so that Śrī Śaṅkara's distinction between Ignorance as superimposition, and name and form, superimposed *through* Ignorance as the material cause of the world, is lost.)

220 THE TREATMENT OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

The truth is that the Self can have no empirical experience without superimposition, and so superimposition should be the first subject of enquiry. But in the system of Vimuktātman it is (perversely) held that Māyā is the cause of superimposition, and consequently that Māyā should be given the first place. In conformity with that, we take up the study of Māyā first here.

(1) Māyā is referred to in the Vedas, Smṛtis, Epics and Purāṇas by such terms as Māyā, Ignorance (avidyā), Darkness (tamas), the Cause (kāraṇa), Dissolution (laya), Cosmic Power (śakti), Sleep (supti), the Great Sleep (mahāsupti), Sleep (nidrā), the Indestructible (akṣara), the Ether (ākāśa), in such

texts as 'One should know that the material cause of the world is Māyā' (Śvet.IV.10). The claim made in the opening benedictory verse that it was the material cause (prakṛti) of the whole world beginning with the Cosmic Intellect (mahat) was certainly correct. For, even in the world, errors like shell-silver, with their objects, are explained as being the work of Māyā. And so it is demonstrated that the error of supposing that the Self is not the Absolute can only be dispelled through knowledge, like the shell-silver error. (I.S. I.34, p.144)

Here the following points should be noted. The statement 'Māyā is referred to by terms like "Ignorance" and so on' is based on the system of the Pañcapādikā (P.P. p.98; M.V.132,4;143,4). But there is this difference. The Pañcapādikā passage, having mentioned superimposition first, following Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, then goes on to say that the power of Ignorance (avidyā-śakti) is referred to in the Vedic and other texts by Māyā and other terms. Here in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, what is first mentioned is the distinction between subject and object. It is then taught that, as the object cannot be either distinct or non-distinct or both distinct and non-distinct from the subject, it must be indeterminable. Then Māyā is mentioned as the seed from which the whole objective order springs. And it is claimed that it is Māyā that is referred to by the term Ignorance (not *vice versa* as in Śrī Śaṅkara, cp. M.V.45,1). Both the Pañcapādikā and the Iṣṭa Siddhi, however, accept that Māyā and Ignorance (avidyā) are synonyms and are referred to by the term Prakṛti in the Upanishads, although this is in fact nowhere the case. Both, therefore, teach a doctrine that is not in the Veda and which deviates from Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary.

(2) But is it not the case that the word 'Māyā' appears amongst names for consciousness (prajñā; Yāska, Nighaṇṭu Kāṇḍa of Nirukta, III.9)? How, then, can it be shown that Māyā as material cause of the universe is indeterminable? But this objection is wrong. For we know from the very words of the Veda itself that both the effect of Māyā, the world of duality, and knowledge of it, are indeterminable. Now, in the case of the judgment 'There is no pot here', the reference is to a pot that is known to exist at one place and whose existence at another is denied. But in the case of texts like 'There is no plurality whatever here; he goes from death to death who sees the appearance of plurality here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19) the reference is not to duality or to perception of it which is known to exist in one place and whose existence at another is denied. On the contrary, we have teaching that wherever duality is perceived it is set up in that place alone by metaphysical Ignorance, teaching that has the same effect as a sentence like 'This is not silver'.

Thus duality and perception of duality are shown by the Veda itself to be indeterminable, like shell-silver. And from this we conclude that their (material) cause must be of the same nature. For the (material) cause is of the same nature as the effect. And we have already explained, and will explain again later, how what is absolutely real cannot enter into any cause-effect relation.

And though the term 'Māyā' is used to refer to consciousness (prajñā), it is not a term used to mean the Absolute. For the other names of consciousness (listed in the Nighaṇṭu Kāṇḍa, Nirukta III.9) do not refer to the Absolute either. And the upanishadic text 'The Great Lord is the magician who operates this Māyā' (Śvet.IV.10) distinguishes the Absolute from Māyā. The Absolute, since it consists of pure unchanging Consciousness, cannot function directly as the material cause of the universe. So should we perhaps assume that the alternative meaning assigned to the word 'Māyā' in the Nirukta was 'intellect'? But the intellect is not a cause. It is non-eternal, and is itself an effect, and we have already refuted the idea that an effect can be a cause (see M.V.222,1). And if the elements, beginning with the ether, were effects of intellect, then, being non-different from it, their material cause, they, too, would be non-eternal (against the Vedic tradition), and they could not be objects of the intellect's knowledge (since they would be non-different from the intellect). We have already explained (cp. I.S. p.113), and will be explaining again later (cp. I.S. p.177) how the intellect cannot be the object of its own knowledge. And true experts in the Veda do not agree that the universe is an effect of intellect. And so it remains established that the material cause of the world is indeterminable Māyā or metaphysical Ignorance. (I.S. I.35, p.144-5)

Here there is a good deal that requires discussion. So we will divide the material into six sections (i-vi), each dealing with a passage quoted from the above extract.

(i) To begin with, the statement that the material cause of the universe is Māyā, and that that is indeterminable Ignorance, contradicts the upanishadic traditions. The tradition carried in all the Upanishads is that it is the Absolute, and nothing else, that is the material cause from which the universe proceeds. We have such texts as 'That from which these creatures are born' (Taitt.III.1), 'With roots above and branches below' (Kaṭha II.iii.1), 'The universe is born here from the Indestructible principle' (Muṇḍ.I.i.7), 'Verily, the cosmic vital energy proceeds from the Self' (Praśna III.3), 'He is the Lord of all... the source and ultimate goal of all beings' (Māṇḍ.6), 'He projected these worlds' (Ait.I.i.2), 'Then He projected fire' (Chānd.VI.ii.3) and 'From this Self... do all creatures come forth' (Bṛhad.II.i.10). And we have the words of the Lord

Himself, 'I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all creatures' (Bh.G. X.20). We also have the Brahma Sūtras, 'That from which proceed the origination, maintenance and dissolution of this world' (B.S. I.i.2) and 'The Absolute must be understood as the material cause of the world, or otherwise there would be a contradiction between the thesis and the example offered to illustrate it' (B.S. I.iv.23).

(ii) Then there was the claim that in texts like 'There is no plurality whatever here' we have a denial of appearances set up in the Absolute by metaphysical Ignorance, on the model of a sentence like 'This is not silver'. With this we concur. The Veda only speaks of the Absolute as the cause of the world in order to convey that, in its true nature, the world *is* the Absolute. And so the negation of the universe, and also the teaching that the universe has the Absolute for its true nature, are both appropriate. Thus we find, for instance, 'And so there is the teaching "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.II.iii.6) and 'All this world is verily the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12).

(iii) Then there was another argument, the line of which was: 'Because it is known from Vedic revelation that duality and the perception of duality are indeterminable, like shell-silver, the Veda has implicitly declared that its material cause, Māyā, is also indeterminable'. But with this argument we cannot agree. For it is not said that duality is indeterminable like shell-silver in order to imply that its material cause is indeterminable. The implication is that the Absolute, which is *real*, assumes the form of the world through Ignorance, as shell and other things assume the forms of shell-silver and so on in common illusions. As a true expert has said:

(3) All entities that exist have a (real) cause. (G.K. I.6)

(4) As a rope imperfectly perceived in the dark is variously imagined as a snake or a stream of water or in other ways, so is the Self wrongly imagined as this and that. (G.K. II.17)

(iv) There was the further claim that the cause was of the same nature as the effect, and also that the absolutely real did not enter into the cause-effect relationship. On this we would make the following remarks. There is no rule that cause and effect are necessarily of like nature. That is why, when the philosopher of the Sāṅkhya school makes the objection, as expressed in the Sūtra 'No, because it is of a different nature' (B.S. II.i.4), that the world cannot have the Absolute for its material cause, because the Absolute of the Upanishads is fundamentally different from the world in nature — revered Bādarāyaṇa contradicts it by saying 'But examples of such a thing are perceived' (B.S. II.i.6).

As for the remark 'An absolutely real thing cannot enter

into a cause-effect relationship', it is a half-truth. For a true expert (Gauḍapāda) has declared that that which is real as the cause may undergo 'production' as the effect through illusory appearance (māyā), and that the effect is indeed produced through illusion from a real cause.

(5) Production from the real through illusory appearance is intelligible; a real production would not be intelligible. (G.K. III.27)

Other texts could be cited to the same effect. And no one should attempt to retort that the phrase 'production through illusory appearance' implies a declaration that Māyā is the material cause of the world. For the phrase 'production through illusory appearance' is not affirming that the Absolute is a cause; its actual purpose is to deny real production, as is clear from the original context. And the same author also said this at another place:

(6) If the world of plurality existed, it would no doubt really come to an end. But this duality is a mere illusion. Non-duality is the final truth. (G.K. I.17)

If you ask why shell-silver and the like are brought into the argument in Vedanta at all, we shall be explaining this point below (M.V.223,7, note) when dealing with the topic of cancellation of error.

(v) What has been said above is already enough to explain the truth about the claim 'The Absolute, since it consists of pure unchanging Consciousness, cannot function directly as the cause of the universe'. The true Vedantin is not concerned to teach that the Absolute is subject to being known through immediate intuition but rather to teach that the whole world is in truth only the (undifferentiated) Absolute. Perhaps you will ask, 'If that is so, why does the Veda teach that the Absolute becomes transformed into the world?' On this point the revered Commentator wrote as follows:.

(7) But the Absolute becomes subject to transformation and to all empirical experience through apparent distinctions consisting of name and form, manifest and unmanifest, which are imagined through Ignorance and are indeterminable as being either the metaphysical reality itself or as being anything different. In its ultimately true form, however, it remains beyond all empirical experience and not subject to transformation. (B.S.Bh.II.i.27, M.V.47,6)

But did not the Iṣṭa Siddhi say just this when it said that Māyā only, and not the Absolute was the cause? No it did not. For the teaching of the revered Commentator is as follows. He

held that the cause-effect relationship is attributed to the Absolute falsely. This false attribution occurs through an adjunct of name and form imagined through Ignorance, not naturally. Name and form, for their part, whether manifest or unmanifest, are imagined through Ignorance, so that, from the standpoint of the final truth, there is no cause-nature or effect-nature in the Self.

In the Iṣṭa Siddhi the doctrine is different. The world is made out to be indeterminable through quotation of texts and reasoning. The work then argues (wrongly) that it is reasonable to suppose that an indeterminable entity has an indeterminable cause. From this it is supposed to follow that the cause is indeterminable Ignorance, Ignorance being made synonymous with Māyā. The Self is a wall on which the world is a fresco painted by indeterminable Māyā. This is a different doctrine from that of the revered Commentator, since it is manifestly out of tune with it.

(vi) When it was said that, though Māyā could be used as a name for consciousness, it could not be used as a name for the Absolute because the text 'The Great Lord is the one who *operates* Māyā' (Śvet.IV.10) separates Māyā from the Absolute, that was correct. But the view of the Iṣṭa Siddhi that Māyā means both the material cause of the world and metaphysical Ignorance does not follow from it. Why not? Because there is no evidence in worldly experience to show that Māyā is anything at all, in the light of which one could affirm that it was the material cause of the world. The Upanishads ask whether the cause of the world is real or not, and reply that one should know that the world is an illusory display (māyā) (Śvet.IV.10). That is, one should know that it is a mere false notion imagined through Ignorance. The sequel, 'The Great Lord is the one who operates this magic illusion' confirms this interpretation. For it cannot be claimed that the Self is called the Great Lord in virtue of his possessing the power of delusion. The purpose of the verse is quite different. The magic power of a magician depends on the magician, and, in the same way, the material cause of the world depends on the highest Lord, and is in this sense like an illusory magic show — that is the correct interpretation of the verse. In places like 'Indra assumes many forms by his magic powers' (Bṛhad.II.v.19) the word 'māyā' is used (through its meaning 'consciousness') to refer to (illusory) empirical cognitions. Even there, the fact that the cognitions are referred to in the plural number shows that they are unreal. And thus a true expert has said:

(8) The Self is unborn, but appears to undergo birth in various forms through Māyā, as we know from such texts as 'There is no plurality whatever here' and 'Indra (goes about in many forms) through his magic powers'. (G.K. III.24, M.V.35,5)

(9) *Śaṅkara's Commentary:* But does not the word Māyā mean consciousness? Yes, it does. There is nothing wrong, since the true meaning is that the consciousness of the organs of knowledge (indra = indriya) can be taken as an illusion, since it is based on metaphysical Ignorance. So the phrase 'by his magic powers' really means 'through the cognitions of the instruments of knowledge, cognitions which are of the nature of Ignorance'. (G.K.Bh.III.24)

221 IGNORANCE AS THE CAUSE OF PURELY PHENOMENAL OBJECTS (PRĀTIBHĀSIKA-ARTHA)

Such words as 'avidyā' and 'ajñāna' (Ignorance) are said to mean Māyā (I.S. p.144; M.V.224,10). The term 'Ajñāna' is used for Ignorance, here understood as Māyā, either because Ignorance is contradictory to knowledge or else because it is by definition 'not-knowledge' (a-jñāna = not knowledge). But that same entity is referred to as indeterminable and non-conscious and called Māyā and other names — not here understood negatively as the mere logical contradictory of knowledge (not-knowledge, I.S. p.69). Vimuktātman held that the world was the effect of Ignorance (ajñāna), and that shell-silver and so on were the examples to illustrate the mechanism (M.V.218,3). As the Iṣṭa Siddhi usually spreads itself at some length in supporting this illustration, we shall now have to examine it.

(1) In the case of a reality, there could not be error and its correction. In the case of something without any existence whatever, there could not be an erroneous cognition and a cancelling cognition. Erroneous cognitions and their objects are Ignorance (avidyā), indeterminable as real or unreal. (I.S. I.9)

(From Vimuktātman's own commentary): If the shell-silver had been real, the cognition of it would not have been an error, any more than there is error in the cognition of real silver. And in that case, there would be no cancellation of the cognition (in the form 'that was not silver'), any more than there is in the case of real silver. But if the silver were totally unreal (and therefore outside human experience) — like a horn growing from the head of a man — then there would be no cognition at all. So there could not be the 'error and correction' referred to in the verse in that case either....

Here you might object that we have said that there could not be error and its correction if the silver were either real or totally unreal. Nor could they occur if the silver were 'both-real-and-unreal', as the latter is a contradiction in terms. Nor is there any other way of conceiving the silver apart from these three. So the practical familiarity we have with errors and their correction is not a proof of their

existence, as it does not stand critical scrutiny. But such an objection is wrong. For we maintain that the illusory silver and our erroneous cognition of it are of the nature of Ignorance, which is indeterminable as real or unreal. (I.S. p.47)

(2) For if the object is indeterminable, the cognition by which it is known must also be indeterminable. Otherwise it could not be a cognition of an indeterminable object, any more than correct cognition could. And if a cognition is determinable (withstands scrutiny), then its object must also be of a kind to withstand scrutiny, like the objects of other right cognitions. So the indeterminability of both the object and the cognition in error stands proved. (I.S. p.48)

(3) Moreover, since the indeterminable object and the erroneous cognition are transient in time, we have to look for a cause for them. An efficient cause alone will not suffice to account for their origin, so we have to look for a material cause too. In this connection, the real is never found to be a direct cause of the unreal. And if, in the case of an error, the real had been the material cause, then there would not have been an error. There would have been reality known through an authoritative means of cognition, as in the perception of a pot. But this cannot be accepted (as it would fail to account for the difference between true perception and error). Therefore we have to assume that the material cause of the error must be indeterminable (i.e. of a reality-grade indeterminable as either real or unreal) like its effect. And that cause cannot be anything other than Ignorance (ajñāna), which must be beginningless. What has a beginning cannot be a material cause, for if it has a beginning it will itself be an effect of some more permanent material cause, and it will not exist like a material cause in company with the effects that derive from it (but will disappear to make way for them, as the lump-form of the clay disappears to make way for the pot, M.V. 222,1). The material cause must also be beginningless because to conceive it otherwise would involve infinite regress (in that if the material cause has a beginning it must spring from another material cause which has a beginning, which must in turn spring from another material cause and so on). (I.S. I.9, p.48)

On this one should ask, 'When one calls shell-silver and the like "indeterminable as either real or unreal" does that mean merely that they are false by nature? Or does it mean that there are certain entities which are characterizable as "indeterminable"?' If it only means that they are false by nature, we have no quarrel. On the second view, the entities in question are not accepted by all philosophers, and are not evident in ordinary worldly experience. In fact, their nature

is not worth investigating, as it would be totally unproductive to do so. They are not even claimed to be existent entities, that their investigation could have any meaning or purpose. What *is* worth trying to discover is their true nature as shell, or whatever the case might be. For that would remove attachment, aversion, fear and other passions. As a true expert has said:

(4) This Self is imagined both as associated with unreal entities and also as non-dual. But even the entities imagined only exist *as* the non-dual principle; therefore supreme value resides only in non-duality. (G.K. II.33)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: We have the familiar example in worldly experience that a rope may be imagined as a snake or streamlet of water which do not exist in the rope, in the form of 'This is a snake, this is a streamlet of water, this is a stick'; or it may be correctly conceived in its nature as a rope, with no second thing added. In the same way the Self, though itself ever one by nature, is imagined in an infinity of unreal forms, beginning with the cosmic vital energy, that do not really exist... and also in its ultimately true nature as non-dual, the substratum of all the false imaginations, like the rope.

And these imaginary beings, such as the cosmic vital energy and the rest, are only imagined as forms of the real Self. For there cannot be a transient false imagination without a substratum. Therefore, even at the time of the imaginations, supreme value lies only in the non-dual principle, since that is the substratum of all illusions, and it never departs from its own true nature as the non-dual Self. The imaginations themselves are pernicious. They stir up unwelcome emotions, as the rope-snake and the like stir up fear and so on. Because the non-dual principle is without fear or danger, it alone is the repository of supreme value. (G.K.Bh.II.33)

Then there was that other claim that, if the object of a cognition was indeterminable, the cognition also must be indeterminable, while if a cognition withstands scrutiny, its object, too, must be such that its reality will withstand scrutiny. Here we require to make some distinctions. First of all, does the word knowledge mean mental idea, or does it mean the actual awareness of the object? If knowledge means the mental idea, then everyone will have to agree that, if a piece of shell is conceived as silver, we have a case of mistaken application of the notion of one thing to another, which is false superimposition. For we discover at the time of the correction of the error that the cognition was a piece of false imagination. We then feel, 'There was no silver there. I just imagined it in error'.

But if knowledge is (not the idea but) the awareness

(avagati), the case is different. Awareness cannot be false. For no one who has mistaken shell for silver, even when he later discovers that the silver was false, thinks that the awareness illumining the false silver was itself false. No one thinks 'I did not then feel "This is silver"'. In this connection the revered Commentator has said:

(5) Although the effects of a snake-bite or a bathe experienced by someone in the dream state are unreal, nevertheless the awareness of them, the fact that a dream-cognition resulted, is real. For it is not contradicted when the person wakes up. People think, when they have awoken from a dream, that the snake-bite or bathe experienced in dream was false; but they do not think that the awareness illumining those experiences was false. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14)

This also shows the truth about the passage 'And if a cognition withstands scrutiny, then its object must also be of a kind to withstand scrutiny'. If knowledge is identified with mental ideas of objects, then, in the case of shell-silver and the like, there will be no true cognition or real object. But if knowledge be taken as identical with awareness, then the case is different. There is no falsity in awareness. For awareness is real and still present at the time of correcting the error, when it takes the form 'Although I was aware of silver, it was in fact shell that was at that time being misperceived'. Awareness then apprehends the silver and the mental cognition of it as false. The knowledge at the time of the correction of the error was real *as awareness*; but it does not follow that the silver on which it bore was real too. Even the Iṣṭa Siddhi will say later:

(6) What determines the authoritativeness or otherwise of a cognition is the fact of its either having or not having the real for its object; the question whether the cognition itself is real or unreal is irrelevant. (I.S. I.9, p.62)

Hence (even on Vimuktātman's own showing) an object of cognition may be false even when the cognition is true. Incidentally, we may point out that where the object of a cognition is false, the cognition is authoritative if it determines the object as false, whereas it is inauthoritative if it estimates it as real.

Then there was the further point, 'Since the indeterminable object and the erroneous cognition are transient in time, we have to look for a cause for them'. Our comment on this is as follows. It is true that shell-silver and the like are transient. But we do not have to look for a cause for them, as they are mere false imagination, and the cognitions by which they are revealed are mere imagination too. The pre-condition for such imaginations is failure to discriminate the shell or

other substratum in its true nature. This is the prompting cause (nimitta kāraṇa) for the piece of mental imagination; and the material cause is quite evidently the mind. So we do not 'have to look for a cause'. Objects of erroneous cognition are not realities, that an enquiry into their cause and so on could be meaningful or useful. As for the mental imagination itself, one could not imagine any other cause for it apart from those on the mental plane, such as absence of discrimination of the true nature of the real, and the impressions of the previous experience of other objects.

222 IGNORANCE (AJÑĀNA) IS DIFFERENT FROM ERROR, DOUBT AND ABSENCE OF KNOWLEDGE

The author of the Pañcapādikā failed to see that illusory phenomena like shell-silver were only mental imaginations. (He speaks, for instance, of 'false silver residing in the shell', M.V.138,2.) Accordingly, we find in the Pañcapādikā the first signs of a theory that they are produced and destroyed, and of an enquiry into what could be their cause. Such theories are greatly developed in the Iṣṭa Siddhi and certain other later Advaita works. For Maṇḍana and his followers, on the other hand, Ignorance, regarded essentially as erroneous knowledge of the form of misrepresentation, was the cause of wrongly supposing the supreme Self to be the individual soul. In order to refute this view, the Iṣṭa Siddhi tries to prove that, over and above erroneous cognition, metaphysical Ignorance (ajñāna) exists as the material cause of a purely phenomenal (prātibhāsika) object.

(1) (But is it not the case that metaphysical Ignorance (ajñāna) is nothing other than erroneous cognition, since that is what we are familiar with as 'ignorance'? We are familiar with erroneous cognition and doubt. But we are not familiar with any metaphysical Ignorance, considered to be different from these two, not vouched for by any of the empirical means of cognition. Nor can any logical case be made out for regarding such a strange entity as the cause of erroneous cognition. All that we have, therefore, is erroneous cognition, having another earlier erroneous cognition as its cause.) The cause of that earlier error is a yet earlier one, and the cause of that an earlier one still, since the series of errors, or of errors and their impressions, is beginningless, like the cycle of seed and sprout, and, since such a series can well constitute cause and effect, there is no need to assume any other cause.

But this whole theory is wrong. We have already replied to it by pointing out, amongst other things, that the earlier erroneous cognitions do not accompany the later ones (M.V. 221,3). An earlier effect does not accompany a later effect

into which it is transformed; the lump-form of the clay does not accompany the pot (as the clay does; the lump-form disappears to make way for the pot). And that which does not accompany an effect cannot be its material cause, as the lump-form of the clay cannot be the material cause of the pot. It is the clay only which is the material cause, since it accompanies both the lump and the things into which the lump is transformed. But the effects are not material causes of each other. In the same way, since erroneous cognition and doubt and their impressions are all effects, they are not material causes of each other. That alone is their material cause which persists in them consistently while they come and go, and that is metaphysical Ignorance. For they only exist when it exists; and when it does not exist, they do not exist either. (I.S. p.48)

Here the proposition 'Metaphysical Ignorance exists regularly accompanying erroneous cognition, doubt and their impressions' is based on abstract reasoning. But there is an important point that is not raised. The clay accompanies everything made from it, the large pot, the small pot, the bucket. Does Ignorance accompany everyone's experience in this way? If so, is it the philosopher's personal experience that shows him this? Or does he have to make some effort to prove it? We shall be reflecting over this problem further when examining the question of whether Ignorance is accessible to direct experience (cp. M.V.222,3, note).

Śrī Śureśvara accepted the view that Ignorance was essentially absence of knowledge. He expressed this in the formula '"Ignorance" which means "I do not know"' (T.B.V. II.176, M.V. 110,1). The Iṣṭa Siddhi refutes this.

(2) There is an argument which runs as follows. If you say (the faulty argument runs) that ignorance as expressed in the feeling 'I do not know' is something other than absence of knowledge, that is wrong. For there is the experience familiar to all of ignorance and of the cessation of ignorance as 'Formerly I did not know the shell, now I know it' and 'My ignorance had come to an end, but now I again find that I do not know'. So ignorance is simply absence of knowledge.

This argument is wrong. For it cannot be established that a non-existence is open to proof. Some (the Logicians) claim that perception establishes non-existence; others (the Pūrva Mīmāṃsaka followers of Kumārila) hold that it is established by knowledge of non-existence (anupalabdhi, the recognition of non-existence which occurs when a thing is not perceived where it was expected). But Ignorance is not known by either of these forms of knowledge. Because it is known immediately, it is not known through the 'anupalabdhi' of the school of Kumārila, for such a cognition is a mediate form of knowledge. And when (according to the Logicians) non-existence is known

directly through perception, it is known as a character of something perceived (e.g. 'This corner of the floor has no pot'). But the Self (to which Ignorance must be supposed to belong) is not an object open to perception. For if it were, it would be not-self, like a pot or any other perceivable object. Nor can the Self be an object of knowledge, for the same thing cannot be both knower and known. Nor is there any other knower apart from the Self — or, if there were, that would be the Self (and so, *per absurdum*, the not-self would be the Self).

Or again, since the Self is not the object of any of the means of empirical knowledge, its 'Ignorance' could not be known through the faculty of apprehension of non-existence (anupalabdhi, assumed by the followers of Kumārila). For not even the exponents of anupalabdhi are capable of apprehending the non-existence of anything when they do not have an objective knowledge of the place where it ought to exist.

If you ask how Ignorance can manifest at all if there is no authoritative means of knowledge bearing on it, we reply that it manifests like shell-silver. Shell-silver does not manifest under the light of any valid means of cognition (pramāṇa). And if it did so manifest, it would not be illusory! And yet it *does* manifest. Ignorance manifests in the same way, simply through immediate awareness. (I.S. p.65-6)

(3) If absence of authoritative knowledge is not Ignorance, let us consider what else it could be, if it is anything that can be established by valid cognition at all. But it cannot be anything else established by valid cognition. For absence of knowledge cannot be established as an object of knowledge existing in the Self, and it cannot exist outside the Self either. If you argue that it might exist outside the Self as the opposite of knowledge, we reply that it still could not be so established by valid cognition. For the knowledge possessed by the Self cannot be established as an object of valid cognition (and all the less could absence of that knowledge outside the Self be so established). And so absence of knowledge cannot be established by valid cognition in any way.

You may reply that in that case absence of knowledge must be Ignorance. Very well, we accept it. If absence of knowledge is taken as a species of Ignorance, this will not offend against the indeterminability of Ignorance. For, since absence of knowledge cannot be established by valid cognition to be a case of non-existence, it cannot be designated 'unreal'. (I.S. p.66)

Here, in considering Ignorance (ajñāna) and its nature we must introduce some distinctions. Let us suppose that 'I do not know the shell' implies direct awareness of Ignorance. Well, in that case, since the shell was open to objective knowledge by perception, could we really say that Ignorance of it was not

open to objective knowledge by perception? And what would be impossible about a valid cognition of non-existence bearing on the ignorance of the shell, and assuming the form 'I know the shell, so I am not now beset by ignorance of it'? Those who hold that the shell and so on are open to perception, and also that cognitions of them are open to mental perception, must certainly accept that Ignorance is accessible either to perception or to apprehension of non-existence (i.e., in this case, apprehension of non-existence of knowledge). However, one might suppose 'Because the Self is not open to objective perception, Ignorance in the Self (i.e. Ignorance affecting the Self) cannot be open to objective perception either; and neither can Ignorance in the Self be open to apprehension of non-existence (anupalabdhi), since there would be no objective apprehension of the Self as the locus (objective apprehension of the locus being always required for apprehension of non-existence, e.g. the pot is not *on the floor*).

Still, the assertion, 'Ignorance manifests, and that through direct awareness' — this will have to be accepted even by him who holds Ignorance to be non-existence of knowledge. For there is no rule forcing us to hold that (Ignorance in the form of) absence of knowledge in the Self has to be known through the empirical faculty of apprehension of non-existence (anupalabdhi), as is the case with non-existences belonging to the domain of the not-self. Nor would it be a terrible calamity if Ignorance were hereby made to be indeterminable: for metaphysical Ignorance as Ignorance of the true nature of the Self is eminently indeterminable, since its existence is only established through lack of reflection. As Śrī Śureśvara says in the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi:

(4) The Self as pure unbroken awareness is concealed by bare Ignorance, accepted on the basis of familiarity for lack of proper critical reflection; the Self then appears as other than it is. (N.Sid. III.113, prose intro.)

Nor does this undermine the reasoning saying that Ignorance is absence of knowledge. Even the one who holds to the indeterminability of Ignorance has to accept the negation of knowledge. And it should not be forgotten that the statement that Ignorance is absence of knowledge, like the statement that it is indeterminable, is only a makeshift in the end.

(5) You cannot lay it down that *all* forms of absence of knowledge are Ignorance. For non-existence in the form of non-existence of one thing in another (itaretara-abhāva) is invariably located in an *object*, whereas Ignorance is located in the Self, which is not an object. Again, non-existence following destruction is something produced, and no one has the experience of their Ignorance being produced. Further, people do have the experience of their Ignorance coming to an end,

whereas no one accepts that non-existence following destruction can come to an end.

Perhaps you will argue that non-existence following destruction must come to an end, as it has a beginning. For whatever is produced is some form of being, and produced being is invariably destroyed, as in the case of a pot. Every later being that comes into being represents the 'non-existence after destruction' of some earlier being, and every earlier being represents the 'prior non-existence' of some later being. But even if this be admitted, both 'prior non-existence' and 'non-existence following destruction' would come into being. And, as there is no experience of metaphysical Ignorance coming into being, it cannot be either the 'prior non-existence' of knowledge or its 'non-existence following destruction'.

It is true that destruction can come into being, as we have, for example, the experience 'I have now lost my knowledge' (i.e. it is now 'destroyed'). But we do not have the experience of metaphysical Ignorance coming into being, as we have no knowledge of its prior non-existence. We have knowledge of the prior non-existence of knowledge only; we do not have knowledge of the prior non-existence of Ignorance.... So metaphysical Ignorance is not non-existence of knowledge. (I.S. p.66-7)

(6) If you were to argue (on the basis of arthāpatti, i.e. 'the only possible hypothesis remaining') that Ignorance could only be the prior non-existence of knowledge, on the ground that the onset of knowledge brings it to an end, we would reply that this was wrong. For what was brought to an end by the onset of knowledge might have been something (positive and) other than the mere non-existence of knowledge, as darkness is removed by bringing out a lamp. Darkness is not equivalent to the prior non-existence of a lamp. And yet the lamp brings it to an end by its mere existence.... And so knowledge is able to bring Ignorance to an end by its mere existence, even though Ignorance is not simply the non-existence of knowledge. So it stands proved that metaphysical Ignorance is not mere absence of knowledge. (I.S. p.67 and 69)

The author here uses dialectical arguments to distinguish his own conception of Ignorance from that of both the Logicians and the Mīmāṃsaka ritualists, by whom Ignorance was conceived as non-existence of knowledge, defined variously as prior non-existence, non-existence after destruction, or non-existence of one thing in another. This whole conception of non-existence as having different kinds was refuted by Śrī Bhagavatpāda in his commentaries on all the three starting-points of Vedanta (Upanishads, Gītā and Brahma Sūtras), as we now show.

(7) And it is not correct to suppose that even prior non-existence can have a beginning. For, since there are no

distinctions in non-existence, this is only an empty fantasy. (Taitt.Bh.I.1, intro.)

(8) But if, on the other hand, a distinction into different kinds were admitted for non-existence, as lotuses are distinct according to whether they are blue or of some other colour, the non-existence would become an existence, just like a lotus, from the mere fact of having distinctions. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.26)

(9) No one can show that there is any distinction in non-existence such as non-existence of one, non-existence of two, non-existence of all, 'non-existence prior to production', 'non-existence after destruction', 'non-existence of one thing in another' and 'absolute non-existence'. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.48)

Because this conception of different kinds of non-existence has been refuted by Śrī Śaṅkara, one might say that the very question 'What kind of a non-existence is Ignorance?' was itself prompted by Ignorance. And so the reasonable view would be that Ignorance was simply absence of knowledge, and the notion of its existence in the Self was established only through lack of reflection.

But when the matter is more deeply considered from the standpoint of metaphysical truth, the notion 'Ignorance abides in the Self' is seen to be inconceivable. For the Self is not related to space, that Ignorance could find anywhere to abide there. And it is not related to time, that one could suppose 'Now there is Ignorance; at some future time it will come to an end'. And so one can say with Srī Sureśvara:

(10) Because space and time and so on are the effects of Ignorance, the Self is unrelated to them. Therefore, when there is knowledge of the Self, there is no knowledge left to come and no Ignorance that has not been destroyed. (B.B.V. I.iv.1452)

Well, be that as it may, let us raise another question. In this system, Ignorance, which is neither being nor non-being, is accepted as the material cause of shell-silver and other illusions. We ask whether this material cause is present everywhere in its effects, as clay is in the pots and other objects into which it is transformed. For you have said, 'Erroneous cognitions, doubts and their impressions are effects, and they are not material causes of each other. That alone is their material cause which persists in them consistently, while they come and go' (I.S. p.48, M.V.222,1 *ad fin.*) and 'Knowledge of the Absolute burns up Ignorance, even if it is born of Ignorance' (I.S. p.69, M.V.227,2). If you say, 'Yes, Ignorance as material cause is present everywhere in its effects', then we ask you why (in the course of experiencing illusory silver) we do not have the experience 'This silver is

the result of Ignorance' and 'That silver was destroyed on account of the destruction of its material cause, Ignorance'. As we have already explained (M.V.222,1, note), this question is never answered in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, a point we should not forget.

223 THEORIES OF ERROR

The Iṣṭa Siddhi institutes an enquiry into theories of error in order to establish the indeterminable character of purely phenomenal objects like the shell-silver, and of the cognitions by which they are known.

(1) Some say that the shell-silver that manifests in erroneous perception is real, others say that it is unreal. Others say that it is indeterminable as either real or unreal. So we now take the matter up for discussion. As the unreal could not even manifest as an error, and the real would not be subject to cancellation by a correcting-cognition, the shell-silver is indeterminable either as unreal or as real; that is, in brief, the reasoning behind these three views. (I.S. I.2-3, p.39)

Having made this preliminary statement, the author goes on to refute four different theories of error. (1) The view that the object of erroneous cognition is totally unreal (asat-khyāti); (2) Three forms of the doctrine that the object of erroneous cognition is real but seen as other than it is (anyathā-khyāti); (3) The doctrine that error is due to a failure to discriminate between a perception and a memory (akhyāti); (4) The doctrine that the object of erroneous cognition is an idea of one's own mind (with no external referent, ātma-khyāti). Having refuted these, he then goes on to establish his own theory that the object of erroneous cognition is (external to the mind and) of indeterminable reality-grade (anirvacanīya-khyāti).

In the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Commentary, Śrī Śaṅkara asks 'Well, but what is this thing you call superimposition?', and observes, in the course of working out the definition: 'Some say that superimposition is the transference to one thing of attributes that belong to another. Some affirm that superimposition is invariably caused by some failure to discriminate differences. Others, again, say that a superimposition is nothing more than the wrong notion resulting from imagining contradictory attributes in a substratum (where they do not belong)'.

And having set out briefly these views, he shows how the views of all schools agree with his own, remarking, 'But in all these views the common point is that one thing appears with the attributes of another'. Then he goes on to quote practical examples, and says: 'And worldly experience agrees

with this. For a piece of shell appears as silver (in the well-known silver-illusion) and the one moon (in the case of the disease of double-vision) appears to be accompanied by a second moon'. The idea was that since the error of mistaking shell (i.e. mother-of-pearl) for silver was common in worldly experience, there could be no doubt about it. But the revered Commentator did not engage in an examination of the various other views of error, as such an enquiry would have been of small use or interest.

The author of the Pañcapādikā, on the other hand, who accepted the theory that the indeterminable power (śakti) of Ignorance was the material cause of superimposition, examines the other theories at length. And the author of the Bhāmatī, even though he accepts that Ignorance is of the nature of superimposition, accepts also a cosmic power of Ignorance of the nature of dissolution (laya), and he, too, examines the other theories of error at length.

Here in the present work, the Iṣṭa Siddhi, a prolonged and determined effort is made to refute the other views of error in order to impress on the mind the existence of a positive indeterminable Ignorance, with the help of that same example of shell-silver. The author's idea is that the silver and other errors must be of indeterminable reality-grade, since, as set out in the verse just quoted (M.V.*223,1*), the unreal could not even manifest as an error, while the real would not be subject to correction by a cancelling-cognition, so that the other theories (which take the erroneous phenomenon either as unreal or real) cannot establish a defensible theory of error.

The reply to this has already been given (M.V.222). The shell-silver and so on are (not objective entities of indeterminable reality-grade but) mere fantasies of the perceiver. It is useless to argue for the existence of any objective entity over and above the shell, the substratum of the illusion. On the view of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, however, it is possible to prove that there is perception (khyāti) of illusory objects of indeterminable reality-grade; it is possible to prove through this that the universe is of indeterminable reality-grade, and to prove through that that the Absolute is non-dual. From a vision of the Absolute so conceived, it will be possible to obtain liberation. These, as we have already indicated, are the justifications for the artificial theory devised in the Iṣṭa Siddhi.

The author himself sets forth as follows a number of objections and answers on the subject of the theory of the indeterminable character of the object in error.

(i) The proponent (Bhāskara) of the doctrine that the object of the erroneous cognition is real is made to raise the following objection: You (Advaitin) argue that the totally unreal, like a flower growing in the sky, cannot even manifest.

And what is not unreal, like real silver, is not subject to being corrected by a cancelling cognition. So we have to conclude, you say, that shell-silver is indeterminable as either unreal or real (I.S. I.42, p.150). (I (Bhāskara) for my part deny that what is neither real nor unreal can exist at all or be subject to cancellation, M.V.160,3.)

Vimuktātman answers this charge as follows:

(2) You yourself agree that there can neither be the rise nor the perception of the totally unreal; and there certainly cannot be the destruction through a cancelling cognition of the wholly real. Illusory silver must therefore be indeterminable as real or unreal (since it indubitably manifests and is subject to elimination by a cancelling cognition). (I.S. p.151)

(3) (The Veda speaks of the origination and destruction of the world, but neither the totally real nor the totally unreal can undergo either origination or destruction. So the world must be indeterminable as real or unreal on the authority of Vedic revelation as well as of reason, I.S. I.45. You might object that the real can undergo destruction if it has originated, though the Absolute cannot undergo destruction as it has not originated. Well, but if the real can undergo origination, then the Absolute must also be able to undergo origination, as it is identical with the real. Equally, it would be able to suffer destruction.)

(To this you will perhaps reply that the Absolute cannot undergo origination, as it has no cause.) But this would be incorrect. For on your own hypothesis the world is real, so that, being non-different from the Absolute, it could no more have a cause than the latter could. And if you replied, 'Well, the world *does* have a cause', then that would imply that the Absolute also had a cause, since (as the real) the two would be non-different. If you say that the Absolute is the cause of the world even though non-different from it, then the Absolute would also be its own cause. And if you said that that was impossible, then the Absolute could not be the cause of the world either, since the two are non-different.

Or suppose that the world were real but different from the Absolute. Then the world would be without origination and without a cause, like the Absolute. So on that view, too, the real would not be subject to origination and destruction. And you yourself do not maintain that the unreal is subject to origination or destruction. Yet the Veda says that the world is subject to origination and destruction. It follows that Vedic revelation and reason alike show that the world must be indeterminable as real or unreal. (I.S. p.152)

We may ask: If the total unreality of the world is out of the question, and if its production and destruction would be unintelligible if it were taken as real, how does that show that it

must be indeterminable as real or unreal? Suppose Vimuktātman were to reply 'Because the Veda teaches that it undergoes production and destruction', that would be wrong. For a true expert has said of the Vedic texts teaching the creation of the world 'This is only a device for introduction of the doctrine of the sole metaphysical reality of the Self' (G.K. III.15). He declares that their purpose is not to teach the creation of the world as a historical fact, but that they are introduced as a means to communicate something different. There are conclusive Vedic texts such as 'This whole universe is in truth nothing but the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.12) and 'All this is but the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2) which teach that, from the standpoint of the highest truth, the world is the undifferentiated) Absolute and nothing else. In the light of these, no other interpretation of the creation texts is possible.

(ii) Similarly Vimuktātman states the objection against the doctrine of indeterminability raised by the proponents of the doctrine that error is unreal. 'If the indeterminable as well as the unreal were taken as the non-real, then when the words 'That is not real' were heard there would be the doubt whether the reference was to the unreal or to the indeterminable. But in practice people do not have this doubt (they take the reference to be to the unreal). Vimuktātman's reply to this is as follows:

(4) Is the unreal different from or non-different from the real? If it were different, it would not be genuinely unreal, it would be in some sense real. But if it were non-different, such terms as 'erroneous manifestation of the totally unreal' (asatkhyāti) would be inappropriate. So all talk of 'erroneous manifestation of the totally unreal' is unsound. (I.S. p.161)

(5) That which is by nature unknown (the non-conscious) cannot be knowledge. If the unknown is made known (through the knowledge inherent in the knower), such a cognition (would be something that came into being and so) would be indeterminable. (Neither the totally real nor the totally unreal can either come into being or be destroyed, cp. M.V.220,2 and note, section iv;223,6.) And if the non-conscious were not made known, it would not be known at all, since it is by nature non-knowledge. So coming into perception applies only to the indeterminable, just like coming into being. And it is itself indeterminable. That is why I said that both coming into manifestation and passing out of manifestation were imagined through Māyā and not real, just as birth and destruction are in general. Since we have shown that both worldly perceptions and their objects must be indeterminable, we reject as unfounded the view (of the Mādhyamika Buddhist) that there can be

perception of the totally unreal.

But is it not illogical that there should be perception of Māyā, which is by nature unconscious? Yes, it is. For it is Māyā. If its manifestation were not illogical, both its manifestation and itself would be real, and then it would not be Māyā. (I.S. p.191)

(6) If you ask how, if it is indeterminable, the illusory silver can exist and manifest, we reply that this phenomenon is intelligible on the basis of its being due to error. It cannot be the totally unreal that manifests in error; for, as the indeterminable does not assume the form of total unreality, there is no evidence to show that error is a manifestation of the totally unreal. (I.S. p.121)

(7) And reason (and the other empirical means of knowledge apart from perception) do bear on directly knowable objects (just like perception). It is by them, for instance, that the fact that there is only one moon is established; and they also establish that the second moon, and also our cognition of it, are of the nature of indeterminable Ignorance. For this is only discovered when perception is contradicted. However, a person does not then feel that the second moon and the like had no existence whatever, for the reasons already given (such as the impossibility of a positive cognition, even if erroneous, bearing on a total non-entity). And the contradiction of perception is explicable in a completely different way (by appeal to the mere cessation of Ignorance). The erroneous phenomenon and our erroneous cognition of it arise from ignorance of the true nature of the thing that is being mistakenly apprehended. They are removed by right knowledge of that thing. The object of an erroneous cognition cannot, however, be removed by the knowledge of the non-existence of anything. This rule applies here also. The fact that the moon is one has to be known first. And without this knowledge of the fact that the moon is one, there cannot be knowledge that the perception of a second moon is an error.

Let us suppose, though, that an authoritative voice says, 'There are not two moons' or 'This direction is not east'. By the above reasoning, the experience that will result will not be the non-existence of the two moons, but the knowledge that the error of seeing two moons or of sensing the wrong direction was of indeterminable reality-grade. The matter must be understood in the same way in the case of the Vedic text 'There is no plurality here'(i.e. vision of plurality will not cease, but there will be knowledge that it is of indeterminable reality-grade, Bṛhad.IV.iv.19). (I.S. p.122)

Here the same partiality for resorting to a proof based on the indeterminability of illusory silver breaks out everywhere. People at large regard the reality in illusory perceptions as

nothing other than the substrata onto which they are superimposed; they do not descry the indeterminable reality-grade of some (hypothetical) objective illusory phenomenon. For they do not take steps to enquire whether a mere illusory phenomenon is real or unreal. They merely have the doubt 'Is this silver or is it not?' At the end of their enquiry their conviction is, 'This is only shell, not silver'. Nor is there any entity over and above the shell called 'non-existence of silver' which could be ascertained by a faculty of apprehension of non-existence. Their feeling, we may be sure, is 'All that is ascertained is the existence of shell on its own evidence'.

Hence, in the case of negations like 'This is not silver', 'There are not two moons' or 'This direction is not east', which deny silver, a second moon or the fact that a certain direction is east, there is a point we have to remember. The chief purpose of such sentences is not negation; nor is it the exact evaluation of the falsely perceived silver and so on; rather, their chief purpose is to communicate the true nature of the substratum of each illusion. The same is true of such Vedic texts as, 'There is no plurality here'. And in this connection an ancient authority has said:

(8) When a flaming torch is waved, the appearances of straight and curved lines do not arise from any external source. Nor, when the torch is held still, do they either move away from the torch or enter back into it. They never issued forth from the torch in the first place, as they have no substantial being. The same is the case with differentiations appearing in Consciousness, for they also are illusory appearances. When Consciousness vibrates in motion, the appearances that arise do not come from any external source. When Consciousness is motionless, the appearances do not either move away from Consciousness or enter back into it. They never issued forth from Consciousness in the first place, as they have no substantial being; since the causal relation does not apply to them, they are ever incomprehensible. (G.K. IV.49-52)

Here it is denied that causal relation applies to the incomprehensible appearances of straight and crooked lines. Just as the one flaming torch is (at the level of empirical experience) all that really exists, so Consciousness is the only reality; the appearance of duality is not reality.

(9) The unreality of the second moon resides in the fact that those whose eyes are not afflicted with double-vision do not see it. But is it not the fact that, in the case of duality, there is no example in this way of anyone who does not perceive it? Not so, for those in dreamless sleep and trance-like concentration (samādhi) do not see it. (Taitt.Bh.II.8)

The teaching here is that the second moon does not exist at all,

as it is not perceived by people with sound eyesight.

(10) Such a knower of the Absolute sees even the ladle with which he pours oblations into the fire as verily the Absolute. He sees it as non-existent except as the Self. When a person who has been under the illusion that a piece of shell is silver perceives the absence of silver in that shell, he says 'What appeared as silver was really shell'. In the same way, the knower of the Absolute says 'The offering is really the Absolute'. (Bh.G.Bh.IV.24)

Here it is declared that there is no silver in the shell. The reality in the silver is only the shell. Nothing is taught about silver of indeterminable reality-grade arising from Ignorance. In the same way, from the standpoint of the knower of the Absolute it is clear that the oblation, too, is itself only the Absolute.

(11) Just as, when the rope has been discerned in its true nature, all imagination ceases upon acquiring the conviction 'It is a rope', so, when the Self has been discerned, there is the conviction of non-duality. (G.K. II.18)

Here the teaching is that, when the truth is known, the various imaginations such as snake and streamlet of water cease; only the rope exists. The verse does not teach that, after the truth has been discerned, the 'indeterminability' of the snake and the rest remains unaffected.

224. THE NATURE OF IGNORANCE OF THE SHELL

In the system of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, it is argued that the cause of shell-silver is beginningless Ignorance. And that Ignorance has to be destroyed through knowledge of the Absolute. The following texts should be considered.

(1) The effect is not totally equivalent to the cause. Hence it stands proved that there can be no rule, 'Because the effect always exists as the cause, wherever the cause is to be found there the effect is to be found also'. (I.S. p.54)

(2) Thus we hold that time itself governs the rise, development and eventual destruction of effects that fall within time, which is our answer to the question 'In what sense are effects subject to time?' The question would be self-contradictory if raised on the basis that effects fall outside time. Our view that the cause of all effects is eternal and changeless is thus well established (on the analogy, (given earlier, I.S. p.55), of the flowers and fruits appearing and disappearing

regularly in time on a tree that persists unchanged through time, while time itself cannot fall within another time and so be subject to change). Hence beginningless Ignorance of the shell can stand as the material cause of the purely phenomenal shell-silver and of the erroneous cognition bearing on it. There is no other material cause. (I.S. p.55-6)

In the systems of Maṇḍana, Vācaspati and others who thought like them, Ignorance was accepted as superimposition; by Sureśvara it was taken essentially as absence of knowledge. Here in the Iṣṭa Siddhi both these views are refuted. The appeal is to such arguments as, 'One has to accept that Ignorance is the beginningless material cause of error; for it is present in all effects. And it is not any form of non-existence, since non-existence is accessible to the faculty of apprehension of non-existence (anupalabdhi — and Ignorance is not)'. On the basis of these arguments, it is claimed that beginningless Ignorance is different from superimposition and its impressions.

In this connection, those who identify Ignorance with error do not say that Ignorance is the material cause of distinction, but rather what imagines it. This exposes their argument to the charge of circularity, in that distinction depends on imagination, while imagination depends on difference. To rebut this charge they appeal to the beginninglessness of Ignorance and of its impressions, and of Ignorance and the individual soul, comparable to the beginningless cycle of seed and sprout (B.Sid. p.10,33; M.V.94,1; Bhāmatī, I.i.1, M.V.186,2 and 4;189,1).

This being so, it would not be right to charge those who hold to a beginningless cycle of Ignorance and its effects on the model of seed and sprout with absence of a cause pervading the effect and consequent absence of a material cause.* For this would be an objection against something that had not been claimed. All the less could such an objection prevail against those who walk on the path of the tradition of false attribution followed by later retraction and who hold that Ignorance is superimposition, that time and so on are its effects, and that it is a mere false imagination like a rope-snake. So we will quote here a few texts from a true expert as a reminder of what the traditional teaching is.

* *(The view is indefensible, however. See M.V. p.560 T.N.)*

(3) This natural (i.e. uncaused) beginningless and endless superimposition, which is of the nature of false supposition and which is the origin of the sense that one is an individual capable of action and experience, is directly familiar to everybody. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, M.V.23,3)

(4) Its unreal form is set up by Ignorance and consists in the three 'quarters' (Prājña, Vaiśvānara and Taijasa) which correspond to a seed (Prājña) along with its sprouts, although they are mere imaginations like the snake imagined in a rope. The text now proceeds to affirm the existence of the absolutely real form of the Self, which is not a seed and which corresponds to the rope in the rope-snake illustration. And it does so by negating the three states enumerated above as mere imaginations, like the snake. (Māṇḍ.Bh.7, intro.; cp. M.V. 100,2)

Here Śrī Śaṅkara explains what the Upanishad is saying. The three states, related as cause (dreamless sleep) and effect (waking and dream), which are set up by Ignorance and correspond to the snake in the illustration, are first expounded by way of false attribution, according to the traditional method; then afterwards they are negated, and the Fourth is affirmed, corresponding to the rope in the illustration.

(5) This shows that space, time, mind and the minute atoms, etc., are effects. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.7)

Here it is claimed that time, as well as the universe beginning with the ether-element, is an effect. And, as it is an effect, we conclude that it is superimposed on the Absolute. Otherwise, if time were not a special unique superimposition, and were an effect in exactly the same way that the objects that occur in time are, the theory would have the fault that time would imply dependence on another time (leading to infinite regress).

(6) Everything in the world arises through confused superficial vision (saṃvṛti); therefore nothing in the world is eternal. In its true nature as being, everything is 'unborn'; therefore nothing (real) is ever destroyed. (G.K. IV.57)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: Confused superficial vision implies concealment. It refers to experience in the realm of Ignorance (which conceals the Self). Everything comes into being through that Ignorance. Therefore there is nothing eternal in the realm of Ignorance. And so it is that transmigratory life proceeds as coming-into-being and passing-away. In its true nature as being, however, everything is 'unborn'. It is verily the Self. (G.K.Bh.IV.57)

Here it is taught that an effect is by definition superimposed through Ignorance.

(7) Therefore the conclusion is that it is milk and other such substances themselves which persist in new forms such as curds and the rest, and are then called 'effects'. The view

that the effect is separate from the cause could not be established by argument if you argued for hundreds of years. Therefore it is the one root-cause which wears successively all the forms met with in empirical experience up to the last, like an actor dressed up for a succession of roles. (B.S.Bh.II.i.18)

Here the characterization of the cause by such phrases as 'like an actor' and 'wears successively all the forms met with in empirical experience', which indicate standing as the substratum of various false notions, show that the effect is a mere piece of false imagination, like a rope-snake. So no theory that Ignorance is a material cause undergoing real *transformation into effects was present in the mind of the revered Commentator.*

(8) *(Objection):* The statement made before that the conscious principle, the Absolute, one without a second, was the cause of the world, could not be right... (B.S.Bh.II.i.24).

(Conclusion of the Answer): The conscious principle, the Absolute, one without a second, is the cause of the world by self-transformation, operating without recourse to external instruments, like milk transforming itself into curds, or like a deity or a sage of exceptional powers (bringing forth miraculous effects without recourse to external instruments. (B.S.Bh. II.i.26)

Here it is very clearly stated that it is (not Māyā but) the Absolute, one without a second, that is the cause of the world. This also shows by implication that it is through Ignorance in the form of superimposition that the Absolute becomes a cause.

(9) Even the statement that the Absolute, though bereft of all particular characterization, can be associated with all powers, is made only through attributing to the Absolute distinctions that are imagined through Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.II.i.31)

Here again the teaching is that it is verily the Absolute which, though undifferentiated, stands as the cause of the world, associated with all powers, the latter being of the nature of name and form, manifest and unmanifest, imagined through Ignorance.

As the texts just quoted show, it is the Absolute only that is the cause of the world. The world is superimposed upon it through Ignorance and called its effect. This is clearly seen to be the tradition accepted by the ancient authorities in Vedanta. The author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, however, has a different theory. He holds that the material cause of the world, which is of indeterminable reality-grade, must be Ignorance, which is also of indeterminable reality-grade, since the Absolute, 'eternal and raised above all change, cannot stand

directly as the material cause of the world' (I.S. p.145). In order to prove his theory, he tries to show that in common illusions like shell-silver, also, the material cause of the illusory silver is indeterminable Ignorance (ajñāna), itself synonymous with Avidyā and Māyā. This is clear. Indeed, he himself says quite openly:

(10) That Māyā which is referred to in the Veda and the Smṛti by such terms as Māyā and Avidyā and others, is the material cause of the world. So all individual errors have Māyā as their material cause. (I.S. I.34, p.144)

(From Vimuktātman's own commentary): Therefore it stands proved that the error of supposing one's true Self to be other than the Absolute can be removed through knowledge, just like the silver-error. (I.S. p.144)

(11) Perhaps you will ask how Ignorance could be beginningless as applied to a piece of shell, which has a beginning. But there is nothing wrong in our theory here. For the shell is not the seat of Ignorance. The seat of Ignorance is that which knows, Consciousness, and that is beginningless. (I.S. p.56)

(12) *(Objection):* If Ignorance of the shell does not have its seat in the shell, how can we speak of Ignorance of the shell at all?

(Answer): Just in the same way that we speak of knowledge of the shell. Knowledge of the shell cannot have its seat in the shell, as the shell is non-conscious. It is only because the shell is its object that we can speak of knowledge of the shell at all. In the same way, in the case of Ignorance of the shell, the shell is the object concealed by Ignorance. (I.S. p.56)

(13) In fact no one has either knowledge or Ignorance of shell-silver, or it would be real, like real silver. And it cannot be real, as it is subject to cancellation through a correcting-cognition. So the whole silver-illusion arises only from Ignorance of the shell. (I.S. p.56)

(14) There is no contradiction in supposing that there can be the false ascription to the shell of silver — false silver which in fact proceeds from Ignorance with its seat in Consciousness. For it is simply the result of error. It is like the false ascription of the sun to the water of a well in which it happens to be reflected, though the sun in fact remains where it is in the sky.... If the person in error can see false silver, why should he not equally see a false identity-relationship between that silver and the shell?

No one is ever aware of Ignorance having its seat in an

object; the sensation of the perceiver always is, 'This is my Ignorance here'. Even if one were to admit for argument's sake that Ignorance had its seat in an object, still, ultimate dependence on a knowing principle has to be admitted all the same. For without Consciousness as knowing principle there could not be knowledge of silver, and this knowledge is the only evidence for the silver. So Consciousness is the ultimate source both of the illusory silver and of the erroneous cognition whereby it is known. (I.S. pp.56-7)

That point that was made in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.133,1) 'In the case of all external objects and mental experiences, this power of Ignorance must necessarily be admitted to exist invariably in association with their real nature as bare Being' — that point is clearly contradicted here in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, where Ignorance is accepted as having its seat in the Self, and the notion of Ignorance having its seat in the shell and other external objects is refuted. Reasons are also given against accepting an externally based Ignorance: it disagrees with ordinary worldly experience, and involves resort to unnecessary assumptions.

Two views, however, the Iṣṭa Siddhi rejects. The first is the view that Ignorance with its seat in Consciousness is *only* individual error (bhrānti). The second is the view that, in the shell-silver illusion, Ignorance is simply lack of knowledge, and thus mere absence of knowledge. The teaching in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, different from either of those views, is that Ignorance of the shell is Ignorance as a positive entity, with its seat in Consciousness.

(15) But is it not a fact that, even after Ignorance of the shell has been brought to an end, illusory silver and so on are sometimes again seen?... But this objection is wrong. For false silver and so on are only seen when Ignorance of the shell returns, not when there is knowledge of the shell. Does this then mean that there can be an indefinite number of Ignorances of the shell? Yes, it does; if there is an indefinite number of new perceptions of the shell, there can be an indefinite number of instances of Ignorance of the shell....

In the case of all objects, Ignorance has to be removed piecemeal by a series of cognitions, because in each object there are different aspects that have to be known through different cognitions, as the sound and other aspects may remain over to be known (even after the object has been known by sight). Thus there is nothing wrong in supposing that there are an indefinite number of potential Ignorances relating to one object, since it is agreed that knowledge of a single object may imply overcoming a number of different Ignorances. (I.S. pp.63-4)

(16) But would it not follow that, if the cause of the

non-manifestation of the shell is Ignorance, even when the shell was known the shell would not be manifest, as even on the removal of one Ignorance relating to it, others would remain?... So let us say that, in virtue of its own intrinsic nature, the shell does not manifest, since it is non-conscious (jaḍa). It manifests when there is a cognition of it; when there is no cognition it does not manifest, since this is its nature. Does it then follow that knowledge of the shell is merely a matter of its being illumined by knowledge, and that there is no such thing as Ignorance that has to be removed? No. For, if there were no Ignorance, the shell would never be unknown, in which case it could never be known either. It is true that the shell is by nature unmanifest, and that the function of knowledge is merely to illumine it. But, since it is not manifest when you have no knowledge of it, your absence of knowledge has to be removed by knowledge; so (the function of knowledge in knowing the shell is not merely one of illumination); you cannot deny that it also has to remove your own Ignorance. (I.S. p.64 f.)

(17) Perhaps you will argue as follows. Because knowledge is the cause of manifestation, you will say, the shell will manifest when there is knowledge. But absence of knowledge (not being anything positively existent) is not a cause of non-manifestation. So there could still on your (Advaitin's) theory be manifestation of the shell even when absence of knowledge of it had not come to an end (which is absurd).

But this argument is wrong, because there cannot be knowledge of the shell without cessation of absence of knowledge....

Or you may argue as follows. True, there cannot be knowledge without the cessation of the absence of knowledge; there must indeed be cessation of the absence of knowledge; then manifestation of the shell would be temporary, as its cause, knowledge of the shell, would be temporary (and so, since manifestation of the shell would have a beginning, knowledge could stand as its cause, explains Jñānottama). But there would still be manifestation of the shell even when other cases of absence of knowledge had not come to an end, since these latter would not be causes of the non-manifestation of the shell. But this is a common quality of all instances of absence of knowledge; for (since they are mere non-existents) they cannot be causes of the non-manifestation of the shell. (I.S. p.65)

Here Ignorance is taken as something over and above individual error (bhrānti), something which has to be put to an end by metaphysical knowledge. It may be either positive or negative in form; but the question of what it actually is is neither raised nor answered. Some, who identified Ignorance with absence of knowledge, held that the cessation of Ignorance was simply the rise of knowledge, and that it would be quite wrong to speak of an extra absence of knowledge existing over and

above the Ignorance brought to an end by positive knowledge — and something that would require to be brought to an end by further knowledge. But this view is neither raised nor refuted. Nor is any notice taken of the view of the revered Commentator on the topic of the purely phenomenal (on which we here subjoin a few texts).

(18) One merely imagines silver, although there is in fact no silver. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.5, M.V.46,10)

(19) It is the rope which is called a snake, because it is mentally conceived as a snake. (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.3)

(20) We have the example of a piece of shell which is actually being perceived (as a 'this'), and yet, since it is misapprehended as silver, it is not (properly) perceived. The sole obstacle here is misapprehension. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7; M.V.30,8; 138,11)

Here the words of the revered Commentator rule out any place for the 'production' or 'material cause' of false silver.

(21) In the case of a mirage, the notion of reality that has accompanied it is broken as soon as right knowledge prevails. In the same way, these bodies experienced in the world come to an end like the bodies seen in dream and other states of illusion. (Bh.G.Bh.II.18)

'In the case of the mirage and the like — their end is simply the breaking off of the notion of reality that had previously accompanied them'. This idea does not imply that they are 'produced' by Ignorance or 'destroyed' by knowledge. The revered Commentator shows that their 'maintenance' is only their being accompanied by the notion of reality through Ignorance.

(22) As a rope becomes a snake through erroneous cognition, and then afterwards, when brought under a light, itself reveals its own true form as a rope... (Chānd.Bh.VIII.xii.3)

Here it is said that the rope assumes the nature of a snake through erroneous cognition only, *not through a transformation undergone by a material cause of the nature of Ignorance.*

And so, as knowledge of the shell puts Ignorance of the shell to an end, so does knowledge of the Absolute put an end to Ignorance of the Absolute. This is the force of the illustration.

Pursuing the matter further, the Iṣṭa Siddhi cites an opponent who notices difficulties in the doctrine (of Maṇḍana) that Ignorance is many, and raises the further objection that

Ignorance of the Absolute (read brahmājñānasya, cp. I.S. p.70, line 10) may return again and again even after being burnt up, just as Ignorance of the shell may do, with the result that liberation will be impossible. The Iṣṭa Siddhi answers this point as follows:

(23) Even Ignorance of the shell, once burnt up, cannot return, or otherwise it would not have been burnt up; moreover, the conception of the return of something that had been burnt up would contradict experience. And (while we admit that there must be Ignorance of the shell later if it is to be perceived anew on a later occasion) we do not hold that (in such circumstances) a new element of Ignorance is generated; it is just that the old beginningless Ignorance was not completely burnt up, as the shell was not wholly manifest. For the shell does not only exist at the instant of its being known; it also exists later. And perception does not perceive its objects in the form in which they exist throughout time. And so, since the shell (as perceived and re-perceived down time) has to be known by a succession of different cognitions, it must have a succession of different forms. It cannot, therefore, be completely known in any one cognition; no one cognition, therefore, can eliminate Ignorance of it entirely. (I.S. p.70)

(24) You may object and argue as follows. If Ignorance has parts, it must be an effect, like a pot (in which case the parts would have to be assembled, so that Ignorance could not be beginningless). If it does not have parts, then it must either cease or not cease totally. The objection is correct. And that is why we said earlier that Ignorance is indeterminable either as having parts or as not having them.... Therefore, as long as a non-conscious entity exists, Ignorance in regard to it is never completely brought to an end. (I.S. p.70-1)

There are conceptions here that stand in contradiction with the formulae approved by the true expert on Vedanta. For instance, two alternatives are mentioned; either the Ignorance relating to the shell is itself many; or else, in the case of one entity, such as a piece of shell, there are many elements of Ignorance concealing many different forms belonging to the piece of shell, all of which elements of Ignorance have to be brought to an end by a series of different cognitions. It is also pointed out that, whether Ignorance is taken as having parts or as without them, in either case there are insuperable difficulties. So it is argued that Ignorance is indeterminable either as having parts or as not having them. But these conceptions stand in contradiction with the formulae of the true expert on Vedanta, such as the following:

(25) For there cannot be alternatives in regard to an existent

entity, as there can be in regard to a proposed action. (B.S. Bh.I.iv.15)

(26) For one cannot make a hypothetical assumption that would contradict experience. (*ibid.*)

(27) Nor is the mere fact that a word is used in everyday speech with a certain meaning enough to establish that we are truly familiar with the actual existence of what it denotes. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.15)

(28) For the function of the Veda is only to inform, not to alter. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

(29) For, if you are prepared to assume the existence of what does not exist, you can prove anything. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.17)

Such are the formulae of the true expert. The conception in the Iṣṭa Siddhi that we are now discussing is based on the empty hypotheses of dry logic and stands in contradiction with all five of Śrī Śaṅkara's formulae. (1) It admits the alternative that Ignorance may be one or many. (2) It contradicts experience and speaks of 'shell-silver' as 'an effect', when all that has happened is that shell has been mistaken for silver. (3) It embarks on the 'proof' of an extra form of Ignorance over and above the familiar absence of knowledge, doubt and individual erroneous cognition attested in worldly experience, basing the proof on the mere fact that we use such words as 'Knowledge has come, Ignorance has gone'. (4) In order to find significance for knowledge (in terms of its own system), it assumes that it has the active role of destroying Ignorance. (5) It assumes the existence of a metaphysical Ignorance that does not exist to stand as cause for silver that does not exist!

(30) If you say that my doctrine has the same faults as that of the dualist Sāṅkhya philosophers, I deny it. For I am a Māyāvādin. These are faults which only arise and require defence when the effect and the cause are both taken as real. They require no defence in the context of Māyā, for their defence is secured by the mere fact of their being Māyā! Compare the example of a monk. It is only householders and others who have to defend themselves from such charges as that of not burning a sacrificial fire; monks are preserved from them by the mere fact of being monks!

Therefore the matter stands as we have explained it. If Ignorance were taken as real, then it could not be brought to an end, and this would be true no matter who held the theory or in what form. But in fact it is seen that it is in certain cases brought to an end. Therefore the definition of Ignorance and of its cessation that I have given must be the correct

one. (I.S. p.93)

Here Vimuktātman refutes the opponent's theory and establishes his own view. On this there is nothing further to add. The 'proof' is no more than the assumption of an entity that does not exist, on a mere empty logical hypothesis. The existence or cessation of a form of Ignorance that has only been assumed hypothetically on logical grounds cannot be regarded as anything attested by universal experience.

225 IGNORANCE OF THE SHELL DOES NOT TRULY EXIST

Ignorance of the shell has its seat in the knower. Yet it is not a contradiction to say that the false silver that is an effect of Ignorance is perceived in the shell. This claim has been made above (M.V.224,14). But this claim is only made on the assumption for argument's sake that Ignorance of the shell exists. But the final conclusion of the Iṣṭa Siddhi is that no such thing as Ignorance of a non-conscious object exists.

(1) Because absence of knowledge, error and right knowledge are all known in immediate experience to have the same seat, and because the non-conscious, since it is known as an object, cannot have knowledge, Ignorance cannot have its seat in the non-conscious. For (Ignorance can only have its seat in the knower and) it does not make sense to suppose that the same entity could be both knower and known. (I.S. p.193)

(2) And good and evil, such as liberation and bondage or heaven and hell, are inconceivable in the case of the non-conscious. So this is another reason showing that Ignorance cannot have its seat in the non-conscious.... If Ignorance could have its seat in the non-conscious, it could never come to an end, any more than it could if its seat was the unreal. For knowledge is ever absent from the non-conscious. (I.S. p.193)

(3) A human being may have direct experience of the fact that he has Ignorance, through the feeling 'I am ignorant, I do not know'. But a non-conscious entity cannot have such feelings, because it is by nature not an experiencing subject. So the presence of Ignorance in the non-conscious cannot be guaranteed by its own experience. Nor can it be proved by an authoritative means of knowledge, for knowledge of Ignorance is not accessible through the authoritative means of knowledge. Ignorance, indeed, must always be established before one can proceed to resort to a means of knowledge (and a means of knowledge, by definition, cannot reveal what is already known). (I.S. p.194)

(4) The mind and other bodily organs cannot be the seat of beginningless Ignorance, as they are not eternal. Nor could any other differentiated non-conscious entity be the seat of beginningless Ignorance, because all differentiated entities are composite, and are therefore effects and so non-eternal. And an undifferentiated non-conscious entity cannot possibly be the seat of Ignorance, as it is not itself a possibility (the non-conscious being invariably an effect produced by the conscious, and therefore composite and differentiated). And we have already explained that the conscious, the Self, cannot be differentiated through any cause (cp. M.V.215,1, *ad fin.*). Therefore, since it is the only beginningless principle, it was certainly correct to say that it was the seat of beginningless Ignorance. And we have already explained that Ignorance must be beginningless, or it would not be Ignorance (M.V. 221,3), and how there would be the difficulty that, if Ignorance were not beginningless, (it would arise at a point in time and) those (i.e. all living beings) who were already liberated before its rise on account of the absence of Ignorance as cause of bondage, might later lose their liberation on account of the subsequent rise of Ignorance (so that all liberation would be insecure, I.S. p.71).* Therefore the correct view is that it is only the Self that is the seat of Ignorance, not the non-conscious not-self. (I.S. p.195)

**(The argument was: 'If Ignorance were an effect (and consequently had a beginning), then before its rise all living beings would naturally be liberated; but as (in its capacity as effect) it would arise subsequently (and afflict the liberated), the liberated would fall into bondage, so that there would be no guarantee of effective liberation anywhere (which contradicts the Veda and is absurd)'. I.S. p.71. T.N.)*

It is true that one can demonstrate from a mere consideration of the facts that both Ignorance and knowledge can only have their seat in Consciousness. But the Ignorance expounded in the Iṣṭa Siddhi is different from Ignorance as revealed in ordinary worldly experience. That is the only reason why there could be the suspicion that it might *have its seat in the non-conscious. In the Pañcapādikā it is admitted that Ignorance can be intimately related with the real being of external objects (M.V.133,1), so the denial that Ignorance had its seat in the non-conscious was not introduced for nothing.*

Thus it is shown that positive Ignorance does not have its seat in the non-conscious. But the deeper doctrine of the Iṣṭa Siddhi goes further. It maintains that the non-conscious cannot be known through valid means of empirical cognition. So there can be no Ignorance *of* the non-conscious and no Ignorance *in* it either.

(5) One might ask how Ignorance, which is non-conscious, could have its seat in the Self, which is not non-conscious. For on the Advaitin's view, you might say, the non-conscious cannot relate to the conscious: it cannot stand as its essence, its attribute, its quality or its modification, any more than form and so on can. Well, the last point is true. Ignorance cannot be the essence and so on of the Self. Nevertheless, Ignorance does have its seat in the Self. You cannot (attempt to prove that non-conscious Ignorance does not have its seat in the Self and) argue 'Whatever is non-conscious is other than Ignorance having its seat in the Self, like so and so', because there is no example you can quote to support the statement, since I hold that all the non-conscious is Ignorance with its seat in the Self (cp. M.V.225,15 *ad fin.*). It was to teach this that it was denied that Ignorance could have its seat in the non-conscious, while admitting (provisionally) that the non-conscious was the object of valid empirical cognition. By the same line of reasoning, it follows that the non-conscious cannot have Ignorance of the Self, since it is no more possible to establish that there is Ignorance *in* the non-conscious than it is to establish that there is Ignorance *of* the non-conscious. Indeed, Ignorance and the non-conscious are not observed to stand in relation, since, even if the non-conscious may be regarded, provisionally, as the object of valid empirical cognition, Ignorance itself cannot. (I.S. p.196)

One may compare Sureśvara's introduction to the third Book of the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi (M.V.113,1) with this reasoning of the Iṣṭa Siddhi. Sureśvara argues that, because the not-self is superimposed, there cannot be any relation between Self and not-self except through Ignorance. And that Ignorance cannot be made out to be Ignorance in *the not-self (that is, with the not-self as its seat, the conscious principle which it afflicts). Nor can it be Ignorance* of *the not-self (in the sense that the latter was the object that it concealed). There is the difference in the system of the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi, however, that Ignorance is absence of knowledge (not positive Ignorance).*

(6) Well, if Ignorance does not have the non-conscious for its object (i.e. for that which it conceals), let that be so. But in that case one could not have the experience 'Formerly I did not know the pot, now I know it'. Not so. One could have that experience in the same way that one has the experience 'Formerly I saw two moons, now I no longer see them'. (Jñānottama explains: Even though the non-conscious cannot be the object of knowledge or the object concealed by Ignorance, one can have the *experience* of knowledge or ignorance of it, because such experience is falsely imagined, like the second moon). (I.S. p.196)

(7) Again, when the pot is unknown, one cannot know (directly) that there is ignorance of the pot. But it is also the same when the pot is known, for then there is no ignorance of the pot either. Perhaps you will claim that, when the pot has been known, the experience 'This was not known before' proves ignorance of the pot. (Delete 'na' before 'sidhyatīti', cp. I.S. p.196,line 21.) But this is not right, for there is no proof of the existence of an unknown pot. The pot cannot be known as unknown through valid cognition, as it is only admitted to be unknown before the application of a means of valid cognition.

Perhaps you will say that there can be ignorance of the pot after it has been known. But in that case the means of valid cognition whereby it was known would have to reveal it as unknown and not as known. For one and the same application of a valid means of cognition could not reveal the pot in both these two contradictory ways, as that would be a plain contradiction.

Perhaps you will claim that, since the non-conscious is evidently not known after the valid cognition is over, it must be (in some sense) known before the valid cognition. But if it had been known before the valid cognition, there would have been no need to apply the means of valid cognition to know it. Nor can the non-conscious be known before valid cognition.For, by its very nature (as non-conscious), it cannot make itself known; and, even supposing for argument that it could be known through a valid means of empirical cognition, it could not have been known before (or there would have been no resort to the means of cognition). Therefore, as the non-conscious cannot in fact be known through a means of valid empirical cognition, it can never be known at all. And if you say that it cannot be established as unknown either, we reply that if it cannot be established as unknown it cannot be established as known; for, on our view, only that which was previously unknown can be known. (I.S. p.196-7)

(8) A valid means of knowledge reveals black as black only, and does not make it white. Similarly a means of knowledge fulfils its function of revealing an unknown object, and so is not useless; but its function is limited to revealing the unknown object as it is, without the slightest addition (for example, of the notion of its having been previously unknown). And so the fact of the object's being unknown is not proved by a means of cognition. For even when a means of cognition has been applied, no change is introduced into the object. And so, just as there is no proof of the object's being unknown before the application of a means of knowledge, so must one hold that it cannot be proved to be unknown after the means of knowledge has been applied either. Or otherwise it ought to have been possible to show that it was unknown before the application of the means of knowledge. For if 'unknownness' before the means of knowledge cannot be proved, 'unknownness' after it cannot be

proved either, 'unknownness' being the same in either case. And if unknownness cannot be established either before or after the application of a means of cognition, that latter would be useless in either case.

And if this is the case when a valid means of knowledge is applied, it is clear that the existence of the non-conscious cannot be proved without one. For in these circumstances the non-conscious would undergo no distinction either before or after the application of a means of cognition, while it cannot reveal itself on its own either. (I.S. p.199)

(9) But do not you yourself hold that the means of knowledge introduces no change into its object? Yes, I do. And that is why I said that the non-conscious is never revealed to anyone through a means of valid cognition; in regard to the non-conscious, the means of valid cognition are useless.

You may object that the means of valid cognition will be equally useless in the case of that which is not non-conscious. For there will be no difference in that which is not non-conscious before and after the application of the means of knowledge (since the latter introduces no distinction). And the means of knowledge will have no scope in regard to that which is not non-conscious, as it is self-revealed in any case. But this objection is not right. For the function of the means of knowledge is to put an end to Ignorance. (I.S. p.199)

Thus there is an implicit rejection of the view of the Pañcapādikā expressed in the words 'Ignorance... (is not the cause of the concealment) of non-conscious things, but only of their appearing as other than what they truly are' (P.P. p.28/5).

(10) But since there is no Ignorance of the non-conscious, there is no scope for the means of knowledge to put an end to it. Or suppose for argument's sake that Ignorance of the non-conscious *was* put to an end by a valid means of cognition. Even so, the non-conscious is still incapable of self-revelation by nature, and a valid means of cognition introduces no change into its object. Hence the existence of the non-conscious would remain unestablished.

Perhaps you will argue that, although the means of knowledge cannot introduce any other distinction into the non-conscious, it can introduce the new distinction of 'knownness'. Otherwise the existence of the non-conscious could never be proved, and the application of means of knowledge to it would be useless. Even so, on the principle that whatever is the object of a means of valid cognition is known, there could be no proof of the existence of an unknown non-conscious entity through a means of valid cognition. And if some non-conscious entity were admitted to be unknown, although the object of a valid cognition (i.e. known as unknown), then it would follow that all the non-conscious would be unknown and its existence

could not be proved. This also shows that Ignorance cannot be known through the means of valid cognition, since it is non-conscious, as are the means of cognition (considered in themselves, in abstraction from the reflection of Consciousness by which they appear to be illumined).

So the conclusion is that our natural notion that a non-conscious entity can exist, and that, being unknown to start with, it can become known through a means of valid cognition — such a notion, and others that follow from it, are all the result of Ignorance. (I.S. p.199-200)

(11) Another reason why the Void and the non-conscious should not be equated with Ignorance is the uselessness of such an assumption. For instance, there is no need for the Void and the non-conscious to account for erroneous cognition (bhrama). The Void and the non-conscious, indeed, do not make errors, since they are not conscious. As we have already explained, only that (i.e. Consciousness) which can be the seat of (i.e. can be afflicted by) Ignorance (in the sense of absence of knowledge) can go on to make errors. Nor can the errors of the conscious subject proceed from Ignorance that belonged to the Void and the non-conscious. For this would involve unacceptable consequences. If one being could make errors through the Ignorance of another, everyone would be making errors all time.... If the error of the conscious subject were due to the Ignorance that belonged to the Void or the non-conscious, then that error could not be brought to an end by knowledge gained by the conscious subject (which would undermine the metaphysical teaching of the Veda). And the Void and the non-conscious are not themselves capable of knowledge. (I.S. p.200-1)

(12) Perhaps it will be argued that although knowledge of the illusory silver is only possible through the Ignorance of the conscious subject, nevertheless illusory appearances like silver and so on* could not manifest in distant external objects like the shell or the face of the sun unless Ignorance were present in those objects. If we should claim that objects proceed from the Ignorance of the beholder, our opponent would reply that if that were so, they ought to manifest as belonging to us, like our erroneous knowledge of them does. They should not appear in the substratum of the shell and so on, as the Ignorance that produced them would not be located there — neither should rope-snake, mirage or bogeyman be seen in their various external substrata....

But we reply that this objection is wrong. For in dream these illusions are seen to occur regularly as described in reference to shell and so on, without there being any Ignorance in the dream-shell and the rest (as it is admitted that in dream the only Ignorance is that of the dreamer). (I.S. p.201)

(The translator has had to omit the word 'suṣira', being uncertain of the meaning. At M.V.232,3 (ad fin.) there are two more references to misperceptions of the sun. There the word 'suṣi', perhaps related to 'suṣira', has been left untranslated for the same reason. Read susy for supty at V.P.P. p.526 line 28, cp. I.S.p. 338 line 20. T.N.)

The author's view is that there is no Ignorance concealing the shell, and no Ignorance with its seat in the shell either.

(13) If you want to know how we can experience silver-errors and the like arising from Ignorance of shell and the like, listen. The silver-errors, etc., which proceed from Ignorance in the Self when it has developed till it assumes the form of the 'this' element in the shell, etc., are said (loosely) to proceed from the Ignorance seated in the shell. But there cannot be any Ignorance seated in the shell, etc., as the shell, etc., just like the shell-silver, etc., are themselves effects of Ignorance (and therefore not the seat of Ignorance (cp. M.V. 113,1). All Ignorance belongs to the conscious principle alone, as in dream. We have the same sort of situation when a pot arises from the Self, when the latter has undergone the whole gamut of transformations (pariṇāma) beginning with the cosmic ether and ending with a particular transformation of clay — and is then (loosely) said to 'arise from clay' (although, in the end, nothing can arise from anything except from the Absolute). For an effect cannot truly be a cause (cp. M.V.222,1), and it is the root-cause that is the true cause of all effects down to the last. (I.S. p.204)

Here proof is offered, on the basis of empty logical reasoning, that both the shell and the shell-silver 'proceed from Ignorance'. It must not be forgotten that it is only Vimuktātman's conception of Ignorance that is considered here.

(14) For it is only the Self that can, of its own accord, be either knower or known, as it is not anything that *has to be* known; the Void and the non-conscious cannot be either known or knower, since, according to the theories in which they are taught, they are things that *have to be* known. What *has to be* known cannot of its own accord be either knower or known. And they must be things that have to be known, as otherwise their existence could not be proved. For nothing establishes itself of its own accord except the self-luminous Self. So it was correct when we said that it is the Self alone, and nothing else, that manifests, through Ignorance, as the non-conscious, and in other ways. (I.S. p.206)

(15) When we said that the Self was known 'of its own accord', the intention was to exclude the notion that it had to be known by another, and to affirm its self-luminosity. It was not

intended to affirm that one and the same thing could be both the subject and the object in a cognition. For that would be logically impossible. And in any case it is well known that objects of cognition, such as pots, cannot themselves be knowers. So the Self does not have to be known as an object through the ego-notion or in other ways....

Knower and known cannot stand to each other in reverse as known and knower, any more than an object that has to be illumined by a light can illumine that light. If the non-conscious and the Void were admitted to be both knower and known of their own accord, they would be accorded the status of the Self, and of not having to be known, and of not being capable of being known (as objects). There would then be no cause to make them the seat of Ignorance to ensure that they were neither known nor knower, since (not being self-luminous like the Self) they would by very nature be neither known nor knower. Nor would it be meaningful to posit the Ignorance that has its seat in the Self as existent in them (as they would be unknown by nature); and for this reason they could not be known by the means of valid cognition, as there would be no Ignorance to remove. So nothing non-conscious can exist except the Ignorance which has its seat in the Self; all the less could a Void exist. And so it is the Self that is the support of all empirical experience, which occurs in itself alone, through Ignorance. Indeed, nothing else apart from it can be shown to exist — either to exist truly or through Ignorance. (I.S. p.206-7)

(16) *(Objection):* How can Ignorance approach the Self, which is self-luminous, raised above all change and one without a second — any more than darkness can approach the sun?

(Answer): Ignorance cannot be denied, as it is familiar in experience. And it cannot have its seat in the not-self, as the not-self cannot exist without it....

And so it must be accepted that Ignorance has its seat in Consciousness, for it has been shown that it cannot exist independently, that it cannot have its seat in the non-conscious, and that it cannot be denied. And we are immediately aware of Ignorance existing in Consciousness through such experiences as 'I do not know, I am ignorant' and 'I am bewildered'. (I.S. p.207-8)

(17) The relationship of Consciousness with Ignorance is of the same nature as Ignorance. It (eventually) ceases to be Ignorance and comes to an end of its own accord. It is not (eternal) like Consciousness....

Ignorance is not of the nature of Consciousness, nor is it anything different, nor is it non-different; neither is it real, nor unreal, nor both real and unreal; it is in fact indeterminable, and this by its own nature, and not in virtue of some other Ignorance (which would lead to infinite regress).

And the relation of Ignorance to Consciousness must be understood as being of the same kind, from the very fact of its being a relation of Ignorance.... And so, since all relations are Ignorance only, one need not look for any other relation to connect it to the Self. (I.S. p.208-9)

The point briefly is as follows. The clear teaching of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara is that Ignorance is either absence of knowledge, doubt or erroneous knowledge. It has its seat in the knower, and not in the known. And yet the notion that the Self is the seat of Ignorance is itself generated by Ignorance, and has no other source. The difference is that in the case of the Iṣṭa Siddhi there is the insistence that Ignorance is something other than the triad of absence of knowledge, doubt and erroneous knowledge, an abstruse entity, the subject of debate amongst philosophers. This hypothetical entity is claimed to be the cause of the world in the same sense that Ignorance of the shell is the cause of shell-silver. As the subject of Ignorance is a disputed one, we must just bring each theory into the present work in its familiar form. Here the attempt in the Iṣṭa Siddhi to extend the refutation of the view that the non-conscious could be either the seat of Ignorance or the object concealed by it to include the Void seems to us wasted effort, as the exponents of the Void did not themselves hold that the latter was the seat of Ignorance or the object concealed by it.

On the classical view of Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara everything other than the Self is imagined through Ignorance. This includes both the non-conscious objects and the means of valid cognition whereby they are known. Nevertheless, even on this view, as long as the distinction between Consciousness and the non-conscious remains in force (through Ignorance), so long Ignorance remains in the realm of the non-conscious, and is subject to being brought to an end by the regular means of valid cognition and so on, until the final awakening to reality. It is not clear why the author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi did not accept this view. And he ought also to have accepted that the means of valid cognition, when put to use and manifesting as valid cognition itself, could illumine the non-conscious like lamps removing the darkness that enshrouds the shell or rope, for this is what agrees with ordinary experience in the world. Thus the revered Commentator says:

(18) The light of a lamp has the immediate result of dispelling Ignorance, darkness and illusory notions like that of a rope-snake. The result of such a light will be the conviction that the rope (alone exists and) transcends all false notions like that of a snake, which now no longer exist. Similarly, the result of metaphysical knowledge is that the Self manifests free from all false imagination and transcendent. (Bh.G.Bh. XVIII.67, intro.; cp. M.V.59,3)

(19) The truth is that, in perception of a pot, the means of knowledge is applied merely to sever the pot from the Ignorance enshrouding it, and its work is done when the unwanted Ignorance is removed, just as the purpose of cutting is to sever the parts, and cutting is complete when the parts are severed. Once the offending Ignorance of the pot has been removed by a suitable cognition, there is no later separate cognition of the pot and no further result that the existing cognition could achieve. (Māṇḍ.Bh.7)

Of the last two extracts, the teaching at extract 18 is that just as a pot is enveloped by the self-luminous light of a lamp or the like, so are other non-conscious objects like the rope illumined by the light of the means of valid cognition. For we should accept the principle evident from ordinary worldly experience that a means of valid cognition makes known what was previously unknown.

The point made at extract 19 was a little different. There is nothing else that knowledge of the pot has to do apart from putting an end to the darkness obstructing the illumination of the pot. And, in the same way, there is nothing else that has to be done by metaphysical knowledge of the Self apart from putting an end to Ignorance. Ignorance is destroyed by the mere rise of knowledge, and then there is no obstruction to the illumination of what is to be known. This is the point that the passage brings out. Note that in both quotations it is admitted implicitly that the object of a means of valid cognition is non-conscious.

226 HOW DO THE MEANS OF VALID COGNITION OPERATE?

The following objection may be raised. If there is no real non-conscious object like shell, and no knowledge of it either, how can perception and the other means of cognition operate with validity? And how can we have the experience of the correction and cancellation of our illusions? To this objection the Iṣṭa Siddhi returns the following answer.

(1) And so it must be accepted by all who follow reason that it is the Self alone, real from the very highest point of view, which stands, until final enlightenment supervenes, as the support of all worldly and Vedic dealings, which occur through its magic power of delusion (māyā) or Ignorance, like a mass-hypnotist (māyāvin) standing as the support of his magic panorama of mountains, rivers and seas. It was to illustrate this point that mention was earlier made of unrealities such as shell-silver and the like, regarded as proceeding inexplicably from Ignorance of the shell and the like, where the reality of the shell and so on is established in and for

worldly experience. So one should not suppose that there is any contradiction (if we now say that no external objects exist and no Ignorance is located in them, since we were then only speaking from the standpoint of worldly experience, but are now speaking from the standpoint of the final metaphysical truth) — nor should you suppose that we have no example to support our case, since we have produced an example established by worldly experience. (I.S. p.200)

If you are going to give an example based on worldly experience, the example must be cited as it is experienced in the world. The example should not itself be made the subject of sceptical enquiry. If Ignorance is found present in the consciousness of some individual like Devadatta and concealing some non-conscious object like a shell, this must be accepted as a fact of experience. And knowledge, if it arises, must belong to Devadatta too. Again, if the Self is the substratum of all experience, then it must be accepted that the Self is what the Ignorance present in Devadatta and others conceals. Why is it that this mysterious indeterminable Ignorance is assumed to exist in the Self and nowhere else? We pass over this question for the moment, as it will have to be examined later (at M.V.232).

(2) The whole experience of a dreamer, including his means of valid cognition and their objects, is of indeterminable reality-grade; but it remains uncontradicted until he awakens. And there are cases (such as the roaring of a dream-lion) where the awakening to reality which destroys the dream-world occurs through causes belonging to that world. So it should be understood that there is nothing contradictory if we maintain that the same kind of awakening can occur from the waking state. (I.S. p.34, cp. M.V.217,2)

(3) Even though, on my theory, all the experiences of waking are of the nature of Māyā, still, until the final awakening in liberation, the laws of experience hold (and the distinction between error and its cancellation obtains). (I.S. p.153)

(4) Even in the dream-state there can be manifestations of the non-conscious, the conscious (e.g. the experiencer himself), the mixed and the 'pure' (e.g. space, Jñānottama), appearing to be able to fulfil the function fulfilled by the shell in the case of the silver-illusion in the waking state. But the dream-world, simulating the variegated world of waking with its manifestation of colour and form and other features, cannot have for its substratum an object in contact with the sense of sight in the manner of the shell standing in contact with the sense of sight in the waking state and functioning as the substratum of the silver-illusion (since the sense-organs of waking are withdrawn in the dream-state, and the external objects are created

by the dreamer). Also, if the dream-world arose from Ignorance inherent in the object, cancellation of illusion and so on would be impossible (cp. M.V.225,2). So the dream-world does not arise from Ignorance inherent in any object. (I.S. p.203)

(5) I have already said more than once (cp. M.V.225,2;226,4) that even if there could be Ignorance with its seat in the not-self, still, just as in the case of the scenes beheld in dream and so on, the experience of the means, object and result of valid cognition is possible only through Ignorance (read ātma-avidyayā, cp. I.S. p.214,line 16) with its seat in the Self. (I.S. p.214)

(6) For objects constituting the not-self, like the world made up of the elements beginning with the ether, together with ignorance of them, knowledge of them and a knower for them and so on, are all possible through metaphysical Ignorance before enlightenment, as illustrated by the case of dream. (I.S. p.216)

(7) The texts to do with rituals and symbolic meditations, too, which give information on how to obtain what is imagined by those in Ignorance to be desirable and how to avoid what is imagined to be undesirable, are authoritative. But, like perception and the other means of valid secular cognition, they are only authoritative in the state of Ignorance and before enlightenment, just as the means of cognition in the dream-state are only valid till waking. (I.S. p.217)

References to the example of dream, like the above, are found over and over again in the Iṣṭa Siddhi. The conception of Ignorance in this work is established through analogical reasoning on the strength of the example of the shell-silver (I.S. p.39). There is also reference to immediate experience in the form of 'I am bewildered' and so on. But this last point is only used to show that Ignorance (as conceived by Vimuktātman) is experienced as related to the individual's private consciousness. It is not considered enough to prove also that Ignorance has its seat in the pure Self, one without a second.

There are a number of passages where Vimuktātman explains how Ignorance, as he conceives it, can be established through logical reasoning. For example, 'For we accept that the universe is the work of Māyā' (M.V.217,1): 'For we maintain that the illusory silver and our erroneous cognition of it are of the nature of Ignorance, which is indeterminable as real or unreal' (M.V.221,1 *ad fin.*): 'We must therefore assume that the material cause of error must be indeterminable as real or unreal, like its effect, and that the cause cannot be anything other than Ignorance, which must be beginningless' (M.V.221,3):

'We do not say that the indeterminability of Ignorance is proved because it cannot be known through the means of valid cognition either as existent or as non-existent. We say that the proof of its indeterminability is the fact that it can be abolished merely through knowledge' (I.S. p.63). And the fact that Ignorance so conceived has the Self for its seat and the Self for the object it conceals is established merely by empty logical reasoning, through showing dialectically that non-conscious objects like the shell and so on cannot be the seat of Ignorance or the object which it conceals.

If the objection is raised 'How, then, can one explain how in some cases there is experience of knowledge through the means of valid empirical cognition and in other cases not?', the objection is answered by Vimuktātman on the logical plane, simply by appealing to the example of dream. No attempt is made to establish Ignorance by resort to the universal experience of mankind. Nor is any appeal made to experience to show that waking, like dream, is confined to the state of Ignorance. In the system of the revered Commentator, the explanation of Ignorance, and of the experience to which it gives rise, and of the cancellation to which it is subject, runs quite differently, as may be seen from the following.

(8) But in what sense do we mean that perception and the other means of knowledge, together with Vedic tradition, belong to those in the realm of Ignorance? What we say here is this. Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in feelings of 'I' and 'mine' there can be no empirical knower and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.: cp. M.V.97,1, note;160,11, note)

Here it is maintained that there can be no relation of the Self with the body and organs, which are objects, except through superimposition, so that all experience of means of valid cognition and of objects of valid cognition presupposes Ignorance. And this is proved by universal experience.

(9) And there are times, such as those of dreamless sleep and meditative trance (samādhi) and so on, when all evils like the sense of being an individual capable of action and experience cease. Here there is a break in the flow of erroneous cognitions identifying the Self with the body and the other factors of the psycho-physical organism. So this erroneous notion that we are individuals undergoing transmigratory experience is (not part of our own true nature but) caused by erroneous cognition, and from the standpoint of the highest truth transmigratory experience is not a fact. Thus it is shown that it is brought to an end once and for all through true metaphysical knowledge. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.67, intro.)

Here it is taught that it is the universal experience *of*

dreamless sleep and kindred states that shows that the identification of the Self with the body and the rest is due to Ignorance in the form of error (bhrānti). The view that the experience of the waking state, which portrays the Self as identical with the body and organs, is mere error is confirmed by the experience of dreamless sleep, meditative trance and so on (where it is found through experience *not to exist).*

(10) Of course, it is also true that the individual soul is never anything but united with the Absolute, as it can never lose its own nature. But in waking and dream it appears to acquire a foreign nature on account of its contact with apparent conditioning adjuncts, and it is relative to this appearance that it is said to 'attain' its true nature in dreamless sleep, because the apparent foreign nature is then lost. (B.S. Bh.III.ii.7, cp. M.V.41,3;246,13)

The Veda teaches that there is 'attainment of Being' in dreamless sleep. but this 'attainment of Being' is not intended to be limited to the state of dreamless sleep only, for the text says that it is an attainment of one's own true nature in the words 'He dissolves in his own Self', and one's own true nature is always naturally present. Where in waking and dream we experience ourselves as limited individual souls, that is a mere appearance, caused by the superimposition of apparent conditioning adjuncts. For even there the reality is attested in all experience in the form of the witness-consciousness, different from the whole complex of our bodies and organs. That is what is here taught.

(11) All empirical experiences that occur before one has realized that one's Self is the Absolute are taken as real, like the experiences of a dream before awakening. (B.S.Bh. II.i.14; M.V.48,7;146,6).

As long as the notion of reality in regard to the ideas thrown up in Ignorance as superimpositions is not broken, so long will the experience of means of cognition like perception and their objects seem to be true. That is the point being made. And there is also the example of a dream. Here, the dream-experience is exposed as error and cancelled on awakening. For one has the conviction (in later waking experience) that it was false. And in the same way, when the notion of one's identity with the body, mind and organs has been exposed as error and cancelled, there is the conviction that perception and the other means of knowledge and their deliverances were both unreal and untrue. This is what Śrī Śaṅkara wished to say. With him, it is not just a matter, as it was with Vimuktātman, of arguing, *on the basis of logic and with the help of the example of dream, that the experience yielded by the empirical means of knowledge 'must logically be' false: (it is a matter of*

immediate certitude and conviction).

(12) For the purpose of the texts in expounding the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is not to declare that the Absolute is subject to these states or to transmigratory experience in any form, but to show, on the contrary, that it is entirely *bereft* of these states and that it is *not* subject to transmigratory experience in any form. (B.S.Bh. I.iii.42: M.V.44,5;201,7, note; cp. M.V.201,8)

(13) Since dream-experience and waking experience are mutually exclusive they (are transient and so not real, and) do not affect the Self; and because in dreamless sleep the world-appearance is lost and one unites with the Self, the real, it follows that one *is* the Self, the real, free from the world-appearance. (B.S.Bh.II.i.6: M.V.44,2)

Here the fact that the Self is not affected by the defects experienced in the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, and the fact that it transcends the phenomenal universe, is expounded through logic based on experience. *It is not that, as in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, the indeterminability of the universe is first established hypothetically by abstract logical argument, and that an indeterminable Ignorance is then set up hypothetically as cause of the universe — all by mere empty logic lost in theorizing.*

(14) And it is the same in worldly experience. Shell manifests falsely as silver. The one moon (in the case of double-vision) appears to be accompanied by a second moon. (B.S.Bh. I.i.1, intro., M.V.138,10)

Here the fact that wrong appearances can be corrected and cancelled through knowledge is established on the basis of common worldly experience. It is not that, as in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, the example from worldly experience is itself made into a topic for argument, starting with a consideration of how the shell-silver could have come into existence.

227 THE TERMINATION OF IGNORANCE

The true experts on Vedanta have taught that Ignorance of the Absolute is brought to an end by knowledge of the Absolute, using the illustration of Ignorance of the shell being brought to an end by knowledge of the shell. And this cessation is not an act attended by the factors of action; it is simply the cancellation (through right knowledge) of wrong notions which had attributed to some object of knowledge characteristics that it did not in fact possess. This example is cited to bring home the teaching on the cessation of Ignorance, which is based on

upanishadic texts like 'not gross, not subtle' and 'neither this nor that'.

This being so, it is strange that in the Iṣṭa Siddhi the author should drop Śrī Śaṅkara's procedure of concentrating solely on the common element between the example and the thing that it is used to illustrate, and should use empty hypothetical reasoning to make both the example and the thing illustrated a subject for theoretical dispute. He takes shell-silver, the example, as an effect of indeterminable Ignorance. He then undertakes a long drawn out criticism of other theories of error, based on hypothetical theorizing. This quite unnecessarily drags the topic of the cessation of Ignorance into the realm of complicated dialectics. The following will give a rough indication of the way this is done.

(1) Here the word 'knowledge' has to be interpreted according to the context either as the light of Consciousness (bodha), which is 'the not non-conscious', or else as the reflection of that light in a mental idea bearing on a real object. For the word 'knowledge' is found used with both these meanings; the first is the primary meaning, the second is figurative usage. In the present context, mental ideas are called knowledge because, when knowledge of the shell arises, it dispels Ignorance. The Ignorance here in question is that (individual parcel of it) which gives rise to the illusory silver and the like, for that, in the present context, is what has to be dispelled. When there is a mental idea that reflects the Absolute, that also is called knowledge. And Ignorance of the Absolute is (understood in a cosmic sense and) called 'the power of Ignorance' (avidyā-śakti); it is itself non-conscious by nature, and is the material cause of all the non-conscious. It is true that such knowledge of the Absolute, (being a reflection), has the form of Ignorance. But because its object is real, and because it reflects only the Absolute, it is accepted as knowledge, and as that which puts an end to Ignorance of the Absolute. We have already explained (M.V.221,6) how the validity of knowledge depends, not on its intrinsic reality *qua* cognition, but on the reality of its object. (I.S. p.69)

The contention that knowledge of the Absolute can assume the (preliminary) form of a mental idea in which Consciousness is reflected, like knowledge of the shell, is correct (so far as it goes). For it is established through universal worldly experience that knowledge with real entities for its object comes through the application of the means of valid cognition. But it is entering the area of fruitless controversy to say that, because, in the example cited, Ignorance is the cause of errors like shell-silver, it follows that there must be a non-conscious power of Ignorance standing as the non-conscious material cause of the thing to be illustrated (the world-

illusion). For a power of Ignorance, so conceived, is not the same as the common ignorance that everyone experiences, and there is no proof of its existence, either in worldly experience or in the Vedic texts, while the true experts in Vedanta have explained metaphysical Ignorance differently.

The Iṣṭa Siddhi proceeds as follows:

(2) As a fire arising (through friction) from a bamboo burns up the bamboo and the whole bed of bamboos from which the bamboo arose, and then finally extinguishes itself too, so knowledge of the Absolute, though starting from Ignorance (in the form of a mental idea), burns up Ignorance and then finally extinguishes itself, as it is a part of Ignorance. Or one might express it by saying that the Absolute, of the nature of the light of Consciousness, burns up its own Ignorance when it is attained by a mental idea in which it is itself the sole reflection. And when all other effects of Ignorance, along with that mental idea, have been burnt up, the Absolute alone remains. A king, by taking one thief and killing him, effectively kills all the other thieves whom he cannot catch, and attains security. Fire could not on its own burn a wick, but it can do so when it is burning oil or clarified butter introduced into the wick. In the same way, the Absolute, which could not burn up Ignorance alone, as it is not inflammable, is able to burn it up when it acquires association with a certain mental idea. (I.S. p.69-70)

The teaching given here in the Iṣṭa Siddhi is as follows. Ignorance is a power, itself non-conscious by nature and the material cause of all the non-conscious. Starting from here, it is maintained that knowledge puts an end to this power. And then finally it is held that, as a fire arising from a bamboo burns the bamboo that was its cause and then extinguishes itself, so knowledge of the Absolute burns up Ignorance (its source) and then extinguishes itself (reading śāmyatve, nominative neuter dual). It is clear that, in this mode of explanation of enlightenment, knowledge is made into a factor of action. This contradicts experience, and also contradicts the method of teaching by false attribution followed by later retraction approved by the true experts in Vedanta. For the latter do not accept that the world or its cause, Ignorance, are existent entities that have to be brought to an end through knowledge. All they admit is the correction and consequent cancellation of mere erroneous imagination. And cancellation of an error is not the bringing to an end of a real thing, that the example of a fire arising from a bamboo could be relevant. Cancellation of an error is merely the realization, through negation of that error, that it is really nothing other than the substratum on which it was superimposed. For what has been superimposed is unreal. Thus one who knew the true tradition has said:

(3) If the world of plurality really existed, it would no doubt really come to an end. But this duality is a mere illusion. Non-duality is the final truth. Had anything actually been imagined, that imagination could be brought to an end. This doctrine (that things are imagined) is for the sake of teaching (those in Ignorance). When the truth is known, there is no duality. (G.K. I.17,18)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: (One might wonder how non-duality could be the truth when the world is still continuing and when enlightenment can only arise through the cessation of the world....) The objection would apply if the world really existed. But the world of plurality no more exists than a snake imagined in a rope. A snake imagined in a rope through an erroneous idea is not something that actually exists and is then later brought to an end by discriminatory knowledge. (G.K. Bh.I.17, cp. M.V.47,3)

If we say that the universe of plurality is imagined, we are saying that it is only set up through superimposition. We are not saying that it has for its material cause Ignorance of indeterminable reality-grade. And in the same way the mention, in the illustrative example offered, of a snake imagined through an erroneous notion, (shows the snake as a fantasy and not as a thing, and thereby) precludes the possibility that an 'indeterminable Ignorance' could be the material cause of the world.

(4) Just as this world-appearance is an illusion like a rope-snake, so is this imaginary distinction between a pupil and his Teacher and so on. It is simply accepted as a means for teaching before the rise of enlightenment. So it is for purposes of instruction (and not as a statement of metaphysical truth) that we have this teaching that there is a pupil and a Teacher and a subject taught. But when the object of the teaching is attained, when the supreme principle is known, duality does not exist. (G.K.Bh.I.18, M.V.27,5)

(5) As soon as the notion of consciousness directed inwards and consciousness directed outwards ceases, the distinction between knower, knowledge and known also comes to an end. Śrī Gauḍapāda will later say, 'When the truth is known, duality no longer exists' (M.V.27,5). Subject-object knowledge cannot remain an instant after the cessation of duality. For to suppose that it could would entail a new suppression of duality and so lead to infinite regress, which would mean that duality never could cease. So it stands proved that, at the very moment of the valid negating cognition, all evils like 'consciousness directed inwards' and so on superimposed on the Self come to an end. (Māṇḍ.Bh.7, M.V.100,2, note)

All the points here made support the method of false attribution followed by later retraction. The notion that consciousness can be directed inwards or outwards is said to be superimposed. It ceases at the very moment of realizing the truth of its negation. Because the ideas of Teacher, pupil and enlightenment and so on are mere imaginations, they cease immediately with the rise of metaphysical knowledge. Empirical knowledge, since it also falls on the side of duality, ceases the moment that consciousness directed inwards and the rest do. So those who resort to such examples as that of the fire coming from the bamboo and destroying both itself and other things are evidently copying Maṇḍana and others who belong to a different school. Maṇḍana gives the example, 'A medical potion first causes the digestion of other liquids and then digests itself' (B.Sid. p.13, cp. M.V.100,1).

(6) (Thus Ignorance on its own is not subject to being burnt up: but the Absolute as associated with a particular modification of the mind burns it.) In other cases, too, (i.e. in the ordinary cases of illusion in the course of worldly experience which are used to illustrate metaphysical illusion) it is only knowledge associated with the mind that burns up Ignorance and its effects. In such cases, the mind and its modification (in the cancelling cognition) are taken as real and hence are not subject to being burnt up; and the Absolute does not in fact burn them up. It is like the case of fire associated with wind. Fire burns up grass and so on, but does not burn up the wind, since that is not inflammable. What burns up Ignorance, therefore, is either the mind lit by knowledge or knowledge kindled by the mind. And thus we have well shown that it is the fire of knowledge that burns up Ignorance and its effects. (I.S. p.70)

If there is a burning up or destruction of the Ignorance of the shell and other items used to illustrate metaphysical Ignorance, it cannot be effected by Consciousness alone or indeed by Consciousness associated with the mind either. For there is no possibility of change (and therefore of any action such as that of destroying) in Consciousness. It is cancellation of error alone that, by revealing the true nature of the substratum (the shell), exposes the falsity of the apparent silver. Differences in the nature of the object revealed do not occasion any difference in the nature of the knowledge by which they are revealed. Knowledge reveals the shell as real and the silver as false, and also reveals its own vehicle, the cognition, as true. It does not ever cause the destruction of anything or cause the cessation of anything in any way. Right knowledge takes the form 'In confusion, I made the mistake that there was silver; but there was no silver there'. All that knowledge has to do is to remove the confusion: it does not have to put an end to an entity called Ignorance as well. At one time the

idea may arise, as a modification of the mind, 'One is aware of silver'. The reflection of pure Consciousness in that mental idea is alone responsible for its manifestation. At another time there may come the idea, 'Similarly, one is now aware of the shell as shell'. One should ask what is responsible for the manifestation of that. In fact, in both cases the one Consciousness stands as immediate awareness, indifferent as to what it illumines. As has been said:

(7) Mental modifications give way each to another, and are said to be correct, doubtful or erroneous. The Consciousness accompanying all of them is one, and differentiation accrues from the mental modifications only. (U.S.(verse) XVIII.121)

Here again, there was no reference to the idea of the bringing to a halt of Ignorance, and no suggestion that the mind and Consciousness were alternative candidates for performing the task.

228 WHAT IS THE CESSATION OF INDETERMINABLE IGNORANCE?

At one point Vimuktātman attributes to an opponent the argument: 'If you say "The cessation of an erroneous cognition is itself the cessation of Ignorance, as error consists in Ignorance", we ask "What is that cessation of Ignorance?" The fact is that there is no such thing as the cessation of Ignorance, because such a theory cannot be rescued from the faults that attach to it, whether Ignorance be taken as real, unreal, both real and unreal, or indeterminable as either real or unreal, and it could not meaningfully be accepted as "negligible" (tuccha)'. The opponent continues in this vein at some length and concludes, 'And so, as the cessation of the indeterminable is impossible, and as the cessation of Ignorance is a known fact, Ignorance cannot be indeterminable'. To this objection Vimuktātman replies as follows:

(1) One must accept that the cessation of Ignorance is of another kind, other than the four kinds called real, unreal, both real and unreal, and neither real nor unreal; you have yourself already refuted these kinds in admitting that Ignorance was indeterminable. For these four kinds of cessation ending with 'indeterminable as real or unreal' apply only to the cessation of things which themselves have a determinable reality-grade. Indeed, properly speaking, a cessation of indeterminable reality-grade would belong only to the real (= the eternal, Jñānottama) such as the Self or the ether. (Such a cessation could not be real, because it would be of things eternal by definition; but, if it occurred at all and was perceived, it could not be totally unreal. Jñānottama.)

And so the appropriate reality-grade for the cessation of that which is itself indeterminable must be other than indeterminable. As the saying has it, 'One must offer the food that is appropriate for the sprite for whom it is intended'. (I.S. p.85-6)

(2) To this the opponent replies: 'The non-existence of Ignorance corresponds in kind to its existence. If its existence is false, why should it not end through a false cessation?' (I.S. VIII.2, p.364)

When the opponent sets up an alternative and asks, 'Do you hold that the cessation of Ignorance is real or false?', Vimuktātman replies as follows:

(3) I ask in turn of you: 'Do you mean to ask whether I mean that cessation of Ignorance is both real and false? Are you suggesting that, in so far as I say "real", that would imply (that Ignorance had been real and so) that duality was real; while in so far as I say "false", Ignorance would remain in play?'

I reply that if the 'reality' of the cessation of Ignorance means its existence over and above the Self and Ignorance, then I do not accept it. Even when Ignorance is in play, there is no reality over and above the Self, far less when Ignorance itself has ceased. But if the 'reality' of the cessation of Ignorance means that, not being an illusory notion like, say, the cessation of the Self, the cessation of Ignorance is not itself subject to cancellation — then in that sense I accept that the cessation of Ignorance is 'real'. In what sense, then, do I say that the cessation of Ignorance is false? Not in the sense that it is illusory (māyā-maya). But what is subject to destruction is not a reality. And I accept that the impotence of destruction to give rise to any new reality implies its falsity. So my thesis is not open to the charge brought by the opponent. (I.S. p.364-5)

Here it is clear that we have an answer to the objection that took the cessation of Ignorance as something over and above Ignorance. Here is another answer of the same kind.

(4) Therefore, just as the indeterminable, though not immediately evident as such, has to be accepted eventually by the one ignorant of the Self as the only reasonable hypothesis, so the special nature of its cessation (later called the fifth kind (grade) of existence) has to be accepted eventually as the only reasonable hypothesis, even though it is not immediately evident as such. (I.S. p.86)

The truth is that one must accept that Ignorance and the cessation of Ignorance are in fact immediately evident. It is

true that all exponents of the doctrine of metaphysical Ignorance would agree with the author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi when he says, 'Ignorance and the cessation of Ignorance have to be accepted on the basis of experience. No one would expect to find a valid cognition for the cessation of something whose essence and nature is not known through valid cognition to begin with' (I.S. p.86). But there would be bound to be disagreement on the question whether Ignorance was what the author supposed it to be.

To the challenge 'Tell us how Ignorance is burnt up and what the proof of your view is', Vimuktātman replies as follows:

(5) The destruction of Ignorance is (nothing more than) a reality when known, or knowledge of a reality. (I.S. p.369)

(6) The Self is by nature immediately self-evident. Its 'being unknown' is its appearance of being concealed by beginningless, non-conscious, indeterminable Ignorance. Its 'being known' is its becoming immediately evident through the upanishadic texts as the Spirit known through the Upanishads, endowed with uniqueness and other attributes. And that is, precisely, the cessation of Ignorance.

And because Ignorance is beginningless, it has no cause. As it has no cause, it cannot re-appear once it has been destroyed, since there is nothing which could cause it to do so. For what did not previously exist does not arise without a cause. And Ignorance is not subject to birth. What is subject to birth cannot be Ignorance, as Ignorance is the cause of all that is subject to birth, and without it nothing can be born. And so, once Ignorance has been brought to an end, neither it nor anything else can be born again.

The fact that Ignorance is not an effect also shows that its cessation does not imply that anything else is brought into being (as the cessation of an effect like the lump-form might imply the production of a pot). Nor is Ignorance a cause after its destruction, for its effects are then found to be in the same (destroyed) condition as itself. We have parallel teaching in the case of the great dissolution at the end of the world-period and so on.... The termination of Ignorance, therefore, is the immediate experience of one's true Self as the Absolute, proceeding from knowledge of the Self arising through the upanishadic texts. This experience is nothing other than the Self. But because it does not occur before the rise of metaphysical knowledge, one cannot charge our theory with such defects as implying eternal absence of Ignorance. (I.S. p.371-2)

(7) In ordinary worldly experience, knowledge of the real constitutes destruction of ignorance of the real and of all that ignorance of the real implies. Will not the same hold true in the case of the metaphysical teaching of the Veda? Yes, let it

be so. We have spoken of knowledge and cessation of Ignorance as synonyms. Thus, since the result of the cessation of Ignorance will be the Self alone, the pure principle of Consciousness, that alone will remain over as real, so that there is no fear of the reality of any second thing. The Self alone, though raised above all change, can figure as the 'result' in relation to a means and object of valid cognition, since it is the pure principle of Consciousness (which is said technically to be the 'result' (phala) or 'resultant-cognition' after the application of a means of knowledge, in this case the hearing of the upanishadic texts after adequate previous discipline). Though it is eternal and changeless, it stands as the cessation of Ignorance through its (figuratively attributed) role of 'resultant-cognition' (phala). And as it is only said to assume the role of 'resultant-cognition' on the rise of valid knowledge, our theory does not have the defect of implying the eternal non-existence of Ignorance. (I.S. p.373)

Here Ignorance is conceived throughout as cancelled by knowledge, never by anything material. After examining the passage, one could say that without fear of contradiction. But if only Ignorance had been accepted as beginningless superimposition there would not have been any need to use hypothetical reasoning to establish its nature; nor would there have been any need for such reasoning if it had been accepted that its cancellation was just knowledge of the Self (and not a hypothetical 'cessation of Ignorance' in addition). For the revered Commentator expresses himself on this point as follows:

(8) If you ask, 'To whom does this Ignorance belong?' we reply, 'To you who ask this question'. If you then ask, 'But does not the Veda say that I am the Lord?', we reply, 'If you are awake to this (you will see that) there is no Ignorance for anybody'. And this answers that other objection raised by some, which runs, 'Well, if the Self is supposed to be associated with Ignorance standing over against it as a second thing, then non-duality would be impossible'. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.3)

And so this whole distinction of knowledge and Ignorance, and the further distinction of knowledge and Ignorance into that which cancels and that which is cancelled respectively, is for the sake of bringing home the fact that the Self is one only, undifferentiated and without a second. But the final bed-rock truth is that the word of the true expert 'When the truth is known, there is no duality' (G.K. I.18) is enough to put a stop to all the fever of debate.

229 IGNORANCE OF THE ABSOLUTE TERMINATED BY STAGES

According to the Iṣṭa Siddhi, the whole of the Ignorance concealing the shell cannot be terminated by one sole cognition (M.V.224,23). One may then raise the objection, 'This must also be the case with metaphysical Ignorance of the Absolute. How then can the self-luminous Absolute be shown to be made known through a means of knowledge?' To demonstrate that it can, Vimuktātman begins by showing that the Absolute is what is concealed by Ignorance.

(1) Though Consciousness is in fact self-evident and self-luminous, some (e.g. the Materialists) say that it does not exist and is not manifest. And they say this sincerely and in no spirit of cynicism. But the truth is that consciousness does exist and is manifest. The Absolute also is self-luminous and existent; and yet for the metaphysically ignorant it does not exist and is not manifest. In this area, therefore, a means of valid cognition (the upanishadic texts) is significant and useful. Thus the Upanishads are significant and useful if they proclaim the existence and self-luminosity of Consciousness. It is true that any claim that pure Consciousness does not exist and is not manifest is based on a mere error. But error is always itself based on Ignorance, so that those who make this error are not aware that they are in error. And so for them instruction from the Upanishads on this topic could be meaningful....

Therefore, although the Self is self-luminous, it requires to be illumined by a means of cognition. And since the non-manifestation of the Self is only Ignorance, the 'illumination' performed by the means of cognition is simply the removal of Ignorance. It is like the 'construction' of the ether of space in a well realized merely by digging away the solid earth. (I.S. p.71-2)

Here the author obstinately insists that we have to accept the existence of another kind of Ignorance, other than individual superimpositions and the like, which already prevent one from realizing one's true nature as the Absolute. He then tries to prove by rational argument that a metaphysical Ignorance of this kind can conceal the self-luminous principle. Next he introduces the example of the space in a well to circumvent the difficulty that, on his own theory, the Absolute (being self-luminous) cannot be known through a means of valid cognition (arguing that the function of the cognition is to remove obstructions to the manifestation of the Self in its pure form). But the example is not parallel with what it is intended to illustrate. In the case of the well, there is a clearly perceived obstruction in the form of the earth and stones which have to be removed. But the Absolute is the Self of all,

and that which illumines all. One cannot (from the strictly metaphysical standpoint) establish that it is obstructed by anything.

(2) Thus even on this view it is possible to retain the principle that the essential function of a valid means of cognition is to shed light. For its power to bring Ignorance to an end is demonstrated to show that it sheds light. All the more securely is this demonstrated if 'shedding light' is itself interpreted as putting an end to Ignorance. And the ancient commentator said, 'The validity of the Veda stems from its power to negate' (quoted by Śaṅkara at G.K.Bh.II.32, M.V.29,2). (I.S. p.72)

It is true that, from the standpoint of worldly experience, the principle 'The function of a valid means of cognition is to shed light' holds for possible objects of cognition. But the Absolute is self-luminous, and the very Self of the one enjoying such cognition. Here the means of cognition have no scope. The Veda denies the distinction between knower, knowledge and known, dismissing it as error. As the revered Commentator says in his Commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad:

(3) But is it not a contradiction to say that the Self is unknowable and yet known?... We reply that there is nothing wrong here, as it is only intended to say that it is not subject to determination by means of knowledge other than the Veda traditionally interpreted.... The Veda actually conveys the final metaphysical knowledge by negating all activity of a cognizer through a means of knowledge.... In this context, it does not accept the ordinary use of a sentence, consisting in the statement of a proposition.... For the Self is the Self of him who is expounding it. An expositor can only expound when he has a subject to expound and he can only have a subject to expound if he himself is different from that subject. (Bṛhad. Bh.IV.iv.20)

What is said here implies that the means of valid cognition in the case of the Absolute has the function of negation. But the 'removal' that results is not comparable with the removal of material objects like earth and stones. It is only the cancellation of an idea that had been based on Ignorance. The finally accepted view in Vedanta is that, since duality has been superimposed through Ignorance like a rope-snake, all that is needed is the cancellation of this error; it is not that anything real has to be physically removed. Thus we read in the Commentary on the Kārikās of Śrī Gauḍapāda:

(4) But how can the Veda put an end to the notion of duality if the Absolute in its true nature remains beyond the scope of its activity? We reply that there is nothing wrong here, (since

its function is to negate duality). For duality is superimposed on the Self through Ignorance, just as the snake is on the rope.... So we must conclude that it is only on account of the impediment arising from particular notions superimposed on the Self, such as that of being happy, that one is not established in one's true nature; and that to be established in one's true nature would be final beatitude. Hence the function of the Veda is to remove all particular notions about the Self, such as the notion that it is characterized by happiness, through implanting the idea that the Self does not have such characteristics as happiness. This is effected through the negative texts such as 'neither this nor that' and 'not gross, etc.'. Even the notion that one is not happy does not accompany all one's various individual ideas; for example, it does not accompany the idea 'I am happy'; but the presence of the Self in its true nature is constant. (G.K.Bh.II.32)

We would have been happy to assent to the doctrine of the termination of Ignorance if it had treated Ignorance as superimposition only. For a superimposition may be dispelled simply by imparting the information that it is an erroneous cognition. If the cessation of Ignorance were taken as the cessation of a thing with which one was actually faced, it could not be knowledge that effected it. And on the view that liberation results from the removal of a thing with which one is actually faced, such liberation would be transient. It is true that there was an appeal to the maxim 'The validity of the Veda stems from the fact that its function is to negate', but that maxim is concerned with the cancellation of superimposition, as that is how it is explained by the revered Commentator. We now adduce some well known texts supporting the series of points we have made above.

(5) In this context there can be prohibition of superimposition on the Self in the same (loose) sense that there can be superimposition on it. It is in the same sense as that in which ignorant people superimpose impurities onto the pure ether of the sky, and are advised to abstain from so doing. If the prohibited superimposition had been a reality, liberation would certainly be transient. So this must be the prohibition of something which is not a reality, like the prohibition found against constructing an altar in the sky. (U.S.(verse) XVIII. 22-3)

(6) For knowledge is never found either to remove or to introduce a real attribute; its function is always seen to be to put an end to wrong ideas (avidyā). (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

(7) And thus it follows that the purpose of the Vedic texts when they predicate 'non-happiness' and other negative attributes of the Self is merely to terminate such ideas as 'I am

happy' and so on. And there is the maxim of one who knew the true tradition for communicating the texts, 'The validity of the Veda stems from the fact that its function is to negate'. (G.K.Bh.II.32, cp. M.V.29,2)

The purpose of the negative texts of the Veda is simply to deny the presence in the Absolute of what is negated; they are not intended to characterize the Self, or to relieve it of any characteristics it actually possesses. This is clear from the appeal to the maxim saying that the validity of the Veda stemmed from the fact that its function was to negate. The teaching of that maxim is that the purpose of the Veda is to negate superimposition. This maxim comes from Draviḍācārya, the author of a commentary (bhāṣya) on the Chāndogya, or so we presume from Ānandagiri's gloss on Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on that work (Ṭīkā to Chānd.Bh.I.i.1, Ā.S.S. ed. p.1). In the Iṣṭa Siddhi it is attributed to 'the author of the Vākya' (Brahmanandin, according to Jñānottama: T.N.). We must leave to philologists the final decision on which version of his identity is correct.

(8) There is therefore nothing to show that one who has immediate experience of the fact that his true Self is the Absolute, infinite as described, can be affected by any remnant of Ignorance which would have caused rebirth and so on. He cannot face further transmigration. But our doctrine is that, before this immediate experience that one's true Self is the Absolute, there can be a gradual termination of Ignorance of the self-luminous Absolute, one's true Self, achieved by stages. That is why we find here and there in the Vedic texts accounts of the Self which begin with a bare statement of its existence and end by identifying it with the non-dual Absolute, beyond hunger and thirst and other defects (Bṛhad.III.v.1). And then they add argumentation designed to put an end to the common-sense notion that the metaphysical truth stated in the Upanishads is impossible, and to eradicate the false views erected in its place. In this way the statement 'That thou art' is repeated nine times to eradicate different errors (Chānd.VI. viii.7 ff.). And when it says 'Then he came to know that he was that reality of which his father had spoken' (Chānd.VI. xvi.3), the text shows that hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are the methods for that vision of the Self which will put an end to all Ignorance. And a discipline was laid down, beginning with inner and outer control and culminating in abandonment of all action. At an earlier stage, performance of ritual sacrifice and so on was also ordained, ultimately to prepare for metaphysical vision through purification of the mind. If direct experience of the fact that one's true Self is the Absolute had been possible without this discipline, merely through hearing the metaphysical texts once, the texts prescribing it would have been useless. (I.S. p.73-4)

We shall divide this up into different points, and examine them to see which points are tenable and which not, quoting authorities in support of our argument as we go along.

To begin with, we can agree with the statement that after direct experience that one's true Self is the Absolute there can no longer be any remnant of the Ignorance we had before. Metaphysical knowledge would not be metaphysical knowledge unless it eradicated metaphysical Ignorance entirely. And thus it is said in the Commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka:

(9) Ignorance of the Absolute disappears the moment that direct knowledge of it arises.... Moreover, he who has knowledge of something cannot have incorrect conceptions about it, for lack of any possible content for incorrect conceptions. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10, cp. M.V.30,9)

Vimuktātman also said that there can be termination of metaphysical Ignorance by stages before direct experience of the Absolute. If by Ignorance, in this context, he meant anything over and above superimposition, we have already said what has to be said on this matter; there cannot be termination of Ignorance so conceived. If, however, Ignorance is identified with superimposition, then we have to accept a pair of alternatives; there can be termination by stages of Ignorance so conceived for some, but not for others. For the revered Commentator has said:

(10) It is true that the Self which is being communicated has no parts. But many parts are erroneously attributed to it, such as body, mind, senses, intellect and sensation of objects. Here, one act of attention can dispose of one erroneously attributed part, another can dispose of another. In this sense, communication of the Absolute may be by stages. But all this is only the preliminary form of apprehension of the Self. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2, M.V.55,7)

(11) Meanwhile, those gifted persons who are not afflicted by any absence of knowledge, doubt or erroneous knowledge to obstruct their comprehension of the meaning of the *words* of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads can have direct knowledge of the meaning of the *sentences* after hearing them only once. For them, repetition would be useless. (B.S.Bh. IV.i.2, M.V.207,9)

Vimuktātman also said, 'The Veda gives accounts of the Self which begin with a bare statement of its existence and end by identifying it with the non-dual Absolute, beyond hunger and thirst and other defects. And then it adds argumentation designed to put an end to the common-sense notion that the metaphysical truth stated in the Upanishads is impossible, and to eradicate false views erected in its place'.

Here one may concede that, on occasion, the true nature of the Self is expounded after its bare existence has been affirmed first. For example, in such texts as 'Some say that it exists, others say that it does not' (Kaṭha I.i.20), the topic refers to something that is not immediately known here in this life, namely the fate of the soul after the death of the body. Here there is room for the doubt whether or not the soul continues to exist, and an occasion for dispelling it. But in texts which affirm '(The Self) must be apprehended simply as "It is"' (Kaṭha II.iii.13) the reward in view is a matter of immediate experience here in this very life. Here there is no doubt as to the existence of the Self, so no reasoning is given to remove such a doubt, and that is a significant point of difference. And, after teaching that the Self is beyond hunger and thirst and other defects, there can be no doubt about its existence either, so that it is clear that there will be no reasoning on the topic.

(12) And yet, although the Self is bereft of all particular characteristics, we can affirm that it exists, as we know it as the ground of the world. An object can only dissolve into something existent. For the world, as effect, may be conceived as accompanied by a hierarchy of ever more subtle causes, pointing in the end to the notion of some ultimate existent principle. When an existent object vanishes, the idea of it vanishes too, but the notion 'existent' does not vanish. It is our mental ideas 'existent' and 'non-existent' that are the criterion in determining the question of whether a thing exists or does not exist.

If the world had no ultimate ground, it would be taken as an effect that was not accompanied by any existent cause, and hence as itself non-existent. But this is not the case: it is perceived as existent, like a pot accompanied by clay. Therefore it follows that we have to perceive the Self as ground of the world in the form 'It is'. (Kaṭha Bh.II.iii.12)

This is the commentary on the portion of the text of the Kaṭha which runs, 'How can He be apprehended except by one who says "He is"?' (Kaṭha II.iii.12).

(13) Having thus disposed of the devilish nihilistic position, the Upanishad goes on to say that the Self has to be known as 'it is', through its adjuncts, beginning with Hiraṇyagarbha, which are real through the reality of their material cause. But when there is knowledge of the Self without effects or modifications, as taught in the text 'A modification is a name, a mere suggestion of speech' (Chānd.VI.i.6), and the effects have no existence apart from the cause, then we have the true form of the Self which has to be perceived. It has no external adjuncts, no empirical marks, and is not the object of any notion such as 'existent' or 'non-existent'. (Kaṭha Bh.

II.iii.13)

This is a commentary on the portion of the text which runs, 'It is only the true nature of that which has been apprehended simply as "It is" that manifests clearly'. Here, existence is immediately evident. The Veda does not give any dialectical argumentation to demonstrate that it is not impossible. On the contrary, it first teaches existence as an adjunct (upādhi) of the Self. Afterwards, it negates even that, in order to communicate its true nature as free from all adjuncts. That is what the revered Commentator here teaches.

(14) 'O Yājñavalkya, which is the Self within all, beyond hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death?' (Yājñavalkya replied), 'The knowers of the Absolute, verily, having known this Self, rise above the desire for sons, rise above the desire for wealth and live on alms'. (Bṛhad.III.v.1).

Here, after teaching that the Self is beyond hunger and so on, the text does not give any reasoning on such themes as rebutting the notion that it is impossible that the upanishadic teaching about non-duality could be true. For its purpose is to communicate the fact that the Absolute is immediately evident and present within all. After that, in order to indicate that there is nothing further to be done, it teaches rising above the three desires.

The point made by Vimuktātman about 'That thou art' being repeated nine times, each time disposing of a different error, was correct. For additional doubts are raised under the formula 'Teach me more, revered Sir' (Chānd.VI.viii.7) and the further point that Śvetaketu said 'Then he understood it from him' (Chānd.VI.xvi.3) when all Ignorance was at an end — that also was correct, but only if understood to mean that Śvetaketu had knowledge of the supreme reality through the removal of his various doubts that arose after new points of teaching. For Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary at that point agrees.

(15) And so, instructed through his father by the words 'That thou art' and through various arguments and examples, he came to have concrete knowledge of that principle of which his father had spoken in the form 'Verily, that Being am I'. (Chānd.Bh.VI.xvi.3)

Here the reason for giving arguments and examples was only to remove the various doubts that had arisen. When all doubts have been removed, the knowledge 'I am the real, the Absolute' arises automatically. That is the implication.

(16) Now, in the matter of the Self, which is here under consideration, what is the advantageous end-product in regard to

the Self resulting from the authoritative teaching of the sixth Book of the Chāndogya Upanishad (now drawing to a close)? We have already explained that the advantageous end-product is the final cessation of the notion that in one's true Self one is an individual capable of action and experience. (Chānd.Bh.VI.xvi.3)

It is clearly being said that the advantageous end-product of the revealed teaching of the Upanishads is the cessation of the erroneous notion that one is an individual capable of action and experience. It does not say, 'There is total cancellation of Ignorance through the revealed teaching when all the various aspects of Ignorance have been removed one by one through answers to the questions raised'.

While it is true that the Veda teaches that the means to vision are hearing, pondering and sustained meditation, nevertheless these have to be approached in the manner explained (M.V.53 and 54). The Veda does not at all intend to teach that one aspect of Ignorance is removed by hearing, another by pondering and a third by sustained meditation.

(17) You may object that it has been said that the upanishadic teachings about the Absolute are not effective and useful like the information imparted about the true nature of the rope, because the one who has received the Vedic teaching about the Absolute continues to behold the transmigratory world as before. To this we reply as follows. No one can demonstrate that the one who has known that his true Self is the Absolute is subject to transmigratory life as before. For that would be in contradiction with his conviction that his true Self was the Absolute, derived from that authoritative means of knowledge called the Veda. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.204,5, note)

(18) We do not accept the claim made above that, because pondering and sustained meditation are mentioned after hearing, the Absolute is taught as a mere subordinate element in an injunction, and that the communication of its true nature is consequently not the culmination of Vedic teaching. For the pondering and sustained meditation are only prescribed for the sake of direct realization of the Absolute. The Absolute would only have been a subordinate element in an injunction if injunctions were found about action to which the Absolute had to be subjected after it had been directly realized. (But this is not the case.) (B.S.Bh.I.i.4)

Both these passages from Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary say that hearing and the other disciplines are for the purpose of attaining direct realization of the Absolute. If direct realization results from mere hearing, there is no need for pondering and sustained meditation. But nowhere is it ever said that one aspect of Ignorance is removed by hearing,

another by pondering, and so on.

A further point was made in the Iṣṭa Siddhi that there could not be direct experience of the Absolute through mere hearing without other practical disciplines in addition, on the ground that this is a goal which cannot be realized without resort to practical disciplines. On this we would make the following observation. The existence of an injunction to undergo discipline for knowledge does not mean that everyone always has to undergo all the disciplines in their totality. For Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad:

(19) It is seen in the world that the factors that go to produce an effect may be disposed in different ways, that they may operate in different combinations, and that they may be either superior or inferior in their kind.... It is the same when we consider the means for knowledge of one's identity with the Self of all. Sometimes actions performed in previous lives may be the means, as in the case of Prajāpati (Bṛhad. I.iv.2). Sometimes austerity (tapas) is the means.... Sometimes faith and other qualities are spoken of both in the Veda and the Smṛti as indispensible for attaining knowledge of the Absolute, as is shown by such texts as 'He who has a Teacher can know' (Chānd.VI.xiv.2), 'He who has faith attains knowledge' (Bh.G.IV.39), 'Know that through prostration...' (Bh.G. IV.34), 'From a Teacher, verily...' (Chānd.IV.ix.3) and 'The Self is to be seen, to be heard about...' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5). (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.2)

Nor is there any rule to show that all the means prescribed for knowledge have cessation of Ignorance as their direct result. For the passage continues:

(20) For faith and the rest (prostration and so on) are for removing the obstructing factors such as demerit arising from sins. And hearing, pondering and sustained meditation on the upanishadic texts refer to that which is immediately and directly known. When demerit and other obstructions have been destroyed, the Self and the mind are found to be by nature instruments of knowledge of what truly exists. (Bṛhad.Bh. I.iv.2)

Thus spiritual disciplines can bring different rewards. Sometimes their reward is the removal of impurities resulting from past sins, sometimes it is to incline the heart towards introversion, sometimes it is to produce one-pointedness in the mind, sometimes it is for direct abolition of superimpositions of the not-self onto the Self. Hence it was not at all correct to argue that Ignorance must have different aspects which have to be nullified successively, or otherwise one could not

explain why different spiritual disciplines were prescribed. Nor is it logically correct to speak of Ignorance as having parts, when it is (said to be) indeterminable as either having parts or not having them (M.V.218,6). So it is a faulty argument to say that because the non-conscious object, the shell or whatever it may be, has many forms and cannot be wholly revealed by any individual cognition, therefore no single cognition can fully terminate ignorance of it (cp.M.V. p.690).

The Iṣṭa Siddhi offers the alternative theory that Ignorance is many, but this also is to be dismissed. It will be enough to make metaphysical knowledge significant if it be assumed that absence of knowledge, doubt and wrong knowledge, which present the Self under this form and that, are all that have to be terminated; one does not need to look for any other special form of metaphysical Ignorance to make the metaphysical knowledge taught in the Upanishads significant. This stricture which we have brought against the Iṣṭa Siddhi may thus be regarded as well grounded.

230 KNOWLEDGE OF THE ABSOLUTE CAUSES IMMEDIATE INTUITION THROUGH REMOVING IGNORANCE OF THE ABSOLUTE

The doctrine of the Iṣṭa Siddhi is that for total cessation of Ignorance one requires not merely hearing and the other disciplines but actual vision of the Absolute, and that the latter arises from the great metaphysical texts of the Upanishads.

(1) Even when the Self has been known through hearing, pondering and sustained meditation, the appearance of differentiation does not come to an end, any more than the vision of the moon as double comes to an end when it is known, through indirect means like inference, that the moon is not double. One still needs, therefore, to bring Ignorance to an end through direct vision. (I.S. p.74)

(2) One does not come to know that the notion of the moon as double is an error without direct apprehension of the fact that the moon is one. There may be a reliable authority who tells us 'There are not two moons' or 'This direction is not east'. But our earlier explanations have shown that the idea that the moon is double is indeterminable but not non-existent. The same pattern holds good in the case of an upanishadic text like 'There is no plurality here' (Kaṭha II.i.11). Therefore one must accept that, because the error of seeing two moons is an error of direct perception, it can only be brought to an end through immediate knowledge (perception of the moon as one). In the same way, the notion that one's true Self is other than the Absolute is an error of immediate misperception.

Only direct knowledge derived from the Veda will put it to an end. (I.S. p.122)

(3) And a thing that is not immediately evident will not become immediately evident through indirect cognitions, even if they are repeated again and again. For the objects of inference and other indirect forms of knowledge are not found to become immediately evident. (I.S. p.74)

(4) If direct apprehension based on the Veda does not get rid of Ignorance, nothing else will. For the Veda is the only competent source of knowledge in the field of metaphysics, so that apparent knowledge derived from any other source would be error or imagination, but not knowledge. Not even our opponent accepts that sense-perception is a means to knowledge in the metaphysical sphere. If metaphysical knowledge comes from the Veda, it comes from the actual words and from no other source. If direct metaphysical knowledge is in fact the (emergence of the) Self in its true nature (and it is so), then, if it dispels metaphysical Ignorance at all, it will do so eternally. So it is Vedic knowledge alone that dispels Ignorance. And if it did not do so it would be vain. (I.S. p.334)

Here the view of Maṇḍana and others that immediate knowledge of the Absolute comes through repeated affirmation (cp. M.V. 107,1, note, with references there given) is rejected. It is taught that immediate knowledge comes from the actual words of the Veda.

(5) Here even verbal knowledge communicates something directly evident, for it bears on the Self that is directly evident, as is the case with human speech that teaches the self-luminosity of the Self. (I.S. p.122)

(6) For I do not hold that knowledge of the false silver and the like constitutes genuine knowledge, or it would have been true. We have already explained that the knowledge of false silver is just as much a piece of the play of Ignorance as the false silver itself is (cp. M.V.221,1). Both are set up by Ignorance; and it is said that only the knowledge of that of which they are the Ignorance will bring that Ignorance to an end. That is the only form of knowledge that is called a cancelling cognition — not one that brings other ignorance to an end (i.e. not one that brings to an end ignorance of a previously unknown object like a pot — in short absence of knowledge — while not bringing to an end the special play of Ignorance that forms illusory objects and our cognitions of them).

One who eats the produce of the earth in the form of food is called a food-eater, but not one who eats the actual earth as well. In the same way, knowledge is said to form a

cancelling-cognition when it brings Ignorance as associated with a particular false manifestation to an end; but knowledge is not called a cancelling-cognition when it merely brings to an end ignorance as absence of knowledge (e.g. when bringing knowledge of a previously unknown pot). It is only after Ignorance associated with a special illusory manifestation has been brought to an end by a cancelling-cognition that we have the reflective consciousness of the correction of an error, in such a form as 'this is not silver'; otherwise (i.e. without the illusory manifestation and cancelling-cognition) there would be (no consciousness of the cancellation of an error but) only knowledge of the absence of silver. There is no consciousness of the correction of an error without the special grounds for it. (I.S. p.94)

(7) Knowledge can only bring Ignorance to an end; it cannot bring any physical reality to an end, even an atom; for that is what we find in experience. To hold otherwise would be to fall into absurdities (such as implying that knowledge could shatter a pot).... Illumining an object and cancelling an error are not the same thing (even though they both terminate a phase of Ignorance). For we evidently do not find that all cognitions cancel their own results! But knowledge (though it does not invariably cancel an error) does by its very rise (and without activity on its part) end our ignorance (of previously unknown things). That is what is found in experience, and it is perfectly logical (and may be illustrated by the power of light to dispel its opposite, darkness). (I.S. p.94)

(8) Therefore, although the Self is self-luminous, it requires to be illumined by a means of cognition. And since the non-manifestation of the Self is only Ignorance, the 'illumination' performed by the means of cognition is simply the removal of Ignorance.... And so, although the means of knowledge (the Vedic text) makes the Self known (when it was formerly not known) it does not convert it into an object of knowledge, as if it were something non-conscious. (I.S. p.72, cp. M.V.229,1, *ad fin.*)

(9) The case here should be seen to be the same as that with the vision of the double moon. In that instance, a person who had discovered through inference and other indirect means that the moon is one knows that the vision of the moon as two is erroneous, even though it is yielded to him by perception — and he knows this even before he comes to have direct perception of the moon as one. Nor is there any question of his perception of the moon as two being contradicted (at the level of perception). In the same way we have shown that the world is known to be illusory (even before direct realization of the Self) through such texts as 'There is no plurality here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19), 'Indra by his magic powers...' (Bṛhad.

IV.v.19) and 'He goes from death to death...' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19), as well as by logical arguments to show that it has a beginning and an end and so on, which all imply that it is of indeterminable reality-grade. On our view it is explicable that error should be terminable through knowledge, as positive error is born of Ignorance. (I.S. p.122)

Here there are four major points to consider.

(i) The Iṣṭa Siddhi says that the material cause of Mahat (the Cosmic Intellect) and the rest of the world is known by such names as Māyā, Avidyā... Akāśa and others (M.V.224,10). From this we conclude that metaphysical Ignorance (avidyā) is the material cause of the world. And since erroneous cognition, doubt and the impressions they leave are its effects, there is no reciprocal material causality between them and it.

It is, however, also argued that because Ignorance invariably accompanies erroneous cognition, doubt and their impressions, while erroneous cognitions and doubts come and go, this is a further reason for regarding Ignorance as their material cause (M.V.221,3;222,1). That is what Ignorance is said to be even on the view that it is (not a non-conscious power but) a (perverted) form of knowledge.

One may allow for argument's sake that there is Ignorance concealing the shell (M.V. 224,2;224,12-3). But even on this admission it is taught that the material cause of the shell-silver is Ignorance with its seat in the Self (M.V.224,14). However, in a deeper sense no Ignorance concealing the real exists whatever, since its existence cannot be established by valid means of cognition. In his concluding summary, therefore, Vimuktātman says that all Ignorance is non-conscious and has its seat in the Self (M.V.225,5). Thus the whole world, manifest and unmanifest, knowledge and known, is said to be the play of Ignorance. In the system of the revered Commentator, too, the universe is an effect of Ignorance. But for him Ignorance is erroneous cognition in the form of beginningless superimposition, whereas in the Iṣṭa Siddhi it is a non-conscious power (M.V.227,1).

(ii) The claim is made (M.V.230,2) that the error of supposing that there is a pluralistic universe and the error of supposing that one is an individual person are cases of immediate erroneous cognition; they can therefore only be terminated by metaphysical knowledge that is itself immediate and direct. It is further said that before the rise of such immediate knowledge one can know that the world is illusory (māyā-maya) and of indeterminable reality-grade through Vedic texts such as 'There is no plurality here' and arguments such as those showing that it has a beginning and an end (M.V. 223,7, *ad fin.*).

In this connection, the author fails to ask whether direct

and immediate knowledge might arise from the Vedic texts or from reasoning. The text 'There is no plurality here' (Kaṭha II.i.11) teaches that through a mind purified and disciplined by the Teacher and the tradition one can have the knowledge 'All this is the Absolute, which is my true Self. Nothing else exists'. (For it says: 'By the mind alone is this to be obtained', Kaṭha II.i.11.) In the same way, the other part of the text (Kaṭha II.i.10) which says 'He goes from death to death who sees the appearance of plurality here' says that it is through Ignorance that a metaphysically ignorant person sees the appearance of plurality. But it does not say 'This (Ignorance or duality) is of indeterminable reality-grade'.

Similarly, there is a difference in the reasoning on the topic of the reality-status of the world between the classical Advaita teachers and the Iṣṭa Siddhi. The older reasoning was: 'What does not exist either before or after its manifestation does not exist during the period of its manifestation either' (G.K. II.6), and this was used as a ground to show the parity of waking and dream. But the same argument is used in the Iṣṭa Siddhi to establish a different point, namely the indeterminability of the world as an effect of Ignorance, its material cause (M.V.221,3, *ad init.*).

(iii) There is another doctrine found in the Iṣṭa Siddhi. The various aspects of Ignorance are said to be negated successively one by one through successive applications to hearing, pondering and sustained meditation (M.V.229,8), but this does not amount to the total destruction of Ignorance. This is achieved through 'vision' or direct and immediate knowledge of the Self (M.V.230,1). It is only direct knowledge arising from the revealed Vedic texts that negates erroneous cognition, which is itself immediate and direct (M.V.230,2). The termination of Ignorance is effected by knowledge through its mere rise (M.V.230,6).

But why does not the author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi accept the view of the revered Commentator expressed in commenting on Brahma Sūtra IV.i.2 (M.V.55,4) that it is possible in the case of some people to have direct vision of the fact that one's true Self is the Absolute merely through hearing a metaphysical text from the Upanishads once? Why does he not accept what Śrī Śaṅkara said about vision of the Absolute in various places where the example of a person coming to know that he was the tenth comes up for discussion? For instance it was said, 'The villager we are considering, who was counting the numbers of the party, failed, through his own ignorance, to "attain to himself" (i.e. failed to include himself in the number). But when he was afterwards reminded by someone "You are the tenth", he "attained to himself" through his own knowledge. In the same way, one who fails, through metaphysical Ignorance, to attain to his own true nature as the Absolute may very well attain to it later, when instructed by the

Vedic texts, through enlightenment in the form of direct intuition that he is the Absolute, the Self of all' (Taitt.Bh.II.1, cp. M.V.59,14;206,8). No clear answer is found in the Iṣṭa Siddhi to the question whether, in this example, it is the concealment of the tenth person, or whether it is some indeterminable wrong apprehension like that of the double moon that has to be terminated through vision. Another question that remains unanswered in the Iṣṭa Siddhi is, 'Why cannot the knowledge arising merely from hearing the text "That thou art" terminate Ignorance and yield immediate experience, just as hearing the sentence "You are the tenth" does?'

(iv) We have the statement, 'Knowledge can only bring Ignorance to an end; it cannot bring any physical reality to an end, even an atom' (M.V.230,6). In this context, the author spurns regard for that form of Ignorance which is attested in worldly experience as being subject to termination by knowledge, and which consists in ordinary absence of knowledge, doubt and erroneous cognition, and attempts to prove by hypothetical reasoning the existence of a different form of Ignorance, a 'positive' Ignorance, on the ground that it is that which is subject to termination through knowledge. In the system of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, the fact of Ignorance being terminated through knowledge is illustrated by examples taken from worldly experience, but they are used to show how metaphysical Ignorance of the Absolute is subject to termination through knowledge.*

**(The author has shown above that it is dubious metaphysics to take examples from ordinary worldly experience to illustrate the nature of that which is the ground of all worldly experience. See M.V.218,6, note. T.N.)*

231 A MODICUM OF IGNORANCE ACCOMPANIES
EVEN THE ONE WHO HAS ATTAINED
DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE

In the system of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, it is accepted that even the enlightened person is accompanied by a modicum of Ignorance until the fall of his body at death, even though no Ignorance survives that would cause rebirth.

(1) We affirm the existence of a modicum of Ignorance (avidyāleśa) after enlightenment. For it is admitted that the body even of an enlightened person persists for a time. And the persistence of a baby depends on hunger and thirst, which in turn depend on perception of difference, which in turn is rooted in Ignorance. (I.S. p.74)

(2) Enlightenment is received from an enlightened Teacher

(ācārya). And an enlightened Teacher is both enlightened and alive. Perhaps you will object and say that, if a Teacher remains alive, he cannot have had direct experience of the final reality. But that would not be correct. For the Lord taught in his Gītā 'Those enlightened ones who have directly perceived reality will teach you knowledge' (Bh.G.IV.34), emphasizing that metaphysical knowledge is the means to gain the true end of man, provided it is taught by one who himself had direct experience of reality. If you claim that as soon as anyone has direct experience of reality his body falls dead forthwith, then that would mean that there could be no enlightened Teacher and so no receiving of enlightenment and so no liberation. (I.S. p.75)

(3) No action can bring results to its performer that conflict with the unfoldment of the portion of merit and demerit from other lives that initiated his present life. Even actions of very powerful merit, such as the Horse Sacrifice, have to await the exhaustion through experience of the portion of merit and demerit that initiated the current life before they can bring their rewards. The (highly meritorious) actions that can give rise to enlightenment can only bring their reward when a body for experience has been initiated through a portion of the merit and demerit of previous lives, and it can only do so in accordance with that portion of merit and demerit. When these conditions are satisfied, there is no contradiction between enlightenment and the experience of the merit and demerit that initiated the current life.... Therefore, as we have to admit that the body of the enlightened person persists for some time after enlightenment, we have to admit that there must be the faint suggestion of a remnant of Ignorance (avidyā-śeṣa) keeping that body alive and restricted to that. (I.S. p.75-6)

Although these texts are placed in the mouth of an opponent expounding a provisional view, we conclude that the exponent of the finally accepted view agrees with them, as he expresses that agreement by saying 'This conception is excellent' (I.S. p.77).

(4) Perhaps you will claim that the persistence of the body and so on (senses, mind, etc.) of the enlightened person can occur through an impression alone, without being accompanied by Ignorance, as the fear and trembling and running away caused by the snake-error may also be caused by haunting impressions arising from that error that persist even after the rope has been known. But this is not correct. For there cannot be an impression of Ignorance without Ignorance, since both the impression and the mind in which it lies have Ignorance for their material cause. And the example does not agree with what it is supposed to illustrate; for the fear and

trembling have the mind and body of the observer for their material cause, not Ignorance of the rope. The snake-error admittedly has Ignorance of the rope for its material cause; but as that Ignorance no longer exists, the snake-error no longer exists either....

Or we might concede for the sake of argument that in worldly experience there might be a (repeated) snake-error as well as trembling due to an impression (even after knowledge of the rope). For in worldly experience there would be an impression and a mind to contain it. Nevertheless, in the case of the enlightened person there is no scope for an impression or a mind containing one, so in his case nothing can happen through an impression. So we have to accept that the appearance of a body, etc., (sense-organs and mind) in the case of the enlightened person is due to a modicum of Ignorance. We have already explained (M.V.229,8) how there can be a partial burning up of Ignorance of the Self. (I.S. p.76)

The doctrine that, in the case of the enlightened person, the body and ego-sense and so on persist on account of an impression of Ignorance, like the trembling and so on that may persist after knowledge of the rope, is expounded in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.151,2;153,6), the Brahma Siddhi (B.Sid. p.134, cp. M.V.101,2 and the Bhāmatī (M.V.204,4). Here in the Iṣṭa Siddhi it is clear that the attempt to prove the persistence of a modicum of Ignorance (avidyā-leśa) is introduced to refute that doctrine of an impression (avidyā-saṃskāra). The modicum of Ignorance is definitely Ignorance (as opposed to a mere impression of Ignorance). But the question of how a modicum of Ignorance could remain over after the rise of metaphysical knowledge is nowhere considered.

(5) Your conception is excellent. I am also of this opinion. I do not, however, accept that the enlightened person has a remnant of Ignorance (ajñāna-śeṣa) that could result in transmigratory experience in a new life, and you also have refuted this possibility. Only when the possibility of further transmigration is refuted can justice be done to texts like 'Though already released, he acquires final release' (Kaṭha II.ii.1) which proclaim liberation in life, and to texts speaking of the man of steady wisdom (Bh.G.II.54) and of passing beyond the three 'constituents' of the world (Bh.G.II.45). (I.S. p.77)

In regard to a modicum of Ignorance or an impression of Ignorance in the case of the person liberated in life — where this is admitted anywhere by an Advaitin, it is clear that it is admitted from the standpoint of empirical experience only. One can accept that the theory of an impression is the better of the two. Otherwise we are left with the platitude, 'All that knowledge does is to cancel Ignorance, and Ignorance is

only cancelled by knowledge'. A further difficulty with the 'modicum of Ignorance' theory is that, if it is admitted that Ignorance as well as knowledge accompany the enlightened person, then, (since Ignorance and knowledge are taken to be mutually compatible), if Ignorance is to come to an end at all, it will have to destroy itself (without help from knowledge, which is absurd). It is also clear that, for one who holds to such a theory, final and total liberation is (not a matter of direct experience but) only a belief based on faith in the authority of the revealed Vedic texts. For the theory accepts the continuation of a modicum of Ignorance as long as the body remains alive. Here we should note what was said by the revered Commentator:

(6) But erroneous knowledge, though cancelled, continues on for a certain time owing to the force of latent impressions, as in the case of a person cured of the double-vision through which he saw two moons. And one should not raise the objection that the knower of the Absolute must either have a body for a certain time after enlightenment or else not have one. For if a person, even though he be only one person, has the conviction in his own heart that he has immediate knowledge of the Absolute and is also possessed of a physical body at the same time, how can anyone else shake him from this conviction? (B.S.Bh. IV.i.15, cp. M.V.101,4)

Here the words 'but erroneous knowledge, though cancelled, continues on for a certain time' show that the revered Commentator did not accept the persistence of a remnant of erroneous cognition, or the remnant of an impression of erroneous cognition, that could have practical effects. He merely maintained that the enlightened person conformed with any illusory appearance of erroneous cognition that might come up in the full consciousness that it was only an illusory appearance, as one who has known the shell for what it is accepts any appearance of silver that may come up afterwards in the full knowledge that it is only an illusory appearance. A knowing subject neither gains anything nor loses anything if he conforms with ideas that have been cancelled and which he knows to have been cancelled. From this we see that, for the enlightened person, the notion that he has a body is itself cancelled.

All this agrees with the technique of false attribution followed by later retraction. Initial false attribution consists in accepting and conforming to erroneous cognition in the full consciousness that one is accepting and conforming to a mere appearance. It is then perfectly intelligible that the notion that one has a body, sense-organs and mind should be the result of a mere appearance *of the unfoldment of the portion of merit and demerit that initiated the current life, while conformity with a real body and so on is denied. Because erroneous cognition is itself spoken of as cancelled, it is*

even denied that there is any real conformity with it.

But the doctrine of the Iṣṭa Siddhi and other works of its kind is not the same. They accept Ignorance in the form of the Unmanifest (i.e. as a cosmic power). And they argue that it stands as material cause to the body, sense-organs and mind, the latter being regarded as its effects. In the case of the enlightened person, there is conformity with a remnant or an impression of Ignorance conceived as a material cause undergoing transformation into various effects. And that is different from the teaching of the revered Commentator.

(7) No wrong notion arises for the enlightened person. For in his case there is no reason for it.... Sometimes, however, memories which appear like erroneous cognitions may arise from latent impressions left by erroneous notions that had arisen previously, and may occasionally produce the delusion of erroneous cognition. It is the same as when one who has correctly learned the directions of the quarters is (even afterwards) occasionally visited by a wrong notion of them (which does not seriously affect his correct conviction). If one who had attained right knowledge could have erroneous ideas exactly as before, that would undermine all confidence in right knowledge and the whole enterprise of enquiring into the meaning of the Vedic texts would be rendered vain. (Bṛhad. Bh. I.iv.10, cp. M.V. 59,16)

Here also Śrī Śaṅkara is clearly teaching that the enlightened person deliberately conforms to ('goes along with') erroneous cognition which (for him) has already been cancelled.

(8) But the enlightened person is able to give up action completely, since, in his case, Ignorance has been terminated by knowledge. The survival of any remnant of what had previously been superimposed through Ignorance is then logically impossible. No remnant of the double moon projected by sight affected by double-vision survives after the disease has gone. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.48)

Here Śrī Śaṅkara is saying that, where the enlightened person appears to be conforming to Ignorance that has in fact been removed, he is deliberately conforming to erroneous cognition that he knows to have been cancelled.

(9) Therefore, since being embodied is the result of false notions, it is proved that the enlightened person is not embodied even while alive. And the Vedic texts about the knower of the Absolute agree with this. 'Just as the slough of a snake lies thrown off and dead on the top of an ant-hill, so lies this body (cast off in the case of the enlightened person). But this disembodied immortal life is verily the Absolute, is verily light' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7). 'Seeming from the empirical

standpoint to have eyes, but really without eyes'. And the Smṛti teaches the same; 'How does the one of steady wisdom speak?' (Bh.G.II.54) In such texts describing the person of steady wisdom, it shows that he is beyond engagement in action. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.61,7, note)

Here the argument is to show that, because having a body is illusory, there is no engagement in any action on the part of the enlightened person, whose erroneous knowledge is terminated. Though it is admitted that he conforms to cognition that he knows to have been cancelled, this is taken as 'doing nothing'. Texts from the Veda and the Smṛti are quoted in support of this position.

The account of the enlightened man in the Iṣṭa Siddhi is different. There the enlightened person is represented as being affected by a remnant of Ignorance, the cause of false cognition. And the same Vedic and Smṛti texts are quoted in support. It is clear that on this point the systems of Śrī Śaṅkara and Vimuktātman are different.

232 REFUTATION OF THE SYSTEMS OF MAṆḌANA AND OTHERS

Maṇḍana Miśra (M.V.94;95,1) and Vācaspati Miśra (M.V.188,1; 202,4) held that, because, if Ignorance had its seat in the Absolute, everybody would be released whenever one single person was, it has to be accepted that Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul. The Iṣṭa Siddhi refutes this doctrine at length. We shall begin with the two verses in which its author summarizes the essence of his case.

(1) For the reasons given above, we cannot accept that Ignorance could have its seat in anything imagined, since anything imagined would be non-conscious. The conscious (lit.not non-conscious) cannot be imagined, since it establishes itself independently. Nor can the conscious and the non-conscious together be imagined, since the conscious cannot be imagined. If you do not accept that the Absolute could be either the seat of Ignorance or the object concealed by it, then there could be no cognition bearing on the Absolute and no liberation resulting from that; for there could be no transmigration arising from Ignorance of the Absolute. (I.S.(verses) VI.4,5: p.324)

(2) If in this way the Absolute was neither the one afflicted by Ignorance nor the one concealed by Ignorance, then, as there is no other consciousness apart from it, there could be no conviction 'I am the Absolute', derived from the Upanishads. And because there was no Ignorance of the Absolute, Ignorance of the Absolute would not be the cause of transmigratory experience. If there was no Ignorance, it would not have to be

destroyed by the idea of the Absolute (as provided for in Maṇḍana's theory, cp. M.V.100,1). And the theory would contradict the Vedic teaching that liberation comes from knowledge.

Since the individual souls are themselves imagined, they are non-conscious, and cannot be the seat of Ignorance. If one were to imagine that they were the seat of Ignorance, Ignorance would have its existence in something imagined by Ignorance! There would thus either be circular reasoning, or the fault of mutual dependence or the fault of infinite regress.

Nor can we accept the criticism advanced by Maṇḍana (M.V. 95,1; cp.94,1) and by Vācaspati*(M.V.187,2;202,4) that Ignorance cannot have its seat in the Absolute because the latter is of the nature of knowledge. For the Absolute is not knowledge in the sense of enlightenment engendered by the Veda, but knowledge in the sense of being of the nature of pure Consciousness. Nor can individual errors, which have a beginning, have their seat in the beginningless Absolute. Nor can the fault (in the argument that seeks to show that the individual soul is beginningless and the seat of Ignorance) be remedied by appeal to the conception of a stream of individual errors. For if the stream itself is an error, it is an effect (and so has a beginning); and if the series is not an error, then it is real (and so the errors would be realities, and not errors). So we conclude that it cannot be the individual soul that is the seat of Ignorance; for the soul is itself imagined.

Ignorance cannot conceal anything other than the supporting consciousness in which it inheres and which it afflicts, whether that other thing be taken as unknown or as known. If the other thing were not known, it would not be possible to establish that one was ignorant of it; and if it was known, then it could not be concealed by Ignorance.

If one were to take the view that the one afflicted with Ignorance simply consisted in Ignorance, then knowledge could not destroy Ignorance. For if it did, it would destroy the ignorant one and so destroy the possibility of knowledge. If the ignorant one were destroyed by knowledge, there could never be an enlightened Teacher, and pupils cannot gain enlightenment from a Teacher who is not himself enlightened.

Nor is it right (in attempting to avoid imputing Ignorance to the Absolute) to say that Ignorance has its seat in what is imagined as being distinct from the Absolute. For since Ignorance cannot have its seat in that which has been imagined, we would be left with the (already refuted) position that Ignorance had its seat in the individual soul. If it be said that the difference only resides in that whose difference has already been imagined, this would lead to infinite regress. If the ignorant one were himself imagined through Ignorance, his knowledge would be like dream-knowledge and would not put an end to Ignorance. That is the substance of the refutation of

Maṇḍana. (I.S. pp. 324-31, summarized) **(See T.N. below p.739)*

(3) Some say that if (as on our own view) the one Ignorance were the cause of the imagination of the distinctions giving rise to all the different individual souls, then when one soul gained liberation through enlightenment all would be liberated (which contradicts experience). But we ourselves hold that when one is liberated, only one is liberated, as we do not admit the existence of a plurality of individual souls. It is our opponent's theory which suffers from the defect he attributes to ours (because the existence of other souls can only be established through Ignorance, and, if Ignorance were really overcome, the notion of the existence of other souls would be overcome with it). (On the view that, if one is liberated all must be liberated,) as long as there is one soul remaining unliberated, no one can obtain liberation, not even those who have acquired metaphysical knowledge.

On the doctrine of Vācaspati* there is a separate Ignorance for each soul; but this leads to too many unproved assumptions. Perhaps you will say that this does not matter, as many Ignorances are only assumed to account for the variegated circumstances found in the world, such as the distinction between liberated and unliberated people. Well, we reply, these variegated circumstances must be either real or imagined. If they are real, there is no need of assuming Ignorances to account for them. And if they are imagined, there is still no need to assume a plurality of Ignorances, as they would be explicable through one. If this is not accepted, then one would have to assume innumerable different Ignorances to account for the innumerable different states of a single soul. If you say that many different souls manifest and that each must be supposed to have its own Ignorance, we reply that these souls are themselves imagined. Their manifestation could well be caused by the Ignorance seated in one soul; there is no need to assume either a plurality of souls or of Ignorances seated in them.

Let us suppose that the Ignorance that imagines the soul and also its difference from other souls is the same, because the fact that Ignorance has different aspects does not imply any distinctions in Ignorance itself. And let us suppose that that Ignorance whereby the soul imagines itself different from other souls has its seat in the soul, since the soul is the seat of whatever its Ignorance imagines (read svakalpita, cp. I.S. p.332, line 16). If one soul is imagined through the Ignorance of another, while the latter soul is imagined through the Ignorance of the former, we have the fallacy of mutual dependence. But if, to avoid this, we assume that the soul is imagined by the Ignorance of another soul, and that by the Ignorance of another, we have the fallacy of infinite regress, since the other soul will require another soul to imagine it and so on. Nor can we say that infinite regress is acceptable because the process is beginningless, like seed and

sprout. For if this analogy is accepted, then, while the series as a whole may be beginningless, each individual soul constituting a member of the series will have a beginning like a seed. And if it has a beginning it will have an end. And if it will have an end, it will not be able to enjoy (immortality and eternal) liberation (as promised in the Upanishads).

(Moreover, each preceding instant of Ignorance must either be destroyed or not destroyed when it is succeeded by the next.) If each preceding instant of Ignorance is not destroyed when it is succeeded by the next, no later instant of Ignorance will ever be destroyed either, so there will be no liberation. But if each previous instant was destroyed when supplanted, then any later instant would also be immediately destroyed, and everyone would be liberated at once (which contradicts experience). Or, if this is denied, no Ignorance will ever be destroyed (as the previous argument for this will hold).

If others, themselves afflicted with Ignorance, were not manifest, together with their Ignorance and its effects, to the enlightened person who had thrown off Ignorance, there could not be any relationship of Guru and pupil. The true Guru cannot be afflicted with Ignorance. And metaphysical knowledge infallibly destroys Ignorance. On your view (i.e. Maṇḍana's view, M.V.101,2), the persistence of the body of the enlightened person is due to the mere impressions of Ignorance. One cannot accept a distinction and say that the Guru only has verbal knowledge and not immediate knowledge of the Self. For (in this instance) it is impossible to establish that knowledge through words and immediate knowledge are different (cp. M.V. 59, intro.). If metaphysical knowledge did not arise from the texts, they would not suffice to dispel Ignorance. And it should not be claimed (as by Maṇḍana, cp. M.V.101,5, note) that verbal knowledge dispels absence of knowledge, while positive Ignorance is destroyed by repeated affirmation of that knowledge. For positive error does not follow from absence of knowledge, which is a mere negation.

It is also wrong to suggest that knowledge arises as the reward for affirmation of knowledge. Knowledge might arise from attention to something other than knowledge, but the idea that it could arise from attention to knowledge is self-contradictory (in that knowledge would have had to have already risen before it could be attended to)....

So it is useless to imagine that there is any Ignorance apart from your own, or that there is anyone else affected by Ignorance apart from yourself. It is not right to suppose that one Ignorance can imagine (create) another. Perhaps you will say that there are illusions, such as the display of the mass-hypnotist (rope-trick, etc.,) the mirage and the double moon seen by several persons, where there is one illusion created collectively by the Ignorances of many people. Well, there is no reason to accept that this worldly example is applicable in the metaphysical context, as we shall show below.

But if you hold that one Ignorance can imagine (create) another, we ask you 'When you gain enlightenment, is all that is imagined by your Ignorance destroyed or is it not? If it were destroyed, your liberation would imply the liberation of everyone (which would undermine the need for upanishadic teaching and hence the authority of the Veda). But if it were not destroyed, you yourself would not be liberated'.

It is true that you have given examples where worldly tradition supposes that one thing is imagined by the Ignorances of many people. But (conceding hypothetically for argument that there are 'others') we have given the contrary example of misperception of the sun and (dream and) others, where the illusion is private and does not agree with the experience of 'others'. And as other (apparently collective) illusions can be explained as private illusions in the same way, there is no proof that many Ignorances co-operate to produce a single illusion even in (apparently) collective illusions like the mass hypnotist's magic display. It could be argued that the (apparent) agreement between many people in such cases arises from the fact of their private illusions being similar. But do 'others' exist at all? In dream, when other Ignorances and ignorant people are imagined, such Ignorances and their effects do not survive the dissolution of the dream-Ignorance that brought them into being.

Perhaps you will claim that (there is a plurality of Ignorances and that) the individual Ignorance of many different people arises from the collective Ignorance of all. (This, you would say, would account for the possibility of individual liberation.) For when food is bought and cooked from supplies contributed by many people, that food is their collective property and they can eat it; but if one omits his contribution the food is not his property and he cannot eat it. In the same way in the present context (the realm of Ignorance is the product of many Ignorances, but, if one Ignorance is dissolved, the one who formerly possessed (i.e. was afflicted by) that Ignorance has no further part in the collective Ignorance).

(But this whole theory is wrong as there are no 'others'.) We have already explained how all products of Ignorance are the products of one Ignorance, as in the case of a dream or a misperception of the sun (read suṣi, cp. I.S. p.338, line 20, and see T.N. at M.V.225,12). Indeed, whatever is imagined is non-conscious, and the not-non-conscious is different in nature from the non-conscious and cannot be imagined. So there is no possibility of anything being anything other than oneself. We conclude, therefore, that there is no other being in Ignorance except oneself, and no other Ignorance to afflict any such a person.

True, you claimed that the individual Ignorance of many people arises from the collective Ignorance of all people. But even if this were true, the dissolution of the Ignorance of one person would not destroy an atom of the products of that

person's Ignorance. For its cause would have been the *collective* Ignorance, and that would not have been destroyed. So if there was to be liberation (in terms of this theory) it could only be through the destruction of *all* Ignorance, so that liberation could only be the liberation of everyone together (which would be absurd in itself, and would undermine the Vedic traditions about sages of past times acquiring liberation and about the need for individual instruction and discipline on the path of Vedanta. Thus all arguments for a plurality of souls or Ignorances fail and also commit the same fault of which they accuse the Iṣṭa Siddhi, namely, failure to account for the fact of some souls being liberated and others not. But the Iṣṭa Siddhi can account for this on the analogy of dream, the individual souls and their bondage and liberation being, as it were, the dream of one dreamer, the Absolute assuming one Ignorance. (Cp. Yogīndrānanda, 1977, pp.470-84 = Advaita Siddhi, Chapter 53 on Eka-jīva-vāda.) And so, concludes the Iṣṭa Siddhi, one who claims that bondage is set up by Ignorance and destroyed by knowledge must support the view that Ignorance rests in the Absolute and not in anything else (such as the individual soul) held to be imagined by that Ignorance, I.S. VI.27). (I.S. pp.331-9, summarized)

**(See p.735 and 736. P.Hacker (Kleine Schriften p.117) has claimed that Vācaspati criticized Vimuktātman's theory of error (Nyāyavārttika Tātparyaṭīkā, Vizianagram ed. 1898, p.55) and consequently must have written later than Vimuktātman. This is not necessarily contradicted by the present passage, as the name 'Vācaspati' does not occur here in the original text of the I.S., which may have been directed against Maṇḍana. Lines 6-22 above are from the Translator. T.N.)*

From this refutation of various forms of the theory that there is a plurality of different Ignorances we can see that, by the time of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, there had been a proliferation of schools and sub-schools in the tradition following Maṇḍana and Vācaspati. It is also clear that in the case of systems where hypothetical reasoning predominates there can be no firm basis for any definitive doctrine.

The question 'To whom does Ignorance belong?' is raised and answered at several places in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries. But, unlike Vimuktātman, he does not raise the question in the form 'Does transmigration, including Ignorance and its effects, apply to the individual soul or to the Absolute?' For no difference between the individual soul and the Absolute is admitted in Advaita Vedanta in so far as it follows Śrī Śaṅkara. But the question is sometimes put by him into the mouth of opponents in such a form as 'To whom does this transmigratory life belong?' or 'Whose is this failure to be awake to the true nature of the Self?' And they go on: 'If the Absolute is admitted to be eternal, pure, conscious and liberated by

nature, it cannot be the transmigrant. But in that case, what other being is there that could be the transmigrant? Seeing that in your system you do not admit any other conscious principle apart from the Absolute, there cannot be transmigration for anybody. You go to all these lengths, and end up establishing a philosophical consequence that you do not yourself accept!' In the various passages in which these opponents are refuted, we find objections thus formulated. We will now quote a few such passages so that the reader can see.

(4) It is said that because (on our system) the Absolute is one and there is no other Self (to have experience), the Absolute must have experience through the experience of the embodied individual soul. To this we reply as follows. 'Here is a question to which we beg the favour of an answer, O favourite of the gods. "How did you come to the conclusion that there was on our system no Self for experience apart from the Absolute?" Perhaps you will answer, "Through such texts as 'That thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7), 'I am the Absolute' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10) and 'There is no other knower but He'" (Bṛhad. III.vii.23). Very well, but such texts should be understood according to the sense in which they were meant; you cannot just take bits here and there to suit your own doctrine. The text "That thou art", in affirming that the Absolute, with such characteristics as "untouched by evil" and so on, is the true nature of the embodied soul, shows by that very affirmation that the embodied soul in its true nature does not have empirical experience. How could the Absolute have empirical experience through the experience of the embodied soul? It is true that, as long as the identity of the embodied soul in its true nature with the Absolute is not perceived, there is empirical experience based on the body. But it is caused by erroneous knowledge. It does not touch the Absolute, the supreme reality'. (B.S.Bh.I.ii.8)

From the standpoint of the highest truth, there is no one who undergoes transmigration through Ignorance and its effects.

(5) 'To whom, then, does this Ignorance belong?' We reply, 'To you who ask this question'. If you then ask, 'But does not the Veda say that I am the Lord?' we reply 'If you are awake to this (you will see that) there is no Ignorance for anybody'.(B.S.Bh.IV.i.3, M.V.113,4, etc.)

(6) But who is Śvetaketu, the one referred to by the word 'thou' in the text 'That thou art'? He is the one who has the conviction about himself, 'I am Śvetaketu, the son of Uddālaka'. Having heard the teaching about the Self and pondered over it and understood it as well as he could, he asked his father, with a view to attain understanding of what he had not heard, pondered over or understood, 'What is the true nature of this

teaching, revered Sir?' This person, properly qualified to hear, ponder over and understand the texts, is (in his real nature) that supreme Deity who 'entered' the body and its organs, composed of fire, water and earth (lit. food), like a person or the sun 'entering' water in the form of a reflection, in order to manifest name and form. Śvetaketu did not understand about his Self, distinct from the body and organs, of the nature of pure Being, the Self of all, before hearing about it from his father. Now, instructed by his father in the words 'That thou art', and with reasoning and examples added, he understood well what his father had said, and attained the conviction 'I am verily pure Being'. (Chānd.Bh.VI.xvi.3)

The teaching is that the distinction between metaphysical knowledge and metaphysical Ignorance applies only within the state of metaphysical Ignorance.

(7) Our opponent will ask here, 'Well, whose is this Ignorance?' We reply, 'It belongs to him to whom it is appears to belong'. You will perhaps ask 'Who is it who is found to be ignorant?', but the question is useless. If you see Ignorance at all, you see the one who has it.... Suppose I accept your point that the relation between Ignorance and the one who has it is known, but not directly known. What would you say to that? You may say 'Because Ignorance is the cause of evil, it would have to be got rid of'. If so, I reply, 'Whoever *has* Ignorance, let *him* get rid of it'. You may say, 'Well, but does not Ignorance belong to me?' 'If you really know that, then you know both Ignorance and the Self to whom it belongs'. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2)

(8) Or, to take another side of the question, if Ignorance or anything else is the object of knowledge, it is *only* the object of knowledge (and by definition different from the knowing subject who knows it). And the knowing subject would remain the knowing subject only, and could not become the known object. And if this be so, then the knowing subject, the 'Knower of the Field' (M.V. p.35) is in no way affected by Ignorance, or by being the one who undergoes suffering, or by other such false notions flowing from Ignorance. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2)

It is clear from the above-quoted passages that, in the unreflective state of Ignorance, Ignorance belongs to the individual soul who has the conviction 'I do not see myself as the supreme Self'. But it is seen through reflection that, for everyone, their true Self is eternally pure, conscious and liberated. And when this has been seen, it is seen that no one is afflicted by Ignorance. Where occasionally texts are found which appear to attribute Ignorance to the Absolute, even there we can see that the real intention is to teach the doctrine that Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul.

(9) We do not say, the opponent claims, that there is no superimposition onto the Absolute of attributes it does not possess, superimposition parallel with the false superimposition of the attributes of silver onto a shell. What we say is that the Absolute is not the cause of superimposition onto itself of attributes that it does not possess, and that it is not the author of Ignorance.

Very well, replies the Advaitin. We agree that the Absolute is not the author of Ignorance and that it is not deluded by it either. Even so, there is nothing *other* than the Absolute which is the author of Ignorance, and no other conscious being apart from the Absolute that is deluded by it. (Bṛhad.Bh. I.iv.10, M.V.46,5)

(10) We have the text 'Then the Absolute knew itself alone (as "I am the Absolute"): through that it became the all' (Bṛhad. I.iv.10). It is wrong to suppose that this text shows that the Absolute could not be a spiritual enquirer like us. For (there is nothing wrong in supposing that the Absolute could appear to be such from the standpoint of Ignorance, and) this is what we hear from the Veda. It is not my personal fancy. It is the Vedic teaching. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10, cp. M.V.95,1, note, *ad fin.*)

(11) And you yourselves will have to accept that, if there is a seeker at all, he can only be (in his true nature) the Absolute. For all plurality is imagined in the Absolute (which has no plurality in its true nature). (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

(12) This which is perceived as the one present in the body turns out to have been the Absolute even before enlightenment, and all this universe was always the Absolute. But because of Ignorance there are the superimposed notions 'I am not the Absolute' and 'I am not all this universe'. And then there are the further superimposed notions 'I am an individual capable of action, I am the one who experiences the results of the actions I have performed, I am happy, I am miserable, I am undergoing transmigratory experience'. But from the standpoint of the highest truth the Absolute is the Absolute alone, and is different from the foregoing, and is all that really exists. Somehow, by great good fortune, that one (the Absolute in the state of Ignorance) met with a compassionate Teacher who enlightened it by saying 'Thou art not undergoing transmigration', and then it came to know its own true Self, that which it really is by nature. By the word 'true' is meant 'free from all superimposed characteristics, (such as that of being an individual capable of action and so on)'. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

The point here made is as follows. The Absolute is ever pure, and is free from Ignorance, whether any particular soul is in a state of Ignorance or not. When a soul is in Ignorance, it appears from the standpoint of that ignorant soul that the

Absolute is the seat of Ignorance; but when Ignorance has been dispelled through metaphysical knowledge, the soul knows 'I am eternally pure, conscious and liberated by nature'. As for the term 'Ignorance', it is a synonym for erroneous knowledge, the natural (i.e. beginningless and uncaused) superimposition of differentiation on that which is eternally free from differentiation. But nowhere in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries is this erroneous knowledge called an effect or explained as an effect; nowhere is it said that it has an indeterminable metaphysical Ignorance, conceived as a distinct metaphysical principle, for its material cause; nowhere is it said to have, or explained to have, its seat in the Absolute (as if this were a fact, and not what merely appeared to be the case to the soul while it was in Ignorance, as explained above).

233 REFUTATION OF NON-DUALISM AS CONCEIVED IN THE THEORY OF THE ABSOLUTE AS WORD

In the course of refuting the doctrine of nihilism, Vimuktātman claims that, if there is no meaning to be expressed, there can be no word expressing it. He says 'For if the meaning were supposed to be either non-different from the word or non-existent there could be no word or meaning' (I.S. I.72, p.169). And then he adds that if in this way there can be no word and no meaning, there cannot be anyone expressing a meaning either. And in this context he refutes the doctrine of the Non-duality of the Word, propounded by the philosophers called the Grammarians, who taught that the Word was both that which expressed the meaning and also the meaning.

(1) If Word were that which expressed the meaning, then, because its nature would be exhausted in that function, it could not be the meaning as well. And if it were the meaning, then, because its nature would be exhausted in being the meaning, it could not be that which expressed the meaning. So one and the same thing (Word) could not be both the meaning and that which expressed the meaning, either simultaneously or successively. Perhaps you will say that one part of Word is to express the meaning, while another part is to be the meaning. But, even then, the part that expressed the meaning could not be the meaning, and the part that was the meaning could not express the meaning. (I.S. p.170)

(2) Perhaps you will object that there are certain words meaning 'word', such as śabda, dhvani, abhidhā, vācaka, which have themselves (i.e. have 'word') as their own meaning. But these words, while they do mean 'word', also each convey a special shade of meaning in addition, so that, though they are themselves meanings expressed through the power of Word, they

are not, as meanings, absolutely non-different from Word. Words such as 'pot' which refer to ordinary objects do not convey themselves as their own meaning. And so it stands proved that that which expresses the meaning and the meaning, that is to say the word and the object it denotes, are different. And from this it follows that the doctrine that Word itself is the object or meaning of Word is wrong. (I.S. p.170)

(3) And so the doctrine that all is the Non-dual Word is unsound. For the two categories word and meaning, that which gives expression and the idea expressed, are necessarily different. If word and meaning were non-different, all meanings would be non-different from the words expressing them. But in that case the meanings would, by parity, express the words as their own meanings, and would themselves all become words meaning 'Word'. The meanings 'sense-organ', 'mind', 'intellect', 'Self', as also the words expressing them, would be nothing other than words meaning 'Word'. And since Word (would, on this theory, be made into an object, it) would then be non-conscious; it follows that there would be blind darkness everywhere.

Perhaps you will claim that the word 'Self', being on this theory non-different from the actual Self, which is not non-conscious, would itself be 'not non-conscious'. But if we tried to retain the non-difference of word and meaning on this supposition (we could not get a reciprocal non-difference); we could only say that the word was the meaning; we could not say that the meaning was the word (since that would reduce the conscious Self to non-consciousness). (I.S. p.170-1)

This should be compared with Maṇḍana's remark: 'Consciousness, in order to be *consciousness, depends on assuming the form of a word (as may not occur, for instance, in the case of our fragmentary 'consciousness' of a speck of grass that we pass by on the road, in which case we would not be distinctly aware of it); or, to express it differently, consciousness* is *the Power called "Speech"' (B.Sid. p.19, M.V.102,3).*

(4) Perhaps you will say that, in the case of the word 'unreal', unreality is only imagined, so that (unreality does not extend, through reciprocal identity, to Word in general and) the meaning 'unreality' is confined to that word. But in that case, we reply, the meaning would not be non-different from the word. If you were to say that the meaning 'unreal' *was* non-different from the word, then either the word would be imagined, or else (against your own hypothesis) the unreal would not be imagined. So that as (on the hypothesis of reciprocal identity) both the word and the meaning would have to be either imagined or not imagined, your thesis 'In the case of the word "unreal" unreality is only imagined' will not stand. You cannot say that the meaning only would be imagined, not the word. For

then there would be no reciprocal identity. One would be imagined and the other not. (I.S. p.171-2)

(5) Perhaps you will argue as follows. It is true, you will say, that the word expressing the meaning and the meaning expressed by the word are imagined to be different from one another. But they are in fact both illusory modifications of the Absolute as Word (śabda-brahman).... Since they are non-different, they can both be (aspects of) Word. So there is nothing wrong, you will perhaps claim, in saying that the word expressing the meaning and the meaning it expresses are both, in their true nature, Word. But we reply that such a view would be wrong. For the imagined and the not-imagined cannot be non-different. And there is no proof that the Absolute is Word. (I.S. p.172)

(6) And there is no Vedic text saying that the Absolute is Word. Even if there was, it would have to be taken as metaphorical usage, meaning something else, and not intended to be taken literally.... Consider such texts as 'That which cannot be uttered by speech and through which speech makes utterance' (Kena I.5), 'That which is not heard by the ear...' (Kena I.8) and 'Without sound, without touch...' (Kaṭha I.iii.15). They do not affirm either that the Absolute is Word or that it has Word as a characteristic.... Thus the world is an illusory modification (vivarta) of the Absolute; but it is not an illusory modification of Word. Therefore it is correct to say 'All this is the Absolute' or 'All this is the Self'. But it is not correct to say, in a similar spirit, 'Both the meaning and the word expressing it are Word'. So the doctrine that reality is the Non-dual Word will not stand. (I.S. p.174)

This refutation of the doctrine of the Absolute as Word is thoroughly justified. But the following is worth noting. Word and meaning are both experienced as objects of consciousness, as the Vedic text 'Let Me unfold name and form' (Chānd.VI.iii.2) shows. Neither of them can be the Absolute in the form in which they stand. Both are imagined in the Absolute. It is only an illusory appearance when the Absolute manifests in empirical experience as word and meaning. The Absolute is the true essence underlying both word and meaning, but different from either of them. This was the teaching of the revered Commentator, as the following texts show.

(7) Nor can there be anything else other than the Absolute which is not name and form; for all modifications of the Absolute without exception are unfolded as name and form. (B.S.Bh. I.iii.41)

(8) On the contrary, it is invariably Being to which some other name is given through the mere notion of it as something

else. It is parallel with the case of the snake-illusion, where it is in fact the rope that is called a snake under the impression that it is a snake. And it is parallel with the normal worldly practice of thinking of the lump of clay or the clay pot as different from the clay and calling them 'the lump' and 'the pot'. But for those who discern the rope in its true nature, the name and notion of the snake cease, as do the name and notion of the pot and the rest in the case of those who distinctly perceive the true nature of the clay. And in just the same way the name and notion of all modifications of Being cease for those who discern the true nature of pure Being. (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.3, M.V.47,1)

(9) Though the name and the named are one, this unity has so far only been treated of from the standpoint of the name. It has been said, for instance, that all this (world) is but the syllable Om. Now (in the next passage of the Upanishad) the same subject is taught from the standpoint of the named, to show that the name and the named are one.... And the purpose of knowing the identity of the name and the named is to enable oneself to dismiss name and named together at one stroke and realize the Absolute, which is different from either. (Maṇḍ. Bh.2, intro.)

234 ACCEPTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF POSITIVE NON-DUALITY

The Iṣṭa Siddhi appears to accept the doctrine of positive non-duality (bhāvādvaita). Thus it says:

(1) But did I not say (claims the opponent) that there is the real and the unreal, so that the character 'real' does not cover everything (e.g. it does not cover the unreal)? But the Advaitin replies that this claim cannot be upheld. For, if no duality were implied in your position, you would not have been able to use the word 'and' (in 'the real *and* the unreal'), which implies two things existing together. And, in an case, we have explained that non-being is not subject to designation by words, so that words cannot be used to apply to it. (I.S. p.168)

(2) If the unreal were a second thing over against the real, or the real a second thing over against the unreal, there could be a third and a fourth thing up to or beyond a trillion, as the principle of multiplication and plurality would be the same. If you say that there could be no third thing because difference (and hence multiplicity) is not applicable to non-being, we reply that in that case it could not be a second thing either (so that the whole concept of non-existence, as we have already shown, is unfounded). There cannot be a

second thing that is not different. You cannot say that the unreal could exist as a second thing over against the real, but that the real could not exist as a second thing over against the unreal, as the principle of multiplication would be the same. (I.S. p.168-9)

(3) Our opponents may claim that if the destruction of Ignorance is equated with 'absence of anything apart from the Self' and therefore with the Self, the above-mentioned objection would again arise (namely that Ignorance could never have existed at all, so that bondage would have been impossible and the Veda useless); but if destruction is anything other than the Self, then Non-duality would be contradicted.

But what exactly is this Non-duality that would be contradicted if the destruction of Ignorance were taken as other than the Self? If it is the Self, well, that (as experience shows) is not contradicted by Ignorance and its effects, so it would be contradicted by the absence of Ignorance even less. But suppose non-duality were taken (not simply as the Self but) as the fact of the Self being without duality. Again, there would be no contradiction if the fact of the Self being without duality were itself equated with the Self. But if the fact of the Self being without duality were taken as a reality over and above the Self, then there could never have been bondage (as there would always have been the reality called 'the fact of the Self being without duality' to contradict it).

Perhaps you will maintain that Non-duality is the fact of Ignorance and the duality proceeding from it being burnt up by knowledge. If this burning up is equated with the Self, then the above-mentioned objection will again arise (namely that Ignorance could never have existed and bondage could never have arisen). But if the burning up is different from the Self, you yourself will contradict Non-duality. Perhaps you will say, 'Well, our reason for saying that the burning up of Ignorance was not the Self was to avoid the implication that Ignorance would never have existed. We did not mean that the burning up constituted a second positive reality over and above the Self, for any such burning up considered as other than the Self would be inadmissible'. But if our Vedanta opponents may say this, we ourselves may say that there will be no contradiction with Non-duality if (as on our view) the destruction of Ignorance is taken as the absence of anything apart from the Self. (I.S. p.366)

Maṇḍana also acknowledges the doctrine of the Non-dualism of Positive Being (bhāvādvaita, M.V.102,5). But we have pointed out in that section that it is a disputed question whether he actually subscribed to the doctrine himself or not. In the Iṣṭa Siddhi, however, (the doctrine of the Non-dualism of Positive Being is evidently embraced, as) it is clearly stated (as we have just seen) that non-being in any form cannot

contradict Non-duality.

Now, if the finally accepted view really is that the non-existence of anything cannot contradict Non-duality, and Non-duality is accepted as purely positive, then non-differentiation and Non-duality are being understood in a merely metaphorical sense. For the existence of something associated with distinctions will have been admitted, even though its non-existence would not undermine non-duality.

Even if we were to say that Non-duality is simply Ignorance and its effects burnt up and destroyed by the fire of knowledge, this would not altogether save Non-duality from being metaphorical (since it would imply a standpoint from which Ignorance was a kind of reality that had to be burnt up). For on Vedantic principles there cannot be anything that would undermine Non-duality, apart from metaphysical Ignorance and its effects, which we know from worldly experience.* The distinction between Ignorance and enlightenment is only made in the Upanishads for purposes of practical teaching. The bogey raised in the form 'If the destruction of Ignorance only meant the Self, it would be eternal and there never could have been bondage' strikes no terror at all. If you have the conviction, 'Neither Ignorance nor its destruction are anything over and above the Self; there never is, was or will be bondage', this already implies that the destruction of Ignorance is nothing over and above the Self. The following text from Śrī Śaṅkara is worth considering in this connection.

(4) But does not the Veda say that I am the Lord? We reply, 'If you are awake to this (you will see that) there is no Ignorance for anybody'. And this answers that other objection raised by some, which runs 'Well, if the Self is supposed to be associated with Ignorance standing over against it as a second thing, Non-duality would be impossible'. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.3)

**(The simple form of metaphysical Ignorance recognized by Śrī Śaṅkara, unlike the abstruse form of it taught by Vimuktātman, is guaranteed by the universal experience 'I do not know'. Its reality and existence are of course denied from the standpoint of metaphysical knowledge. T.N.)*

The Absolute alone is real. Being ignorant does not affect it, as being ignorant is itself a state imagined through Ignorance. In the same way, having a second over against it through Ignorance does not affect it either, as the notion of being afflicted by Ignorance is also imagined through Ignorance. From this standpoint, neither being nor non-being are in contradiction with Non-duality. For both are imagined through Ignorance. In truth, the non-dual Self is eternally free from the distinction between being and non-being.

235 DEFENCE AGAINST OPPONENTS' OBJECTIONS

In the course of arguing that all currently accepted theories of error imply the admission of Māyā whether their exponents like it or not, the Iṣṭa Siddhi argues that this is also true of error conceived as positive misconception (anyathākhyāti). Then it raises the question, 'Can one thing assume another form or not?', and it sets out and refutes an opponent's view on the point.

The statement of the opponent's view runs:

(1) But is it not the case that, if one thing could not assume the form of another, the metaphysical teachings of the Veda would be useless? And if a person remained the same in all circumstances, how could either action or knowledge be of use to him? The Veda actually declares that there can be a change of state in such texts as 'Having already identified himself with the deity of his meditation while still alive...' (Bṛhad.IV.i.2, cp. M.V.56,1) and 'Knowing the Absolute, he becomes the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.III.ii.9). And there is the Smṛti text (Bh.G.VIII.6) 'And whatever being he is thinking of when he leaves the body, to that being he goes'. (I.S. II.64-5, p.235-6)

Then the reply is given from the standpoint of the finally accepted view. Afterwards the question is also raised how that which is eternal and immutable can undergo change into an individual capable of action and so on. This objection, too, is answered.

(2) (We reply as follows. To those who desire another state, a desire which can only be based on Ignorance, the Veda points out the means. It does not affirm the reality either of the means or the ends.) A person in his true nature is eternal and unchanging; he can 'undergo change' only through error — as, for example, he erroneously supposes that birth and other changes belong to himself, though he is different from the body (to which alone such changes belong). If the person in his true nature really underwent a change either through action or knowledge, how could the rewards for such action or knowledge accrue to him (since he would no longer exist)? Neither the destruction nor the bringing into being of the Self can constitute the reward for action or knowledge. (I.S. II.67-8, p.236)

The notion of action, its factors and results can only arise from the standpoint of superimposition. The Vedic texts prescribing action and meditation simply conform to this standpoint. The refutation here offered in the Iṣṭa Siddhi is made in accordance with the method of the true experts in Vedanta, and there is nothing further to add.

The Iṣṭa Siddhi also criticizes the doctrine of Bhāskara, according to whom the Absolute is both different from and identical with the individual souls and the world; it also occasionally attacks the doctrine of Difference in Identity as upheld by the school of Kumārila, and also the view that non-existence (abhāva) is itself a form of existence (bhāva). (I.S. p.241, 359, 222-316, 52, 60, 295, 367, 242-3, 248-9, 359, *sic*.) We refrain from expounding the arguments here, for lack of space. And there would also have been little interest in doing so. For the refutations of the doctrine of Difference in Identity are not in contradiction with the classical Vedantic method, defence of which is the main subject of the present study, while examination of arguments based on mere secular reasoning is of no use for determining the true method followed in the Vedanta.

For the same reasons we abstain from any lengthy examination of the part of the work which refutes the doubts raised by the Dualists. In brief the objection and answer run as follows:

(3) Therefore (says the opponent) the doctrine that everything constitutes one Self is wrong, as it cannot explain how some can be enlightened and others in metaphysical Ignorance, or how there can be Guru and pupil, or how there can be some liberated and others not. Hence one must accept that people are different from one another, and that duality is the final truth; for on this basis the co-existence of Guru and pupil and the other points are explicable. To this we reply that the difficulty about liberation that faces those who accept as ultimately real the existence of a plurality of different souls is not of our making. The logical answer, therefore, is to accept that everything constitutes one Self. (I.S. VII.10-12, p.342)

For the same reasons, we abstain from going into the refutation of the Materialists (I.S. VII.18 ff.).

236 SUMMARY

One might sum up the Iṣṭa Siddhi as follows. The book starts from the premise that immediate experience is self-revealed. It expounds the position of Advaita by hypothetical reasoning intended to show that the world that is illumined through immediate experience is of indeterminable reality-grade. The delight in dialectic manifested in this work goes so far that reasons are frequently adduced to prove the blatantly obvious, especially in passages pointing out to the opponent the inconveniences of his own doctrine, such as 'If immediate experience itself had to be illumined, it would become (a non-conscious object) like a pot, and so would not be immediate experience'.

The author accepts the general position that the world is

the effect of Ignorance, which latter is identified with Māyā and has its seat in the Absolute. Liberation comes from knowledge derived from the Vedic texts of the true nature of one's Self as the Absolute.

It is true that the author of the Pañcapādikā was the first to lay down the doctrine that the world had Ignorance for its material cause. But many special developments based on the use of reason as a panacea to solve all difficulties emerge clearly in the Iṣṭa Siddhi for the first time. Amongst these we could number the refutation of the view that Ignorance could have its seat in the non-conscious, the proof of indeterminable Ignorance through the example of shell-silver, the establishing that distinctions of any kind occur through Māyā only, the explanation of the interplay between empirical cognition and its objects through the example of dream, and finally the tendency throughout to say that, wherever there is a contradiction from the standpoint of reason, it does not matter 'because it is all Māyā'.

A feature of this system is the frequent resort to hypothetical reasoning without regard to experience, both in refuting the doctrines of the adversary and in establishing the author's own positions. It is true that, in accepting that immediate knowledge of Non-duality arises directly from the Vedic texts, he rejects the doctrine of Maṇḍana and others that the practice of affirmation is required first. Nevertheless he holds that even in the case of a person liberated in life a modicum of Ignorance persists; and he also holds that total freedom from Ignorance comes only with the death of the body (videha-mukti). From this we deduce that for him the notion that the result of metaphysical knowledge was realization of the Self was only an idea received through Vedic revelation (and not a matter of direct experience).

And similarly in this work the method of explanation by cause and effect, introduced in the guise of a support for the doctrine of indeterminability, triumphs over the method of interpretation of the texts as false attribution followed by later retraction, and reigns supreme. Advaitins from now on have to accept this doctrine forced down their throats whether they want it or not. Wondrous indeed are the powers of Māyā!

CHAPTER XII
THE VIVARAṆA

237 THE CONTEXT OF THE WORK

The two most prominent themes discussed in the Iṣṭa Siddhi were the doctrine of Ignorance as a material cause, and the detailed consideration of error and the correction of error. The commentary on the Pañcapādikā we are now to consider, the Vivaraṇa,* would well deserve the title of Pañcapādikā Vārtikā, in that it went over the work on which it was commenting (the Pañcapādikā) in great detail, discussing what it had said, what it had left unsaid and what it had said incorrectly. It restated in briefer form some of the arguments accepted in the Iṣṭa Siddhi. It transmitted the entire method of the Vedanta system as accepted in the school of the Pañcapādikā, supporting it with new arguments. It stood as a summary of the teaching of all the Advaita schools current at the time when it was written. And because the author effected all this and set out at length a number of original theories of his own in support of the doctrine of indeterminable Ignorance, he came to be called the 'Vivaraṇācārya'. He is known also as the author of the Śārīraka Nyāya Saṅgraha and of the Śabda Nirṇaya and other works. Here, however, we will only examine the theories contained in his commentary on the Pañcapādikā, as these form the foundation of the Vivaraṇa school.

*(Page references will be given to the Madras edition. A concordance of page references to the most important passages in the Vivaraṇa, connecting the Madras, Calcutta and Varanasi (Vizianagram) editions is supplied, together with many helpful explanations of the text, in K. Cammann, 1965. See also B.K. Sengupta, 1959, and Bhāratītīrtha, trans. Sūryanārāyaṇa Śāstrī and Saileśvara Sen, 1941. T.N.)

238 SUPERIMPOSITION HAS FALSE IGNORANCE (MITHYĀ AJÑĀNA) FOR ITS MATERIAL CAUSE

Although the Vivaraṇa was undertaken as a commentary on the Pañcapādikā, it often accepts the line of thought followed in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, and for this reason we shall occasionally be giving page references to both these works and considering their contents in the course of our exposition.

The Pañcapādikā, in commenting on the term 'false knowledge' (mithyā-jñāna) in the introduction to Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary, where it really (as always in Śrī Śaṅkara) meant superimposition, broke down the compound mithyā-jñāna artificially as 'that which is false (mithyā) and which is Ignorance (ajñāna)'. Then it added: '"False" refers to "indeterminability". And "Ignorance" (ajñāna) refers to the non-conscious power of Ignorance (avidyā-śakti)' (M.V. 132,3). What the Vivaraṇa says here is as follows:

(1) If only the term 'Ignorance' (ajñāna) had been used, that might have meant mere absence of knowledge (involving ignorance but not error). If only the term 'false' (mithyā) had been used, that would only have covered erroneous cognition (but not the delusive power that brought it about and stood as its material cause). So he explains the meanings of the two words, showing that they are used together to exclude both these wrong ideas (and to denote the power of Ignorance as the material cause of error) by saying 'That which is false (mithyā) and that which is Ignorance (ajñāna). (V. p.64)

Here the Pañcapādikā explains the word 'false' as meaning 'indeterminable' and the word 'Ignorance' as referring to a non-conscious power. But the Vivaraṇa follows the Iṣṭa Siddhi (M.V.222,1 and 2), where it is explained that the use of the two words 'false' and 'Ignorance' is for the sake of eliminating the ideas 'absence of knowledge' and 'erroneous cognition' respectively. Both explanations contradict the way Śrī Śaṅkara himself understood the term 'false knowledge' (mithyā-jñāna) in the relevant part of his Commentary and in the argumentation by objection and answer that followed. For he simply took the term to mean superimposition. Both explanations undeniably commit two faults. They introduce points not relevant to the Commentary they are explaining; and they introduce a mode of explanation totally foreign to the previous Vedic tradition.

(2) You may ask how indeterminable Ignorance could be the material cause of superimposition. We reply that it must be so, because, when indeterminable Ignorance is present, superimposition arises, and when it is not present it does not.

To this one might object as follows. There is an obstacle to superimposition, one might say, in the form of knowledge of

what is actually given (e.g. shell). Ignorance may very well be interpreted (not as an indeterminable power of any kind but merely) as absence of knowledge of what is actually given. Thus the constant concomitance between Ignorance and superimposition may be explained in a different way, namely as constant concomitance between superimposition and mere absence of knowledge.

But this argumentation, we reply, is not right. An obstacle is that which obstructs the production of an effect when the entire complex of causes needed for it are present. But when the entire complex of causes needed for superimposition is present, knowledge of what is actually given is never found co-existing with it to function as an obstacle. On the contrary, knowledge of what is actually given can only arise when the entire complex of causes needed for a superimposition is *not* present. So it is not correct to say that absence of knowledge of what is actually given is in constant concomitance with absence of an obstacle to the functioning of the entire complex of causes needed for a superimposition (so that mere absence of knowledge is *not* what lies in constant concomitance with superimposition; and positive metaphysical Ignorance, which does, can stand as its cause).

Perhaps you will say that, even so, knowledge of what is actually given is contradictory to superimposition. Ignorance as absence of knowledge is the cause of superimposition in the sense of effecting absence of relation with something contradictory to the same. But this is wrong. For superimposition is an effect, and an effect *first* needs a cause; it is only *after* it has already come into being as an effect proceeding from a cause that the question of the absence of relation with anything contradictory could arise at all. Therefore the only rational view is that the constant concomitance of Ignorance with superimpositon supplies what the latter needs first, namely a cause — (so that Ignorance, admitted to be the constant concomitant of superimposition, cannot here be interpreted negatively as mere absence of knowledge, mere absence of an obstacle, but must be interpreted positively as a cause, and so as the indeterminable power of Ignorance). (V. p.65-7)

Here, the mention of the constant concomitance of Ignorance with superimposition follows the Iṣṭa Siddhi (M.V.222,1), as does the refutation of the view that Ignorance could here be mere absence of knowledge (M.V.222,2,5 and 6); but the objection suggesting that Ignorance is merely the absence of the obstacle to superimposition formed by knowledge is Prakāśātman's own original contribution.

(3) But is it not the case that defects in the object (such as excessive distance from the eye or similarity to some other object) or defects in the organs (such as the disease of double-vision in the eye or excessive greed in the mind) are

the causes of superimposition? Yes. But they are only efficient causes. It is as material cause that Ignorance comes in. All effects require a material cause. For an effect is something positively existent, and we reason that it must have a (positive) material cause on the analogy of a pot (which cannot exist without the clay from which it is made). (V. p.68-9)

This also follows the Iṣṭa Siddhi (M.V.221,3); but the point about superimposition depending on defects comes from the Pañcapādikā (M.V.146,4).

(4) A false (indeterminable) superimposition consists in a false object and a false (indeterminable) cognition of that false object. The various different efficient causes of particular errors, such as eye-disease and so on, are not common to all superimpositions, and therefore none of them can be regarded as the material cause of superimposition as such. But false (indeterminable) Ignorance is found everywhere agreeing in nature (as false or indeterminable) with its effects (consisting in both erroneous cognitions and their objects). And since its seat is the Self, it (has the same seat as erroneous cognitions and their objects and) can stand as the substratum of superimposition (whereas the defects cannot, as many of them have a different substratum from that of superimposition, which is the Self — namely, the sense-organs and other faculties of the observer). Metaphysical Ignorance, therefore, is the unique material cause of all superimposition; defects in the soul or mind or eyesight of the observer are not its material cause. (V. p.71-3; for I.S. parallel, cp. M.V.222,1)

239 DEMONSTRATION OF THE NATURE OF METAPHYSICAL IGNORANCE

The Vivaraṇa follows the method laid down in the Pañcapādikā for proving the existence of a power of Ignorance. We find in the Pañcapādikā: 'In the case of (all) external objects and mental experiences, this power of Ignorance must necessarily be admitted to exist invariably in association with their real nature as bare Being. Otherwise the manifestation of false objects would be inexplicable' (M.V.133,1). And the Pañcapādikā also says here, 'There certainly is, even here, the defect of non-perception, of the nature of metaphysical Ignorance, hiding the light of Consciousness' (M.V.139,4), adducing arguments based on the sense of Vedic texts and on analogy with empirical experience. But the Vivaraṇa seizes on the word 'necessarily' and interprets it to imply inference, and seizes on the word 'this' interpreting it to imply perception. And on this basis it advances more arguments as follows:

(1) Perception reveals Ignorance, because we find that we have the immediate experience 'I am ignorant' and, (in dreamless sleep) the experience 'I do not know myself or anyone else'. But is not this experience merely a manifestation of absence of knowledge, not of anything positive called Ignorance?

No, this objection of the Bhāṭṭas is wrong. For Ignorance as a positive entity is an object of direct experience, like the immediate experience of a mental state in the feeling 'I am happy'. Non-existences (are not immediately apprehended in this way but) are apprehended by the special means of knowledge called non-apprehension, (where there is no contact with the object known as absent, but only with its *locus*, e.g. as in 'There is no pot in this corner': read gocaratvāt). There cannot be knowledge of absence of knowledge in the Self even for those who, like the Vaiśeṣikas, hold that non-existence is known through perception. For, if we were to have the cognition 'There is no knowledge in me', there would have to be knowledge both of the substance (the Self) and of the thing which was not in it (pratiyogin), and as this would imply the presence of knowledge in the Self, there could not then be the apprehension of absence of knowledge in it; or, if you say that there would be no knowledge either of the substance or of the thing not present in it, then all the less could absence of knowledge be established (for lack of the requisite means to establish an 'absence'). The same impossibility of establishing absence of knowledge of the Self arises whether such absence of knowledge is taken as the object of the special form of cognition called non-apprehension (anupalabdhi) recognized by the Bhāṭṭas, or regarded as inferred from absence of experience. The same difficulties will arise whether the Self is taken as known or as unknown (i.e. if the Self is known, absence of knowledge will be contradicted; and if it is not known, the conditions for establishing absence of knowledge cannot be fulfilled; the 'non-apprehension' of the Bhāṭṭas requires knowledge of what is negated (here = knowledge) and direct apprehension of the *locus* in which it is negated (here = the Self); and there cannot be inference of absence of knowledge of the Self without knowledge of the Self, as such an inference, conceived under the laws of the Vaiśeṣikas, would depend on knowledge of a universal law concerning the Self, itself based on prior perceptions of the Self).

And in ordinary waking experience in the world, when our Ignorance is particularized as being about an object, we express it by saying 'I do not know what you are speaking of' and then proceed to listen to more instruction about it (which we would not be motivated to do if Ignorance were absence of knowledge, since absence of knowledge of a thing, paradoxically, cannot be established without prior knowledge of that thing). Do you say that such further listening is only to obtain closer knowledge of a thing we already know, through

knowing more of its attributes? (But Ignorance cannot be absence of knowledge of the attributes of a thing we already partly know either. For) we sometimes say 'I do not know the number you mention'. (Numbers do not have further numbers for their attributes, so we cannot be asking for new attributes of the number but only for the number itself. Do you say that we only listen further to obtain immediate knowledge of that which we already know mediately? This also is wrong, because) we sometimes listen after saying 'I do not know the teaching of the Veda on this point concerning the after-life' (which we would not do if correcting absence of direct knowledge were our aim, as we can never have direct knowledge about the after-life. So positive Ignorance remains a fact established by perception, because Ignorance as absence of knowledge cannot be established as the universal rule.) (V. pp.74-6, partly expanded according to T.D.; cp. M.V.222,2 and 3)

This is the teaching of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, supported by independent reasoning.

(2) (If Ignorance (ajñāna) were taken in its literal sense as absence of knowledge (ajñāna = not knowledge, privative 'a' = not + 'jñāna' = knowledge), then it could not be known unless its locus (the Self) and its 'counter-positive' (pratiyogin, here = knowledge) were known (as one has to know the corner of a room where a pot usually stands and also to know the pot before one can establish absence of the pot), and yet, if they were known, there would be a contradiction, (in that knowledge and absence of knowledge would be known simultaneously.) But if Ignorance be taken to be positive in nature and directly revealed by perception, then when its locus and 'counter-positive' (knowledge) were known, there would be no contradiction, since knowledge of Ignorance will be knowledge of another positive entity — though there would have been a contradiction had Ignorance been taken as absence of knowledge.

The (Self as) Witness-consciousness may supply the conditions that would be necessary for establishing Ignorance as absence of knowledge, in that it reveals (itself as) the locus for it, and also reveals (itself as) the counter-positive (*viz.* knowledge). But it will not negate Ignorance if the latter be taken as a separate positive entity. For it reveals Ignorance as its object. Nothing is negated by the very knowledge that reveals it.

Perhaps you will ask how it could be that an object enveloped in Ignorance could be revealed by the Witness-consciousness, because an object can only be known through the application of one of the valid means of cognition, such as perception and the rest. To this we reply that everything is an object to the Witness-consciousness, either as known or as unknown. If an object is to be known, that depends on the

intervention of a means of knowledge. But where an object is not known, it is eternally illumined by the Witness-consciousness as enveloped in Ignorance, be it in its general or individual form (i.e. be it part of what one does not know in general, or be it that one feels, in particular, that one does not know *that*). And so it stands proved that perception of Ignorance can only be rationally accounted for if Ignorance is taken as positive, not if it is taken as mere absence of knowledge. (V.pp.81-4)

This is a refutation of an original objection (i.e. one not taken from the writings of another school, but) conceived on his own part by the author. No explanation is offered here to show how the fact of Ignorance being directly perceived could be a matter for theoretical dispute.

(3) Inference, too, shows the same thing. A cognition through the valid means of knowledge, now under discussion, implies something other than itself, and something other than its own previous non-existence. That is, such a cognition implies something which conceals its object. It implies something which exists in the same place as itself and which it destroys. For the cognition illumines an object that was not previously illumined, like the light of a lamp coming for the first time to an object shrouded in darkness. Thus we have proved the existence of positive Ignorance, which has the same seat (āśraya) as knowledge (namely the Self) and has, as the object (viṣaya) which it conceals, the same entity (the Self) that is revealed by knowledge. (V. pp.85-9)

(4) The existence of positive Ignorance may also be established by the means of cognition called presumption (arthāpatti). There is the false superimposition of silver onto shell and of the ego-sense onto the Absolute as pure Consciousness, the superimposition taking the form of a false (indeterminable) object and a false cognition applied to it in each case. We have to investigate and discover something indeterminable to stand as the material cause of these superimpositions. If the material cause were real, then, because an effect agrees in reality-grade with its material cause, the superimpositions would be real (and not false, which is absurd). And the material cause of superimposition must be assumed to be not only indeterminable but beginningless. Because if a material cause which had a beginning were assumed, another material cause with a beginning would have to be assumed for that, (leading to infinite regress). But we know through presumption (arthāpatti) that that which is beginningless, and false, and the material cause of false superimposition, and related to the Self, cannot be anything other than Ignorance. The point being made is that the existence of false superimposition forces us to *presume* the existence of

false Ignorance as its material cause, since false superimposition could not arise from any other source. (V. pp.89-91)

(Sac cites I.S. pages 47 and 18 as giving examples of argument by presumption. See I.S. p.47, lines 18-24 and p.18, lines 13-15. The second passage runs: 'Neither subject nor object can assume a second form. For the subject cannot assume the form of the object and the object cannot assume the form of the subject. And no third form apart from subject and object exists (they "exhaust reality")'. T.N.)

(5) To begin with, one cannot say that the non-manifestation of the self-luminous Absolute in dreamless sleep and similar states is due to our being a separate subject, as we can say in the case of our ignorance of the experiences of other human beings. For the Veda says that in dreamless sleep we are identical with the Absolute (Chānd.VI.viii.1, M.V.40,5). Nor can erroneous cognition be the impediment causing the non-manifestation of the Absolute in dreamless sleep, as erroneous cognition is absent in dreamless sleep. Nor can the residual impressions of past erroneous cognitions be the impediment, for they do not have the power to impede the manifestation of the real. We find that we can very well be aware of a shell, even when there are impressions of past silver-errors in our minds. Nor can non-perception be the impediment. For perception of the Self as our own true nature is constant and eternal. Intermittent non-perception cannot occur as an impediment in the case of self-luminous Consciousness.

Actions cannot contradict and prevent the manifestation of what is our own true nature (as the Jainas say they do). For that would imply the total non-manifestation of Consciousness for ever. Perhaps you will object that there would be the same result if Ignorance were the impediment. But this is not so; for Ignorance cannot be an impediment to the manifestation of that Consciousness which reveals it as its object.... Therefore the experience of the non-manifestation of the Absolute in dreamless sleep and kindred states (swoon, trance) forces us to presume the existence of some other Ignorance as the impediment to manifestation — other than non-perception, erroneous cognition, the impressions of erroneous cognitions or actions. (V. pp.106-8)

The Pañcapādikā had said that a small residue of the impressions of Ignorance remained in dreamless sleep (M.V.134,1). The explanation is added in the Vivaraṇa, 'A small residue of the impressions remains, not that impressions and the like are Ignorance' (V. p.106), evidently through anxiety that the text might be taken literally and people might suppose that Ignorance was no more than an impression of past erroneous cognitions.

(But to remain in tune with the classical Vedanta

interpretation of dreamless sleep one must view the matter differently as follows.) In waking, there is the empirical notion, arising through the impediment of superimposition, that in dreamless sleep and kindred states there is non-manifestation of the Absolute. But that superimposed notion is only found in waking. The Vivaraṇa does not examine the possible objection against its position, which might run: 'In dreamless sleep one is established in one's own true Self. Why may it not be that there is only "Ignorance" of it because of the absence of the factors required for empirical knowledge?'

(6) In dreamless sleep there is no erroneous cognition. Nor is there any impediment from the residual impressions of previous erroneous cognition. There is no contradiction to self-evident perception of the Self arising from any transient periods of non-perception (such as are characteristic of empirical experience in the waking state). For all these reasons the Absolute in its true nature *ought* to manifest as Consciousness in dreamless sleep. But the Veda points out that the false stands as an impediment to its manifestation in dreamless sleep in such texts as 'Borne away by the false' (anṛta, Chānd.VIII.iii.2) and 'These desires are real, but they are concealed by the false' (Chānd.VIII.iii.1). Thus it is proved that some false entity exists, other than erroneous cognition or its impressions or absence of perception or actions, which prevents the manifestation (of the Absolute in dreamless sleep). (V. p.207)

The truly relevant teaching on the present topic is as follows. One is eternally established in one's true nature as the Self. But, as the Veda teaches, '(Because the self-existent One pierced the sense-organs outwards), therefore the sense-organs are turned outwards, not inwards to the inner Self' (Kaṭha II.i.1). For this reason there is a natural inclination outwards towards the consciousness associated with the sense-organs. One therefore behaves in the manner described in the text 'Immature souls pursue desires for external things' (Kaṭha II.i.2). Though one's own true Self is manifest, yet one falls a victim to desire, promoted by beginningless Ignorance. The minds of undiscriminating souls are thereby pulled away towards the external sphere by objects.

Since all this is established even in the waking state, one may well object to this hypothesis about a certain form of Ignorance for which there is no warrant either in worldly experience or in Vedic revelation, made to account for the non-manifestation of the inmost Self in dreamless sleep. Even in the Vedic passage quoted, the revered Commentator explains the term 'the false' (anṛta) as meaning thirst for objects and the self-willed behaviour that it brings in its train; he does not explain it as meaning positive metaphysical Ignorance. Therefore in dreamless sleep one goes to one's true Self

(Chānd.VI.viii.1), and one's own true nature shines (unhindered). But because the factors required for knowledge of it are then lacking, one may not realize the fact. This is another way in which the Vedic texts which were quoted can very well be explained.

(7) What we are doing here is to show through the various valid means of cognition that Ignorance, which is revealed intuitively by the Witness-consciousness, cannot not exist; it does not follow that it can be known through the valid means of cognition. (V. p.209: cp. I.S. p.61 and see Sundaram, p.262 f.)

If Ignorance is known directly through immediate experience, then it ought not to be a matter of dispute amongst argumentative philosophers. The sustained attempt (by Prakāśātman) to explain Ignorance with the help of the various means of cognition (perception at M.V.239,1-2, inference at 239,3, presumption at 239,4,5, revelation at 239,6) appears to be misguided, as it can only end in representing it as existent. There is no dispute amongst mankind in general that they are subject to ignorance, nor are they concerned whether such ignorance should be labelled existent or non-existent. Nor are all the philosophers in contention agreed that they experience positive, indeterminable Ignorance, conceived as something over and above individual illusion (and as its cause). Ordinary people of the world have such experiences as 'I do not know', 'I am in doubt' and 'I am confused' and experience non-perception, doubt and wrong perception as varieties of (ordinary everyday) ignorance, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, while contending philosophers, and reflective observers generally who do not happen to agree with Prakāśātman and his school, openly deny the existence of indeterminable positive Ignorance as taught in his system. Nor is there any mention, direct or indirect, anywhere in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, of any positive Ignorance other than the triad of non-perception, doubt and wrong perception. This is a point that must be carefully considered.

240 THREEFOLD CAUSE OF THE SUPERIMPOSITION OF THE NOT-SELF ONTO THE SELF

The author of the Vivaraṇa accepts that all superimposition of the not-self has a cause, and then explains the cause as follows.

(1) *(Objection):* On the theory of the Advaitins, the complex of the ego-sense and the rest are superimposed on the Self, the latter being the knowing subject, of the nature of the

light of non-dual Consciousness. On this theory, the following three factors in the error-situation will all be constituted by the Self — namely, the substratum of the superimposition, itself different from the superimposition; the valid knowledge by which the substratum of the superimposition is correctly (but indeterminately) known; and the knowing subject who beholds the superimposition. (Now, in order to have a superimposition you need, besides the factors just mentioned), either a defect in the substratum (say excessive distance or excessive proximity to or similarity to another object); or else a defect in the organ or instrument of valid knowledge (say double-vision or jaundice affecting the eye);, or else a defect in the beholder (say excessive greed for silver or excessive fear of snakes). On the Advaitin's theory, says the objector, if there is to be a defect in the substratum or a defect in the beholder or a defect in the instrument of knowledge — all or any of these defects will have to be defects in the Self. But there are no defects in Consciousness. For it is that which takes cognizance of all superimpositions and objects, and is not itself subject to production. Knowledge arising from the group of three factors required for a superimposition (indeterminate knowledge of the substrate, impression from previous experience and defect) could have no place in any (hypothetical) superimposition of the not-self onto the Self. And in the case of the Self, there would be nothing to function as the substratum of a superimposition, known objectively but indeterminately, with its general features known, but its particular features unknown. Nor would there be any place for the term '(previously seen) at another place' included in the definition of a superimposition given (B.S.Bh. I.i.1, intro.) by Śrī Śaṅkara, (since pure Consciousness is non-dual and raised above conditions of space, time and causation). So, for all these reasons, not even the definition of superimposition offered by our Advaita opponent himself can be satisfied in the case of (superimpositions alleged to be made on) the Self.

This was the tentative objection referred to by the author of the Pañcapādikā (M.V.139,1) when he began with the words 'in the case of an external object...'. (V. p.194 f.)

And after raising this tentative objection against the adequacy of the definition of superimposition to meet all cases, the Vivaraṇa refutes it as follows.

(2) First of all he (the author of the Pañcapādikā) shows that (in the case of the superimposition of the ego-sense on the Self) Consciousness, as the means of knowledge, is afflicted with Ignorance, which causes superimposition onto the non-dual Absolute, the Self, the latter standing as the substratum. He begins by saying (cp. M.V.133,2, *ad init.*) 'We reply that here, too, (in the case of the Self) there exists a defect of

non-perception...'. (V. pp.206-7)

(3) The Self is self-luminous. Yet, on account of Ignorance, it is only perceived indeterminately, and not in its particular nature. By pointing out that the Self can for this reason stand as the substratum of a superimposition, the Pañcapādikā shows that the part of Śrī Śaṅkara's definition of superimposition that runs 'the false appearance in one place of what has previously been seen at another place' can hold of the superimposition of the ego-sense onto the Self (cp. M.V.141,8).

Of the three factors required to cause superimposition, two have now been established (in the context of the superimposition of the ego-sense onto the Self) — namely, Consciousness, as the means of knowledge revealing (though only in an indeterminate way) the non-dual Self as substratum; and Ignorance, seated in Consciousness and supplying the causal factor of defect. The Pañcapādikā now proceeds to establish the third causal factor, namely impressions of previous superimpositions, beginning with the words 'And, because it is beginningless, it (Ignorance) has the characteristics attributed to it by the revered Commentator of "having been previously seen" and "being of the nature of a memory"' (M.V.141,8)....

In its true nature as the light illumining the confused cognition of the Self identified with the not-self, the Self as Consciousness is not subject to production in time. But it undergoes production in time in its form as (reflected in the mind and) coloured by particular objects. And there can be a confused manifestation of subject and object identified in one cognition because it is a case of erroneous knowledge. And therefore the cognition which manifests the not-self as the Self is accompanied by the three causal factors required for being a superimposition (indeterminate knowledge of the substratum, defect, and impression of previous experience of the superimposed element). And this cognition is a superimposition and its existence as such is established. (V. pp.229-30)

We have had occasion to note (M.V.183,3-4) the method adopted in the Bhāmatī for explaining the two characteristics 'being of the nature of a memory' and 'having been previously seen', that are mentioned in the course of the definition of superimposition in the introduction to Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary. It is clear that the author of the Vivaraṇa disregards this method completely. Although the metaphysical superimposition of the not-self onto the Self is in fact beginningless (and so uncaused), the author of the Vivaraṇa goes to great lengths to try to show that it is brought into being by causal factors, like the casual, momentary superimpositions that occur in the course of worldly experience, such as that of shell-silver.

Arguments of a sort are offered in an attempt to demonstrate the following points: first, that Consciousness itself is the

evidence for the fact that beginningless superimposition is itself subject to production, just as transient individual superimpositions like shell-silver are; secondly, that the very Ignorance that stands (adhyāsīna, lit. 'is seated') as the subject of enquiry constitutes the essential element of defect in the causal complex that brings superimposition into being; thirdly, that the text in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.141,8) 'And because it is beginningless it has the characteristics... of having been previously seen and of being of the nature of a memory' contrives to suggest (by its affirmation of beginninglessness) that superimposition of the not-self onto the Self can always find a previous impression. The author of the Vivaraṇa also holds that, though the Self is partless, its particular nature remains unknown due to the said Ignorance, so that it can stand as the substratum of the superimposition of the not-self. Though indeterminable Ignorance is made a matter of speculation and dispute, it is nevertheless also made the key to solve every problem; so that the whole doctrine is clearly vulnerable to the charge 'If one fundamental point is disproved, everything else is disproved with it'.

241 THE SEAT OF IGNORANCE AND THE OBJECT IT CONCEALS

The teaching of the Vivaraṇa is that Ignorance does not have its seat in the mind, nor in Consciousness as qualified by the mind, but in reality as such (svarūpa-mātra).

(1) But is not the experience 'I am ignorant' a proof that ignorance has its seat in Consciousness qualified by the mind (to form the individual ego)? No, it is not a proof. For, on this argument, the experience 'I am enjoying experience' equally would show (the same unaltered result) that the light of Consciousness had its seat in Consciousness qualified by the mind (so that the contradictory notions 'I am ignorant' and 'I am enjoying experience' would both be made a ground for the same conclusion). True, one could say that there was an argument to show that experience did not have its seat in the mind. One could say, for instance, that in the case of 'the iron burns' we have a false appearance of a mutual relation between the act of burning and iron, based on the fact that they are both related to the same fire (whereas the truth is that only the fire burns and the iron is unrelated to burning, being no more than the vehicle containing the fire). And on this basis, one could argue, there is only a false appearance of the mutual relation of experience and the mind, based on the fact that they are both related to the same Self, while experience does not really have its seat in the mind at all.

But against all this one could make the counter-argument with equal cogency that the experience 'I am ignorant' arises

from the fact that both Ignorance and the mind are related to the same Self, and that it does not arise from any relation of the mind to Ignorance as seat of the latter. Why assume that the experience 'I am ignorant' is caused by a mutual relation between mind and Ignorance (which is bound to be an assumption based on a circular argument, since the mind is a product of Ignorance) — when other explanations are available? And, what is more, the fact that Ignorance has its seat in the Self by a direct relation (without the intervention of the mind) is clearly revealed in dreamless sleep.

Possibly you will suggest that if the Absolute in its true nature cannot be the seat of Ignorance, perhaps the Absolute in some qualified form can be the seat. But this would be incorrect. For if the Absolute in qualified form is related in this way to Ignorance as the seat of the latter, it will have to be so related *also* in its non-qualified form (so that all the difficulties of the latter theory remain). And if, to avoid this, you were to make the non-conscious the seat of Ignorance, (there would be the absurd result that) the non-conscious would also have to be the seat of erroneous cognition and of the right knowledge that cancelled and corrected it.

Perhaps you will say that if we adhere to the view that the Absolute is the seat of Ignorance there is just as much logical difficulty as if we had held to the non-conscious being the seat. That is correct. But it is better to accept as seat of Ignorance something of the existence of which one is certain, rather than to resort to a hypothesis which implies two seats for Ignorance (the qualified Self and the pure Self), both of which are logically indefensible. Also, (if the one in bondage is to be the same as the one who later enjoys liberation) the seat of Ignorance must be related to that aspect of the Self that relates to liberation (i.e. to the pure Self, not the qualified Self). (V. pp.200-1)

(The argument appears to be as follows. (1) To attribute Ignorance to the qualified Self is still to attribute it to the Self, which is a contradiction. (2) But the qualified Self is a compound, with a non-conscious element. To attribute Ignorance to the non-conscious is also to attribute correction of Ignorance and liberation to it (M.V.225, 1,2), which is a further contradiction. So instead of having two contradictions, it is better to attribute Ignorance directly to the Self, as this involves only one logical contradiction, which can be eliminated by appeal to experience (cp. M.V.241,4). Cp. T.D. p.273 f. T.N.)

The non-conscious does not experience Ignorance. Ignorance must be assumed to pertain to Consciousness, so as to cover the transition from bondage to liberation without contradiction. The mind and other effects of Ignorance cannot be its seat since (it is beginningless and) they are not eternal. All this

and more stems from Iṣṭa Siddhi pp.193-6. (See M.V.225,1-7.)

On this topic, one should consider the following passage from Śrī Śaṅkara.

(2) For just as we find the defect causing wrong apprehension and the like (i.e. doubt and non-perception) in the instrument of cognition, the eye, and do not find wrong apprehension and the like, or their cause, the eye-disease of double-vision, in the knower — (so, in any example of Ignorance, the defect rests in the instrument of cognition and not in the knower). When the disease of double-vision has been removed from an eye through the treatment of that eye, it is not afterwards found to affect the knower (even though no change has been effected in the knower as such). And from this we conclude that it never was an attribute of the knower. In the same way, wherever there are cases of non-perception, wrong apprehension or doubt, the causes of such cognitions must always lie in some instrument of cognition, and not in the ultimate witnessing Consciousness. And such cognitions cannot be attributes of the witnessing Consciousness for the further reason that they themselves are known as objects, like the light of a lamp. From the mere fact of their being known, they must be known by a knower who is other than themselves. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2)

As for the point about it being better to accept a single seat of Ignorance rather than resort to a hypothesis which implied two seats — that was wrong. When both alternatives are illogical, it is wrong to accept one. Perhaps you will ask why it is, in that case, that Śrī Śaṅkara speaks of the mind as the seat of Ignorance. One must reply that his real purpose was to explain that the sense of being an individual capable of action and of experience was indefensible on either of the hypotheses about the seat of Ignorance, and to declare that the true nature of the Absolute was pure Consciousness, free from Ignorance. Thus he writes in the Brahma Sūtra Commentary:

(3) The purpose of this Vedic text (of the Paiṅgi Rahasya Brāhmaṇa which says 'One (bird) eats the sweet berries, that is the mind') is not to affirm that the mind, which is *per se* insentient, is capable of experience. What then is its purpose? Its purpose is to proclaim that the conscious principle, the ultimate Witness-consciousness, is not the individual experiencer, and is the Absolute in its true form. To that end it falsely attributes the power to experience to the mind, which modifies into various forms such as pleasure and so on. For this state of being an individual capable of action and experience is something imagined through a failure to discriminate the mind from the Witness-consciousness. From the standpoint of the highest truth, it cannot belong to either of

them. For the mind is non-conscious, and the Witness-consciousness is not subject to modification. Least of all can it belong to the mind, as the latter is by very nature a mere projection of Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.ii.12)

Parallel deductions should be drawn about Ignorance. The Vivaraṇa says:

(4) It is not the case that Ignorance needs to have a (conscious) seat where it abides, and an object that it conceals, that are different from one another. In fact it performs the two functions of abiding in and concealing the same reality. In this respect it is like darkness, which fulfils (the same) two functions when it obscures the place in which it lies — for it conceals, without being of the nature of an action....

Nor does Ignorance stand in contradiction with its seat, the light of Consciousness. For Ignorance cannot stand in contradiction with that very Consciousness that illumines and manifests it, and it is agreed that the Witness-consciousness manifests Ignorance. So there is no contradiction between Ignorance and Consciousness, its seat. In fact all have to agree that while the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep are manifesting in the Self through empirical cognition, Ignorance must have its seat in the Self and conceal both the Self and the not-self (or otherwise we would be omniscient); so there cannot be any contradiction between such manifestation and Ignorance having its seat in the Self. And Ignorance is not contradictory to the light of Consciousness as such; for it cannot be in contradiction with that which illumines it. Nor do we ever find contradiction when the self-luminous stands in relation with Ignorance; it is only in the case of objects that have to be illumined by another that relationship with Ignorance constitutes a contradiction (because, since they are non-conscious, Ignorance cannot have its seat in them)....

Very well, but surely, as the Absolute is omniscient, and all is one, there cannot *be* Ignorance. No, not so. For Ignorance is actually experienced inhering in the individual soul. But did we not say that all was one? We did. But consider the case of an original object and its reflection in a mirror. We do not regard it as a contradiction that, although the original and its mirror-image are one, the smudges and other characteristics deriving from the mirror which we attribute to the image are not found in the original, and it is free from them. Even so, although the Absolute and the individual soul are identical, there is no contradiction in regarding the Absolute as omniscient and the individual soul as the seat of Ignorance; indeed, the omniscience of the Absolute supplies justification for assuming that Ignorance inheres in the individual soul.... The Absolute is self-luminous, one and

omniscient. But it does not manifest as such. We therefore assume that there is (a positive force of) Ignorance concealing it. Otherwise there would be the absurdity of attributing the manifestation of distinctions and non-consciousness and partial knowledge to mere absence of knowledge. And this would contradict such words occurring in the Vedic texts as darkness, delusion, mists, and concealment through Ignorance, which teach the existence of a positive force of Ignorance which causes both obscuration and superimposition. (V. p.210-5)

Here the insistence of the Iṣṭa Siddhi (M.V.232,2) that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute alone and not in the individual soul is dropped. On the other hand the Vivaraṇa follows the teaching of the Pañcapādikā, which runs: 'Ignorance is taken by presumption (arthād) to rest in the individual soul, obscuring the true nature of the light of the Absolute' (M.V.134,1, note;134,2;139,4). For, after all, Ignorance is actually felt to inhere in the soul. This, however, forces the author to undertake enquiries intended to justify the possibility of such characteristics as omniscience inhering in both the Absolute and the individual soul (which are non-different, although the soul is afflicted with Ignorance).

But Śrī Śaṅkara, in commenting on the Sūtra 'But on account of the teaching of Bādarāyaṇa that the Self was something more...', remarks 'As the author of the Sūtras here points out, the Self is taught in the Upanishads as being "something more" than the embodied self' (B.S.Bh.III.iv.8, M.V.64,1). Had the path chalked out by the true expert been followed, there would have been no question of having to try to reconcile omniscience with being the seat of Ignorance. In fact the omniscient and the self-luminous cannot possibly be the seat of Ignorance. As long as Ignorance inheres, there is no direct awareness of omniscience or self-luminosity; but when such direct awareness supervenes, it is seen that Ignorance does not inhere anywhere. Thus Śrī Śaṅkara says:

(5) Until Ignorance ceases, the soul remains bound within its merit and demerit and remains an individual soul. But when Ignorance ceases, it becomes aware that it is the universal Consciousness, according to the text 'That thou art'. But the reality in man undergoes no real distinction either when it has Ignorance or when it is freed from it. (B.S.Bh.I.iv.6)

It appears to us that this reasoning would make sense only from the standpoint of those who hold that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute, not from the standpoint of those who hold that it has its seat in the individual soul.

(6) Should we not agree, then, that when we say 'I do not know the thing you are talking about' this represents an illusory but positive manifestation, in which Ignorance is

particularized (cp. M.V.239,1)? Well, but is not the particularizing-factor here just a particular that happens to be unknown? No, this cannot be so. For what was simply unknown (and unmanifest) could not manifest positively as a particularizing-factor. Well, but is it not equally illogical that something that *does* manifest should be a particularization of Ignorance (since it is known and not unknown)? Not so. For its relation with Ignorance is itself a mere illusory appearance. That this should be illogical is thus perfectly in order. In fact (if an illusion is rendered inexplicable) it is actually an advantage to the argument. And this illusory relation is actually experienced as manifesting. (V. pp.224-5; cp. I.S. pp.207-10, M.V.225,16 and 17)

It is to be noted, in this context, that even on the view (of Śrī Śaṅkara, etc.,) that Ignorance is essentially superimposition, one may speak of it as manifesting with its seat in the individual soul by appeal to uncritical common-sense experience (e.g. in 'I do not know the thing you are talking about').

242 THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SOUL AND THE ABSOLUTE

It is clear that the view 'Ignorance, which has its seat in Consciousness only, has its seat in the soul' implies a distinction between the soul and the Absolute. What then is the adjunct that defines and limits the individual soul? To this question the author of the Vivaraṇa replies as follows:

(1) It is only Ignorance of the Self that can conceal the Self. Hence Ignorance is the cause of the superimposition of appearances like that of a distinction between the individual soul and the Absolute. Because it has Ignorance, which is illusory, as its cause, the limitation which constitutes the individual soul must be a form of illusory superimposition. The real is partless and cannot undergo any real distinction into two. And we have shown that connection with the defects of the sense of being an individual capable of action and experience results from a beginningless cycle of causes and effects, like seed and sprout. Hence the cause of this beginningless cycle of causes and effects, namely Ignorance, must itself be beginningless.... (V. p.216)

(2) It must be beginningless Ignorance itself that is the cause of the beginningless cycle of superimpositions rendering the individual soul distinct from the Absolute; it cannot be the mind or any other effect of Ignorance (since every effect has a beginning). (V. p.216)

(3) Nor does the mind have the power to delimit. Where there are no real incisions (cp. Īśa 8), a limit can only be due to erroneous cognition, and the only cause for that is Ignorance. Meanwhile, the mind itself is superimposed through Ignorance, since it can be negated through right knowledge. Further, the mind can only function as a delimitor when it has already been itself delimited by its cause Ignorance (so that in saying that the mind is the delimitor we would only be saying that Ignorance was the delimitor). One cannot take the mind as real and as that which delimits the individual soul; for the mind has a beginning (being an effect), and this theory would imply the unacceptable consequence that the soul also had a beginning, which would go against the view (universally accepted amongst Advaitins) that the soul has the adjunct of beginningless Ignorance. And there would be the further consequence that in dreamless sleep and similar states, where the mind is absent, there would be nothing to delimit the soul and keep it as an individual soul.

Perhaps you will claim that in dreamless sleep and the like the delimiting factor is the mind that has remained in being but in a subtle state.... Therefore (in the light of intervening arguments) we must conclude that the subtle state of the mind in dreamless sleep must be the state where it assumes the form of its material cause, and that cause has a potentiality (śakti) for re-awakening, conditioned by impressions derived from (the past experiences of) its effect (*viz.* the mind in its manifest state). Thus (in dreamless sleep and so on, (i.e. trance, swoon, etc.,) the mind lapses into its material cause, Ignorance, and so) the mind cannot be the principle that delimits the individual soul. (V. pp.217-8)

(4) Perhaps you (Bhāskara) will say that our doctrine 'The soul has Ignorance of the Absolute' implies a real difference between the soul and the Absolute prior to the soul's being afflicted with Ignorance (or otherwise the Absolute would be afflicted with Ignorance). But this objection is not right. For we see that a difference also implies a prior difference, in that it raises the new question 'What was it that was different from what — i.e. what were the two things that were different?' For example, even a difference depending on a difference such as that between a substance and that from which it is different, itself depends on (lit. is coloured by) an extra difference in that it raises the new question 'What was it that was different from what?'*

Thus the relationship of the soul and the Absolute (if they are conceived as different) would depend on a new difference in the same way (so that, if the theory that the difference depends on Ignorance is supposed to be wrong because Ignorance itself depends on prior difference, then the theory that the soul and the Absolute are really different is in the same situation; so it is better to adhere to the theory of Ignorance,

which is in any case implied by the Veda). If you say that, (even though the soul may not be different from the Absolute), the Absolute is different from (and superior to) the soul, then we reply that the same holds if one accepts Ignorance. And there can be no real distinction into whole and parts of that (the Absolute) which is partless. Therefore Ignorance alone is the cause of difference, difference being a superimposition. (V. pp.218-9)

*(*Bhāratītīrtha claims that the argument is broadly as follows. One cannot say that, if the Ignorance afflicting the soul must be represented as having the Absolute for the object it conceals, it cannot be the cause of the distinction between the soul and the Absolute, on the ground that it depends upon it. For we find that the relation between a substance and that from which it differs is the cause of difference even though it depends on difference. See Bhāratītīrtha I.lxxx.c. trans. Śāstrī and Sen, 1941, p.100. T.N.)*

(5) Ignorance related to Consciousness alone sets up the distinction in practical experience between the individual soul and the Absolute. But how is it that Ignorance, when really related to the Absolute, appears to lose this relation and to be related only to a distinct entity, the individual soul? We reply that the case is the same as that of the face reflected in the mirror and as that of the ether apparently enclosed within the pot. Here the mirror and the pot are related only to the face and the cosmic ether. Yet they are the cause of the appearance of something distinct from the face and the cosmic ether respectively, namely the reflection of the face and the pot-ether. Finally they appear to lose their relation with the face and the cosmic ether and to be related only to the reflection of the face and the pot-ether. (V. p.219)

In all this we have the assumption, in contradiction with Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, of the existence, over and above superimposition of effect and cause, of a certain entity called 'Ignorance' which stands as their material cause. It is clear that such an assumption can only be made if one overlooks the fact that all our practical experience of cause and effect arises through superimposition. Throughout the Kārikās of Śrī Gauḍapāda and the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara the distinction between the soul and the Absolute is always made in the same way; the adjunct that sets up the appearance of a Lord is the seed (unmaṇifest) condition of name and form, which are imagined through Ignorance; the adjunct which sets up the appearance of the individual soul is one of cause and effect, set up by name and form. It is clear that the experience, in relation to one and the same Self, first of distinctions and later of the cancellation of those distinctions, is explicable in terms of a system which accepts false attribution followed by later

retraction.

(6) 'The Self stands within all bodies, motionless and unaffected like the ether of space, whether they die, are born, whether they go, come or stand still'. (G.K. III.9, M.V.46,2)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: One should see that the 'birth' and 'death' and so on of the Self in all bodies is in no way different from that of the ether of space; the Self no more undergoes production and destruction, it no more goes, comes or stands still when the bodies do than the ether-of-space in a pot is produced or destroyed or comes or goes or stands still with the production, destruction, coming, going or standing still of the pot. That is the meaning.

(7) 'All bodies and organs are appearances projected like dreams by the power of illusion inherent in the Self. Their existence cannot be established logically, whether they are taken as varying in eminence or as all of the same value'. (G.K. III.10)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: The bodies and organs correspond to pots in the 'pots and ether' illustration. Calling them 'appearances projected by the power of illusion inherent in the Self' means that they are like bodies seen in a dream, or like the bodies conjured forth by a mass-hypnotist. The 'Māyā of the Self' means Ignorance. As they are set up by Ignorance, they do not exist from the standpoint of the final truth.

(8) This teaching of a distinction between the embodied soul and the Inner Ruler is due to adjuncts of bodies and organs set up by Ignorance. It is not the final truth. (B.S.Bh. I.ii.20)

(9) Thus the Lord appears to conform to the conditioning adjuncts set up by Ignorance. It is like the ether of space appearing to conform to the shapes of the cavities of pot and jar. Thus in the realm of practical experience the Lord exercises lordship over the conscious beings called individual souls, who, corresponding to the pot-ether in the illustration, appear to conform to the limitations of their bodies (gross body and subtle body) and organs, which consist of name and form set up by Ignorance. Such souls are in reality nothing but his own Self. (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, M.V.139,7)

Here the word 'Ignorance' means 'superimposition' not 'Māyā'. For the fact that Ignorance sets up the 'Māyā' (illusory appearance) called 'name and form' is an indication that it is different from it.

243 THE EGO-SUPERIMPOSITION

The Vivaraṇa expresses itself as follows in commenting on the phrase of the Pañcapādikā 'The ego is the first superimposition' (M.V.141,1).

(1) The author of the Pañcapādikā accepts as proved the beginningless superimposition of Ignorance on taintless, unwavering Consciousness, partless, consisting of the one savour of bliss, the Witness of Ignorance and of the modifications of the mind. Then, basing his remark on the transient character of the superimpositions that occur within that, he says, 'The ego is the first superimposition'. (V. p.112)

If the superimposition of Ignorance is established as beginningless, it is superimposition that will always play the key role. So why does the author of the Vivaraṇa insist that it has to have Ignorance for its material cause (when, being beginningless, it could not have a material cause apart from the Absolute)? He fails to take into account the point that superimposition is the only thing that can be brought to an end by right knowledge.

(2) Perhaps you will object that, since a superimposition is determinate, one ought to be able to point to a determinate substratum on which it is superimposed. For in ordinary experience superimpositions are invariably found to occur on substrata that are determinate. But this would rule out pure Consciousness, which is free from all determination. Here the author of the Pañcapādikā raises a difficulty about how you explain the superimposition of the ego-sense onto a determinate substratum, where that determinate substratum would itself have to be Consciousness determined by the ego-sense and so on (implying circularity of argument). This he does by saying: 'But do we not here have circularity of argument? Superimposition depends upon availability for empirical experience...' (M.V.142,2). And he replies, 'Not so — there is no defect of circularity, because superimposition is beginningless' (*ibid.*).

That is to say, (because superimposition is beginningless) there can (always) be a later superimposition of the ego-sense onto Consciousness manifesting in determinate form. Superimposition of limitations onto the indeterminate is actually found in experience (as in the case of the superimposition of blue colour and tent-like shape onto the infinite ether of the sky). A later superimposition of ego-sense may therefore be taken as occurring on Consciousness determined either by the superimposition of Ignorance or by a previous superimposition of ego-sense. (V. pp.296-7)

The difficulty about how the superimposition of Ignorance

itself, too, can occur on an indeterminate substratum comes up again here in another form. It is no answer to say, 'There can be superimposition onto Consciousness that has already been rendered determinate by a previous superimposition'. The notions of 'earlier' and 'later' are themselves superimpositions, so that the same objections apply to those very notions. That is why (the statement of Śrī Śaṅkara) 'Superimposition is natural' (implying that it is beginningless and uncaused) is the best answer to all objections. In ordinary empirical experience we first superimpose on the pure Self the idea that it is the object of the 'I-notion', and then on that basis further superimpositions are made. The correct view is that superimposition is beginningless in the same way that in a dream we may superimpose, say, a cow and its calf, while the whole dream is devoid of any real succession in time. But this answer to objections raised against the possibility of superimposition of the ego-sense is not possible within the framework of the system of the Vivaraṇa; for here superimpositions are asserted to be occasional and successive in time, and are made dependent on a material cause.

We subjoin the explanation given in the Vivaraṇa of the passages in the Pañcapādikā which assert that the ego-sense has a material cause as well as other causal factors.

(3) When the Pañcapādikā says 'This beginningless Ignorance...' (M.V.132,4) it is referring to the material cause of the ego-sense. The reference is to Ignorance,* merit and demerit from previous action, and also previous experience. What that means is the impressions left by previous errors, actions and experiences.

The passage 'It assumes, under the control of the supreme Lord,...' (M.V.143,4) describes the efficient cause of the ego-sense. The expression 'It assumes... a certain form in which it has the two cosmic powers of knowledge and activity' (*ibid.*) indicates its nature (svarūpa). The expression 'The sole source of the power to act or experience as an individual' (*ibid.*) sets forth its effects. The reference to the 'eternal changeless Consciousness' (*ibid.*) is a statement of the means of knowledge whereby it is known. The passage 'It is because of its union with this ego-sense that the eternal, changeless Consciousness... (erroneously becomes known as the experiencer)' (*ibid.*) explains that one of the other functions of the ego-sense is to be the cause of all wrong superimposition. And the Pañcapādikā goes on to answer the question 'Why is the ego-sense not found in dreamless sleep?', starting with the words 'And in dreamless sleep...' (P.P. Eng. trans. p.68, one of the passages omitted at M.V.143,4).

The line of argument is that dreamless sleep means the dissolution (into its material cause) of that effect of Ignorance, the subtle body (including the mind, ego and sense-

organs of the individual soul). (V. p.269)

**(As the author points out in a note here and also at V.P.P., English Intro. p.107, the original text from which this phrase is taken (Bṛhad.IV.iv.2) reads 'vidyā' not 'avidyā'. The reference was originally to merit from meditation, not to Avidyā in the later sense. T.N.)*

(4) The ego-sense is separated from the Self by Ignorance. How is it that one fails (in the course of practical activity) to realize that it is an object (a 'this')? On this the Pañcapādikā says, 'Some fall into the error of supposing that the ego is not an object (not a 'this')...' (P.P. p.103/21). The idea is that it does not seem to be an object because it is separated from the Self only by Ignorance (and not by the processes of objective cognition through a pramāṇa). (V. p.277, cp. Sengupta p.235 f.)

All that is necessary in the way of comment here has already been said in commenting on the Pañcapādikā (cp. notes at M.V. 134,1 and 139,4 and M.V. sections 141-3).

244 THE SOUL AS A REFLECTION OF THE ABSOLUTE

The Vivaraṇa raises the question, 'Well, what is this thing called the soul?', and replies: 'We say that it is nothing but the Absolute, reflected in Ignorance' (V. p.760). To clarify this reflection-theory, he states and develops the doctrine of the original and its reflection given in the Pañcapādikā.

(1) One might object that if the soul were a reflection it could never know its true identity with the original of which it was a reflection. For, if it were a reflection, it would be non-conscious, like the minute reflection of himself that Devadatta might see in the pupil of the eye of another person. The Pañcapādikā answers this by saying, 'It is only Devadatta's non-conscious part (his body) that enters into such a reflection' (P.P. Eng. trans. p.76: omitted at M.V.144,2, penultimate para). If the reflection of Devadatta (in the pupil of the eye of another person) is non-conscious, that is due to the fact of its being a reflection of something that is itself non-conscious like a pot (namely his body); it is not due simply to the fact of its being a reflection. (V. p.287-8)

The opponent has argued that the soul is unaware of its true nature, and also non-conscious because it is a reflection. But no real answer is given to the objection. Nor would it have been right to have said 'Since the soul is seen to be conscious, the question ought never to have been raised'. The

right answer would have been to have said 'It is precisely because the soul is seen to be conscious that it cannot be a reflection. For no reflection anywhere is found to be conscious'. At any rate, it seems that a counter-argument of this kind would be hard to rebut.

(2) The Pañcapādikā (*ibid.*) supposes that an objector might argue that the metaphysical knowledge which puts an end to Devadatta's error is seen to belong not to him, as a reflection, but to the original of which he is a reflection. Since the Absolute is that original, the argument runs, the knowledge that puts an end to error belongs to the Absolute. To this argument the Pañcapādikā replies; 'Not so. For when error arises either about one's Self or about something else, it is only one's own knowledge that can dispel it'. What qualifies one for having metaphysical knowledge is not being the original of a reflection but being in error. And that is caused through being in Ignorance, which is the condition for being an individual soul (not for being the Absolute). (V. p.288).

(3) Next, the Pañcapādikā (*ibid.*) supposes that an objector might raise the problem: 'Does the Absolute know that it is the true Self of its reflection, the individual soul, or does it not? If it does not, it is not omniscient. But if it does, it sees the limitations and sufferings of transmigratory life in itself'. But the Pañcapādikā denies this and says: 'That Devadatta who knows his identity with the true Self of the reflection is not touched by its defects'. What the Pañcapādikā means is that when Devadatta sees himself reflected in the pupil of the eye of another person, and thereby reduced to minute size and otherwise distorted, he does not grieve over the idea, as it is contradicted by his true knowledge that he is not subject to these distortions. In the same way, the Absolute, too, when it beholds the sufferings of transmigratory life in the soul, its reflection and so its own Self, does not grieve on that account, because it is by nature aware of the metaphysical truth (and so aware that it is infinite). Knowledge of the metaphysical truth and subjection to the sufferings of transmigratory life can no more intermingle than the polished bits of a mirror can be smudgy and the smudgy bits polished. (V. p.288)

This should be compared with the answer given to a similar objection at Bhāmatī I.iv.22 (cp. M.V.197,4).

(4) The Pañcapādikā then makes a further point. Is it not the case that, in an illusion of ordinary life like a mirror image, the illusion that the image and its original are two distinct entities persists even after their identity is known? Yes, it is so. But as the conditioning adjunct (upādhi) in

this case does not arise from Ignorance (read ajanyatvāt), it cannot be removed by knowledge (but only by the destruction or removal of the condition, the reflecting medium). The Pañcapādikā expresses this by saying 'The reflected image cannot be brought to an end by knowledge, (since its cause, the mirror or the like, is real)'. (V. p.289)

(5) The Pañcapādikā says: 'But the individual soul, as a reflection, is immediately known to all of us as consciousness' (M.V.144,2). The fact that the soul is a reflection and is also of the nature of Consciousness cannot be denied, as it is guaranteed by the Veda and Smṛti and by direct perception. Thus the Vedas, Smṛtis and Sūtras concur to teach that the soul is of the nature of a reflection. We have: 'He assumed a form corresponding to each form; that "assuming a form" (in which He was reflected) was to make Himself known' (Bṛhad. II.v.19), 'He is one and many at the same time, like the moon reflected in different water-surfaces' (Amṛtabindu 12) and 'And so there is the example given of the (reflection of the sun in water as a) small sun' (B.S. III.ii.18).

Again, though the ether of the sky is formless and bodiless, we see it reflected in water along with the clouds and formations of stars, so that the Absolute, too, though formless, must be capable of being reflected. And again, the vast and distant sky can be reflected in a patch of water that only comes up to the knee, so that one cannot claim that what one is perceiving in such a case is another sky, along with its clouds and so on, that *really* exists within the water. The fact that the soul is a reflection of the Absolute and is, in its true nature, nothing other than pure Consciousness is thus attested by the Veda and supported by perception, and it cannot be gainsaid. (V. p.289)

Clearly the teaching here is that, although the ether of the sky is not capable of being perceived, it is capable of being reflected. Having established this, the author then goes on to argue that the Absolute, too, is capable of being reflected, thereby reducing the Absolute to the status of a substance in the world.

On the basis of the argumentation that we have detailed so far, one could hardly be surprised if someone given to such argumentation should come forward and say, 'The Pañcapādikā and the Vivaraṇa follow a system that is contradictory to that of the Iṣṭa Siddhi, a system which proclaims "The individual soul really and truly arises in the adjuncts of the ego-sense and of its cause, Ignorance; transmigratory experience belongs to the individual soul alone, and not to the Absolute"'. In the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara, on the other hand, the treatment of examples like the reflection of the sun in water accords with the method of teaching by false attribution

followed by later retraction. They are used to illustrate how actions bring their just rewards to the right person only, and how transmigratory experience is illusory.

(6) The Sūtra says, 'And it is only a reflection'. One should understand that the individual soul stands to the supreme Self as the little image of the sun reflected in water stands to the real sun. The individual soul (as such) is not identical with the Self. Yet it is not a separate reality either. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.50, cp. M.V.95,1, note)

(7) When one small image of the sun reflected in one surface of water trembles, others reflected in other surfaces of water do not tremble. In the same way, the connection with the rewards of action that belongs to one soul does not obtain in the case of another.... And because the reflection arises from Ignorance, it is only right to say that the transmigratory experience that pertains to it should arise from Ignorance. And the teaching is equally correct that when that Ignorance is extirpated what remains is one's identity with the Absolute, the final reality. (B.S.Bh.II.iii.50)

Here the soul is a hybrid, compounded of the Absolute as Consciousness and another element, the superimposed reflection. The teaching is that the Vedic texts awaken one to the fact that one's true Self is the Absolute, having first negated the reflection.

(8) But what is the 'similarity' here referred to? The author of the Sūtras replies, 'Sharing in expansion and contraction'. The reflection of the sun in water expands and contracts with the motion of the water, moves when the water moves, multiplies when the water is divided. Thus it conforms to the condition of the water. But these changes do not affect the real sun. In the same way, the Absolute in its true form undergoes no changes. It stays uniform. But in so far as (in the realm of appearance) it enters the adjuncts of the body and so on, it appears to conform to the attributes of its adjuncts, such as expansion and contraction. (B.S.Bh. III.ii.20, cp. M.V.95,1, note)

Here the example *of a reflection is introduced to explain how there is an element of similarity between the soul and a reflection. It is not said that the soul* really is *a reflection.*

245 REFUTATION OF THE THEORY OF DELIMITATION (AVACCHEDA-VĀDA)

The author of the Vivaraṇa is not merely a champion of the reflection theory of the soul: he is also an active opponent

of the delimitation theory. For he expresses himself as follows:

(1) But why could not the soul simply be the Absolute delimited by conditioning adjuncts (without being a reflection of the Absolute)? No, this is wrong. For the Absolute present within the cosmos as enclosed within the various conditioning adjuncts, universal and particular, would be totally conditioned as soul; and that same Absolute in its true nature as unlimited by adjuncts would fall outside the cosmos. But from this it would follow that the Absolute could not be omniscient and omnipotent. For it could not assume two (contradictory) forms and be present in its unlimited form in the places where it was present as limited.

Perhaps you will say that the Absolute can be present in the soul in its true nature (because that is what is delimited), though not in the form in which it lies outside the cosmos. But this cannot be accepted either. For we have the text, 'He who, dwelling in the intellect, (is within the intellect, whom the intellect does not know... He is your Self, the Inner Ruler, immortal)' (Bṛhad.III.vii.22). This teaches that the Absolute, different from the soul, is yet present within it, having assumed another conditioned form (as Inner Ruler). (This text is inexplicable on the theory that the soul is a mere delimitation of the Absolute and not a reflection, because it asserts the presence of the Absolute within the soul in two different forms, as totally transcendent and as Inner Ruler.)

But on the view that the soul is formed by a reflection (of Consciousness in its body and organs), the Absolute can very well abide in the same place with two natures; for we see (in common experience) that when the ether of space is already present in the water from the very fact that the water is *occupying* space, it is *also* present in another (vast) form as seen reflected in the water (as the sky). Thus on the reflection theory the Absolute can abide in the various souls, which are apparent delimitations, and assume such forms as their Inner Ruler and so on. The reflection theory is therefore better. (V. p.290-1)

The wording of the quotation shows that the question of whether the 'reflection' theory or the 'apparent delimitation' theory was the better had already been raised before the author's day. The respected Vācaspati Miśra quoted in various places an early Vedanta author who had given the two examples of pot-ether and a reflection together. We subjoin two examples from the Bhāmatī.

(2) True, the inmost Self, being self-luminous, is not an object and does not have parts. Nor is it *really* delimited by such limitations as the higher and lower mind, the subtle and

gross bodies and the organs, which are imagined through beginningless, indeterminable Ignorance. Yet He appears as if really limited. And though He is without distinctions, yet He appears to undergo differentiation. Though not capable of action, He appears to be capable of action. Though not capable of individual experience, He appears to be an individual experiencer. And though not an object, He appears to be the object of the I-notion. In these ways He manifests as the individual soul, even as the ether of space appears to be differentiated and to have various different characteristics according to the different adjuncts in which it appears to be enclosed, whether it be pot, pitcher or vase. (Bhā.I.i.1, p.38/39-40)

(3) The Absolute can only appear as the individual soul when its real being is established as non-dual. And it only appears as the individual soul through the distinctions set up by beginningless indeterminable Ignorance as conditioning adjunct. The case is parallel with that of the different reflections of one original that may occur on account of the different conditioning adjuncts in which it is reflected, such as mirrors and other shiny objects.

And this theory enables us to account for the opposition of favourable and unfavourable that we find in worldly dealings and in the Vedic texts, along with the distribution of pleasure to some and of pain to others, of liberation to some and of further transmigration to others. Nor do the variety of evils affect liberation. For only the individual souls are connected with the variety of different sensations, as it is only the reflections, and not the original, that are tinted dark or light according to the darkness or lightness of the reflecting media. But the Absolute is like the original; it is not affected by the sensations that affect the individual souls.

Further, when a mirror is removed, whatever has been reflected in it disappears and survives only as the original, but the reflection of that original in the sword-blade nearby does not disappear. In this way, it can be shown how the soul disappears as such but survives as the Absolute when its adjunct set up by Ignorance is removed. (Bhā.II.iii.43, M.V. 197,6)

And there are other such passages. So we must conclude that it is only an unfounded tradition that has grown up among the moderns which says that in Vācaspati's system Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul, while in the system of the Vivaraṇa it has its seat in the Absolute, and which says that, while Vācaspati teaches the 'delimitation' theory of the soul, the author of the Vivaraṇa teaches the 'reflection' theory. There is, however, no doubt that the Vivaraṇa system favours the reflection theory.

246 IGNORANCE IN DREAMLESS SLEEP

At one place the Pañcapādikā speaks of Ignorance as the adjunct which produces the apparent delimitation that forms the individual soul, saying 'So... the Absolute, itself one and homogeneous, is the substratum of innumberable individual souls only as delimited by beginningless Ignorance' (M.V.139, 4). But at another place it speaks of the ego-sense as the adjunct forming the individual soul (M.V.144,3). The author of the Vivaraṇa introduces the topic of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep in the course of his argumentation to show how these two positions can be reconciled.

(1) Pure Consciousness is, in itself, homogeneous and free from all determination. But, on account of the connection with Ignorance, it becomes the substratum of an experience of slight determination in dreamless sleep. Then in dream it becomes the substratum of a more concrete form of experience, through determination by the mind, which has Ignorance for its material cause. Then in the waking state Consciousness assumes its most concrete form, from the colouring it receives from the mind in contact with the physical body. It does not, however, follow that with each separate new adjunct there is a separate new soul. For at each new step there is only the further determination of Consciousness as already determined by the previous adjunct in the series. New adjuncts only create new souls when unrelated to previous adjuncts. (V. pp.291-2)

Now, it is true that the author of the Brahma Sūtras declared that the soul experiences itself as the same after awakening from sleep, because its apparent delimitation is only through one adjunct imagined through Ignorance. Thus we find:

(2) But it is the same (soul that awakens from dreamless sleep that went into it, as we know on four grounds) — because of the fact that ritual activity left unfinished before sleep can only be completed by the same person who began it, because of the fact of self-recognition on awakening from sleep, because of direct Vedic teaching on the point and because of the presence of Vedic injunctions which indirectly imply it. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.9)

But there is no evidence for the presence of Ignorance in dreamless sleep. For, since Ignorance is of the nature of superimposition, it has the form of determinate knowledge. There is no determinate knowledge in dreamless sleep. And the reason for this absence of determinate knowledge in dreamless sleep is given by the Veda itself as the absence of any second reality over against the Self, the latter being of the nature of constant and eternal Consciousness. Thus we have

the text, 'When he does not know anything then (in dreamless sleep), he is knowing when he does not know anything. There is no break in the knowing of the knower, for it is indestructible. But there is not then (in dreamless sleep) any second thing over against him which he could know' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.30, cp. M.V.42, intro.). Accordingly, the revered Commentator has said:

(3) Being united with pure Being in that state (of dreamless sleep), it is but right that the soul should have no subject-object cognition (vijñāna), for, as the Veda puts it, 'What could one see with what?' (Bṛhad.IV.v.15). (B.S.Bh.III.ii.7)

(4) Liberation is realization of one's true nature as the Self of all. It is void of action, its factors and results, and is the result of metaphysical knowledge. It is now taught in the most direct way as the state where Ignorance, desire and action are absent. (Bṛhad.Bh.IV.iii.21)

In dreamless sleep, the soul dissolves in its metaphysically true nature, on account of the absence of distinctions created by adjuncts. In making this point, there is regular reference by the Commentator to the two adjuncts of the mind and sense-organs, as can be seen from the following.

(5) (The soul may be regarded as having two adjuncts, namely the mind in the waking state, when it is associated with the sense-organs and the mind in the dream-state, when it is alone and disconnected from the sense-organs but associated with the impressions of previous experience.) When both these adjuncts disappear in the state of dreamless sleep, it has no particular form derived from any external adjunct. And it is then taken to be as if dissolved in its own true Self. ('As if' dissolved, because, metaphysically speaking, the soul never really leaves its true nature as the Self.) People then say 'He is dissolved in his own Self'. (B.S.Bh.I.i.9)

(6) Tired and desirous of a refuge, the soul in dreamless sleep rises out of identification with a body in both forms (i.e. the waking body revealed by the sense-organs and the mind, and the dream-body revealed by the mind alone, associated with the impressions of previous experience). It becomes one with the Absolute in its highest form, known by such names as Light (jyotiḥ) and the Shining Ether (ākāśa). It gives up its nature as particular cognition and attains to its metaphysically true nature. (B.S.Bh.I.iii.20)

(7) The appearance of particular cognition on the part of an individual knowing subject arises through the association of the Self with such apparent conditioning adjuncts as location in a particular intellect. When such cognition ceases (in

dreamless sleep), we speak of the individual as being in contact with the supreme Self. But this is a figurative way of speaking, which holds true relative to the apparent conditioning adjunct, but which does not imply that any real limitation (or separation) ever occurred. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.34, M.V.41,7)

What is here taught is the total cessation of all adjuncts in dreamless sleep. One must realize that it is not being taught that an adjunct in the form of Ignorance remains over.

There are various theories about dreamless sleep offered in the Vivaraṇa that deserve attention.

(8) And there would be the further consequence that in dreamless sleep and similar states... there would be nothing to delimit the soul and keep it as an individual soul, (so that Ignorance must be taken as that which apparently limits the soul; it is not the mind which performs this function)... (V. p.217, cp. M.V.242,3).

If the Pañcapādikā says that the one who awakens from dreamless sleep remembers his absence of pain in that state (M.V.153,8), there was nothing wrong, as he was merely recording the doctrine of the opponent... (V. p.266).

Absence of pain in dreamless sleep is not remembered: it is known through the means of valid cognition called presumption. The happiness that one who awakens from it remembers acquaints him through presumption with the absence of pain, because the presence of pain would have been contradictory. He feels, 'As I experienced happiness, there cannot have been pain'. The absence of pain in dreamless sleep, therefore, is not a matter of memory but a matter of valid cognition (*viz.* arthāpatti, presumption). In the same way, one who awakens from dreamless sleep reflects that he had no knowledge. This knowledge, again, is valid cognition, not mere memory. For it is based on the knowledge that the Ignorance he remembered having experienced would have been incompatible with knowledge, its contradictory. (V. p.263)

Here it was correct to say that the recollection of joy was something remembered as connected with the Self. But to say that Ignorance (as a positive principle) was either remembered or known through valid cognition was mere obstinacy. All that we recollect is, 'I knew nothing'.

(9) Perhaps you will object that since Ignorance, immediate experience in the form of bliss, and the Witness-consciousness are all constant and indestructible, the experience of them in dreamless sleep cannot leave behind an impression. How, then, can one explain the fact that one who awakens from dreamless sleep remembers having experienced them in dreamless sleep? We reply to this objection as follows. An experience

differentiated threefold and embracing Ignorance, bliss and the Witness-consciousness arises (in dreamless sleep) through three adjuncts resulting from reflections of Consciousness in Ignorance.* These three reflections are different because they are based on three different transient states (avasthā) assumed by Ignorance in dreamless sleep. When these three states of Ignorance come to an end on awakening they leave an impression. A memory of Ignorance, bliss and the Witness-consciousness (as experienced in dreamless sleep) can arise from this impression (in waking) in the Self qualified by Ignorance (i.e. the memory occurs to the individual soul in its capacity as qualified by Ignorance, not as qualified by the mind, since the mind is in abeyance in dreamless sleep — cp. T.D. *ad loc.*). *(V.*pp.265-6*)*

**(Prakāśātman takes even the recollection in waking of the presence of a transcendent Witness in dreamless sleep to be no more than the recollection of a modification of Ignorance in the form of a transcendent Witness. The recollection both of happiness and of Ignorance itself are also taken as recollections of the experience of transient forms assumed by Ignorrance. Ajñānaṃ sva-sukha-sākṣyākāreṇa pariṇamate, explains T.D. T.N.)*

The immediate experience (of the individual in dreamless sleep) is here conceived as proceeding from an adjunct arising from the reflection of Consciousness in Ignorance. It is also claimed that there are some reflections of Consciousness that are differentiated (threefold) by a distinction of (three) states of Ignorance in dreamless sleep. These are ill-conceived theories.

Here the Vivaraṇa is not satisfied with the mere claim that positive Ignorance is present in dreamless sleep. Many further points are mentioned. A cause-effect relation is admitted between the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep (so that dreamless sleep causes memories in the waking state, for instance). Ignorance is credited with modifications in dreamless sleep. Consciousness is reflected in these modifications in three different forms. And it is further assumed that the three of them come to an end and leave an impression that can be picked up by memory, with Ignorance as a whole for their seat. This whole catalogue of assumptions is accepted in the system of the Vivaraṇa, though it has no foundation whatever in experience. No attention is paid to Śrī Sureśvara's text, 'The feeling "I knew nothing" (on the part of one awoken from dreamless sleep) is not a memory of his consciousness in dreamless sleep; for in dreamless sleep one is established in the Self; there being no connection with time, such experience does not belong to the past' (B.B.V. I.iv.300, cp. M.V.122,17, note; 19). Sureśvara

teaches that the feeling 'I knew nothing' is not a memory of one's experience in dreamless sleep, but simply a false idea. But no attention is paid to this in the system of the Vivaraṇa. And there for the first time one finds the doctrine that in dreamless sleep there are modifications (vṛtti) of positive Ignorance with special reflections of Consciousness in them.

(10) The line of argument here in the Pañcapādikā is that dreamless sleep means the dissolution of that effect of Ignorance, the subtle body (M.V.243,3 *ad fin*). Perhaps you will ask how the power of action of the ego-sense can be dissolved in dreamless sleep, seeing that the vital energy remains active. Our reply to this is that we do not say that the vital energy is confined to the ego-sense; in fact it is a separate principle. All we say is that the ego-sense has a power of action, because it can prompt the five modes of activity of the vital energy. For the modifications of the vital energy are seen to depend on the mind in its capacity as will.

Or else we may assume that it is only the mind's power of knowledge that goes into dissolution in dreamless sleep, while its power of action in the form of the vital energy, remains intact; for the mind is perceived to have parts. Or one may resort to the view that (even in the waking state) creation is limited to what is actually being perceived (dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi) as in dreams and the like. Then, from the standpoint of the vision of the person in dreamless sleep, everything will be dissolved. For in that case, perception of the body and vital energy of the sleeping-person would just be erroneous cognition on the part of other people. (V. pp. 269-70)

This is a typical case illustrating how those intent on raising and answering objections forget that, while prospective actions admit of alternatives (in that one may either do them or not do them or decide to do them differently) facts do not admit of alternative theories. We may add that the quoted extract shows that Dṛṣṭi Sṛṣṭi Vāda and other minor systems had gained currency before the composition of the Vivaraṇa.

Exactly what is meant by the term 'dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi' is not stated. One might infer from the use of the example of dream that the teaching was that, just as the dream-world is only seen from the standpoint of the person asleep and dreaming, even so nothing exists at all from the standpoint of the sleeper in the case of dreamless sleep. If that was all that was meant, it would be correct. But if it was intended to mean that in dreamless sleep everything dissolved into Ignorance, its material cause, that would not be correct. For it would contradict the Veda, the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara, reason and experience alike. In the Veda, for instance, we see:

(11) When a person is in dreamless sleep, he sees no dream whatever. He becomes one with the vital energy. Then speech dissolves in him (as the Self) with all names.... (On awakening) the vital energies proceed from this Self to their respective positions, from the vital energies proceed the gods, from the gods, the worlds. (Kauṣītaki IV.19-20)

The teaching here is that there is dissolution in the Self and re-emergence from the Self, not dissolution in and re-emergence from Ignorance. And the teaching is given out in this way as a means to awaken one to the true nature of one's Self. If one were to admit that there was dissolution in Ignorance in dreamless sleep, the Veda would be contradicted. For instance, it would be quite impossible to suppose that the section of the Kauṣītaki Upanishad from which we have just quoted, which relates the conversation between Gārgya and Ajātaśatru on the subject of the supreme Self in all its purity, was in reality concerned with the Self as associated with metaphysical Ignorance. The context shows that the whole section is concerned with the supreme Self. The key to the theme is given in the text 'O Bālāki, do you know who is the creator of the spirits you have mentioned, and who is responsible for all this work? (Kauṣītaki IV.19)'

And the text goes on to speak of creation coming forth from the Self as described, using the example of sparks coming forth from fire, and also teaches the return of creation to the Self and its dissolution in it. It also speaks of the Self entering into the creation that it has projected, in the words 'Even so does this conscious Self enter this body and dwell within it'. And it is further clear that the topic is knowledge of the Self from the mention of the results of this in the text, 'Verily, until Indra came to know this Self, the demons overcame him; but when he came to know the Self he slew the demons and won the victory and attained superiority over all beings and independent sovereignty (svārājya) and lordship' (Kauṣītaki IV.20). Śrī Śaṅkara says:

(12) The upanishadic doctrine is that in dreamless sleep the individual soul unites (in pure identity) with the Absolute in its highest form, and that it is from the Absolute in its highest form that the world, beginning with the vital energies, springs forth (when the soul awakens). (B.S.Bh.I.iv.18)

The claim in the Vivaraṇa that the ego-sense and so on dissolve into Ignorance in dreamless sleep stands in contradiction with this. It is not right to predicate Ignorance of a state in which all individuality as a human soul is lost.

The Vivaraṇa doctrine contradicts experience too If there were Ignorance in dreamless sleep, then people who awoke from it would have the conviction 'The world has come forth from Ignorance'. But this is not in fact the case. What people

feel after dreamless sleep is, 'In dreamless sleep I was not aware of anything in the way I am now'.

(13) Of course, it is also true that the individual soul is never anything but united with the Absolute, as it can never lose its own nature. But in waking and dream it appears to acquire a foreign nature on account of its contact with apparent conditioning adjuncts, and it is relative to this appearance that it is said to 'attain' its true nature in dreamless sleep, because the apparent foreign nature is then lost. So it is quite wrong to say that in dreamless sleep the soul sometimes attains identity with the Absolute and sometimes not. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.7, cp. M.V.226,10)

This is how Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary states the regular union of the soul with its own true nature in dreamless sleep. And the statement that in dreamless sleep the ego-sense and the rest dissolve in Ignorance stands in contradiction with this.

And it also contradicts experience. Ordinary people in the world do not experience anything at all in dreamless sleep. The experience of the Self is indeterminate Consciousness. The subsequent reflection on that experience in the waking state in the form 'I knew nothing' is limited to the denial that any object was experienced. As Śrī Sureśvara said:

(14) If Consciousness as immediate experience was not invariably present in dreamless sleep, how do you explain how the one who awakens from it can have the idea 'I knew nothing in dreamless sleep'? (B.B.V. III.iv.103, M.V.122,21)

(15) But in dreamless sleep that duality is not found. Ignorance, the cause of evil, is not present. There is then no duality for the soul to perceive through distinction into individual subject, empirical knowledge and objects, as there is in the waking and dream states. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1519, M.V. 122,17)

247 IGNORANCE IS NOT A MATERIAL CAUSE INTRODUCING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SOUL AND THE ABSOLUTE

An objection might be raised as follows. You claim that in dreamless sleep only Ignorance delimits the soul (and not superimposition of any kind). This would imply that there was no difference between the soul and the Absolute. And this would mean that Ignorance in fact afflicted the Absolute. To this objection the Vivaraṇa replies as follows:

(1) To prevent any suspicion that Ignorance and its effects are intermingled with the Absolute, we have to say that in

dreamless sleep and similar states there must be some distinction between the soul and the Absolute. Does this distinction, then, lie in the nature of things, so that it is not due to error? Yes, it lies in the nature of things. Apart from dreamless sleep and similar states, however, the distinction between the soul and the Absolute is due to erroneous knowledge, and therefore has Ignorance as its material cause.

Well, but if a distinction lies in the *very nature* of things, then it will not have Ignorance for its material cause; for it will be beginningless, and will not be an error. True. But we say that this distinction, though beginningless (and so not an effect of Ignorance) is nevertheless conditioned by Ignorance. It is like the relation between Ignorance and the Self, which has Ignorance for its condition, but not for its material cause. For, on the one hand, Ignorance cannot assume any form at all before the rise of a relation with the Self (as it is *per se* non-conscious, explains T.D.); and, on the other hand, Ignorance is beginningless. It follows that Ignorance cannot be the material cause of (but only the condition for) the relation between the Self and Ignorance.
(V. pp.292-3)

It is not a good idea to say that one must accept a distinction between the soul and the Absolute for fear that, if there is not one, Ignorance will intermingle with the Absolute. Let us concede for argument that Ignorance was present as an adjunct of the soul throughout the three states (as you hold). Even so, you would have no right to assume the existence of a distinction between the soul and the Absolute in dreamless sleep which no one has ever experienced merely to prove your thesis that there is no intermingling of Ignorance with the Absolute.

This is also enough to disprove your 'proof' of an in fact unproved distinction between the soul and the Absolute, itself based on an unproved relation with Ignorance, and also to disprove the theory that this distinction is conditioned by Ignorance, though Ignorance is not its material cause.

Since there is no proof of the existence of Ignorance in the form proclaimed by you, which is other than the ignorance of ordinary worldly experience, this whole system of assumptions that you make is a baseless structure.

The Iṣṭa Siddhi, commenting on its own phrase 'The fact that Ignorance is incomprehensible on our theory is a point in favour of the theory and not against it' (I.S. I.140, p.210), remarks that the relation between the Self and Ignorance is itself of the nature of Ignorance, since all relations are falsely imagined (I.S. p.211). Here in the Vivaraṇa the relation between the Self and Ignorance is itself 'conditioned by Ignorance', which is saying the same thing as the Iṣṭa Siddhi in different words.

(2) (It is agreed that, since the distinction between the Absolute and the soul is beginningless, it cannot be an effect at all, and so it cannot be a product of Ignorance or have Ignorance for its material cause, though it can be and is conditioned by Ignorance.) But how can the distinction between the soul and the Absolute be conditioned by Ignorance? (Must it not lie in the nature of the soul and the Absolute themselves?) We reply that Consciousness is the seat of an imaginary beginningless distinction in the form of the beginningless individual soul. But it is Consciousness qualified by beginningless Ignorance that forms this seat, not Consciousness in its true nature, for the latter is a strict unity. The distinction has its seat in qualified Consciousness, but also receives a colouring (an appearance of reality) from Consciousness in its true nature. Since the qualification in qualified Consciousness is conditioned by Ignorance, the distinction between the soul and the Absolute is said (loosely) to be caused by Ignorance. There is no contradiction in supposing that whatever is conditioned by Ignorance may be beginningless, like relationship with Ignorance, and yet also, like the latter, of indeterminable reality-grade — and so, although beginningless, capable of being cancelled.

In worldly experience, it is only when the face and the ether of space are qualified by the mirror and the pot respectively that they give rise to a false appearance of difference (in the form of mirror-image and pot-space); they do not do so on their own. For this reason it is said that distinction (in general) is conditioned by an external adjunct. (V. p.294)

The essence of what requires to be said here has already been said in the note on the previous extract.

We should pause here over the statement 'Consciousness is the seat of an *imaginary* beginningless distinction in the form of the beginningless individual soul: but it is Consciousness qualified by beginningless Ignorance'.

Earlier in the Vivaraṇa there occurs the sentence: 'Because the relation of the Self with beginningless indeterminable Ignorance is *imaginary* like Ignorance itself, it no more touches the changelessness of the Self than darkness touches the ether of the sky' (V. p.111, omitted in M.V.). And the author also affirms expressly that Ignorance is superimposed when he says, 'Although the superimposition of Ignorance has been established as beginningless, the author of Pañcapādikā refers to transient superimpositions and says "The ego is the first superimposition"' (M.V.243,1). In this way his theory about Ignorance, his theory about the relation of Ignorance to the Absolute, and his other theories like that of the distinction between the Absolute and the soul being conditioned by Ignorance but not having Ignorance for its material cause, will all hold if it is accepted that everything is imagined.

But his case falls within the maxim quoted by the true expert, 'For if you are prepared to assume the existence of what does not exist you can prove anything you like' (M.V.224,29). In fact if all these hypothetical entities and processes are accepted as imagined, they are accepted as superimposed. This being the case, it is difficult to see why this school lays such emphasis on the teaching 'This Ignorance is the material cause of superimposition'. They do not explain why it should not be accepted that everything (other than the Self) is imagined through superimposition (including Ignorance, the so-called 'material cause of superimposition').

248 EXPLANATION OF KNOWER, KNOWING AND KNOWN

The author of the Vivaraṇa takes no notice of the fact that Śrī Śaṅkara declares the individual knower himself to be a creature of Ignorance. He raises the following objection through the mouth of an opponent with a view eventually to explain and defend his account of knower, knowing and known.

(1) You may object that if our theory was right the world would not be capable of becoming an object of experience or activity. For (you would argue) the Self is relationless. It is changeless, homogeneous, Consciousness, of the nature of taintless bliss. It cannot be the individual experiencer, as it is void of the instruments of empirical knowledge, as well as of action and modification. Where there is no capacity for individual knowledge, there cannot be an individual capable of action or experience either. There cannot be empirical experience, which consists in a complex of knower, knowledge and known, actor, action and deed, experiencer, experience and object of experience, in the pure Self. Nor could the ego-sense be the seat of empirical experience, since it is *per se* non-conscious. (V. p.297-8)

The author then makes his objector review other systems, and finally he concludes as follows:

(2) Therefore none of the various theorists are able to account for empirical experience based on the valid means of knowledge and so on. To this argumentation we must assent. And yet, says the author of the Pañcapādikā, on our own theory we will be able to offer a certain explanation. And he begins (M.V.147,1, *ad init.*) 'The "this" element in the ego-sense thus constituted...' (V. p.304)

On this one should go back and look at the whole of the portion of the Pañcapādikā given above, M.V.147,1. Here we will give an abbreviated presentation of what the Vivaraṇa says on

the point.

In expounding his own view, the author of the Vivaraṇa resorts to two lines of reasoning by way of defence and explanation.

(3) Since Consciousness is concealed everywhere by Ignorance, it seems, in this condition, to be by nature unmanifest; but it manifests in whatever particular form is assumed by the mind. Delimited by the mind in contact with objects, Consciousness illumines whatever form is assumed by the mind, like the fire in a piece of red hot molten iron assuming an oblong or other shape according to the shape of the iron.

Perhaps you will say that you can well understand how Consciousness, delimited in this way as the individual knower, could manifest in the form assumed by the latter. But how can external objects delimit the form of Consciousness? To this question the author of the Pañcapādikā replies, 'The object, for its part... stands penetrated by the mental idea...' (M.V.147,1). That is, through its contact with the mental idea representing it, the object is said to become capable of perception, to transcend the opaqueness with which it is otherwise invested. The mind introduces into the object with which it stands in contact the same power to manifest Consciousness that it possesses itself — that is what is implied. (V. pp.305-6)

(4) You may object that the light of Consciousness will be different according to the different defining adjuncts by which it is delimited. How can Consciousness delimited by the object enter into relation with Consciousness manifesting in the form of the individual knower? And if it does not enter into such a relation, how could anyone be aware of a relation between knower and known in the form 'This was known by me'? For the Consciousness manifested through the subject and that manifested through the object would be different. A single relational cognition like 'This was known by me' cannot manifest two different entities.

To this the Pañcapādikā replies: 'The object manifests its immediately evident presence (aparokṣatā) as identical with the immediately evident presence (aparokṣatā) of pure Consciousness (apparently) delimited as the individual knowing subject, the latter having been conditioned by the mind to assume the form of the object' (M.V.147,1). The words 'as identical' imply that the immediately evident Consciousness (in subject and object) is one. The mental idea embraces both subject and object. Where the manifesting media are not different (e.g. when Consciousness is manifested on the one hand under apparent delimitation by the object and on the other hand under apparent delimitation by the individual knowing subject, conditioned by the mental idea to assume a form identical with the object), what they manifest is not

different either. (So the initial objection is answered: Consciousness delimited by the object and Consciousness delimited by the individual knowing subject are one.) (V. p.306)

(5) One performing action can be a knowing subject, but an object cannot be a subject. Since the mind acts, Consciousness delimited by the mind must be the knower. (V. p.306)

(6) (But is it not a contradiction to say that though Consciousness is one, it is nevertheless both the knowing subject and also the known resultant-cognition?) To this the Pañcapādikā has an answer (cp. M.V.147,1). The resultant-cognition, labelled 'awareness of an object', is of the same consistency (lit. 'savour') as the immediate Consciousness delimited by the object; this Consciousness is called 'knowing subject' in respect of being delimited by the mind and 'resultant-cognition' in respect of being delimited by the object....

(It is not right to raise the objection, 'The result must accrue to the one who performs the act, but in "awareness of an object" on your analysis the mind performs the act while the Self reaps the result'.) For the Self is the seat of action through its superimposed identity with the mind undergoing transformation; and the mind is the seat of experience through its superimposed identity with the Self. Consciousness has the mind and its ideas for object; and Consciousness and the mind together bear on the same external object through the instrument of the mental idea. (V. pp.306-7, partially expanded according to T.D.)

(7) Consciousness is externally manifest only under its adjunct consisting of objects with which the mind is in contact. Therefore (although present within all objects) it does not manifest in objects with which the mind is not in contact. This explains why an individual knowing subject is not aware of all objects. (V. p.308)

(8) When a particular individual subject knows an object (through contact of his mind with that object), Consciousness in the object manifests only as identical with the empirical consciousness of that subject. It does not manifest as identical with the empirical consciousness of other individual subjects. That is why what is known to one individual subject is not known to all individual subjects. (V. p.308)

(9) (An opponent has claimed that it is not right to say that the ego-sense is an adjunct that can limit Consciousness, since it is an effect proceeding from Consciousness, and no effect can overpower its own material cause. To this we reply as follows.) It was correct to predicate this adjunct. For, though the individual soul is all-pervading, it is not attached to everything and not in contact with everything.

Consciousness only illumines that with which it is in contact. The Absolute, however, is the material cause of all. The universe is nothing different from it and it illumines the universe as if illumining itself. But this is not the case with the individual soul. For the individual soul is not the material cause of the universe....

The case is parallel with that of cowhood and other universals. Though the universal 'cowhood', (being omnipresent), may be present in the places occupied by individuals having manes (i.e. horses),* it will not be manifested by these latter, as it is by nature free from any connection with horses, while it is manifested by individuals with dewlaps (i.e. cows) because they are connected with it by nature.

Or one may take another example. The light of a lamp, though covering areas containing wind, ether, taste, odour and so on, will not illumine these elements because it is not its particular nature to do so, but it will illumine colour, because colour is that with which it lies in special contact. In the same way, the correct view is that Consciousness, (though all-pervading), by the peculiarity of its nature lies in special contact with the mind alone, and not with anything else.

Again, things like grass could not be burned by fire entirely on its own, but only by fire embodied in molten iron (or occupying some other physical vehicle); in the same way, objects cannot be illumined by the Self entirely on its own, but they can be illumined by the Self as embodied in the ego-sense. Hence it was right to speak of the ego-sense as an adjunct. (V. pp.310-2)

**(The implication is that universals are spatially all-pervasive, all of them universally present in all things, though each manifests only in the individuals subsumed under it. For the Vaiśeṣikas and Bhāṭṭas, the universal is omnipresent in the sense of being present wherever and whenever an individual subsumed under it arises; but it is not all-pervading, in that it does not exist in the parts of space where those individuals are not found (Śrīdhara, p.317, Eng. trans. p.662 f.; Kumārila, Ś.V., Ākṛtivāda 25). But the Bhāṭṭas admit the theory of the all-pervading universal as a possible alternative (Kumārila, Ś.V., Ākṛtivāda 26 f.; Pārthaśārathi Miśra, Śāstra Dīpikā, Tarka Pāda, Eng. trans. p.142). T.N.)*

The Vivaraṇa speaks in this way when dealing with the Self conceived as omnipresent. When it considers the Self as under limitation it speaks as follows:

(10) Because the Consciousness delimited by the known object is revealed by contact with an idea of the mind that is the cause of the delimitation of the individual soul, it would not

be a contradiction to identify Consciousness delimited by the known object with Consciousness in the soul. But this does not mean that the soul always has knowledge of the Absolute because it is constantly related to it. For there is no contact through a mental idea capable of assuming the form of the Absolute (brahmākāra). And it is not admitted that anything manifests through mere contact with the mind, and without the mind assuming its form through an idea. For if the mind had the power of knowing through mere contact, and without needing to form a conception, it would know the merits and demerits lodged in it through its past deeds. Indeed, the individual soul only manifests when the mind assumes the form of the ego-sense, which is the typical form of the soul. If this were not so, the soul would be aware of itself in dreamless sleep. Thus the range of the soul's knowledge is limited by the mind, and it cannot illumine all objects.

Or there is another way in which we can explain how the Self becomes an individual knower. Initially it is covered and concealed by Ignorance. In this state it is not itself luminous, and does not illumine the various objects. But when and where concealment (of subject and object) is overpowered by the mind's power of reflecting and colouring (object and subject alike through a reflection of Consciousness), then and there the Self manifests, but only then and there. The Self manifests the object with which the mind is in contact, but only that object. As for the difficulty (raised above) that no effect can overpower its material cause — well, we see that effects like scorpions and trees effect the disappearance of the cow-dung and earth from which they respectively spring. (V. pp.315-6)

To begin with, from the standpoint of the highest truth there would be no occasion for making it an objection to say 'The world would not be capable of becoming an object of experience or activity' (M.V.248,1). For in Vedanta, the unity and sole reality of the Self is admitted, and empirical knowledge and its objects do not (in the last analysis) exist. An 'objection' of this kind would simply be a confirmation of the doctrine of our school. On the other hand if we keep to the standpoint of empirical experience, then the distinction between knower, knowledge and known exists exactly as it is experienced. There is no occasion to raise objections or answer them, and the whole exercise of trying to justify the situation logically is a futile waste of effort.

In the remaining extracts, the author first explained the situation on the assumption that the soul was omnipresent (M.V.248,3-9), and then went on to demand (and supply) an explanation of the situation on the assumption that the soul is delimited by the mind (M.V.248,10). But this was to neglect the principle laid down by the true expert (Śrī Śaṅkara) that facts do not admit of alternatives, though

duties may (M.V.224,25). One cannot appeal to the alternative 'The soul may be either omnipresent or delimited'. The section of the Brahma Sūtras containing the Sūtra 'The soul is sometimes referred to in this way (i.e. as minute) because the qualities of that (the intellect) appear to predominate' (B.S. II.iii.29) shows that it has to be accepted in empirical experience that the soul is delimited by adjuncts. Afterwards, the author of the Sūtras sets forth the soul's connection with action and the results of action in the Sūtra 'And because there is no universal connection (of the individual soul, as apparently limited by adjuncts, with all other bodies) there is no confusion (whereby the results of the acts of one soul would have accrued to another)' (B.S. II.iii.49). The instruments of the soul's knowledge and the objects of its knowledge are to be explained on the same basis. For, as Śrī Śaṅkara says, 'The individual soul is conditioned by adjuncts' (B.S.Bh.II.iii.49).

Then another claim was made (M.V.248,10). It was said that Consciousness was initially covered and concealed by Ignorance, but that it manifested (as the soul) when the mind assumed the form of the ego-sense, the typical form of the soul. Further, that when and where concealment is overpowered by the mind's power of reflecting and colouring, then and there the Self manifests, but only then and there. Here one must observe that, since the Self is formless, the mind cannot have a conception of its form. And one must also reflect that it is a useless exercise to assume an unproved mental idea of the form of the Self, supposed to overpower a concealment alleged to be effected by an Ignorance whose existence is itself never proved.

(11) (In perception) the object receives the power to manifest Consciousness from its contact with the mental idea. But the objects of inference and other indirect forms of knowledge cannot be present to the senses. In their case, factors like the power to arouse a concrete mental idea (vṛtti) and the power to manifest the Consciousness which their presence delimits are not available — so in their case there is no immediacy (of knowledge, aparokṣatā). (V. p.339)

Here the same observation that we made before applies again. In empirical experience, everything is exactly as it is perceived, whether the knowledge is direct or indirect. It does not become exponents of the upanishadic doctrine of the one Self to waste effort on useless argumentation to settle which of the two forms of knowledge obtains in any given situation.

249 PROOF OF SUPERIMPOSITION

In the school of the Vivaraṇa superimposition is established

as follows:

(1) The author of the Pañcapādikā replies to the opponent's case which he has just stated (the case is that the one who enjoys perception, etc., cannot be in Ignorance, see M.V. 146,1). His intention is to show, on grounds of presumption and of the argument from regular absence (i.e. absence of experience where there is absence of superimposition, e.g. in dreamless sleep), that experience as divided threefold into knower, knowledge and known, arises through superimposition. The Pañcapādikā brings out the meaning of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary by arguing 'Wherever there is absence of superimposition there is absence of experience'. And he begins by quoting the Commentary, 'What we say here is this. Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in the feeling "I" and "mine" there can be no empirical knower and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin...' (M.V.226,8). (V. p.348)

(2) (A negative inference may be set up as follows:) If you take any single individual, say Devadatta, then his periods of waking and dream yield empirical experience, for himself only, of knower, knowing and known. This experience is based on his being an active individual, superimposing feelings of 'me' and 'mine' onto his body and sense-organs and so on, and using them as his instruments. These periods are different from, and exclude, his periods of dreamless sleep. Therefore, the time that does not yield him this experience of knower, knowing and known is to be equated with his time of dreamless sleep. (From which we make the negative inference, 'Where there is no superimposition there is no experience', from which follows 'Experience depends on superimposition'.) (V. pp.348-9)

(3) Or else we may appeal to simple presumption. The threefold experience of knower, knowledge and known is impossible unless it is set up by superimposition, with that for its pre-condition. For when there is no superimposition, as in dreamless sleep, experience is not found. (V. p.349)

(4) You cannot argue that the real relation of contact or of inherence subsists between the Self and the not-self and causes empirical experience, because any such relation would obtain equally in dreamless sleep, when there is no empirical experience.... And so the author of the Pañcapādikā concludes by saying that, as the only alternative left, it stands proved on grounds of inference and simple presumption that superimposition is the source of empirical experience in the form of knower, knowledge and known. (V. p.350; cp. P.P. 143 f./32)

(5) When there is a sense of two things being distinct and their difference is not apprehended either through perception, inference or revelation, then, as the only alternative left, the sense of their difference must be superimposition. (V. p.355)

(6) Evidence for the metaphysical superimposition of Self and not-self (which enables empirical experience to occur) is not confined to the secular means of knowledge, such as perception, inference and rational presumption. Vedic revelation, too, uses in its injunctions such words as 'Brahmin' to refer to a person with the necessary knowledge to qualify him for this or that option or duty, and thereby conforms to the natural identification of the conscious with the non-conscious (in this case, the body), common to all individual experience. (V. p.362)

(7) You might ask how, since the Self is in equal proximity to all bodies, there could be regular restriction of superimposition to 'just this body' in the case of each individual soul. We reply that the superimposition of Ignorance is regular in its operation because it is beginningless. The soul's subtle body is a modification (pariṇāma) assumed by Ignorance. And the physical body is its effect, either as proceeding from, or as closely connected with, the subtle body. So there is nothing to contradict the regular restriction of superimposition to each soul separately. (V. p.351)

No attention is paid here to the principle laid down by the revered Commentator, 'All commerce between the attested means of knowledge (perception, inference, etc.) and their objects, whether in the Vedic or secular sphere, proceeds on the basis of this same mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self called Ignorance, as does all Vedic tradition' (M.V.23,2). In direct contradiction to it, an attempt is made to prove the existence of superimposition by these very means of knowledge (that depend upon superimposition).

And there is neglect of Śrī Śaṅkara's doctrine on another point. One cannot explain experience derived through the various means of knowledge unless the body and sense-organs and so on are admitted to exist. In order to account for the operation of the means of knowledge, therefore, the Vivaraṇa accepts without reflection the existence of the body and its organs and so on, as if it was a proven fact. It then goes on to raise the objection, 'How could there be regular restriction of superimposition to "just this body"?', a procedure clearly based on a failure to understand the role that superimposition plays. The Vivaraṇa simply rejects the classical Advaita teaching that all experience of any kind is based on superimposition, and is therefore subject to cancellation by metaphysical knowledge. It is clear that, for the

Vivaraṇa, the belief is that even metaphysical superimposition is an effect, and that it comes into being at a certain time. Once this belief was established, the feeling then began to set in that Vedantic philosophers must enquire into the efficient and material cause of superimposition; and this feeling resulted in efforts to prove the existence of superimposition through several of the different means of knowledge.

250 SHELL-SILVER AND SO ON AS THE EXAMPLES FOR SUPERIMPOSITION

In the school of the Vivaraṇa, the urge to show that Ignorance is the material cause of superimposition is particularly strong, so the words of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary are interpreted throughout as if they were meant to imply that Ignorance was the material cause of superimposition.

(1) When Śrī Śaṅkara said 'This very superimposition, thus defined, the wise call Ignorance' (M.V.22,4) he meant that they found that whenever a false entity was negated through coming to know the particular aspects (here upādhi = viśeṣaṇa) of the ground on which it was superimposed, this took place in invariable concomitance with Ignorance, (and since Ignorance was invariably present, it should be regarded as the material cause of the superimposition, cp. Ātmasvarūpa, p.138). (V. p.346)

Śrī Śaṅkara says: 'This very superimposition, thus defined, the wise call "Ignorance"' (M.V.22,4). And he goes on a little later to speak of the same thing saying 'this same mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self called "Ignorance"' (M.V.23,2). But the author of the Vivaraṇa, even though he alludes to the passage, pays no attention to its teaching. He interprets the word 'Ignorance' (which Śrī Śaṅkara used to designate superimposition) to mean that which is negated when one comes to know the particular aspects of the substratum of an illusion; and then he goes on wilfully to make the further irrelevant (and incorrect) point that the term 'Ignorance' was here used to mean the material cause of superimpositon, because it was that which was invariably found to accompany it.

A little later Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says, 'That onto which a superimposition is made is not connected even in the slightest with the qualities or defects of the superimposed appearance' (M.V.140,5, note). This is to say in clear words that the substratum of an illusion is not in the least affected by the merits or defects there imagined. But the passage is explained in a perverse way in the Vivaraṇa as follows:

(2) It is obvious (and does not need stating) that there can

be no real virtue or defect associated with that which is superimposed in the course of an act of superimposition (since that is illusory by definition). What is being taught here, therefore, is that superimpositions are transformations (of their material cause, Ignorance), and their virtues and defects do not affect their seat (the Self, as pure Consciousness). Why is this so? The beginningless stream of superimpositions is constantly and eternally illumined by Consciousness; therefore the latter (being constant) cannot take part in their transformations. Each occasional change embodied in a superimposition is a transformation (pariṇāma) of its material cause, Ignorance. Since each superimposition is therefore non-different from Ignorance, it is shown that the Self is the seat of each superimposition and also the entity it conceals. (V. p.347)

The teaching given here about superimpositon being a transformation and so on is not to be found in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. It has quite obviously been dragged in, along with the distinction between beginningless superimposition of Ignorance and occasional superimpositions occurring within Ignorance — and the objections and answers that go with this teaching — to prop up the author's private theories.

(3) (Śrī Śaṅkara defines superimposition as 'the false appearance at one place of what has previously been seen at another place, of the nature of a memory' (M.V.136, intro.; cp. 136,1 for the treatment in P.P.). If the term superimposition is taken to refer to the superimposed thing, known through knowledge (as an object), then superimposition will be the manifestation of one thing as if it were another, a manifestation somewhat like something remembered, and Śrī Śaṅkara's words will be construed as bearing on this definition. But if superimposition is understood as referring essentially to the superimposed cognition bearing on the illusory object, then superimposition will be the manifestation of one thing as if it were another, the manifestation being somewhat like an act of memory. And Śrī Śaṅkara's sentence can be construed as bearing on superimposition defined in that way too. By the phrase 'because, by implication...' the Pañcapādikā means 'because of the power of the sentence (of Śrī Śaṅkara) to imply...'. (V. pp.127-8)

The basis for what is said here is a passage in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.136 and 137). What we said earlier in criticism of that work applies here also. It is universally recognized that it is only false knowledge *that can be eradicated by right knowledge. And one needs only look at the way Śrī Śaṅkara sums up the relevant section of his Commentary with the words, 'And the entire upanishadic teaching is begun to communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self and*

thus to put an end to this superimposition, the cause of all evil' (M.V. p.311) see that he did not have superimposition of a thing *in mind here. So no separate explanation about this is needed.*

(4) We find that false silver, though it exists as mere appearance, can be negated by a later correct cognition; the later cognition has for its content only the total non-existence, past, present or future, of empirically real or ultimately real silver (but not of *false* silver). Since both cognitions ('False silver appeared' and 'There is and always was total non-existence of empirically real or ultimately real silver') are logically reconcilable, it would be wrong to reject either of them. And this corresponds to our experience of the content of the two cognitions as 'There is no silver here' and 'It was only false silver that manifested'. (V. pp.122-6)

Students must be asked to say, on the evidence of their own experience, whether there really are two separate cognitions, one bearing on empirically real and totally real silver (and affirming their total absence), and another on silver that is of such a kind that it is subject to later negation by right knowledge. A second question also arises and should be considered. Is the cognition that cancels the illusion of the form 'Verily, what appeared was false' or is it of the form 'False silver manifested'?

The Pañcapādikā has said: 'A defect in the cognitive mechanism blocks its proper operation on the object, and also activates a certain latent impression so that it comes into manifestation. We infer the presence of a defect in the cognitive mechanism from the nature of the effect produced. Behind the superimposition, therefore, lies a single complex of factors, with the cognitive mechanism thrown out of order by the latent impressions. Because this complex is a unity, it produces one act of knowledge issuing in one resultant-cognition. This knowledge arises from a complex associated with an impression activated by a defect. It is therefore quite intelligible that it should have false silver residing in the shell as its object. It is "false knowledge" because its object is false. But the cognition as such was not false, in that we do not have any later cancelling cognition of the form "this was not a cognition"' (M.V.138,2). But the Vivaraṇa explains that passage in such a way as to give it a different meaning as follows:

(5) (You may object as follows. Neither a mere impression nor a mere defect can generate a perception of objective false silver. Further, in the shell-silver illusion the shell is known through an empirically real/true, but inadequate,

transformation of the mind into the mere form 'this', while the illusory silver is known through a separate illusory transformation of the mind.) So one cannot speak (you will say) of one single cognition embracing both the false silver and the empirically real shell with which it is connected. What your (Advaitin's) doctrine also implies is that Ignorance undergoes two illusory transformations under the influence of defects in the object (cp. M.V.139,1), one into the form of false silver, and the other into the form of an appearance (ābhāsa) of knowledge, determined by the false silver. Ignorance together with its effects (which include both an inadequate but empirically real/true cognition of shell and an illusory cognition conditioned by false silver) being thus illumined by the Witnessing-consciousness, how can you say that there is only one cognition?

In answer to this the Pañcapādikā replies 'issuing in one resultant-cognition' (M.V.138,2). The form and nature of the final resultant-cognition that manifests is conditioned by the object, not by the cognitive processes that contribute. Here in the shell-silver illusion, the object consists in a real and a false element, standing as a unity because each appears to be identical with the other. Therefore, although there are two cognitions, one of an empirically real and one of a false entity, they are referred to figuratively as one cognition. The conditioning factor (upādhi) here is the unity of the final resultant-cognition, which is determined by one object. (V. pp.153-6)

The fact that the original work (the Pañcapādikā) and the commentary on it (the Vivaraṇa) represent different systems is here obvious. The doctrine given here that both silver and the knowledge of silver are composed of Ignorance derives from the Iṣṭa Siddhi (cp. M.V.221,1;230, 6).

(6) But are not the defects in the organs (such as double-vision afflicting the eye) or in objects (such as excessive distance or similarity to something else) the cause of superimposition? Yes, they are. But they are only efficient causes. Metaphysical Ignorance also enters in, because superimpositions require a material cause. And all effects require a material cause, since effects are things that have positive existence, like pots and so on. The rule holds good for actions and qualities and other categories as well as for substances, since the former can only come into being through the rise of substances in which they inhere, so that they have the same material cause as the latter....

Therefore superimposition is false and consists in a false object and a false cognition bearing on that object. The efficient causes of superimposition, such as double-vision afflicting the eye and so on, which vary in different cases, are not the seat of superimpositions and therefore cannot stand as

their material cause. Therefore it is not defects like faults in the mind (such as excessive greed for silver) or the disease of double-vision afflicting the eye that form the material cause of superimposition, but rather Ignorance. For Ignorance has all the required qualifications for standing as the material cause. Since it is false, it agrees in nature and reality-grade with all its false effects. It is present behind all of them. And, on the other side, since it has its seat in the Self, it has the same seat as erroneous cognition (and thus can stand as the material cause both of the object and of the cognition when an object and its cognition are superimposed). (V. pp.69-73)

It is clear that, in order to justify his private theory of metaphysical Ignorance understood as a material cause, the author of the Vivaraṇa here borrows the arguments accepted in the Iṣṭa Siddhi (M.V.221,3;224,2;225,4;230,9, note) in an attempt to prove that false silver and so on require a cause, and that that cause is (metaphysical Ignorance conceived as existing) over and above erroneous knowledge and the defects with which the latter is ordinarily associated.

The Pañcapādikā teaches that Ignorance as present in its own non-conscious effects (the objects of the world) is not that which prevents them from manifesting in their true nature (P.P. p.28/4-5). For their non-manifestation can very well be accounted for by defects in the means of knowledge. Explaining this, Prakāśātman writes as follows:

(7) There is no need to assume a separate concealment for any empirical object. For the non-perception of any object may well be accounted for by the 'defects of', meaning the obscuring through Ignorance of, consciousness conceived as the means of knowledge bearing on the not-self....

Perhaps you will object that the Ignorance that conceals the shell must be different from the Ignorance that conceals the Self, since the latter is found to remain in being even after the former has disappeared with the rise of knowledge of the shell. But this we deny. For there is no proof of the existence of a variety of different positive Ignorances concealing every separate instance of the not-self, and existing over and above the (single) metaphysical Ignorance which rests in and conceals the Self. And non-perception of objects can very well be explained by defects in the means of knowledge. (V. pp.97-8)

On the theory that notions like shell-silver arise from metaphysical Ignorance of the Self only (and not from any adventitious Ignorance), cp. Iṣṭa Siddhi pp.202-3.

The Pañcapādikā says (p.28/5): 'And so metaphysical Ignorance (does not conceal objects but) may cause them to appear to be

different from what they are'. The Vivaraṇa explains this as follows:

(8) Perhaps you will object that the difficulty still remains. Why? Well, the cognition of the shell that destroys its false appearance as silver will, according to your theory, also destroy metaphysical Ignorance (the material cause of that appearance). So the question still remains why Ignorance of the Self is still found to remain when superimposition, along with (its material cause) metaphysical Ignorance, has been destroyed by knowledge of the shell. Either you will have to say that there is a separate Ignorance for every object, or else that Ignorance is not the material cause of what is superimposed, or else that superimposition can be destroyed without its material cause being destroyed.

To this we reply as follows. On our view, all that is effected by the knowledge of the shell is the dissolution of the silver into its material cause, as a pot that is shattered by the blow of a pestle dissolves back into its constituent clay. Alternatively, it may be conceived that root-Ignorance assumes a variety of states (avasthā) which serve as the material causes of illusions like shell-silver. It is only these states of Ignorance (and not Ignorance itself) that come to an end, along with the superimposition, on the cognition of the shell or other substratum of an illusion. (V. pp.98-9)

Is there anything you could not *prove in the realm of hypothetical constructions? In the Iṣṭa Siddhi the theory is that Ignorance is not* totally *burned up by the knowledge of the shell (M.V.224,24 and note). Here in the Vivaraṇa alternative theories are offered. According to one theory, there are many Ignorances, and only one dissolves into its material cause on knowledge of the shell. According to the other, Ignorance has different states which undergo destruction. This passage shows that even before the time of the composition of the Vivaraṇa many theories had been evolved by the Vedantins, following the path of empty hypothetical reasoning found in the Iṣṭa Siddhi, to account for the rise and disappearance of purely phenomenal (prātibhāsika) silver.*

(9) The Consciousness delimited by the shell and the like is the seat of the silver and the like. Silver and the like are therefore said to have an external seat (in the shell and the like). But it is always Consciousness alone, either directly, or indirectly as delimited by some external object, that is the support of an illusory appearance. Hence Śrī Śaṅkara was in this sense correct to say (of superimposition) 'the false appearance in one place of what has previously been seen at another place'. (V. pp.181-2)

This also follows the Iṣṭa Siddhi, cp. M.V.225,13.

In the Iṣṭa Siddhi, knowledge and ignorance of objects such as shell constituting the not-self are accepted from the standpoint of empirical experience. But this is defended by saying that all empirical experience of the not-self has the same standing as dream (cp. M.V.226,2-7). In the Vivaraṇa, however, the teaching is not quite the same. Here it is said that Ignorance concealing the shell is *either* metaphysical Ignorance of the Self *or* a particular form of Ignorance that is a state assumed by Ignorance of the Self.

251 STUDY OF THE CANCELLATION OF ERROR

The same methods that are used in the Pañcapādikā and the Iṣṭa Siddhi for refuting other theories of error are also used here in the Vivaraṇa, strengthened by the author's original reasoning.

(1) The experience of erroneous cognition is not explicable either if the cognition is taken as totally real or as totally unreal. Other theories (apart from that of the indeterminability of error) contradict experience. The Akhyāti theory of the Mīmāṃsakas (M.V.137, p.395 f.) makes a host of unverified assumptions. It assumes the presence of two cognitions; it assumes the absence of any form of silver in front; it assumes that the cognition of silver is a memory; it assumes that the sense that one is having a memory is obscured; it assumes that this obscuration leads to a failure to discriminate the memory-unrecognized-as-such from the partial cognition of the object (shell) in front; it mistakenly assumes that the actions one takes over the silver are caused by this failure to discriminate (whereas in fact action always has a positive cause); it assumes that one can have memory of what one experienced in previous lives — and thus indulges in a whole array of assumptions not backed by experience.

The Anyathākhyāti theory of the Logicians (M.V. p.396) assumes many things that contradict valid evidence. It assumes that a real thing that exists in one place is perceived in another place; it endows the sense-organs with powers to perceive things experienced in previous lives and also things far separated from the perceiver in space and time; it endows a mere defect with the miraculous power to bring all this about; and it claims that a real relation between the illusion and its substratum is actually perceived, though in fact no such relation even exists.

To refute all these mistakes one has only to resort to one point, namely the falsity (indeterminability) of the known object in error. This point is true in itself, and is confirmed by the direct experience 'This is not silver -- it was only false silver that appeared'; and the assumption about

metaphysical Ignorance being the material cause of errors is proved correct because of its universal concomitance with them. (V. pp.166-9)

He was not following a sound principle in supposing that his own view would be rendered correct merely by his having established that two other views were riddled with defects. It is affirmed by those who follow the universal experience 'It was the shell that appeared falsely as silver' that it was the shell alone that appeared as if it was silver. And one has the reflection afterwards, 'There was not any silver there'. In these circumstances, it is clearly contradicting experience to affirm that silver (i.e. false silver) is produced (at the time of erroneous cognition). Nor is there any evidence that metaphysical Ignorance stands as material cause. The term 'ignorance' should be taken to mean either imagined knowledge or distorted knowledge or whatever other such meaning is appropriate in the context. But it cannot be right to ordain that one must assume the existence of a form of Ignorance that is only a matter of speculation and philosophical dispute.

The Vivaraṇa has said: 'Here in the shell-silver illusion, the object consists in a real and a false element, standing as a unity because each (falsely) appears to be identical with the other. Therefore, although there are two cognitions, one of an empirically real and one of a false entity, they are referred to figuratively as one cognition' (M.V.250,5). Similar reasoning is used when describing the superimposition of Self and not-self.

(2) When, of two things, one is superimposed on the other (but the two are not mutually superimposed), then one (the substratum) manifests in its general aspect only (as 'this oblong thing' or 'this triangular shiny thing'), and it is only the other (the superimposed factor) that manifests with its particular characteristics. In the case of the mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self, however, the fact that both elements manifest with their particular characteristics shows that they are both mutually superimposed. For, in a superimposition, whatever manifests with its particular characteristics is a superimposed element. And yet we are not forced to regard both elements (Self and not-self) as false. For the conscious element is not directly superimposed in its true nature onto the non-conscious element; what is superimposed onto the latter is the notion that consciousness is *related* to it. Nor does the fact that both the conscious and the non-conscious element manifest in their particular nature prevent them from each standing as the substratum for the superimposition of the other. For the particular characteristics of neither element are apprehended when that element is standing as the substratum; they are apprehended only where it

is standing as other than the substratum (i.e. as the superimposed factor). (V. pp.370-1)

Our own view is that the words of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on this topic should be accepted literally, as they agree with experience. What he wrote was: 'Thus one first superimposes the ego-notion onto the inmost Self, the Witness of all. And then, having done that, one proceeds contrariwise and superimposes that inmost Self, the Witness of all, onto the mind and other elements of the finite personality' (M.V.140,5). No one has the experience 'I am related consciousness'. It is well known that everyone quite literally identifies himself with the inmost Self and the Witness with the feeling 'I'. And even though the inmost Self is directly superimposed in its true nature onto the ego, it does not follow that we are forced to regard both as false. For if the Witness of all is false in its superimposed form, this does not in the slightest affect its true nature as Witness and as free from all relations.

(3) But are not you yourself (Advaitin) uttering a contradiction when you say of something that is experienced as 'It is' (and so as real) that it is indeterminable (and so neither real nor unreal)? This objection we reject. What manifests in the shell-silver illusion is relationship of the silver to the 'this' aspect of the shell, and, along with that, relationship of silver to the reality of the shell; it is not that the silver actually *acquires* the reality belonging to the shell.

Or again, we may argue as follows. Reality is of three kinds. There is the supreme reality of the Absolute. There is practical reality possessed by the objects of the world, beginning with the element ether, which has Māyā for its adjunct. And there is that (different and lesser) form of reality that is possessed by illusions like shell-silver, which has Ignorance for its attribute and is of indeterminable reality-grade when compared with supreme reality. Here there is no contradiction; for we must accept that different things have different degrees of reality according to what is actually found in experience. (V. pp.164-5)

This is not correct. Since no distinctions of degree are experienced in reality, there cannot be three different kinds of reality. The Lord says in the Bhagavad Gītā, 'There is no being of the unreal, nor is there ever any non-being of the real' (Bh.G.II.16). This would be contradicted if either the shell or the shell-silver were taken as real and also as non-existent. Again, if they were taken as unreal, they could not have reality. For there is no being of the unreal. Nor do the Self, shell and shell-silver all belong to one genus (to reality conceived as a genus, sattā), that each could have a different species of reality according to its kind. Nor are

there any distinctions in reality, that shell or silver could be real considered in themselves but of indeterminable reality-grade when considered in relation to something else (as the Vivaraṇa avers). The revered Commentator has said:

(4) And just as the cause, the Absolute, never deviates from reality in past, present or future, so the effect, too, the world, never deviates from reality in past, present and future. And reality is one. Hence this is another reason for the non-difference of the effect from the cause. (B.S.Bh.II.i.16)

The example of shell-silver is given to show that the notion that the world is an effect is a superimposition. This shows that the reality of the silver is none other than the reality it derives from the shell. And that in turn is in truth the reality of the Self. Hence it is written in Śrī Śaṅkara's Gītā Commentary:

(5) That the notion of which never changes, is existent. That the notion of which is transient is non-existent. The distinction between the existent and the non-existent depends on our notions. Everywhere we find two notions arising with reference to one substratum. We are not speaking of (specification through an additional qualifying notion, as in the case of) ideas like 'the lotus is blue'. We are speaking of (the succession of impressions having the form) 'The pot is existent', 'The cloth is existent', 'The elephant is existent' and so on. In these pairs of notions, the notions of 'pot', 'cloth' and 'elephant' are transient, as has already been pointed out. But the notion of 'existent' is not. (Bh.G.Bh. II.16, M.V.140,4)

The doctrine here is that the Self is always known as 'existent' and the not-self as 'non-existent'. There is therefore no occasion for a doctrine of three kinds of reality. Nor is it correct to hold that there are alternative possible theories about reality and that the doctrine that reality is one is the best — or that the shell and the like, though admittedly superimposed, are indeterminable as either the same as or different from the Self, the real. Quite different (and true) is the point that until the Self has been intuitively realized in its true nature there is the practical experience expressed as 'The shell is real, but the silver is false', resting on the reality of the Self falsely superimposed onto the shell.

The Vivaraṇa also raises the question 'What is cancellation (bādha)?' It proceeds to define it after refuting several definitions offered in inadequate theories. Cancellation is not, for instance, suppression of activity directed towards a goal other than that which the person acting has in mind. (This definition is too narrow: it would not include the case of an ascetic who had no desire for silver and who nevertheless

mistook shell for silver and then cancelled the error.) Cancellation is not the discrimination of what had been previously cognized without proper discrimination. (This definition, attributed to the followers of Prabhākara, is too wide; it would mean that all determinate cognition involved cancellation, as on their view our perceptions are initially indeterminate.) Cancellation is not the correct later apprehension as separate of two things that had previously been confused. (This definition, attributed to the Logicians and to the school of Kumārila, is also too wide. It would include the case of an analytically minded person reflecting over his cognition 'The pot is white' and discovering that 'white' was not, as he had first thought, a characterization of the substance, the pot, but only of one of its attributes, its colour; but we would not normally regard this discovery as cancellation of an error.)

The author gives his own definition as follows:

(6) Cancellation arises through knowledge. It comprises the cessation of Ignorance (or some phase of it) along with its effects, whether the latter are still existent or already dissolved in their cause. (V. p.178)

(7) Falsity consists, precisely, in being a positive entity (pratiyogin) perceived in a place that is actually characterized by its (the pratiyogin's) non-existence (abhāva). This falsity is directly revealed through a cancelling-cognition of the form 'The silver is manifesting in the form of a positive entity in a place actually characterized by its non-existence'. (V. pp.174-5)

But one has to make a clearer distinction. It is not merely a matter of a positive entity (pratiyogin) being perceived in a place that is in fact characterized by its non-existence. The illusory manifestation is totally non-existent in any form or at any time apart from the place, time and form in which it was perceived. And at the time of cancellation its whole being is seen to have been exhausted in its manifestation in that way at that place. It is not correct to suppose that, if, at the time of determining the truth, one cannot also establish the cessation of Ignorance (read ajñāna for jñāna) and its effects as interpreted by a particular school, no cessation of Ignorance that could be classed as cancellation has occurred. On the contrary, cancellation should be seen to consist quite broadly in the removal of wrong knowledge by right knowledge, where right knowledge determines the true nature of reality by discriminating between the superimposed element and the substratum onto which it has been superimposed (the reality). For we have the words of Śrī Śaṅkara's Gītā Commentary:

(8) (This is) a 'conjunction' which is in fact (not a real conjunction but) a mere mutual superimposition of the Field and the Knower of the Field (M.V. p.35) together with their attributes, a superimposition that is conditioned by a failure to discriminate two utterly distinct entities one from the other (cp. M.V.112). It is comparable to the process whereby 'conjunction' with a snake is superimposed on a rope, or where silver is superimposed on shell through failure to discriminate the two.... It is then possible to be aware of the Absolute, that which we are here in the world to know, void of all particular adjuncts, as expressed in the formula 'It is not said to be either real or unreal' (Gītā XIII.12). Whoever does this acquires the clear conviction that the 'Field' is something non-existent appearing as if existent, as in the case of visions of elephants conjured forth as a magic display (māyā) by a mass-hypnotist, or dream-visions or illusions of palaces in the clouds. And, in the case of one in whom this clear vision has arisen, wrong knowledge disappears, because it is in contradiction with right knowledge. (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.26)

Here Śrī Śaṅkara clearly teaches that what is superimposed is an illusory manifestation. He also teaches that the only right knowledge is knowledge of the reality of the substratum of the various illusions in its true form, discriminating it from the superimpositions. And he teaches that wrong knowledge disappears through that right knowledge. In the example, the true nature of the silver as bare shell is determined by the right knowledge 'This is only shell, not silver'. In the same way, various parallel convictions come from the knowledge arising from such Vedic texts as 'This whole universe is nothing but the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.II.ii.11), 'All this is the Self alone' (Chānd.VII.xxv.2) and 'There is no plurality here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19). The conviction arises that the whole universe is superimposed on the Absolute like silver superimposed on shell, that it is illusory in the form in which it appears, that it ever has its true nature in the Absolute alone. And this shows that the account we ourselves have given of cancellation was correct. Indeed, if it is not accepted, one is left with the theories that the cancelling-cognition apprises one of the non-existence of the world in the Absolute, and that cancellation means the cessation of Ignorance as conceived in the technical terminology of a particular school. But neither of these theories will stand scrutiny. At the time of the cancelling cognition, the question of whether the world does or does not exist in the Absolute becomes totally irrelevant. And the cessation of Ignorance as privately conceived by a particular school cannot, by its very nature, be a matter of universal experience for everyone.

252 THE IDENTITY OF AVIDYĀ AND MĀYĀ

The Pañcapādikā refers to the terms 'the Undeveloped (avyākṛta)', 'Ignorance', 'Māyā', 'Nature (prakṛti)', 'Non-perception (agrahaṇa)' and 'the Unmanifest (avyakta)', etc., and claims that these words are used synonymously in certain places to stand for the undeveloped (primeval) state of Avidyā and Māyā (before the evolution of a world-period, cp. M.V.132,4). In this context the Vivaraṇa refutes the view of those who hold to a distinction between Māyā and Ignorance (avidyā) and strengthens the arguments for their identity.

(1) Just as one must assume that Ignorance is the material cause of a superimposition, so must one assume that passing inexplicable phenomena induced by drugs, spells or mass-hypnotism (see V. p.170) must also have an indeterminable beginningless entity as their material cause (*viz.* māyā). And we have the Vedic text 'Know that Nature is Māyā' (Śvet.IV.10). Here the word 'Māyā' is used to mean 'Nature' understood as material cause of the world. Thus both Māyā and Ignorance (avidyā) are the material cause of the world. Māyā and Avidyā hence have identical characteristics, as do the modifications they assume as inexplicable phenomena and superimpositions respectively. From this we conclude that Māyā and Avidyā are identical. (V. p.171)

To this one might object that, since there is no general agreement on the part of all philosophers that a certain purely hypothetical form of Ignorance is the material cause of superimposition, there is no identity of characteristics between Māyā and Avidyā.

(2) But has it not been shown that Māyā and Avidyā have different characteristics, inasmuch as Avidyā deludes the person whom it affects, whereas Māyā does not delude the magician who wields it? To this we answer as follows. Whose consciousness supports the magic display? If it is the one who sees it, then as a bystander observing it he is deluded by it. If the support of the magic display is the author of it, the magician, it is not the mere fact that he is the magician that prevents him from being deluded by it. What prevents him from being deluded by it is his certitude that reality contradicts it (e.g. his certitude 'I am sitting on the ground, not half way up the rope in the sky') and also, (in the case of drugs and so on,) his knowledge of the correct palliatives. Otherwise the author of the magic would be deluded by it just as much as the bystanders are.

Nor is it correct to say that Māyā and Avidyā are different because Māyā can be produced at will, Avidyā not. For the free-will of the author of magic extends only to the use of instruments such as spells and drugs for producing it, not to

the actual magic itself. And non-magical perceptual errors of plain Ignorance can be brought on at will, by pressing the eye-ball in such a way that one sees two moons or the illusory patterns naturally seen when the eyes are closed. And one can also, by resort to spells and drugs, wilfully induce erroneous hallucinations that may manifest concurrently with correct empirical knowledge of one's environment. (V. p.172)

Here the deluded bystanders are said to be under the influence of Avidyā, and the author of the magic display is called the Māyāvin (magician). And this is not wrong. It is the delusion that is Ignorance, not the magic display that people see as a result of coming under the delusion. This is reasonable. For Ignorance is said to have the same seat (Consciousness) as knowledge. But the object of vision called a 'Māyā' (a magic show produced by a magician) does not do so. For the word Ignorance is only applied to the state *of delusion. (We do not call the appearance of a man climbing up a rope induced by a magician 'an Ignorance').*

As for the point about one's being able to produce Ignorance at will, that was wrong. For when a person produces the vision of two moons by pressing down on his eyeball with his finger he does not thereby undergo any Ignorance. For even at the time when the vision of two moons is being produced in the form 'The one moon is appearing as if it had a second' one has the conviction that it is not a real vision but only an appearance. Nobody ever has the experience 'This Ignorance was produced by me'.

(3) Nor is there any distinction between Māyā and Avidyā in the technical terminology of the traditional texts. For in such a Vedic text as 'If one meditates on Him, if one unites with Him, if one reflects more and more on his true nature, the Māyā of the world finally comes to an end' (Śvet.I.10), we find the word Māyā used in the Veda to refer to that Ignorance which can be removed by correct metaphysical knowledge. Again, we find such passages in the Smṛti as, 'Reverence to that infathomable Hari of the nature of Knowledge! When the Yogī has ensconced Him in his heart, he crosses the vast realm of Avidyā or Māyā'(Viṣṇu Purāṇa V.xvii.14). Here Māyā and Avidyā are set in apposition, and mentioned as that which has to be crossed over (reading tartavya for kartavya with Madras ed. p.173) through metaphysical knowledge. Again, the author of the Brahma Sūtras uses the word 'Māyā' to designate a dream when he says, 'A dream is a mere Māyā, because it is by nature an imcomplete manifestation' (B.S. III.ii.3). The Commentator (Śrī Śaṅkara), too, sometimes speaks of Avidyā and Māyā as 'of the nature of Avidyā' and as 'the power (śakti) of Māyā'. The author of the Pañcapādikā sets in apposition Avidyā, Māyā and Akṣara (M.V.132,4). And the author of the Brahma Siddhi, too, said 'That is precisely why it is spoken of as "Ignorance",

"the power of illusion (māyā)" and "wrong knowledge"' (M.V. 93,1). (V. pp.172-3)

In the Veda, it is true, the cessation of the delusion of Māyā is said to occur with the cessation of Ignorance through knowledge of the supreme Self, and this agrees with the text 'They cross this Māyā' of the Smṛti (Bh.G.VII.14). In the Smṛti text from the Purāṇa given above (Viṣṇu Purāṇa V.xvii.14) there is another reading 'yoga-māyām' for the 'yogī māyām' quoted by Prakāśātman. There, too, what is really said is that when Ignorance is brought to an end through metaphysical knowledge, then Māyā ceases. For there is the specification calling Hari 'of the nature of Knowledge'.

As for the revered Commentator, he does not in fact put 'Avidyā' and 'Māyā' in apposition (i.e. in subject-predicate relation). He says, for instance, 'The supreme Lord, one only, raised above all change, the source of Consciousness, appears as many through Ignorance, like a magician appearing as many through his magic power (māyā). But there is no other principle of Consciousness' (B.S.Bh.I.iii.19). But when, of a pair of words, one is used in formulating an example, and the other in designating the thing exemplified, the two words cannot be regarded as standing in apposition and as referring to the same entity. The phrase 'the power of Māyā which is of the nature of Avidyā' does not occur in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries. The seed-power called Māyā is referred to at Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya I.iv.3 in the words 'a seed-power of the nature of Ignorance' to show that it is imagined through Ignorance. At Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya II.i.14 there is a passage beginning with the words 'Name and form, imagined through Ignorance...'. It goes on later to say, 'The Lord conforms to the adjunct of name and form set up by Ignorance'. In between these two passages there is the remark, 'The "lordship" of the Lord depends on limitation through an adjunct of the nature of Ignorance'. Here the phrases 'set up by Ignorance' and 'of the nature of Ignorance' both mean the same as 'imagined through Ignorance', as they are used to convey the same idea. When the author of the Pañcapādikā puts Avidyā, Māyā and Akṣara in apposition as referring to the same thing, he does so without a shred of evidence or authority.

The author of the Brahma Siddhi was arguing in a different context, as his system is different. He wished to show that, whether Ignorance was taken as non-perception or as erroneous perception, in either case it must be excluded from the true nature of the Absolute, and this is so because it is 'neither real nor unreal' and 'indeterminable' in this sense. In this context he said, 'That is precisely why it is spoken of as "Ignorance", "the power of illusion (māyā)" and "wrong knowledge"' (M.V.93,1). Here also, reference is made to Māyā in its capacity of manifesting false appearances, not to its nature as Ignorance.

The term 'wrong knowledge' (mithyā-pratyaya) has come in wrongly for 'false manifestation' (mithyā-avabhāsa). For it is not in its capacity as wrong knowledge that Ignorance is called Māyā, but rather in its capacity as false manifestation. In the system of the Vivaraṇa, however, Ignorance is not merely wrong knowledge but also its material cause. One could add more on this subject, but this short note must suffice.

(4) Therefore, because their characteristics are the same, and because their identity is clear from ancient usage, Avidyā and Māyā are one and the same thing. However, there is this distinction in common speech that we call this entity Māyā when we are chiefly thinking of its power of projection, and we call it Avidyā when we are chiefly thinking of its power of concealment. We also speak of this entity as Māyā where it is dependent on the will of a conscious being, and speak of it as Avidyā where it is not. Therefore when the Pañcapādikā spoke of the false silver as 'māyā-maya' ('consisting of Māyā' and so 'illusory', M.V.138,3 *ad init.*) it was perfectly justified. (V. p.173)

It is obvious that in common speech usage Māyā and Avidyā have different characteristics; we speak of the delusive object as Māyā, and of the subject undergoing the illusory experience as afflicted with Avidyā. And we have shown what the ancient usage of Avidyā and Māyā was (on Avidyā, see M.V.22-25; on Māyā, M.V.34,3;118,12, note); it was quite different from that alleged by Prakāśātman.

Prakāśātman also said, 'We call this entity Māyā when we are chiefly thinking of its power of projection'. If this only meant 'in its form as a projected phenomenon', we would agree. But if the meaning is that there is a certain entity which has the two powers of concealment and projection, then we have to say that the Undeveloped principle (avyākṛta), as (unmanifest) Name and Form, does not in itself have the power of concealment, as it is by nature set up by Ignorance. As the Undeveloped principle, it is itself the power that produces the world. But it should be seen that it is the power itself, not that which has *the power.*

As for the distinction saying that the same principle is Māyā when dependent on the will of a conscious being and Avidyā when not dependent on it — there the author contradicts his own assumptions (since an entity that both is and is not dependent on the will of a conscious being is a contradiction in terms).

253 THE CESSATION OF IGNORANCE

The Vivaraṇa makes an objector raise the logical puzzle, 'How can beginningless Ignorance come to an end?', and in answering

it speaks as follows:

(1) Well, in worldly experience it is accepted that, when a thing is produced, its beginningless previous non-existence comes to an end. The Buddhists hold that the beginningless series of impressions is brought to an end through intense and protracted meditation on the truth. The Logicians and other kindred schools, too, hold that the beginningless stream of wrong cognitions comes to an end at the time of liberation, and also that the earth-atoms lose their beginningless blackness (when they turn reddish when clay is baked to form a pot (cp. I.P. II. p.196). The Sāṅkhyas hold that beginningless non-discrimination is brought to an end through metaphysical discrimination. The Mīmāṃsakas hold that the beginningless previous non-existence of our knowledge of merit and demerit as revealed by the Veda ceases now if we acquire that knowledge. (V. p.373)

In this context, however, the cessation of a previous non-existence cannot count as a relevant example. For the Vivaraṇa claims that Ignorance is a positive existent (bhāva-rūpa). Claiming that it is a positive existent is for the purpose of showing that it is not a non-existence. One cannot, however, establish one's doctrine as true merely by pointing out the defects in other people's doctrines. Further, anyone who holds that what is beginningless can come to an end is contradicting the word of acknowledged experts. For we have the texts 'It will not be possible to prove that transmigratory life is beginningless and yet comes to an end' (G.K. IV.30) and 'Moreover, if bondage and liberation be taken to be two states following upon one another successively, then the state of bondage must be taken as occurring first, and as being beginningless, and yet as having an end — and that contradicts evidence' (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.2).

(2) If you say that a positive existent that is beginningless can no more come to an end than the Self can, we reply that it is not so. For Ignorance is indeterminable. We may have the general law 'The beginningless does not come to an end'. But we also have the particular law 'Knowledge brings Ignorance to an end', and the particular law will overrule the general law. (In Vedic exegesis, where a general law and a particular law conflict, the particular law must be granted precedence on its own particular topic, otherwise it will be useless. E.g. in its own particular context, the particular injunction 'Kill the sacrificial animal' overrules the general law 'Do no injury to living creatures').

Perhaps you will claim that destruction is defined as the next later state occurring in the material cause, and ask how something beginningless can undergo destruction, seeing that, being beginningless, it cannot have a material cause. But the

objection is not right. For the correct definition of destruction is 'the next later state occurring in the support'. Otherwise the Vaiśeṣika could not explain how the atoms lost their blackness (when baked to make a pot), or how there could be the cessation of the previous non-existence of something newly produced.

Perhaps you will say that if Ignorance were not a negation but a positive existent and also beginningless, then it could no more come to an end than the Self can. But this is not correct. We have also said that it is other than the real. So why could it not come to an end, even though beginningless, just like the previous non-existence of a new product on your own (Vaiśeṣika) theory?* (Well, but this only shows that beginningless Ignorance *could* come to an end on the analogy of previous non-existence coming to an end with production in the theory of the Vaiśeṣikas.) But what shows definitively that it *does* come to an end? We reply that, as already explained, it is the fact that knowledge and Ignorance invariably prove unequal (in that knowledge invariably obliterates ignorance). (V. pp.373-4)

**(If a thing is newly produced, it never existed before. The Vaiśeṣikas regarded its previous non-existence as something beginningless that came to an end with the production of the thing. Therefore they were in no position to challenge Prakāśātman's claim that Ignorance was beginningless but came to an end. T.N.)*

On the subject of the bringing to an end of beginningless Ignorance, one should refer to Iṣṭa Siddhi page 86 and 368 (cp. also M.V.228,1-8). It is a fallacy to suppose that Nature (prakṛti) is Ignorance in the literal sense. Nature will not come to an end merely because it is conceived as Ignorance.

(3) But is it not the case that knowledge will only bring Ignorance to an end? How, then, is superimposition halted? To this the Pañcapādikā replies '... when the cause is removed, the effect... will also be removed' (M.V.151,1). (V. p.377)

This is a commentary on the following passage of the Pañcapādikā. 'The objection does not stand. For our doctrine is that there arises from the sentence 'That thou art' another cognition which plumbs the depths of the Absolute.' When this knowledge arises it extirpates once and for all the beginningless Ignorance which is the cause of the ego-sense and other illusory projections. It is thus Ignorance which, by concealing the Absolute, conceals the fact that Consciousness in truth is the Absolute, and sets up instead the false notion that it is the individual soul. It is only reasonable to conclude that, when the cause is removed, the effect, consisting in the notion "I am the individual soul and the experiencer,

equipped with various organs", will also be removed. On the other hand, since the ego-sense, itself beginningless, exists alongside the complex of the subtle body and its instruments, the two are not in contradiction' (M.V.151,1).

In ordinary worldly experience it is superimposition *that is brought to an end by knowledge, as also doubt and non-apprehension (read agrahaṇa). It is this trio that is referred to indifferently by the terms 'Ajñāna' and 'Avidyā' in the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara, in accord with ordinary worldly experience, for example at Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1 (trans. Mādhavānanda p.451) and B.S.Bh.IV.i.2 (trans. Gambhīrānanda p.816 f.).*

Even in the Vivaraṇa a different line is struck on this subject in another passage. It runs: 'In ordinary empirical experience we see that non-apprehension, wrong knowledge and the like, which stand in contradiction with manifestation of the real, are brought to an end by right knowledge of the real. Here, in the metaphysical context too, Ignorance as a positive existence is assumed to exist, and is taken to stand in contradiction with manifestation of the real. Hence it is intelligible that it should be brought to an end by knowledge of the Absolute' (V. p.101). Here the author established, in conformity with worldly experience, that superimposition, consisting in non-apprehension followed by wrong apprehension, and known by the term Ignorance, can be brought to an end by knowledge. In the passage now under discussion, however, he forgets what he had himself already said earlier, and insists that superimposition has to be brought to an end indirectly through bringing to an end a special Ignorance hypothetically assumed as its material cause. Why he should do so is not clear.

(4) Perhaps you will make the following objection. 'What is that highest human goal?', you will ask. It cannot be (you will argue) the cessation of Ignorance as the material cause of that stream of superimpositions connecting one with the feeling that one is an individual capable of action and experience. For perception of duality is not annulled even when Ignorance has been brought to an end. The macrocosm consisting of earth and the other elements, after all, does not come to an end merely when one person's sense that he is an individual capable of action and experience comes to an end.

To this we reply as follows. There is more than one opinion on this question. One view runs as follows: The macrocosm of the earth and other great elements may very well remain. But if superimposition of identity with the mind ceases, then the sense of being an individual experiencer will cease. And then there will be no perception of duality. For the pure Consciousness of the Self (though omnipresent) cannot receive any colouring from objects without the mediation of the mind, any more than a being without sense-organs can see colour.
(V. pp.620-1)

(5) But you will ask how experience of one's own true Self as the Absolute and perception of duality can go together. Well, we do not say that they do go together. What we say is that (in the state of liberation in life) there is sometimes awareness of one's identity with the Self in all its sovereign transcendence of subject-object duality, and sometimes there is perception of duality brought on by defects incidental to the stock of merit and demerit that initiated the life in which liberation in life was attained. (V. p.786)

In regard to the first theory, it is to be observed that there is and can be no proof of the existence of the earth and other cosmic elements when the state of being an individual experiencer has come to an end. If their existence be admitted, this will undermine the special point of Vedic teaching that reality is non-dual.

On the second theory, absence of experience of duality is limited to special temporary states, and this contradicts the basic principles of the Advaita system. For the text 'That thou art' shows that realization of one's identity with the Absolute as one's true Self has the characteristic of being free from all special states. Nor can there be any alternative possibilities about questions of fact, as there can be about duty (alternatives about doing a task in different ways or not doing it at all). So it is not right to try to accept both *the view that duality remains during liberation* and also *the view that all duality ceases.*

In this teaching it is accepted that the cessation of Ignorance can be encompassed through mere empty hypothetical reasoning and also that Ignorance returns and is re-experienced at a later time. It is clear that both these points contradict such Vedic texts as 'One attains the Absolute here in this very body' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7).

254 THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPRESSION OF IGNORANCE (AVIDYĀ-SAṂSKĀRA)

It emerges from our discussion of the cessation of Ignorance that, according to the Vivaraṇa, there is nobody whose Ignorance totally ceases while he is still alive; for perception of duality accompanies everyone inevitably as long as they live. In this context, the author of the Vivaraṇa resorts both to Maṇḍana's doctrine of an impression of Ignorance (avidyā-saṃskāra, M.V.100;101,2) and also to Vimuktātman's doctrine of a remnant of Ignorance (avidyā-leśa, M.V.231).

(1) To the proposition that even after Ignorance has been brought to an end through metaphysical knowledge it is reasonable to suppose that it returns (or otherwise one cannot

account for the empirical experience of the person liberated in life), the author of the Pañcapādikā replies, 'No; Ignorance can continue in the form of an impression' (M.V.151,2). (V. p.414)

(2) Perhaps you will object that impressions can be left behind by actions or by knowledge, but not by Ignorance or its effects. But this is not so. It is not correct to say that impressions arise only from actions or knowledge. Perfumes leave impressions in their receptacles (where the odour lingers faintly afterwards). We have to infer that all effects must leave impressions at the time of dissolution at the end of a cosmic world-period (or the world could not come into being again at the beginning of the next world-period). Indeed, we infer that in every single case of anything being destroyed, an impression is left. And in any case, Ignorance and its effects *are* knowledge, namely erroneous knowledge. And though the Witness-consciousness itself is constant and eternal and cannot leave an impression, we know that it becomes reflected in Ignorance and its effects, such as the mind, and cognitions consisting of reflections of Consciousness in the transformations of the mind can well leave impressions, as they are transient.

But an impression, you will say, cannot cause anything more than a memory. How can it cause immediate apprehension of duality? It can do so here, we reply, because it is associated with Ignorance, and therefore constitutes a defect affecting Consciousness. A defect that affects the cause of immediate experience is evidently itself the cause of error in immediate apprehension. And the Self is the seat of the impression, since it is the sole seat of Ignorance. Ignorance is the material cause of all effects except its impressions. The Self, it is true, is not the material cause of the impressions either (for it is real, and they are unreal, and a material cause must be of the same reality-grade as its effects). But it has the adjunct of being their seat, just as it has the adjunct of being the seat of Ignorance, as this can be affirmed without implying any contradiction.

The impression can co-exist for a time with metaphysical knowledge, but is eventually halted by it, so there is no contradiction with the teaching about total release on the fall of the body at death (videha-mukti). Or the phrase 'impression of Ignorance' (avidyā-saṃskāra) may be used to mean 'remnant of Ignorance' (avidyā-leśa), understood in the same sense that we speak of 'the last remnants of darkness' at dawn. The special reference here would be to the time required for the exhaustion of the merit and demerit that initated the birth in which enlightenment was obtained. In any case, the interval between enlightenment and death is satisfactorily explained. (V. pp.414-5)

It is only when Ignorance is set up as a hypothetical positive principle that it becomes a subject of dispute among philosophers. If Ignorance itself is a subject of dispute, how much more will this be the case with the problems that surround it! Should we admit that it leaves an impression behind after it has been brought to a halt? Or should we not rather speak of a remnant? Or is it a mere appearance of knowledge that seems to affect the Witness-consciousness? Is the appearance of duality that results from the impression a case of immediate apprehension? Should we regard the impression left behind by Ignorance as a defect in the same sense that Ignorance itself is? Is the Self properly spoken of as the seat of an impression of this kind? Is the impression brought to an end solely by metaphysical knowledge? When there is liberation in life, is this associated with an impression of Ignorance or is it rather with a remnant of Ignorance? It goes without saying that all this hypothetical reasoning takes place without a shred of support from Vedic revelation or genuine reasoning practised in conformity with it.

The author of the Sūtras and Śrī Śaṅkara commenting on them, when they speak from the standpoint of worldly experience, treat the soul as if it really was embodied and as if the rise of metaphysical knowledge depended on one's stock of merit and demerit. They take the line expressed in the Sūtra 'Only those actions (are destroyed by metaphysical knowledge) whose effects have not yet begun to fructify' (B.S. IV.i.15). It is true that, when the actionless Self is known, all false knowledge stands cancelled, and no remnant of it in the form of further action can subsist. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of worldly experience the statement of the revered Commentator holds good when he says, 'But the negated erroneous knowledge continues on for a certain time owing to the force of latent impressions (saṃskāra), as in the case of a person cured of the double-vision through which he saw two moons (and who sometimes momentarily seems to see them again afterwards, B.S.Bh. IV.i.15, M.V.59,15;203,7, note). For this agrees with the worldly experience 'Shell (sometimes) appears like silver'.

But the Vivaraṇa proceeds differently. It pays no attention to this common experience. It imagines something never perceived by anyone — an indeterminable Ignorance conceived as the material cause of wrong knowledge. It endows this never-perceived principle with embellishments like a 'remnant' and an 'impression'. And it openly contradicts the teaching of the Veda which runs 'One attains the Absolute here in this very body' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.7) and 'Knowing the Absolute, he becomes the Absolute' (Muṇḍ.III.ii.9); for the system of the Vivaraṇa treats liberation essentially as the liberation that occurs with the fall of the body at death. Why the author of the Vivaraṇa resorts to this course is not clear. But anyone who does resort to it contradicts the doctrine, admitted in

principle by all philosophers, that knowledge is knowledge of what is actually perceived. And it is clear that the author also contradicts without warrant the traditional method of interpreting the texts, which treats them as based on false attribution followed by later retraction.

255 THE ABSOLUTE AS THE CAUSE OF VEDIC TRADITION

The Vivaraṇa denies that the Veda is to be regarded as authoritative because its author is the Lord (V. pp.677-82). It refutes the doctrines of the Buddhists, Jainas and Materialists who deny that the Veda is authoritative at all (V. pp.682-5). It accepts the traditional teaching (M.V.191,12) that the Veda is authoritative because it is beginningless and derives from a superhuman source (V. pp.685-8). It argues that, though beginningless, the Veda has a cause in the Absolute, basing itself on the first section (varṇaka) of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on Brahma Sūtra I.i.3.

(1) When the Pañcapādikā says that the Veda, although beginningless, is dependent on the Absolute, it means that the Veda is an effect which proceeds from the Absolute, which is its material cause. The term 'śāstra' refers to all the words of the Veda considered collectively. It starts from the words, where in each case the ordering of the syllables is such as to arouse the idea of a single word-meaning in the mind. It includes the sentences, where the ordering of the words arouses the idea of sentence-meanings in the mind. It includes the sections (prakaraṇa), where the ordering of the sentences arouses the idea of the meaning of a whole discourse. And through these means the various traditional sciences (śāstra) are built up to awaken the mind in various ways to the highest human good. And all this has gone on steadily from time without beginning (so that we must assume that it must proceed from the Absolute and not from any fallible human individual). (V. p.688)

And the Vivaraṇa says that the Vedas are of indeterminable reality-grade.

(2) (Since the syllables of the Veda are eternal, their appearance of following one another in an ordered sequence in time must be an illusion. The fact that our knowledge of the Veda is based on an objective illusion which nevertheless has practical results is only explicable on the theory that illusions are indeterminable.) For here we have a determinate objective illusion that conditions mental ideas (M.V.238,4, *ad init.*). Although the object of cognition (the illusion consisting in the syllables of the Veda appearing to follow one

another in temporal succession), itself distinct from the consciousness apprehending it, is of indeterminable reality-grade, nevertheless it is not taken to be (of that yet lower reality-grade called) 'negligible' (tuccha), as it has practical efficiency in the empirical world. Thus the Veda has the genuine power to communicate meaning. (V. p.689)

And the point that the Absolute must be omniscient because it is the cause of the Veda is made as follows:

(3) The Veda, it is agreed, has the power to communicate knowledge of everything, through its syllables, properly ordered and parsed and correctly interpreted according to literal or figurative usage. For nothing exists that cannot be verbally communicated in some way. Now, the power of communicating knowledge that lies in anything which is an effect must reside pre-eminently in its cause. In the case of a lamp, for instance, the power of illuminating really lies in the fire. And it would be wrong to assume two separate powers, one residing in the material cause and the other in the effect. Thus the Absolute must be omniscient, since it has the power of communicating knowledge of everything.... Being the material cause of all the words of the Veda, the Absolute has the power of communicating knowledge of everything and must be omniscient. (V. pp.690,692)

To say that the Veda can communicate knowledge of everything and that, for that reason, its cause must also have this power was correct. Nevertheless, the emphasis in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary is on the idea that the Veda was produced spontaneously and in sport, like the work of a genius. This is clear from the quotation of the Vedic text about the breathing out of the Veda (Bṛhad.II.iv.10 = M.V.191,12, quoted at B.S.Bh.I.i.3) and the citation of examples such as that of the great grammarian Pāṇini (B.S.Bh.I.i.3, *ad init.*). Indeed, Śrī Śaṅkara says in his Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary (II.iv.10), 'The Veda is authoritative, not in the manner of other authoritative texts, but because it came forth effortlessly from the Absolute like a person's breath' (M.V.191,12).

Thus it is surely correct to hold that the Absolute is omniscient because, in its capacity as Consciousness and as cause of all, it is able to illumine all. As it is said in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on the Taittirīya Upanishad: 'The Absolute (is independent of all else because it) is constant and eternal by nature. Because the Absolute is itself the cause of space and time and of all the other conditioning factors of the objective realm, no object can be separated from it in space and time. And because it is supremely subtle, there cannot, either in past, present or future, be anything separate from it, greater than it and unknown to it. It is in this sense that the Absolute is omniscient' (Taitt.Bh.II.1).

Nevertheless, we find that the particular ground given for proving the omniscience of the Absolute in the Brahma Sūtra Commentary is an '*a fortiori*' argument. The Absolute effortlessly produces the Veda, an inexhaustible mine of omniscience, and this shows that the Absolute surpasses infinitely all great human geniuses like Pāṇini. Prakāśātman's phrase about the power of the Absolute to communicate knowledge of everything (M.V.255,3 *ad init.*) derives from the same place in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, where he says 'The point that the Absolute is omniscient has already been made by showing that it is the cause of the world. The author of the Sūtras now proceeds to strengthen the idea by stating that it is the source of the Veda' (B.S.Bh.I.i.3, intro.).

256 THE ABSOLUTE IS KNOWN THROUGH VEDIC REVELATION EVEN THOUGH IT IS AN ALREADY-EXISTENT ENTITY

Not everything that is taught in the Veda comes within the scope of the enquiries set up by the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. So it is reasonable to suppose that the topic of 'already-existent entities' might remain as a subject requiring further investigation over and above the enquiries carried out by that school. For the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā only regards the part of the Veda that deals with duties that have to be done as worthy of investigation, and does not take up for enquiry the part concerned with metaphysical reality. That was why the Sūtras on the true nature of the embodied soul (the Śārīraka Sūtras or Brahma Sūtras) were instituted to enquire into that metaphysical part of the Veda (P.P. p.215/51; cp. M.V.150,2, note). Explaining this point, the author of the Vivaraṇa expresses himself as follows:

(1) One can acquire *some* sort of comprehension of the Absolute merely from the use of the term 'the Absolute' in the Veda and the Brahma Sūtras, even though the Absolute is not a universal and does not fall under any of the categories of ordinary human knowledge.... The author of the Pañcapādikā rebuts the view that supersensual entities cannot be designated by words, using the following argument. When a word whose meaning is not known from ordinary experience is used, in conjunction with words whose meanings *are* known, to convey knowledge of the meaning of a sentence, then the very impossibility of its meaning other things (on account of the exclusions imposed by the other known word-meanings of the sentence) yields some general positive knowledge of its previously unknown meaning (read apūrva-padārtham, cp. Madras ed. p.585), even when its connection with that meaning is not otherwise known.... And then, when the meaning is thus known in a general way, one can arrive later at a more precise conception

through application of the rules of semantics (nigama), etymology and grammar. (V. p.585)...

It is true that we are not immediately familiar with that which is designated by the words 'knowledge', 'reality', 'bliss', 'the inmost Self', 'non-dual' and 'the Absolute'. But we are familiar with the idea of 'abundance' expressed by the word 'bahutva' (taken as cognate with Brahman = the Absolute). And, following from that, we can get a more particular idea of the Absolute through the modifying force of other words which stand near it and with which it is in syntactical relation (saṃsarga). (V. p.669)...

In the case of something accessible to other means of knowledge apart from revelation, the understanding will come from ordinary worldly usage; and the meaning of the word will be open to variations of interpretation, involving degrees of more and less, according to previous data supplied by other means of knowledge. But where the meaning of a word is only known through its internal parts (read avayava) without reference to worldly usage, there will be no limitations from other data, words or context (so that Brahman may mean 'unlimited abundance', cp. V.P.S. trans. p.372). The word will be understood directly in its primary meaning. (V. p.590)

(2) When a thing is known through one means of knowledge (e.g. the Veda), it does not follow that it is false simply because it is not known through another means of knowledge (e.g. perception). For the object of every means of knowledge is something hitherto unknown. And if a thing known through one means of knowledge were to be suspected of being false if it was not known through another, then a colour or a solid substance seen by the eye would be under suspicion of falsity if it happened that one could not touch it. Perhaps you could argue that human speech depends on receiving some sort of support from other means of knowledge, and is suspect in the absence of the latter. But this does not apply to the words of the Veda, which are of superhuman origin; they do not depend for their validity on corroboration from anything else. (V. p.724)

(3) Perhaps you will say that the words of the Veda require corroboration when they refer to an already-existent entity, as human speech does in the case of such random assertions as 'There are fruits on the river-bank', since whatever is already-existent will be the object equally of another means of knowledge. But we do not agree. For it is only human speech (not Vedic revelation) that refers to things that are equally the object of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge. When *that* (i.e. human speech) is used to refer to existent objects, it *does* refer to what is equally the object of perception and the other means of empirical knowledge.

Perhaps you will say that human speech does not always bear on what is equally the object of perception; sometimes it is

related, rather, to the speaker's memory of existent things. But the cause of even this relation, we reply, is the fact that the memory arises from (and depends on) some earlier empirical cognition bearing on the same object. For this is how human speech relating either to duties or to facts is always found to be. A person will first come to know something from some other means of knowledge, and then will speak to another person on the basis of that knowledge. But the words of the Veda are independent; they do not proceed from knowledge attained through any empirical means.

Besides, if the opponent's theory really held good, it would render the Vedic injunctions dependent on corroboration (which, as a Mīmāṃsaka, he would not wish). For if they mean something rather than nothing (and they must), then that 'something' must fall within the range of perception and the rest, so that they refer to things that are equally the object of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge. The content of secular commands is seen to fall within the range of the empirical means of knowledge. Or if you deny this, it will follow that all commands are incomprehensible, and this will render the Veda incomprehensible too. And if you say that the content of a command cannot fall within the range of other means of knowledge because it is by nature something that has to be done in the future, well then the Absolute, too, falls outside the range of other means of knowledge apart from the Veda, since it is void of colour and other sensible attributes. (V. p.725)

(4) (Nor can the Mīmāṃsaka raise the doubt that, because the texts proclaiming the Absolute are concerned with something capable of being known from another source, they are not themselves an authoritative source of knowledge, but constitute a mere repetition of information gained elsewhere.) For one does not dismiss visual perception as inauthoritative and as mere repetition just because its object happens, in some instance, to be an object capable of being perceived through the sense of touch. If you argue that the rule about the inauthoritativeness of a means of knowledge that merely repeats what can be known from other sources applies only to the spoken word, then this will undermine the authority even of the injunctive texts (by which you yourselves set store). For (they are concerned with the well-known instruments of the ritual, so that) their subject-matter is open to ordinary empirical means of knowledge. Then again, in the case of something known through Vedic revelation (and through some other means of knowledge as well), why should it not be that it was the other means of knowledge confirming Vedic revelation that was the mere repetition? (V. p.726)

(5) And because superhuman revelation is an independent authority, it does not suffer in any way either through other

means of knowledge agreeing with it or disagreeing. (V. p.730)

(6) The following point should be examined. Does a person *simply* wish to obtain the desirable and avoid the undesirable? Or does he wish, in addition, that these two ends should be attained either by engaging in or desisting from action? One must surely assume that he merely wishes to obtain the desirable and avoid the undesirable. For that is the simpler hypothesis.... What a person really wants is the result, not the intervening steps that have to be taken to achieve it (reading antarīyakā, Madras ed. p.732). (Therefore the metaphysical texts of the Veda are not to be dismissed by the Mīmāṃsaka as useless merely because they do not prescribe any action to be done; for they can lead man to his highest end and greatest possible happiness merely through dispelling his metaphysical illusions.) (V. p.732)

(7) A Vedic passage is said to have a certain meaning for its purport (tātparya) when its introductory and concluding sentences refer to the same topic, when the chief meaning is repeated several times in different ways, when a specific reward is stated in connection with that meaning, when the point being taught is new and not known from any other source, and where there are other characteristic signs of purport such as the presence of explanatory passages (artha-vāda) and supporting argumentation.... If the Upanishads are taken as a whole, it should be seen that there are characteristic signs of purport (tātparya-liṅga) to indicate that their overall purport is communication of the knowledge that the true Self of the hearer is identical with the Absolute. Because they co-operate to convey one meaning, we may say that the texts of the Upanishads have the Absolute alone as the chief subject of their communication. (V. pp.697-9)

(8) All the words in the Veda that refer to the cause of the world are referring to that one homogeneous principle, the Absolute, either through direct speech or through figurative usage or through the medium of adjuncts (upādhi). (It is true that attributes like existence and consciousness are predicated of the Absolute in the Veda, but this is only to negate such characteristics as non-existence and non-consciousness which fall within the realm of the indeterminable, cp. V.P.S., Eng. trans. p.468.) The existence and non-existence of distinctions of indeterminable reality-grade can be referred to by words: but they do not imply the existence of any distinctions within the homogeneity of that which is real in the highest sense of the word. (V. p.702)

Brahma Sūtra I.i.4 speaks of the harmony of the upanishadic texts. The Pañcapādikā asks what this harmony is and replies as follows. 'It is the harmony of words whose meanings (in

combining to point indirectly to the Absolute) do not restrict one another (in the manner of the meanings of words in a sentence enjoining action) and do not require the addition of anything else (such as a verb inflected to express command) in order to make sense. It is a "harmony" which conveys the sense of an uninflected noun, devoid of case relations, standing for something homogeneous in nature' (P.P. pp.322-3/84). Explaining this, Prakāśātman writes as follows:

(9) By the phrase '(words) whose meanings do not restrict one another' the author of the Pañcapādikā excludes from the notion of the 'harmony' of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads that form of grammatical agreement which expresses the relation between a noun and a verb (as in 'one should sacrifice with soma').

To this a ritualist might reply: 'But consider the case of the text "He who desires cattle should sacrifice with the Udbhid" (discussed at Śabara, I.iv.1-2). Here a word like "udbhid" (the name of a sacrifice) is placed in grammatical relation with the verb "yaj" meaning "to sacrifice". In such a case, the two stems "udbhid" and "yaj", considered as mere simple stems, so far have the same meaning, namely "sacrifice", and do not restrict one another. But they need the addition of an inflection implying command ("yaj" inflected to "yajeta" meaning "he should sacrifice") in order to make sense. Will not the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads also require a verb inflected to imply command in order to make sense?'

To answer this, the author of the Pañcapādikā says of the upanishadic texts in their deepest meaning 'not needing an inflection implying command'.... And he says 'homogeneous' to counteract the argument, 'Well, but is it not perfectly possible to refer verbally to something characterized by difference in identity, as when we say "the blue lotus"?'

But is it not the case that the stems 'udbhid' and 'yaj', though homogeneous in both referring to sacrifice, nevertheless require an inflection implying command to make sense (since a sacrifice is after all an act)? And will not the case be the same with the words in the upanishadic texts communicating the the Absolute? To rebut this idea the Pañcapādikā says, 'Having the meaning of an uninflected noun (prātipadikārtha)'. And it adds the word 'only' to exclude number and gender. (V. p.699)

(10) In this context, there are texts of two different kinds with two different purposes. One kind proclaims the identity of the true Self of the hearer with the Absolute. The other gives the defining characteristics of the Absolute, such as 'reality', 'knowledge' and so on. The Pañcapādikā gives an example from ordinary worldly speech illustrating the first kind, which proclaims the identity of the true Self with the Absolute, 'Like the words of a sentence (affirming recognition) such as "This is that (Devadatta)"' (P.P. p.323/84).... Here

the circumstances of time and place where Devadatta was previously seen are not taken as identical with the present ones, since the difference is plain to see. And so one does not recognize the identity of Devadatta as he was then with Devadatta as he is now. The object of recognition expressed in the words 'this is that' is the same identical being, Devadatta, apparently characterized by two different states. The formula 'this is that...' where the two words 'this' and 'that' refer directly to Devadatta apparently characterized by different states, conveys to the hearer that what is recognized is the identity of Devadatta in his true nature. It does so because the two words give up part of their meaning ('this' gives up its reference to the different circumstances under which Devadatta is perceived now, 'that' gives up its reference to the different circumstances under which he was perceived formerly). Through this the two words come to refer figuratively (by lakṣaṇā) to a part of their meaning only (i.e. to the persistent identical element in Devadatta, which remains identical through the various bodily changes, and changes of location, time, situation, posture, clothes, etc., and enables us to recognize him as the same)....

The text 'That thou art' can be seen to be an authoritative means of knowledge in the same way. For the word 'thou' gives up part of its meaning. Through this it comes to indicate figuratively the Witness-self in its true state. This is identical with the Absolute in its true nature, indicated indirectly by the word 'that', when the word 'that' is shorn (through the restrictive force of the word 'thou' occurring in apposition in the same sentence) of its meaning of remoteness (pārokṣya). When the meaning of the words 'the soul' and 'the Absolute' is understood as something communicable in a sentence, it will at first appear that the content of the sentence can only be a repetition of something already known, namely the identity of the meanings of 'that' and 'thou' (which must be already known if the sentence is to be understood). But the sentence is in fact an authoritative communication of a new piece of knowledge, as its function is to contradict the appearance of distinctions (i.e. the Absolute is already known as the Self, but falsely overlaid with contradictory distinctions; it is only when the words 'thou' and 'that' are united in an identifying statement that it is seen that the distinctive elements in their meanings (individuality and remoteness respectively) have to be dropped, leaving for each a figurative meaning that is identical; so the identifying statement conveys new knowledge and is not a mere repetition of what was already known before). (V. pp.709-16)

(11) In the case of two word-meanings considered in isolation, each meaning is peculiar to itself and different. It is only through a sentence that we can know that their meanings have any element of mutual identity. But does not this imply that

the separate words on the one hand and the sentence on the other are referring to different things?

No. This might be the case where a person was trying to establish the identity of two different substances. But when there is one substance only, and the object of the teaching is to negate distinctions falsely imagined in that substance through illusory adjuncts, such teaching is authoritative (and not merely tautologous) on account of distinctions in what has to be negated, not on account of any distinction in what has to be known. And thus it has been said, 'The Veda is authoritative, because its function is to negate' (M.V.29,2, etc.). Here, however, (where the negation can be effected by words whose grammatical form suggests affirmation) the teaching points to one substance by negating distinctions imagined through adjuncts, as in the case of two words in apposition referring to the same substance, on the pattern 'This (is) that...' (where a speaker negates the illusory distinctions in the mind of a hearer who has failed to recognize a person or thing known previously in different circumstances). (V. pp. 716-7)

All the extracts quoted above are concerned with the properties of words. Words by nature refer to objects. It needs to be explained how a word, being of such a nature, can refer to the Absolute (which is not an object). Śrī Śaṅkara states clearly that the Veda is the special authority for knowledge of the Absolute in the paradoxical sense that it reveals it as void of distinction into knower, knowledge and known.

(12) It should not be objected that if the Absolute were not an object it could not be revealed by the Vedic texts. For the purpose of the Veda is to negate distinctions that have been imagined through Ignorance. It does not purport to expound the Absolute as an object knowable as a 'this'. On the contrary, in revealing the Absolute as a non-object and as the inmost Self, it abolishes all distinctions, including those between subject, object and act of knowledge. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.99,1, note *ad fin.*)

The author of the Vivaraṇa accepts this teaching, too, and writes as follows:

(13) (True, there are texts saying that the Self cannot be known as an object.) But do not texts like 'By the mind alone is it to be perceived' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19) and 'But I am asking you about that Spirit proclaimed in the Upanishads' (Bṛhad. III.ix.26) teach that the Self is the object of an act of knowing? No, there is nothing wrong here. 'Being subject to communication through the Veda' actually excludes the idea that the Self is an object of the act of knowing (tadvyāvartakatayā, as explained by Ātmasvarūpa p.347). For it

implies (as we know from other texts such as 'that from which words fall back') that the Veda communicates the Self (not as an object but) as having the form of immediate knowledge ('I am that') arising from the upanishadic texts. Indeed, the Absolute is certainly not an object of knowledge. For 'not being an object of knowledge' means 'not being capable of receiving any extra light through being known'. And no new quality of light can arise in that whose nature is already light. (V. p.760)

We shall be examining later (M.V.258) the point about 'being subject to communication through the Veda' excluding the idea that the Self is the object of an act of knowing because it implies that the Veda communicates the Self in the form of immediate knowledge. All that will be said for the moment is that the authoritativeness of revelation as a valid means of knowledge does not lie in any power to produce knowledge which has the supreme Self as its object. One has to accept that it lies where the passage we have just quoted from Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary said it did — that is, solely in the power to negate all distinctions such as those of knower and known that have been falsely superimposed on the Absolute. And this is shown by other passages in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, such as:

(14) Therefore, all that is required is the negation of what has been falsely superimposed onto the Absolute through Ignorance. No effort is required actually to know the Absolute, as it is perfectly familiar already. (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.50, M.V. 204,10)

Upanishad passages like 'By the mind alone is it to be perceived' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19) and 'But I am asking you about the Spirit proclaimed in the Upanishads' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26) do not teach that the Absolute is the object of an act of knowing. That would contradict such a text as 'That which cannot be thought by the mind' (Kena I.6). And as a sequel to earlier teaching we hear the texts 'There is no plurality here' (Bṛhad. IV.iv.19) and 'This Self is (only describable as) "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26), which show that, apart from what is superimposed through Ignorance, no duality exists. Nor is any other knowledge called 'vision' needed, apart from the natural knowledge of the knower. For we read in the Commentary on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka:

(15) But is not this a contradiction? For does not the text say 'You cannot know the knower of knowing' (Bṛhad.III.iv.2)? We reply that it is not so, for there is no contradiction when the knowledge is of this kind. In fact, the Self is actually known as 'the seer of seeing'; and there is the further point that it depends on no other knowledge. And when once it has been intuitively known that the seeing of the seer is constant

and eternal, the seer does not require any other vision with the seer for its object. Desire for seeing the seer (as if the latter were an object) breaks off of its own accord; for one cannot desire that which one knows to be impossible (namely the illumination of the Self, which is by nature light). (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.10)

So this alone is the nature of the direct metaphysical knowledge conveyed by the Upanishads. When this is accepted, there are no contradictions and difficulties.

257 REFLECTION AND DIALECTIC

If Vedic revelation is an authoritative means of knowledge, what is the purpose of philosophical reflection? The author of the Vivaraṇa replies to this question as follows.

(1) There is no defect whatever associated with Vedic revelation. Defects are associated with the organs of human beings. Vedic revelation, therefore, is not the cause of wrong knowledge or of other defects of cognition (doubt, non-perception, etc.). But words are found to be interpreted as having different senses in different contexts. And hence it comes about that human defects cause wrong understanding, the words of the Veda being understood out of context in various different ways according to different secular usages, through a vague and general conception of the meaning, in contradiction with the true meaning of the text. From the actual revealed texts themselves (if the words are understood in their true meaning) nothing but right knowledge can arise. But from the revealed texts associated with defects of human understanding there arise many mutually contradictory ideas. When this has occurred, determination (through reflection) of the true import of the words of the texts neutralizes the human defects, and puts an end to the wrong understanding running counter to the true meaning. And that is all that reflection achieves. When the impediments are thus removed, right knowledge arises from the texts themselves; or, if it has already arisen, it becomes firm. Reflection, therefore, is not a direct means of knowledge of the Absolute. (V. p.580)

(2) The words themselves (being inflected) have the power to reveal their own interrelation. So when the interrelation of the words is known and it has been seen that, when they are duly interpreted according to their primary or figurative meaning, there is no contradiction with the data supplied by other means of knowledge, then knowledge of the purport of the sentence serves to negate doubts and erroneous understanding arising from human defects. (V. pp.583-4)

(3) Immediate certitude about the matter being enquired into arises from the appropriate means of knowledge (here the Vedic texts) only. The role of dialectical reasoning (tarka) is to help in the removal of impediments to the attainment of this certitude. Dialectic is not the instrument for determining the nature of the object of enquiry. That is the point being made. (V. p.402)

The meaning of this extract will be examined in detail at M.V. 258,1 below.

(4) Trains of reasoning are not adequate to establish certain knowledge of the Absolute. The latter is of the nature of pure knowledge and bliss, omniscient and the inmost Self of all. But when the Absolute has been known in an indirect and imprecise way through Vedic revelation, trains of reasoning can demonstrate the *possibility* of such a transcendent being. You ask how? Well, for example, the word 'non-dual' is applied to the Absolute as the material cause of the world. The possibility of the Absolute as material cause of the world being non-dual is shown by reasoning with the help of examples such as clay, which, as material causes, have a relation of non-duality with their effects, in the sense that the latter are never perceived without them. Other examples are also cited, such as the one of a crystal appearing to be red owing to the red colour of an object lying near it, reflections (in water or mirrors), the rope-snake illusion and the illusion of the ether of space being enclosed within a pot. These examples explain the possibility of the sense of being an individual capable of action being superimposed on the Self, and the possibility of the soul and the Absolute being identical; they explain the absence of any independent existence of the world apart from the Absolute, and also how the inmost Self is relationless and therefore pure and non-dual. (V. pp. 668-9)

This is a commentary on the passage of the Pañcapādikā given above, M.V.149,8.

The crystal and other such examples should not be placed in the same class with examples (such as that of clay) designed (as Chānd.VI.i.4 shows) to bring home to the mind how there can be knowledge of all things from knowledge of one thing. And it is also perfectly clear that they can be of no use, in the way claimed, for determining the true nature of that which is beyond action. It is true that examples such as that of the crystal are found in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries. But they are not on the same footing as the examples like clay, which (are actually found in the Upanishads and) are used to prove a point of doctrine.

258 IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE AND THE MEANS WHICH LEAD TO IT

Here in the Vivaraṇa it is accepted that immediate knowledge of the Absolute comes from the revealed word alone, just as it is in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.149,3, *ad fin.*).

(1) In worldly experience an object of cognition is said to be immediately apprehended when it is non-different from the apprehending consciousness (as in the case where the cognition is itself the object of the apprehension of the Witness-consciousness), or when the object of the cognition itself generates the cognition without there being any separation between the cognition and the object (as in the case of cognition of mental phenomena like pleasure or pain), or when there is direct physical contact of the object with the organ of perception that is operating as the means of knowledge (as in the case of perception of external objects). In inference and other means of knowledge where these conditions are not in force, we find that the knowledge yielded is indirect.

Now, the Absolute is the source of all consciousness and all cognition. Even in the case of knowledge arising from the revealed texts and assuming the form of the Absolute (brahmākāra), the first thing to manifest is the Absolute itself, whether as non-different from the cognition or as the source of it. This manifestation is, however, at first impeded, through the failure of the mind to summon enough concentration to apprehend anything so extremely subtle, and also by the defect of the impressions left by past erroneous cognitions. In this way the Absolute manifests through error as only indirectly known. But practice of virtues like inner control (śama), performance of sacrifices and the like, and resort to such disciplines as sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) have special efficacy when practised for the sake of immediate knowledge.

There exists, therefore, a course of action to acquire perfect certitude in the immediate knowledge derived from Vedic revelation, by negating the impediments that produce the erroneous notion that it is only mediate knowledge. In pursuing this course of action, one wards off the effects of past sins by such steps as the performance of sacrifices. One calls a halt to the defect of wrong action through resort to inner and outer control and the other great spiritual virtues. Through mental pondering (manana) one kindles the lamp of clear insight into the possibility of the metaphysical truth glimpsed through the texts (which seems at first to be contradicted by ordinary sense-experience). Through the accumulation of many hours of sustained meditation on the extremely subtle Self as the Absolute, one renders the mind one-pointed in its attunement to that. Even in ordinary worldly experience, we see that there is a special need for concentration of mind when

trying to decide a very subtle issue.

When we say 'Dialectic is an auxiliary to the revealed texts', what we really mean by the term 'dialectic' (tarka) is the pure mirror of the mind itself, washed clean of all impediments in the manner described above. For dialectic understood as discursive reasoning aiming to combat disbelief in the possibility that the teaching could be true and to eliminate false conceptions belongs to the first stage of cognition, before meditation and so on have set in. And thus it was correct when, by use of a taddhita affix in the phrase 'I ask you about that Spirit *proclaimed in the Upanishads*', it was implied that verbal revelation (alone) was the source of intuitive knowledge of the Absolute. For it is only immediate knowledge (not the indirect knowledge arising from discursive reasoning) that is right knowledge. (V. pp.403-9, summarized)

(2) According to another view, it is not the case that the same immediate knowledge that first arose from the Vedic texts becomes manifest later when the impediments disappear. What happens, rather, is that the revealed word first generates indirect knowledge of the Absolute. It then later generates a second immediate cognition with the help of the (cleansed) mirror of the mind as described above. For revelation and ritual, as associated with sacrifice and charity, can lead one on to immediate knowledge (T.D. *ad loc.*). When such knowledge comes, it arises as the second stage in a process. It is comparable to the process where, after sense-contact has first produced perceptual knowledge, it goes on to result later in the rise of a new kind of knowledge, recognition, with the help of a memory-impression of the earlier experience. Nor is it correct (say the followers of this school) to claim that, because the Absolute is self-luminous, any indirect knowledge of it must be error. For other people are self-luminous beings, and yet we have genuine indirect knowledge of their sensations through inference.

On either view, the firm establishment of immediate knowledge requires further efforts after the initial act of hearing. So on either view it was correct for Śrī Śaṅkara to make a separate mention of the *communication* of knowledge through the upanishadic teaching (M.V.139,5, implying, according to Prakāśātman, activity on the part of the one receiving the knowledge). (V. pp.409-10)

All this is supposed to bring out the meaning of the phrase 'communicate knowledge' in Śrī Śaṅkara's sentence 'And the entire upanishadic teaching is begun to communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self...' (M.V.139,5). The first view to be mentioned was one already developed in the Pañcapādikā (M.V.149,3). The idea that the word 'dialectic' (tarka) means 'the mirror of the mind', however, does not represent the teachings either of the Upanishads or of Śrī

Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary. For what the latter says is as follows:

(3) An investigation is opened... into the meaning of the texts of the Upanishads. This enquiry is supported by dialectical reasoning not in conflict with the upanishadic texts, and its purpose is the attainment of supreme beatitude. (B.S. Bh.I.i.1; M.V.31,8;192,1, note)

(4) Indeed, the Veda itself remarks that the enquiring human mind may be used in its support, in such texts as 'It should be heard about, it should be pondered over' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) and 'Just as a wise man, a man of intelligence, would reach Gandhāra (by asking the way at each village), so here a man who has a Teacher will come to know' (Chānd.VI.xiv.2). (B.S.Bh. I.i.2)

(5) But, in the context of the present subject, independent reasoning will inevitably be open to the charge of having no firm foundation. For Being is utterly transcendent, and the cause of liberation from earthly existence. Its true nature cannot be so much as conceived except in the light of Vedic revelation interpreted in the traditional way. The subject-matter here is not within the range of perception, as it has no colour or form or perceptible attribute. And we have already explained (cp. M.V.28,1) how it cannot come within the scope of inference, etc., as there can be no perceived inferential sign. (B.S.Bh.II.i.11, cp. M.V.31,12)

(6) And it is familiar from worldly experience that what one secular philosopher propounds as right knowledge is demolished by another, and what he establishes is demolished by another in turn. How, then, can the conclusions of secular philosophy be regarded as right knowledge when they belong to a domain where uniformity is not attainable? (B.S.Bh.II.i.11)

(7) True, it has been said that the Veda itself proclaims that reason must be respected, as it enjoins pondering as well as hearing. But this should not be used as a pretext for allowing empty hypothetical reasoning to gain entry. For in the present context only those arguments that are sanctioned by the Veda may be resorted to, and that only as an auxiliary to the attainment of direct experience. (B.S.Bh.II.i.6, M.V.31,11)

Thus only two kinds of reasoning are admitted by Śrī Śaṅkara — that is, reasoning to investigate the meaning of the texts, and reasoning that depends on the Vedic texts for its premises. Reasoning that is not based on Vedic tradition but only on human ingenuity is rejected as devoid of firm foundation. So it stands established that no other form of reasoning is acceptable apart from that approved as an auxiliary to the Vedic

texts, dependent on them, and carried out in conformity with experience. Such reasoning may take the form of reflection over the implications of the succession of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep in our experience, or pursue other such themes.

We might also wonder about the propriety of dialectical reasoning used to refute the erroneous constructions of other philosophers in the realm of discursive reason (indirect knowledge). Such dialectical reasoning, however, is legitimate. For the Absolute is immediately evident (and thus inaccessible to the hypothetical constructions of reason, which are an obstacle that must be removed); on this we have the text, 'Explain to me the Absolute that is immediately evident, which is the true Self' (Bṛhad.III.v.1).

As for the doctrine that, even when there was immediate knowledge of the Self arising from the Vedic texts, there could be the erroneous notion that it was indirect knowledge — that whole idea is incorrect. For the Absolute is ever inseparable from us as our own Self. Knowledge of it means, and can only mean, negation of superimposition. Thus it is said in Śrī Śaṅkara's Gītā Commentary, 'Knowledge, therefore, is immediately evident, as also is the knower. So all that is required is the negation of what has been falsely superimposed onto the Absolute through Ignorance. No effort is required actually to know the Absolute, as it is perfectly familiar already' (Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.50, cp. M.V.204,10;256,14).

Hence the other doctrine that metaphysical knowledge derived from Vedic revelation is initially indirect, and that direct knowledge has to be acquired through further efforts, is also unsound. It would imply that the revealed texts were not a valid means of knowledge (since their deliverances had to be corrected), and would involve the false views that attach, as we have already explained, to the doctrine championed by Maṇḍana and others that there has to be repeated affirmation of the metaphysical truth conveyed by the Vedic texts (M.V. 100 and 207, etc.). Therefore it has to be accepted that immediate knowledge arises directly from hearing the texts as Śrī Śaṅkara has explained in his commentaries, and we shall not labour the point further here.

259 HEARING, PONDERING AND SUSTAINED MEDITATION

In the Vivaraṇa, the doctrine that there can be an injunction for knowledge is refuted very much on the lines of Maṇḍana (cp. M.V.98,4;99,1). It is denied successively that there can be an injunction (1) for knowledge derived from hearing the texts, (2) for prolonging memory of such knowledge, (3) for meditation on the Absolute and (4) for immediate knowledge. (V. pp.738-41). Finally, for a fifth point, the possibility

of knowledge of the Absolute depending on an injunction is refuted with other arguments which follow the school of Maṇḍana. For example, it is argued that liberation cannot be the reward for meditating on the prescribed theme 'I am the Absolute', for in that case liberation might be impermanent (since it would have a beginning in time, being the result of an act, and consequently an end in time also), whereas it is metaphysical knowledge (as opposed to the activity of prescribed meditation) that brings the reward of cessation of wrong knowledge (and which consequently ensures realization of the fact that one is eternally liberated, cp. V. pp.744-50).

(1) When the Self has been known from the Vedic text there follows a feeling of joy; this knowledge is therefore converted into immediate intuition through repeated affirmation without an injunction (since one is prompted to perform this affirmation naturally by the initial joy). Such immediate intuition is called 'realization of the Absolute'. When this has arisen, the defects of Ignorance and its effects cease immediately. So the Pañcapādikā was right when it said (P.P. p.341/89) that realization of the Absolute brought its reward simultaneously. (V. p.749)

As this view has already been criticized in the course of examining the doctrines of Maṇḍana (M.V.100, etc.), there is nothing further to be said about it here.

In this context, the Vivaraṇa does not accept the teaching of the Pañcapādikā that the imperatives in the Upanishads enjoining hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are to be interpreted as mere eulogies (cp. M.V.154,5).

(2) One who has been through his daily portion of the Vedic texts according to the injunction for daily recitation acquires a fleeting insight into the following from the upanishadic texts. The means to immortality for one desirous of the Self and indifferent to all else is vision of the Self, as is clear from the passage beginning 'All that is dear is dear for the sake of the Self' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5), continuing 'When the Self is known, all this (world) is known' (Bṛhad.IV.v.6) and concluding 'This, verily, is the essence of immortality' (Bṛhad. IV.v.15).... And with such an enquirer in view, who would be intent on the highest end of human life, the revered Bādarāyaṇa composed the Sūtra 'Then, therefore, the enquiry into the Absolute' (B.S. I.i.1). His purpose was to compose an opening Sūtra covering the subject-matter of the work on which he was embarking, the aim envisaged, and the qualifications required for a fit student. All this is in reference to the injunction 'The Self, verily, should be heard about' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5), which lays down reflection over the texts of the Upanishads for the sake of knowledge of the Absolute, the means to liberation. (V. pp.29-32)

(3) It will be explained later (B.S. III.iv.26) that all the merit from acts performed for unseen ends contributes towards immediate knowledge of the Self. It is therefore possible to interpret the injunction 'The Self, verily, should be heard about' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) as a restrictive injunction (niyama-vidhi, M.V. p.197). It might initially appear that, for immediate knowledge of the Self, there was a choice between resort to the ordinary empirical means of simply hearing the texts (with pondering and other disciplines added) and resort to acts carrying merit which brought results in occult form (as expressed in such texts as 'Him the true Brahmins seek to know through (the merit obtained from) repetition of the Veda, through sacrifice, through charity, through austerity and through restraint of the senses' Bṛhad.IV.iv.22). There is therefore room for a restrictive injunction to prescribe hearing, etc., of the texts as the only means to immediate knowledge of the Self, as the injunction to pound the paddy to obtain the rice from the husk specifies pounding as the only method to use in a certain ritualistic context, when it would also have been possible to extract it by gouging it out with one's nails. (V. p.34)

(4) But is it not the case that the revered Commentator showed that there was no injunction for hearing, pondering and so on, and this on a variety of grounds, including the point that, if the Upanishads were basically concerned with injunctions to act, they could not, for that very reason, establish the true (actionless) nature of the Absolute? To this we reply that it is true that he showed that there could not be an injunction for knowledge. But he did not argue against an injunction for hearing and so on, as in that context the various defects you mentioned do not apply. (V. pp.36-7)

(5) How is it that we assume that there is an injunction for hearing and pondering and so on implied by the subordinate texts? We have such subordinate texts as 'Him the Brahmins seek to know through sacrifice, charity... and so on' (Bṛhad. IV.iv.22). Here knowledge is enjoined in association with sacrifice and the rest. The case is parallel with the text 'For one holds the ladle above for the gods' (where the text is a subordinate part of the topic, but constitutes an original injunction (apūrva-vidhi), as it gives teaching not found elsewhere, cp. Jaimini P.M. Sūtra III.iv.3, referred to by Śrī Śaṅkara at B.S.Bh.III.iv.20 *ad init.*). Or again, it is like the penances imposed for speaking to a woman who is in her periods (which are ostensibly imposed only for one so speaking in the course of carrying out the Darśapūrṇamāsa Sacrifice, but which, owing to the technicalities of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, have to be taken out of their narrower context and applied to anyone speaking to women in their periods generally, Jaimini, P.M. Sūtra III.iv.18).

Or the injunction to carry out hearing and pondering and so on may be parallel with such injunctions as 'Therefore the Brahmin, having mastered his learning in regard to the Self, should strive to stand based on the strength of the Self' (Bṛhad.III.v.1, M.V.57,1; 57,3, note). For the author of the Sūtras will be explaining this point later (B.S. III.iv.47). At all events, it is certain that there is an injunction to carry out hearing of the supreme upanishadic texts, with pondering and sustained meditation as subordinate auxiliary disciplines. (V. pp.37-8)

(6) Here an opponent might perhaps argue as follows. Immediate and true knowledge must belong to the province, not of injunctions, but of the explanatory passages (artha-vāda). For it is a result which depends on a valid means of cognition, and so it is not capable of being enjoined (since the results of the operation of a means of valid cognition depend on the nature of the object known and do not depend on the will of man). But the case with hearing and pondering (the opponent might argue) is different. For they are actions, and can therefore be enjoined as the means to right knowledge, themselves bringing either immediate (dṛṣṭa) or occult future (adṛṣṭa) assistance.

The Pañcapādikā answers this saying 'All this is implied in the first Sūtra...' (M.V.154,7; p.466). The author of that work means that the first Sūtra was laid down on the basis of accepting that hearing, supported by pondering and sustained meditation, were enjoined for the sake of right knowledge. And he now says that, although those texts are injunctions, they carry the additional sense of eulogy; then he goes on to explain a different point in Vedic exegesis, saying 'The gerundive is not used here in the sense of injunction (it is used in the sense of "fitness")...'. (V. p.773)

The Pañcapādikā (ibid.) *says that if the Self is already known in advance to be the dearest thing, then the words 'It should be seen' and 'It should be heard about' constitute (not an injunction but) a mere eulogy. And it claims that all this is implied in the first Sūtra of the Brahma Sūtras, and explained in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary. The gerundive (it claims) is not here used in the sense of an injunction. The usage follows the Sūtra 'The optative, the gerundive and the noun of agency may be used to express the idea of fitness' (Pāṇini III.iii. 169; cp. M.V.154,7). Earlier the Pañcapādikā had also said, in more argumentative strain: '(Texts like "The Self ought to be seen") should therefore be taken as eulogistic, turning the mind of the hearer towards knowledge of the Self by extolling it. For this reason, and also because they contradict the natural tendency to extraversion and so have an element of the function of an injunction, they may be called injunctions, but only in a figurative sense of the term' (M.V.154,5). These*

passages deny that such texts are injunctions. The attempt to make them the very evidence to show that the author of the Pañcapādikā supported the view that they were injunctions is just a superfluous piece of commentator's ingenuity.

(7) You ask how we know that reflection is enjoined in these texts? We reply — because reflection is included there in the words 'Him one should desire to know' (Chānd.VIII.vii.1) and 'That is what you should enquire into' (Taitt.III.1). And it must be reflection that is being enjoined, since there is no possibility of enjoining knowledge that is already desired, or the desire. Reflection is in fact directly enjoined in the text 'It should be heard about' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5), which continues 'it should be pondered over'. We learn from the text 'For the sake of that knowledge he should approach a Guru' (Muṇḍ.I.ii.12) that the metaphysical knowledge in question requires special means. And since attendance upon a Guru is enjoined as a means to that knowledge, we must assume that the more direct means, namely hearing, pondering and sustained meditation, are also enjoined. In a text like 'He should see the Self here in the midst of this life in the present body' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23, quoted M.V.53,7) there is an injunction, but it cannot be an injunction for knowledge, as that is not open to injunction; we must therefore assume that it is an injunction to apply oneself to the means to knowledge. Hence it is shown that the injunction throughout is really for hearing, of which pondering and sustained meditation are to be accounted subordinate parts. (V. p.559)

On these passages the following observations may be made. To begin with, it is not clear on what evidence hearing, pondering and so on are said to be performed for the sake of occult rewards in the future (adṛṣṭa). In Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary it is said that their results pertain to this very life (dṛṣṭa).

(8) Hearing and the rest are performed for the sake of a tangible end in this world, and have to be carried out until vision (of the Self) supervenes. One has to go on repeating them until that result is attained, just as one has to go on pounding the paddy until the rice is extracted. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1)

(9) It has already been established in the first topic of the present Book of the Brahma Sūtras (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1) that all meditations (upāsana) imply repeated activity. Amongst meditations in general, those which aim at leading to right intuitive knowledge only have to be performed until the end is achieved, like the pounding of the paddy to extract the rice. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.12)

There is another point on which the passages quoted above from

the Vivaraṇa are at variance with the revered Commentator. Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary says clearly that phrases like 'it should be seen' have only the outward appearance of injunctions and that their true significance lies in turning the student's gaze inwards. Nor is it correct to say that it is only denied that knowledge can be the subject of an injunction. For his use of the word 'etc.' extends the meaning to hearing, pondering and sustained meditation as well. In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary (M.V.259,11, quoted below) he openly and explicitly denies the need for, or possibility of, an injunction to hear about the Absolute.

(10) The extraverted person, who thinks 'Let me have what is desirable and avoid what is not desirable' does not achieve life's highest goal. But when such a person comes to desire the supreme human goal, texts like 'The Self, verily, is to be seen' (Bṛhad.II.iv.5) and so on turn him away from the natural concern with the psycho-physical organism and its affairs, and engage him in continuous remembrance of the inmost Self. (B.S. Bh.I.i.4; cp. M.V.68,3;125,1, note)

(11) Perhaps you will object that no one will take the necessary steps for knowledge of the Self merely through hearing an accurate account of its nature, without being prompted by an injunction. But this objection is not right. For knowledge of the Self arises merely from hearing the texts which proclaim it. What then would be the point in re-doing all over again what had already been done before? Nor can you claim that without an injunction one would not even hear the texts, as this suggestion leads to infinite regress, inasmuch as one would need an injunction to listen to the injunction, and a third injunction to listen to the second injunction and so on to infinity. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7)

And the following passage yields another denial of the need for any authority to cause one to engage in Self-knowledge.

(12) Nor would it be right to object that no one could devote themselves to the Self in that station either, on the ground that there would be no authority for any course of action whatever. For Self-knowledge bears on one's own true Self. No authority is needed for action directed to the Self, for the very reason that it is one's own Self already. Also, the authoritativeness of all authoritative means of knowledge comes to an end when the Self is known. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69, leading on to the passage at M.V.46,11)

Nor is it correct to say that hearing is enjoined as the principal, with pondering and sustained meditation as its subordinate elements. For this would rule out the possibility that anyone could acquire knowledge merely from hearing the texts

alone. And that would contradict Śrī Śaṅkara's statement that knowledge can arise merely from hearing the texts once.

(13) Repeated resort to the appropriate means of knowledge is indeed useless in the case of the person who can attain immediate experience of the fact that his true Self is the Absolute merely from hearing the text 'That thou art' spoken once. (B.S. Bh.IV.i.2; M.V.31,9; cp. also 207,9)

Nor was it correct to claim (M.V.259,5) that the upanishadic texts like that about 'having mastered his learning in regard to the Self' amounted to an injunction to hear the texts. Nor is there any hint of that in the Sūtra to which reference was made (i.e. B.S. III.iv.47). Commenting on this Sūtra, Śrī Śaṅkara says: 'The words in the Sūtra "of him who has that" mean "of him who has knowledge", namely the (perfect) renunciate'. This clearly says that the alleged 'injunction' for the one who had mastered his learning in regard to the Self is in fact a descriptive statement applying only to the one who has metaphysical knowledge. Perhaps you will say that the alleged injunction would have applied more fittingly to the man of silent sagehood (mentioned just afterwards) rather than to the man of learning, for it is in that context that it is mentioned. Even so, we find that in his commentary on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad III.v.1 Śrī Śaṅkara interprets 'learning' (not as mere academic prowess but) as perfection in metaphysical Self-knowledge. And he explains 'rising above desires' as an injunction for renunciation. So we say that no injunction to hear about the Self is laid down in this context.

Our view therefore is that it was the author of the Pañcapādikā and others who were right when they said that hearing and the rest could proceed without an injunction, and that no injunction for them in fact existed. There are others who ignore Śrī Śaṅkara's phrase 'merely from hearing the text "That thou art" spoken once' and introduce different explanations like 'Having heard, having pondered, having applied the mind for a time'. They are at fault in holding on obstinately to the idea that knowledge of the Self cannot arise from mere hearing of the texts. But let us have done with this minute examination of mutually conflicting commentaries and pass on.

In the Vārtika the term 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) is found accepted to mean knowledge of the Absolute (? read para for apara) in its supreme form (M.V.124,6 *ad init.*). Sureśvara and Prakāśātman are at one, however, in holding that hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are *enjoined* as means to knowledge. But when Prakāśātman makes pondering and sustained meditation subordinate elements in hearing, his view stands in contradiction not only with the system of Sureśvara but with that of Vācaspati as well (cp. M.V.259,7, etc.). He defends his own view in the Vivaraṇa as follows:

(14) There is a view according to which hearing, in the sense of understanding the spoken word as invested with its intended meaning, first provides indirect knowledge of the Absolute, and afterwards immediate knowledge, when the mind has been enriched with impressions from pondering and sustained meditation. On this view, understanding the spoken word as invested with its intended meaning is an aid to sustained meditation for attaining indirect knowledge of the Absolute, and in that sense hearing is subordinate to sustained meditation. But immediate knowledge of the Absolute arises (ultimately) from understanding the intended meaning of the words; when this occurs, pondering and sustained meditation are auxiliaries aiding the full fruition of the results of hearing, and in this sense are subordinate to hearing. (V. p.411)

(15) Understanding the spoken word invested with meaning is the immediate cause of knowledge of what it conveys. A valid means of cognition yields immediate knowledge of its object. The role of pondering and sustained meditation is to prepare the mind for the experience of the Absolute by giving it a permanent inclination towards the inmost Self. So in realizing direct experience of the Absolute, understanding the revealed text is the proximate cause, and pondering and sustained meditation are remote causes and therefore subordinate elements in the immediate cause. When knowledge in the form of immediate experience has already risen first as the result of merely hearing the revealed text, it may be that the meaning will nevertheless appear through error as if it were only known indirectly, and this on account of defects in the mind, clogged with the impressions of past errors. It will be no contradiction if we say that it is then that pondering and sustained meditation come into play. They contribute in an auxiliary and subordinate capacity to the result produced by hearing the texts — which is direct experience of the Absolute — by eliminating obstacles such as mental distraction.

Direct experience cannot arise through sustained meditation alone; such experience can only come from its proper cause, hearing the revealed texts. It cannot come from sustained meditation alone, as there is nothing to show that the latter is a valid means of cognition. Nor can we say that it acquires the status of a valid means of cognition when it bears on the pure Self as the Absolute, known through the Vedic texts. When a cognition has already risen, it is better to assume that the means of knowledge already in play (the Veda) supplies its own authority, rather than resort to the cumbersome assumption that authority lies in the sustained meditation, but that the latter can only be exercised by determining the truth in a sphere that is dependent on another means of knowledge (the Veda). For such authority would only come to sustained meditation extrinsically, and would derive from that authority (namely hearing the Veda) which was authoritative in its own

right. Hence the Pañcapādikā was right when it said that pondering and sustained meditation were only subordinate auxiliaries to hearing the texts, helpful in bringing the latter to consummation. (V. pp.411-3)

We have already explained how there is not invariably a need for a combination of hearing, pondering and sustained meditation (in that the extremely apt student can gain immediate knowledge on hearing the metaphysical text spoken once. M.V. 259,13, etc.). The view that there is an injunction for hearing will not stand examination either. Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary refers to those who are engaged in hearing spontaneously and of their own free will. And his point is that if through some impediment they are unable to discern correctly the meanings of the words in the metaphysical texts, then they may accompany hearing with repeated reasoning over the meaning of the texts, but only for the purpose of gaining a clear conception of the meaning of the words.

(16) There are some for whom the meanings of the words 'that' and 'thou' are obscured by ignorance, doubt or misunderstanding. In their case, merely hearing the text 'That thou art' will not yield knowledge of its true meaning. For one can only understand the meaning of a sentence if one first understands the meanings of the words composing it. In the case of such people, repeated hearing of the texts and reasoning over them is appropriate in order to discern the true meanings of the words. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2, M.V.55,6)

In Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on Gauḍapāda's Kārikās the term 'nididhyāsana' (sustained meditation) is interpreted as a synonym for restraint of the mind, practised by the middling class of students to achieve the dissolution of the mind into the Self.

(17) For all yogis of weak or medium calibre, restraint of the mind is the means to pass beyond all fear, also to the eradication of misery, to awakening to the Self and to unbroken peace. (G.K. III.40)

Śaṅkara's Commentary: There are some people who take the mind and the senses, and all that is other than the Absolute in its true form, as non-existent from the highest standpoint, like a rope-snake. They have 'become' the Absolute, and feel no fear, and have perfect natural certitude as to the indestructible peace called liberation, which depends on nothing external. As we have already explained (G.K.Bh.III.36), there are then no further spiritual practices for such a person to do.

But there are other yogis on the spiritual path of weak or middling powers of vision. They regard the mind as something other than the Self, but related to the Self, and are not awake

to the sole reality of the transcendent Self. In their case, passing beyond fear depends on restraint of the mind. (G.K. Bh.III.40, M.V.55,8)

Thus 'nididhyāsana' (to be taken here as 'restraint of the mind') is not practised for the sake of immediate experience. It is practised for the sake of dissolving the mind in the Self (i.e. becoming aware that the mind is nothing over and above the Self). This should be understood as an auxiliary to establishment in realization of the Self, associated with bringing to an end the impediment of the notion that the mind is real.

260 HOW ACTION IS AN AID TO KNOWLEDGE

We find in the Pañcapādikā the following passage.

'In the first Brahma Sūtra ("Then, therefore, the enquiry into the Absolute") the word "then" indicates a maxim according to which the daily recitation of a portion of one's Veda is a means for the understanding of the meaning of the words. Again, in Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Sūtra I.i.5, it has been taught that the reason for the authoritativeness of the Veda is that it depends on no external cause, since the connection of the words of the Veda with their meaning is eternal, and the Veda is of superhuman origin. Both these reasons are applicable here also (i.e. in the context of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads as well as in that of the ritualistic texts of the rest of the Veda), as they are relevant. But the remaining maxims of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā are not relevant for the enquiry into the Absolute. For they do not touch the subject of the identity of one's true Self with the Absolute, bereft of the phenomenal world of plurality. Nor do they give any rules to show how the words of the Vedic texts do or could expound that.

'The rules of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā are helpful for Vedanta only in so far as the latter is concerned with prescribed meditations on the Absolute as associated with form. In this branch of the Vedantic teaching we have prescribed meditations, which are a mental act bringing a transient reward, a form of action bringing karmic merit. Thus the maxims of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā in general are not relevant for the enquiry into the Absolute' (P.P. pp.240-1).

On this the Vivaraṇa comments as follows:

(1) Perhaps you will object that there are maxims in the Brahma Sūtra itself which show the authoritativeness of the Veda, and ask what was the need for appealing to the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. In this connection you might cite 'Because the Veda is its womb' (B.S. I.i.3) and 'And this shows that the Veda is eternal' (B.S. I.iii.29). We reply that you are right. But

the Vedanta teaching in the Brahma Sūtras merely agrees with and supports the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā teaching, so there is no contradiction. (V. p.537)

It is true that the Brahma Sūtra 'Because the Veda is its womb' (B.S. I.i.3) does declare the hitherto unmentioned point that the Veda is authoritative as a means of knowledge in regard also to already-existent entities, and that this point is further supported by the Sūtra 'But that (the Absolute, is the main topic of the Veda), on account of the harmony of the texts (their systematic arrangement)' (B.S. I.i.4). But there is no mention there of the doctrine of the eternal connection of the words of the Veda with their meaning. As for the Sūtra 'And this shows that the Veda is eternal' (B.S. I.iii.29), its sole purpose was to strengthen the teaching of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā on the point by instituting objections and answers; nothing is freshly expounded here as a new and independent truth.*

**(The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā school is able to accept this doctrine because it rejects the doctrine of world-periods (in which the world and the Veda are periodically dissolved) and because it holds to the reality of the world of multiplicity. Vedanta differs from it on both points. T.N.)*

(2) Perhaps you will say that because the Six Forms of Evidence of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsakas, such as direct relation (śruti), indirect implication (liṅga) and so on (cp. M.V.10) apply here also in the Vedanta, other maxims from the Pūrva Mīmāṃsakas must also apply, because they were formulated earlier than the establishment of the Vedanta. But this the author of the Pañcapādikā rejects, saying 'But the remaining maxims of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā are not relevant for the enquiry into the Absolute'. For the maxims of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā refer to originating injunctions (cp. M.V. p.197), injunctions about subsidiary actions, about avoidance of delay and about fitness of a particular person to undertake a particular ritual (see Āpadeva, Index, under utpatti-vidhi, viniyoga, prayoga, adhikāra). All this refers to what has to be *done*, and is not applicable in the context of communicating the nature of an already-existent reality. Even within the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā different maxims are needed chapter by chapter to explain different points, although they all have the common character of being concerned with things that have to be done. All the greater, then, will be the difference between the maxims of Vedanta, which apply to the knowledge of an already-existent reality, and those of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. As for direct declaration and the other Forms of Evidence, they are (not derived from the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā but are) simply a matter of common knowledge among the people. (V. p.537)

Direct declaration, indirect implication and the other Forms

of Evidence are indeed needed to determine the meaning of texts speaking of already-existent entities. And they are *derived from the earlier science (the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā). To say that they are a matter of common knowledge among the people means little. The attributes of the things denoted by certain words are commonly known among the people, yet the Vedic texts enquire into them to ascertain their true nature all the same. Otherwise, if the things propounded in the Veda were totally beyond the reach of ordinary people's knowledge, they would be unintelligible. It is, however, true that the enquiry into metaphysical reality occurs for the first time in the Vedanta. The various maxims that prevail in the discussion of that particular topic are not found in the earlier science (the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā).*

The Vivaraṇa follows the Pañcapādikā in understanding the word 'then' to mean 'after applying oneself to rituals and good works'. On the subject of how rituals and good works contribute to metaphysical knowledge, the Vivaraṇa expresses itself as follows:

(3) If a person who has been purified by performance of the daily and occasional rituals applies himself to the means for metaphysical knowledge, such as repeated application to hearing, pondering and sustained meditation, then the purifying ritualistic activity, by the peculiar help it gives, ushers in metaphysical knowledge of the Self. But when the same purifying ritualistic activity is performed (without any application to the means for metaphysical knowledge and so) without its operating as an auxiliary cause helping towards metaphysical knowledge, it then results in favourable rebirth and prosperity. Since this dual role is intelligible, there is no contradiction between the Veda and the Smṛti if the Veda attributes to ritual an auxiliary role in knowledge, and the Smṛti treats it as a means to prosperity. (V. p.540)

(4) When a person positively perceives the results of purifying ritualistic activity in the form of purity of mind and inclination towards the inmost Self, he infers that he must have applied himself to such activity in previous lives, and then he engages in the inner (more direct) disciplines for metaphysical knowledge (hearing, pondering, sustained meditation and so on). (V. p.542)

(5) It is admitted that the ultimate authority for all ritualistic action is the 'originating injunctions' (utpatti-vidhi, M.V. p.197). But just as the qualification for some of these is laid down as the desire for long life and so on, so there are others laid down according to the principle 'He who desires direct experience of the Absolute should apply himself to sacrifice and so on'.... We know that direct experience of the Self is attainable through creative activity performed at the

behest of a Vedic injunction for the sake of an end (bhāvanā). For, like heaven and so on, direct experience of the Self is a recognized human end. It is indeed a recognized aim of human life, for the sake of which one can strive. But the desire for it is intelligible only when there has first been indirect knowledge of the Self through Vedic revelation. Without this indirect knowledge of the Self through revelation there could not be knowledge that a transcendent Self existed; hence it is correct to say that desire for direct knowledge of the Self comes after there has first been verbal knowledge. And we have already explained how direct knowledge arises through the performance of other disciplines after the initial hearing. (V. p.543)

We have already said above what requires to be said about direct experience (M.V.258, 7, note).

(6) In this context, sacrifice and the rest are subordinate to a particular desire. They are known to be auxiliaries for the fruitful action expressed by the verb 'seek to know' in the text 'Him the true Brahmins seek to know' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.22); hence they are known to be connected with the desired goal, and to be means to direct realization of the Absolute. Nor would it be correct to say that they were connected with the desire only, and not with the desired goal; for desire (being already present) is not the goal that has to be accomplished. (V. p.543)

The Bhāmatī, on the other hand, says that ritualistic action is performed to promote the rise of desire for knowledge. 'The Atharva Veda (Muṇḍ.III.i.8) shows that knowledge comes to that metaphysically ignorant person of pure intellect, whose sins have been exonerated by the performance of the daily and occasional ritual, and in whom the desire for knowledge has arisen' (Bhā.I.i.1, p.61/84, cp. M.V.204,1).

(7) What is the difference between the view that rituals cause purification of the mind and the view that they cause desire for knowledge, seeing that on both views rituals contribute to knowledge through purification? To this our reply is that purification of the mind leads to metaphysical knowledge only if there is the full complement of auxiliaries, such as the repeated practice of hearing, pondering and meditation. If the auxiliaries for knowledge are not present, purification of the mind leads only to a better life and higher births. But on the view that rituals lead to desire for knowledge, knowledge is seen as being, in a sense, the result of action, and rituals are regarded as themselves generating metaphysical knowledge, by supplying the means to knowledge until that result is achieved. That is the difference between the two views. (V. p.546)

In Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary the doctrines that rituals lead to purification and to desire for knowledge are represented as two different views.

(8) But there are some who perform the daily obligatory ritual for the purification of their souls and without desire for any external reward. For such people, the daily obligatory rituals lead to the rise of metaphysical knowledge. For we have the Smṛti text 'Such a body becomes fit for knowledge of the Absolute (through sacrifices', M.Bh.XIV.115.56, southern recension). There is no contradiction with what we have said before (cp. M.V.59,13;100,2, note), as they are only a remote auxiliary for liberation. (Bṛhad.Bh.III.iii.1, intro.)

(9) Inner and outer control and the rest are more proximate means, because they are directly connected with knowledge of the Self through the phrase 'he knows thus' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.23). Ritual sacrifices, on the other hand, are only connected with promoting the *desire* to know, and hence are to be regarded as more remote aids. (B.S.Bh.III.iv.27, cp. M.V.53,7;100,2, note *ad fin.*)

At another point in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries we find the doctrine expressed that metaphysical knowledge arises as a result of purification and desire to know occurring successively, while ritualistic actions are seen as a direct means to knowledge for those in whom desire for metaphysical knowledge has already arisen.

(10) There is a point that we have to learn from the fact that at Taittirīya Upanishad I.9 spiritual disciplines (righteousness, inner and outer control, etc.,) are laid down along with daily repetition of portions of the Veda. What we have to learn here is that Ṛṣi-like visions of the Self and so on may arise in the case of one who, having performed the daily duties laid down in the Veda and Smṛti, has lost desire for worldly joys and acquired desire for the Absolute in its supreme form (i.e. in some cases actual metaphysical vision, and not the mere desire for it, may arise from the ritual). (Taitt.Bh.I.10)

261 THE ABSOLUTE AS THE CAUSE OF THE WORLD

It is worth enquiring how the Vivaraṇa conceives the cause-effect relation.

(1) But is it not the case that without statement of proof (pramāṇa) and discussion of arguments for and against (yukti) there cannot be the due safeguards against the definition

failing to include all of what is to be defined or extending beyond it, so that some sort of a discussion is needed saying 'This is the definition of that, or perhaps the definition ought to be such and such else'? How, then, can the Sūtra (B.S. I.i.2, cp. the note below) plunge straight into a definition of the nature of the Absolute? In reply to this the Pañcapādikā says, 'Reasoning for and against, and so on, are implied for the determination of the definition' (cp. Sac Pañcapādikā Prasthānam p.107). 'And so on' refers to statement of proof. Statement of the proof of the Absolute and discussion of arguments for and against occupy the two Sūtras (B.S. I.i.2-3) which constitute the determination of the nature of the Absolute. (V. p.622)

There is nothing to show that the Sūtra I.i.2 implies statement of proof or discussion of reasons for and against. The literal meaning is no more than 'That from which proceed the origination, maintenance and dissolution of this world (is the Absolute)'. There is no authority in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary for the Vivaraṇa's statement either. All that the Commentary declares is that the origin and so on of the world as described cannot come from the Nature of the Sāṅkhyas, or from other principles (such as the atoms of the Vaiśeṣikas) derived by hypothetical reasoning. Nor does Śrī Śaṅkara raise the question whether the definition necessarily needs to include all of what is to be defined, without extending beyond it. What he says is, '... because the purpose of the Sūtras is (not to pursue trains of inference but) to weave a chaplet of flowers of the upanishadic texts'.

(2) An objector might ask whether 'origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world' define the Absolute as characteristics that are related to it. And he might suggest that they are not connected with the (actionless) Absolute even in the way, for instance, that a crow perched on a house and used to define it (indicate it) is related to the house. For origination and so on are characteristics that belong (not to the Absolute but) to the world. To this the Pañcapādikā replies, 'The Absolute is related to origination, etc., as their cause', a remark which elaborates the passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary which runs 'The phrase (in the Sūtra) "that from which" is an indication of causality (i.e. is an indication that the Absolute is the cause of the origination, etc., of the world)'.

Well, but is 'being the cause of the origination, etc., of the world' a mere accidental feature of the Absolute or does it express its true nature? To this we may reply with a counter-question. When a crow is perched on a house, where does the character of being a perch for the crow lie? If we were to suppose that 'being a perch for the crow' were included in the meaning of the word 'house', the absurd result would follow that when the crow flew away a part of the house would be lost.

But if 'being a perch for the crow' is just an accidental feature of the house, then 'being the cause of the origination, etc., of the world' may equally be an accidental feature of the Absolute (not expressing its true nature). Indeed, the pure Self that is the object of our enquiry cannot have a variety of things that it has to do, or perform actions, or stand as the power producing them. (V. p.624 f.)

(This argumentation we cannot accept.) If it were really the case that being the cause of the origination and so on of the world was not a character of that Absolute which is the object of our enquiry, then the object of our enquiry would remain undefined. And that would rule out as inadmissible the series of questions and answers instituted by the revered Commentator to introduce Brahma Sūtra I.i.2 under the heading 'What, then, is the definition of the Absolute?' And there is a further point one should note. The world is never totally separated from the Absolute; it is therefore not like the crow presented in the example, which can remove itself from the house; and it can therefore never be regarded as an accidental feature of the Absolute capable of being used to indicate its existence.

(3) The great elements composing the world have Being for their material cause. For they are pervaded by Being, of which they are the manifold modifications, as pots and the like are pervaded by their material cause, clay. Substancehood, and other characteristics which invariably accompany broad classes of things, manifest as the universals under which things are subsumed; but Being is different in that it accompanies *all* things and stands as the material cause of every modification. The very fact that all the objects composed of the great elements are actually perceived to have those elements for their material cause leads us on to infer that there must be some basic material cause or ground on which (not just one class of things but) everything depends. That there must be one single material cause of all can be shown by an inference based on the law that hypothetical entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily.

And we may also infer that it must operate as the efficient cause as well. The inference might take the form that this world must have an identical material and efficient cause, since it is an effect brought about by a 'glance' (i.e. a thought, Chānd.VI.ii.3). In this respect, it is like pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion and so on, which may be explained as having the soul for their material and efficient cause. Nor should one quote the example of pots and the like (where the efficient cause, the potter, is different from the material cause, the clay) to disprove the universality of our rule; for the identity of the *ultimate* efficient and material cause (*viz.* the Absolute associated with Ignorance) must be assumed even there. Nor would you disprove our thesis if you

pointed out that there were different factors in the efficient cause, such as the different merit and demerit of different souls; for we still have to infer that the material cause and the final controller of all merit and demerit are one. Hence even inference alone would show that one being is defined as that which functions as both kinds of cause (efficient and material). But this is confirmed by certain upanishadic texts (such as Chānd.VI.ii.3, Ait.I.i.1, etc.,) which indicate that the Absolute is both material and efficient cause of the world. (V. pp.631-5)

This ignores the relevant passage in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary to Brahma Sūtra I.i.2, which runs: 'But is not there a reference even here to an inference of this kind? No. Because the purpose of the Sūtras is (not to pursue trains of inference but) to weave a chaplet of flowers of the upanishadic texts... (M.V.261,1, note). Therefore the Sūtra "That from which proceed the origination, etc., of this world" (B.S. I.i.2) is not intended to expound an inference. Its purpose is solely to draw attention to an upanishadic text' (B.S.Bh. I.i.2). We also learn from B.S. I.iv.23-7 that the fact that the Absolute is cause of the world has to be learned from the Veda and cannot be known through inference.

(4) It stands established at the outset that because the Absolute is the creator of all, it is omniscient in regard to all its present effects. We must also assume that, since the Absolute knew every past object at the time it existed, it has infallible memory of all objects that it has experienced, this memory being an adjunct which is a modification of Māyā that embraces all objects and admits of no obstructions. For the Absolute will have known all objects that appeared in the past. In the same way, one may assume that, before the projection of the world at the beginning of a world-period, the Absolute has knowledge of all future objects that are about to be projected forth, such knowledge being an adjunct that is a modification of Māyā. For we have the example of potters and other artisans who have an idea of what they are going to make before they make it. So it is intelligible that the Absolute should be omniscient. Indeed, this is confirmed both by Vedic texts and reason; the Vedic evidence for the omniscience of the Absolute comes from the use of the term 'omniscient' in the context of the creation of the world in the text (Muṇḍ.I.i.9) 'He who is omniscient, all-knowing...'. (V. p.646)

The statement 'The Absolute knows everything through a modification of Māyā' is a mere unsupported claim. There is no evidence to show that Māyā assumes modification in the form of ideas (vṛtti) in the way that the mind does. So the inference purporting to establish omniscience is not properly conceived.

It is, incidentally, not an independent inference. It is only brought in to support the Veda. It would therefore have been enough to accept — as the Vivaraṇa does later accept — the remark in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, '(There is no self-contradiction in the proposition) "He who has eternal and constant knowledge capable of illumining all objects is omniscient"' (B.S.Bh.I.i.5, cp. M.V.273,3, note, III). What was the need for assuming the modification of Māyā in the form of an idea like a mental idea (vṛtti)?

Further, to say that the omniscience of the Self consists in its ability to know everything in the three periods of time is an incomplete indication of its omniscience. For time itself is an object of knowledge. On this point we may refer to a passage in the Taittirīya Commentary which runs: 'But when the Absolute is spoken of in the texts as "knowledge" (vijñāna), we have an affirmation that knowledge is of the very nature of the Absolute and inseparable from it, as light is inseparable from the sun, or heat from fire. Such knowledge is not anything that depends on any external cause, as it is the eternal nature of the Absolute. Because all things are inseparable from the Absolute in space and time, because the Absolute is itself the cause of space and time and all other conditioning factors of the objective realm, and because the Absolute is supremely subtle, there cannot, either in the past, present or future, be anything separate from it, greater than it or unknown to it. Therefore the Absolute is omniscient' (Taitt.Bh.II.1, cp. M.V.255,3, note).

(5) There are three ways in which one can describe the cause of the world. One can say that the cause of the world is the Absolute qualified by Māyā, so that the Absolute and Māyā together form the cause of the world, like two strands of a rope. Or else one can quote the Vedic text 'They see the power of the divine Self, hidden in its own constituents (sva-guṇa)' (Śvet.I.3) and say that the Absolute has the power of Māyā, and is the cause of the world through that (as its instrument). Or else one can say that the Absolute is the cause of the world because it is the ground on which Māyā, the material cause of the world rests.

On the first theory, the theory that the Absolute is qualified by Māyā, the Absolute is already indicated indirectly as infinite by the name 'Brahman' connoting (infinite) magnitude, and it is further defined elsewhere in its true nature as (transcendent) Knowledge and Bliss; through these two definitions Māyā is eliminated, and the Absolute is left in pure form (as the ultimate cause). On the second and third theories, since Māyā is dependent on the Absolute, its effect will also be dependent on the Absolute; this is parallel with the case where a cloth composed of threads is seen to be dependent on fibres because the threads themselves are dependent on fibres. That which undergoes apparent delimitation (upādhi) to be the

support of that which lies behind the world as produced effect (i.e. which appears to be the support of Māyā) is of the nature of Knowledge and Bliss, and that is the Absolute; this argument points to the Absolute in pure form (as ultimate cause of the world). (V. pp.652-3)

(6) Therefore it stands proved that the Absolute is omniscient and is both the efficient and the material cause of the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world. In this connection, some say that the Absolute, the cause, possessed of the power of Māyā, may be likened to the original of a reflection, while the individual souls are like so many reflections, each bound to its own private Ignorance (avidyā). Another school says that the Absolute is the cause of the world in the sense of being reflected in both Māyā and Ignorance; the Absolute in its pure form is the seat of immortality; the individual souls are bound by their Ignorance (avidyā).

According to a third theory, it is the individual souls themselves which, each through their own particular Ignorance, manifest the Absolute in the form of a (private) world of multiplicity. The various worlds seem to be one because of similarity, like a second moon seen by several people at the same time (and thought to be the same). According to others, the Absolute is the cause of the world in the sense that it is its true nature. According to yet another view it is the Absolute alone, itself a perfect unity, that undergoes an illusory evolution (vivartate) into the form of the world through its own Ignorance, like one undergoing a dream or similar state. On this view it is the Absolute itself which undergoes illusory modification through its own Māyā-Avidyā. (V. p.693)

Here the author of the Vivaraṇa implies that he agrees with the last view, which follows that of the Iṣṭa Siddhi (cp. M.V.219).

The author of the Vivaraṇa goes into elaborate details in proving the falsity of creation, and summarizes by saying: 'Therefore perception, inference and presumption all prove that the world is false. The Absolute lies motionless in perfect peace. Therefore the Vedic texts on creation are of no particular importance; for creation is but an illusory manifestation (vivarta)' (V. p.642).

But if he was right there, and the world really was an illusion, then his present enquiry into a set of alternative theories about its cause is quite out of place, when he asks 'Is the Absolute alone the cause of the world? Or is Māyā the cause? Is it the Absolute or the souls who are the cause of the world?' And again, it is stated both in the Veda and in the Brahma Sūtras that the Absolute is the cause of the world: we have the texts 'That from which these creatures are born' (Taitt.III.1) and 'That from which proceed the origination,

etc., of this (world)' (B.S. I.i.2).

This statement of alternatives is also unjustified because there cannot be alternatives in regard to a matter of fact as there can be in regard to a matter of duty. There is no logical justification for posing such a problem. Māyā is of the nature of the seed-power of name and form, and is imagined in the supreme Self, through Ignorance, as if it was the supreme Self. It has no independent existence of its own, so that there is no question of posing the alternative 'The cause of the world is either the Absolute or Māyā'. Nor are the individual souls anything separate from the Absolute. For any such idea would contradict such Vedic teaching as 'Let Me enter into these three deities (great elements) as this living soul' (Chānd.VI.iii.2) and 'That thou art' (Chānd.VI.viii.7). In the Brahma Sūtras, too, the Sūtra 'And it is only a reflection' (B.S. II.iii.50) teaches specifically that the soul is only a reflection of the Absolute. And the Sūtras deny repeatedly and explicitly that the soul is the cause of the world, as for instance in the Sūtras 'Not the other, as this would be illogical' (B.S. I.i.16, M.V.199,3, p.604)and 'Not the embodied one, for that would be illogical' (B.S. I.ii.3).

We conclude, therefore, that the statement that the Absolute was the cause of the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world was not intended to imply causality; the meaning was that the Absolute was ever the true nature of the world. The causality of the Absolute in regard to the world does not proceed from its intrinsic nature; it (is an appearance that) arises through distinctions of form imagined through Ignorance. The same is true of its association with all powers (śakti). The conclusion is inevitable. And Śrī Śaṅkara says in his commentaries:

(7) The definition of the Absolute is 'That with which beings remain essentially identical whether in the time of projection, maintenance or withdrawal'. That Absolute you should seek to know. (Taitt.Bh.III.1)

(8) But the Absolute becomes subject to (apparent) transformation (pariṇāma) and to all empirical experience through apparent distinctions consisting of name and form, manifest and unmanifest, which are imagined through Ignorance and are indeterminable either as being the metaphysical reality itself or as being anything different. In its ultimately true form, however, it remains beyond all empirical experience and not subject to transformation. (B.S.Bh.II.i.27, M.V.47,6)

(9) Even the statement that the Absolute, though bereft of all particular characterization, can be associated with all powers, is made only through attributing to the Absolute distinctions that are imagined through Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.II.i.31, M.V.224,9)

(10) Yet the texts teaching that there was a creation are not immediately concerned with proclaiming the ultimate truth. For their subject-matter falls within the realm of practical experience consisting of name and form imagined through Ignorance, and their ultimate purpose is only to indicate how one's true Self is the Absolute. This is a point that should never be forgotten. (B.S.Bh.II.i.33, cp. M.V.140,15)

262 SUMMARY OF THE VIVARAṆA

From the fact that the respected Prakāśātma Yati (Prakāśātman) quotes many different opinions, we infer that many different sub-schools of Advaita had come into existence before the time when he came to compose his Vivaraṇa on the Pañcapādikā. Amongst the medley of different views summarized, it is only occasionally that he reveals his own view in unmistakable terms. He gave support, buttressed by original arguments, to the doctrine of the author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi that there existed a different kind of Ignorance over and above the universally recognized triad of non-apprehension, erroneous cognition and doubt — namely a positive Ignorance of indeterminable reality-grade. We must conclude from this that many Vedantins in his day accepted the doctrine that Ignorance was the material cause of the world of plurality. Amongst the different theories for solving the problem of the cause of the world mentioned in the course of the book, there appear to have been some which agreed with the followers of Vācaspati Miśra. But it was with the view of the author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi that Prakāśātman was particularly inclined to associate himself.

The author refutes the doctrine that the individual soul is 'delimited by' (as opposed to 'reflected in') Ignorance, and establishes his own view that the individual soul is a reflection (M.V.244,245). Again, in his doctrine that pondering and sustained meditation are subordinate elements in hearing, and are enjoined (M.V.259), he partly moves away from Vācaspati. Even so, there are points where he allows a place to the characteristic positions of Maṇḍana's school. He says that Ignorance has its seat in the Self, but that in practical experience it manifests seated in the individual soul. He holds that everyone must accept the identity of Ignorance and Māyā. He accepts that the first knowledge yielded by revelation is indirect, and that immediate knowledge emerges with the help of sustained meditation. He also holds that a continuous stream of memory can be maintained without regard to any injunction to know, because it is found, without exception, to be an activity that brings an immediately evident reward, like the pleasure derived from massage of the body (V. p.738 f., cp. M.V.259,1). Here again he is adopting the standpoint of the school of Maṇḍana (cp. M.V.259, intro.).

He does not examine the doctrine (of Maṇḍana and Vācaspati)

that there are many Ignorances with their seat in the different souls. But he does mention the view of those who hold that it is the Ignorance belonging to the individual soul that is the cause of the world, when he says 'It is the individual souls themselves which, each through their own particular Ignorance, manifest the Absolute in the form of a (private) world of multiplicity' (M.V.261,6). The respected Prakāśātman accepts the doctrine of the impression of Ignorance (avidyā-saṃskāra) continuing in the case of the person liberated in life, which is approved by both Maṇḍana and Vācaspati; and he also supports with a wealth of arguments Vimuktātman's doctrine of a remnant of Ignorance (avidyā-leśa) remaining in the case of the person liberated in life, and tries to make it agree with the teaching of Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary. Here and there he refutes miscellaneous strands from the web of teaching of the school of Bhāskara that had already been refuted by Vācaspati and Vimuktātman, treating the doctrine of Difference in Identity with evident disdain.

The Vivaraṇa gives itself out as a mere explanation of the Pañcapādikā. But in fact it goes into the whole question of what the Pañcapādikā said, what it did not say and ought to have said, and what it said wrongly (in the manner not of a ṭīkā but of a Vārtika). Compared to the Pañcapādikā, it uses more powerful arguments to establish the doctrine that Ignorance is a form of material cause. The style of argumentation of the Logicians is introduced in what is supposed to be the path of pure Vedantic reflection; numerous inferential arguments based on mere intellectual hypothesis are introduced, on the plea that Vedanta teaching admits of argumentation that is not in conflict with the Upanishads. In addition, there is talk, following Vācaspati, of the necessity for 'seedless samādhi' (asamprajñāta-samādhi) for vision of non-duality, thereby setting up an alliance with the followers of the Yoga system. Thus the author shows himself ready to follow the paths of other schools; and it cannot be denied that the Vedic method of false attribution followed by later retraction is compromised by being reduced to one subordinate element among others in the exposition of the path to knowledge of the unity and sole reality of the Self.

In spite of all this, modern Vedantins insist on claiming that the system of Śrī Śaṅkara is fundamentally the same as that of the Vivaraṇa. Wherever any difference between the two systems is too obvious to be altogether denied, scholars exercise all their ingenuity in reducing them to unity with every kind of foolhardy argument. That they should accuse those who point out the differences between the two systems of not knowing the true tradition is, in my view, a remarkable testimony to the strange fascination that the Vivaraṇa can exert over the minds of certain people.

CHAPTER XIII
THE NYĀYA MAKARANDA

263 THE NYĀYA MAKARANDA

After the publication of the Vivaraṇa, Advaita Vedantins gave up their zeal for founding new schools of Advaita philosophy. Later authors made strenuous efforts to establish that the various earlier Advaita schools were all broadly saying the same thing, and tried to enlist the interest of enquirers through vigorous efforts to refute the Dualists. The earliest attempt in this direction was that of Ācārya Ānandabodha Bhaṭṭāraka.

Nothing is known of the life of Ānandabodha. The conjecture that he was a pupil of Vimuktātman does not appear to have been substantiated. What speaks slightly in its favour is the fact that he exhibits a marked respect for many of the arguments found approved in the Iṣṭa Siddhi. The works of Ānandabodha that have been published so far are the Nyāya Makaranda, the Pramāṇa Mālā and the Nyāya Dīpāvalī. Our brief discussion here will be based chiefly on the Nyāya Makaranda.

We have already indicated how, after the Vivaraṇa, Advaita authors began not only to expound the meaning of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary in a way that lets in 'Root Ignorance' and other ideas from the Pañcapādikā and the Vivaraṇa, but also to exhibit a tendency to set up an alliance with other schools on certain points and to follow the techniques of the Logicians. In following this path, what the respected Ānandabodha did was to take up topics from the Brahma Siddhi, the Vidhi Viveka (of Maṇḍana), the Bhāmatī, the Iṣṭa Siddhi and the Vivaraṇa and to try to establish an eclectic Advaita doctrine from them, adding supporting arguments of his own.

264 THE ORDER OF TOPICS IN THE NYĀYA MAKARANDA

We see from an opening stanza indicating the scope of the work that its purpose was only to stand as a collection of maxims useful to the student. 'Having carefully examined the clusters of flowers to be found in the works of philosophers, I have made a selection of the fragrant juices (makaranda) of the true maxims (nyāya) they are found to contain (nyāya-makaranda)'.

The topics are disposed as follows. (1) Refutation of the view that there is difference or plurality in the knowing subject (lit. Knower of the Field, cp. M.V. p.35): (2) Refutation of the existence of difference amongst objects of knowledge: (3) Examination of error: (4) Demonstration of the falsity of the world of plurality: (5) The self-luminosity of the Self: (6) The validity of perception and the other means of knowledge within the empirical realm: (7) Apprehension of the relation to their meaning of words denoting an already-established existing entity: (8) Examination of the true nature of the injunctive texts: (9) How the texts of the Veda can refer to what is partless: (10) Examination of the nature of liberation: (11) The seat of Ignorance: (12) The means to liberation: (13) The cessation of Ignorance.

The method is always the same. First the opponent's view is given. Then the accepted view is brought out almost entirely by refutations of the opponent's view. Vedic texts are only introduced occasionally. At the conclusion of the discussion of each subject a new one is introduced by a verse, and then the work goes on to discuss that. Respect is chiefly paid to post-Śaṅkara works claiming to be of Śrī Śaṅkara's school (rather than to Śrī Śaṅkara's own writings); the method followed in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries of using reason in subordination to direct experience is only found occasionally. Abundant use is made of dialectic, employing the arts of inference and hypothetical presumption to bring out the hidden implications of the Dualist's doctrine that are unfavourable to his view. The chief method of classical Vedanta, which concentrates on the great upanishadic texts and follows the principle of false attribution followed by later retraction, never even comes into consideration. Here, therefore, we shall only expound the bare outline of the argument of the Nyāya Makaranda and subject it to examination.

265 REFUTATION OF DIFFERENCE

The final doctrine of Vedanta as a whole is summarized in the following benedictory verse (N.M. p.1-2). 'He by whose light all else shines, but who is not Himself an object illumined by any light; He of whom the sages say that the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world is His sport; He whom the

Upanishads declare to be beyond the range of mind and speech; eternal reverence to that Lord Viṣṇu, the Self of the universe, of the nature of pure and secondless Bliss!'

The first line of the verse (i.e. in the Sanskrit) lays it down that, as the homogeneous light of pure Consciousness, the supreme Self illumines the whole world and is itself self-luminous and inaccessible to any other knowledge; the second line declares that the Self, though actionless, is the cause of the rise, maintenance and dissolution of the world, thereby implying that the world depends on the Self for its existence and has the Self for its true nature; the third line affirms that the Self is beyond the range of speech and mind, and that it is the Self of all; the fourth speaks of it as having the nature of pure, secondless Bliss.

The work begins by refuting the arguments of those who hold to a plurality of selves, and who argue that one cannot otherwise explain how different individuals have different experiences of pleasure and pain, or explain the implications of the birth and death of individuals. It then points out that such arguments contradict the Veda and the Smṛti. Then it sets out an inference of its own to prove the unity of the Self.

(1) The nature of living bodies is in dispute between the pluralist Logician and the Advaitin (one holds them to be real and to constitute a real plurality, the other holds that they are of indeterminate reality-grade and do not constitute a real plurality). But they are animated by a Self that cannot be denied by either party, from the mere fact of being animated bodies. Here what is adduced as a proof (an animated body) is itself what is declared to be the object of proof (animation by a Self), as cannot be disputed in the case of their own body by either party. It is the same with (all) these (other bodies); therefore they also constitute the thing to be proved. (N.M. p.29)

(The language here is elliptical and grammatically ambiguous. The translator would draw attention to a passage in another work by Ānandabodha which runs as follows. 'Moreover, individual selves are not different from the supreme Self, from the mere fact that each is a self, like the supreme Self. To show that the individual selves are not really mutually distinct we argue as follows. Bodies as centres of individual experience are under dispute between the Advaitin and the Pluralist (one affirms that they are real, the other that they are of indeterminable reality-grade). But they are centres of experience for a principle (the Self) that cannot be denied by either party, from the mere fact of being centres of experience, like the body of the opponent.... If we were to accept the Pluralist's hypothesis of many selves, then everything would have a

separate self, including the ether and so on. But that would have the fault of leading to too many unproved assumptions' (Pramāṇa Mālā, p.3).

Neither form of the argument seems, at first sight, to refute the Pluralist satisfactorily. It could be seen as only establishing a plurality of selves. However, if we consult M.V.265,2, note, we see that the argument must be taken in conjunction with the upanishadic texts on one Self quoted earlier in the N.M. If the upanishadic doctrine of one Self can *be true it* must *be true. Admittedly it could not be true if the Logician could establish his case logically for a real plurality of individual selves: but his attempts to do so are demolished in succeeding passages. T.N.)*

The author then points out how the example chosen by the opponent is inconvenient for the opponent's own view.

(2) The Self is not rendered plural by being the substratum of all the other lower universals apart from substancehood. For it is itself an eternal, changeless, all-pervading, partless substance. In all these respects it is like the ether of space. (N.M. p.30)

The first argument only establishes the possibility *of the unity of the Self, the doctrine to which the author holds. In the second, he refutes the plurality of the Self, basing himself on methods approved by the Logicians themselves. It is true that appeal is made to the texts of the Veda and Smṛti teaching that the Self is one; but no attempt is made to show how these texts can be a means to direct experience and so a valid means of cognition. The argument incidentally shows that at the time when the author of the Nyāya Makaranda lived there were no opponents of Advaita trying to prove the plurality of the self who also held that the ether was a produced effect that had a beginning.*

In the next passage, the author refutes the possibility of difference in the known, that is, in objects. Dialectical arguments are given to show that perception does not reveal difference, whether difference be taken as an attribute or as an attribute of an attribute. And if it cannot be revealed by perception, *a fortiori* it cannot be revealed by the other means of knowledge, which all depend on perception. 'Awareness of difference, the subject of dispute, is not brought about by any valid means of cognition, because it cannot be shown to be so brought about, and also because it is (mere unsupported) awareness of difference, like the awareness of difference that occurs in dream' (N.M. p.55).

It is clear that in none of these passages do we find a general refutation of the doctrine of difference as a whole; we find only a refutation of the hypothetical arguments in

favour of it brought by the opponent. We do not find any proof of non-duality either. In Śrī Śaṅkara's treatment of the problem, however, we find an effortless refutation of duality and proof of non-duality based on direct experience, both of which hold.

(3) One could not conceive of the Self as embodied except through Ignorance in the form of false self-identification with the body. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4; cp. M.V.160,9, note;203,7, note)

(4) For duality does not exist either when the mind has become 'no mind', that is to say when its motions have been suppressed through the practice of discriminative insight and dispassion, or when it is dissolved in dreamless sleep like the rope-snake dissolved in the rope. This proves that duality is unreal. (G.K. Bh.III.31)

266 ERROR IS THE MANIFESTATION OF AN OBJECT OF INDETERMINABLE REALITY-GRADE

The refutation of difference ended with the assertion that the conviction that one was experiencing difference need not necessarily arise from the senses; it could arise from simple confusion, as well as from dream and imagination. This assertion leads on to the question, 'Well, what is this thing called error?' (N.M. p.57) By way of reply, Ānandabodha first states and rejects the four theories of error called Akhyāti, Anyathākhyāti, Ātmakhyāti and Asatkhyāti. Then he says, 'The Ācārya (Vimuktātman) says that error is the manifestation of an object of indeterminable reality-grade' (N.M. p.111), and proceeds to expound his own theory entirely on the lines of the Iṣṭa Siddhi and mostly using arguments found in that work. The question 'What, then, is this thing called indeterminability?' is answered in two ways.

(1) To the point that was raised about the impossibility of defining indeterminability as difference from the real and from the unreal we reply as follows. (The difficulty was: 'When we say "indeterminable as real or unreal", do we mean "not either real or unreal", or do we mean "not real-and-unreal"?') Neither definition will hold. The first, in denying that the indeterminable was real, would affirm that it was unreal (whereas it is not unreal, but indeterminable), and in denying that it was unreal would affirm that it was real (whereas, again, it is not real, but indeterminable as real or unreal). The second interpretation was no better. For "real" and "unreal" would still apply in a contradictory way to the indeterminable, even if "real-and-unreal" taken as a combination was excluded', N.M. p.111.)

To this point we reply as follows. It is true that the definitions, namely difference from real and from unreal on the one hand, and difference from both-real-and-unreal on the other, do not either of them hold if taken separately. But we see nothing wrong if indeterminability be defined as 'difference from real-and-unreal as further delimited by difference from real and difference from unreal'. (N.M. p.115)

(2) There is an implication (arthāpatti) which shows that the indeterminable exists. For the absolutely unreal, like the horn growing from the forehead of a man, cannot manifest at all; and the absolutely real, like the Self as Consciousness, is not subject to cancellation. Errors like the shell-silver, therefore, must be indeterminable (as either real or unreal), since their manifestation and subsequent cancellation is inexplicable otherwise. (N.M. pp.115-6)

(3) Earlier a difficulty was raised by the opponent in the following terms. 'There cannot be cancellation of what is indeterminable as unreal; and there cannot be manifestation of what is indeterminable as real. So how can you say that your conception of the indeterminable is intelligible?' This objection, however, betrayed small insight. For it is the real and the unreal that imply absence of cancellation and absence of manifestation respectively; difference from the unreal and difference from the real do not do so. What proves this? The useless complexity (of saying 'difference from the unreal' instead of 'real' and 'difference from the real' instead of 'unreal' we reply, allied to the fact that there is no other solution to the earlier difficulties raised, apart from resort to the theory of the indeterminable). (N.M. p.116)

(4) Another objection was raised, saying that the theory of the indeterminable character of the object of erroneous cognition contradicted experience. First, it was argued, we have the experience 'This is real and it is silver' (which implies reality). Later we have the experience 'This is not silver', which bears on an unreality. To say that the cause of this experience (which must be something real and unreal) is something indeterminable as real or unreal is to contradict experience.

But this objection is not right either. For just as the fact of being a 'this' that belongs to the shell is connected with the silver by an indeterminable (false) relation, so is the reality of the shell (reading tat-sattā, cp. T.P. p.143, line 3) connected with the silver by an indeterminable relation; and no other reality is apprehended in the silver. So there is no contradiction with the original experience 'This is real silver' (since the 'reality' there experienced was only an appearance arising from a false relation). (N.M. pp.117-8)

(5) There are some, on the other hand, who accept three grades of reality, and rebut the charge of contradicting experience (in their theory of error) by resort to a definition of indeterminability that makes clear that it is different from full reality. (N.M. p.119, cp. M.V.251,3)

This last view is that of the Vivaraṇa Ācārya.

(6) The idea of unreality expressed as 'This is not silver' negates (not false silver but) silver as existing in the external world, or silver that is real throughout past, present and future; after this experience of unreality one reflects 'The silver was false'. Nor should it be said that there cannot be negation of empirically real silver here as there is nothing to suggest that it exists here. For a false appearance of illusory silver can very well occasion negation of empirically real silver. There cannot, of course, be negation of anything where its existence is attested by direct knowledge of it in its true nature, as that would contradict known laws. (N.M. pp.119-20)

(7) Nor is it right to say that, on account of the contradiction with the later experience, the earlier experience (of false silver) had no basis in an external object. For all experiences must be accepted as competent in their own field, otherwise a valid cognition itself might be subject to cancellation through later experience. (Hence we must accept that the erroneous cognition had an external object of indeterminable reality-grade, namely objective false silver.)... A cognition, too, can very well be erroneous even though it has an external object; for its erroneous character will be intelligible when it is seen that it bears on an object of indeterminable reality-grade. (N.M. p.121)

On this point, the truth of the matter is that it is the shell that is the object of the erroneous silver-cognition (and not the external silver of indeterminable reality-grade alleged by the later theorists). This is affirmed on the authority of Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary, where he says, following ordinary worldly experience, 'Shell appears as silver' (M.V.138,10). The sound explanation to give here is that the appearance of silver is a piece of imagination arising through the combination by the mind of certain perceived parts of the shell in a peculiar way, arising from the fact that the shell is not perfectly perceived as a whole. And on this basis one can say that the very notion that a certain entity, which is neither the shell nor real silver, comes into being at that time is itself an error. As for the conclusion that the appearance of silver is indeterminable because it cannot be explained either as real or as unreal — that is just a piece of hypothetical reasoning devoid of any evidence.

The argument from implication (arthāpatti, on the pattern 'inexplicable otherwise',) quoted by the author in favour of an object of indeterminable reality-grade, does not really forward his case, as the phenomenon is perfectly intelligible on the alternative (and simpler) explanation that the shell, itself (from the standpoint of worldly experience) real, appears through error as silver. The subsequent experience, 'There was no silver here; it was only through error that I imagined it', speaks against the possibility of the existence of false objective silver. The claim is made that, over and above the shell, there comes into existence a purely phenomenal (prātibhāsika) piece of objective silver. The only ground for this is empty hypothetical reasoning to the effect that all experiences are valid in their own field, so that the experience 'This is silver' must have an object. But the argument does not hold. For the experience of silver can very well be regarded as having its objective basis in the shell, so that it is out of place to imagine that that objective basis lies in some alleged illusory objective silver, for the existence of which there is no sound evidence. Thus it is the shell and nothing else that is the object of a perception in which it (erroneously) assumes a different form. The false perception is explicable through a defect in the instruments of knowledge; so the fact of error can be explained without recourse to the hypothesis of a separate entity of indeterminable reality-grade (to serve as object). For we find in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary:

(8) The Self is always evident by its very nature, the sole obstacle to this being Ignorance. We have the example of a piece of shell which is actually being perceived (as a 'this'), and yet, since it is misapprehended as silver, it is not (properly) perceived. The sole obstacle here is misapprehension. The (indeterminate) perception of the shell (as a mere 'this') can only be knowledge, since it is only knowledge that is obscured by wrong knowledge. In the same way, Ignorance in the form of misapprehension is the sole obstacle in the case of the perception of the Self. (True) perception of the Self, therefore, arises through the removal of Ignorance through metaphysical knowledge, and in no other way. (Bṛhad.Bh.I.iv.7, M.V.30,8)

This shows that the passage at M.V.266,4 saying 'just as the fact of being a "this" that belongs to the shell is connected with the silver by an indeterminable (false) relation, so is the reality of the shell (read tat-sattā-saṃsargasya) connected with the silver by an indeterminable relation' was just empty talk. For the whole concept of indeterminability is unproved. Similarly, the statement that the indeterminable was different from the perfectly real on the basis of accepting three different grades of reality was not happy either.

For there is no sound evidence to show that empirical (vyāvahārika) reality and purely phenomenal (prātibhāsika) reality constitute distinct forms of reality. For we find in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary:

(9) And just as the cause, the Absolute, never deviates from reality in past, present or future, so the effect, too, the world, never deviates from reality in past, present and future. And reality is one. Hence this is another reason for the non-difference of the effect from the cause. (B.S.Bh.II.i.16, M.V. 251,4)

It is clear that this objection applies to all the early schools from that of the Pañcapādikā to that of the Vivaraṇa (cp. M.V. 251,4).

Even if we were to admit for argument's sake that the erroneous silver-appearance that is apprehended was indeterminable in the sense of neither real nor unreal, we still could not predicate indeterminability in that sense of the world-appearance. For no unreal thing that is both different from the real, the Absolute, and also outside the fold of the world-appearance, exists that we could say that the world-appearance was 'neither real nor unreal'. One may, however, admit that the apparent silver is non-different from the shell, and is in fact nothing but the shell manifesting falsely in the form of silver. On this supposition, the apparent silver will be, as such, a mere illusory appearance, while in its true nature it will be nothing but the shell. Similarly, the world-appearance is a mere illusory phenomenon in the form in which it appears: but in its true nature it is nothing but the Absolute itself. On this we have the word of an expert.

(10) If the world-appearance existed, no doubt it could come to an end. But this duality is a mere illusory appearance. In its true nature it is non-duality. (G.K. I.17)

Śrī Śaṅkara comments on the above as follows: 'A snake imagined in a rope through an erroneous idea is not something that actually exists and is then later brought to an end through discriminatory knowledge. The case with a mass hypnotist's display is similar. When the spell is removed from the spectators' eyes, we cannot say that any existent reality has ceased to be. And similar again is the case with this mere illusion of duality called the world. All that really exists is the non-dual Self, comparable to the rope in the rope-snake illusion, or to the mass-hypnotist in the case of the magician's display. Hence the meaning is that no world of plurality either comes into being or comes to an end'. (G.K.Bh.I.17, cp. M.V.47,3;227,3, note)

Such was Ānandabodha's first definition of indeterminabilty.

But he pursues the question further.

(11) Others say that the indeterminable is that form of being which is subject to cancellation. This definition does not extend too far, as items such as the Self that are determinable (as real) are not subject to cancellation. Nor is it of insufficient extension. For indeterminable items such as the rope-snake are invariably subject to cancellation. What, then, is this thing called cancellation? (N.M. pp.124-5)

(12) The Ācārya (Vimuktātman) says that cancellation means nothing more than the cessation of Ignorance together with its effects (cp. I.S. p.121,lines 10-11). And as the indeterminable exactly coincides with what is subject to cancellation, our definition is unexceptionable. (N.M. p.125)

(13) Others (Prakāśātman) define cancellation as the negation that occurs when the substratum is known in its true form (as in 'This is not silver but shell', V. p.638,line 1); and they define indeterminability as 'being open to a cancelling cognition'. (N.M. p.126)

In this connection, we shall be examining the implications for the cessation of Ignorance below (M.V.275). The first definition of cancellation here given is that of the author of the Iṣṭa Siddhi. The definition of it as the negation that occurs when the substratum is known in its true form is that of the Vivaraṇa Ācārya. The latter author does not differentiate indeterminability from the falsity of shell-silver. Nevertheless, it should be seen that his doctrine that the silver exists separately from the shell (in its own indeterminable mode) must be wrong, as it contradicts common experience, as expressed in Śrī Śaṅkara's words 'For shell appears as silver' (M.V.138,10).

267 BEGINNINGLESS INDETERMINABLE IGNORANCE

The argument for metaphysical Ignorance given in the Nyāya Makaranda is that it must exist as the material cause for purely phenomenal silver and other such illusions. We have already said most of what needs to be said on that subject in the course of examining the Iṣṭa Siddhi (M.V.221). Nevertheless, we can now add a little more.

(1) It was said by the opponent 'Ignorance is either absence of knowledge or wrong knowledge, and neither of them can be the material cause of anything, as neither is a substance'. But that also was wrong. For our appeal is to beginningless indeterminable Ignorance. And that can incontrovertibly be a cause

of an effect that is of the same reality-grade as itself. Nor is it correct to say that there is no evidence for the existence of beginningless indeterminable Ignorance. For the proof of it lies in its illusory effects. (N.M. p.122)

(2) Here there is a proof. The entity under dispute is beginningless indeterminable Ignorance as cause of error. Such an entity must exist. For error is an effect requiring a cause, and if the cause were taken otherwise (i.e. either as real or unreal) contradictions would result. If the thing to be proved did not exist in the way stated there could be no proof in the way stated, any more than there can be proof of what is already agreed by both parties (and where there is no need or possibility of proof. But here there is a proof, so the thing to be proved must exist). (N.M. p.124)

(3) That beginningless indeterminable material cause of the illusory silver is what our school refers to as Ignorance. Because it establishes itself automatically as the material cause of errors like false silver, there can be no dispute over the fact that errors like false silver have that for their material cause. (N.M. p.124)

Only if it could first be proved that the illusory silver was an effect and had an indeterminable reality-grade would it be possible to prove that Ignorance was its material cause. But, as we have already explained, the illusory silver is a mere piece of imagination, and non-different from the shell; so one should not suppose that Ignorance could possibly be its material cause.

In another passage it is argued, after the manner of the Iṣṭa Siddhi (cp. M.V.221,3) and other works, that the silver is an effect dependent on a cause.

(4) As one cannot establish either a real or an unreal material cause for such phenomena, the presence of the silver as effect forces one, as the only solution left, to infer that its material cause must be something that is neither real nor unreal. The Logician himself does not proceed differently. Faced with the fact that pleasure and the other psychic attributes are inconceivable as attributes either of the earth-element or of any of the other eight basic substances admitted by his system, he is forced to infer that they must be attributes of the soul. And we, for our part, are also forced to infer that this material cause (Ignorance) must be beginningless, as this is the theory that involves the fewest assumptions. For if we supposed that it had a beginning we should have to assume another material cause of a similar kind (i.e. of the same reality-grade) to account for it (which would also require a further cause with a beginning and so on in infinite regress). (N.M. pp.123-4)

All this might possibly be sufficient to hold up an opponent arguing on the level of empty intellectual hypotheses. But in the tradition of Vedanta it is accepted by Śrī Śaṅkara and Sureśvara in their commentaries and Vārtikas that the whole world arises as a piece of imagination playing over the reality, the Absolute, as long as the latter is unknown. If that is to be kept in view, there is no room for speculation about cause and effect in relation to the world as a whole. And Ignorance, according to Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, is only mutual superimposition of Self and not-self. And this is universally attested by empirical experience, as it is the cause of all of it. That it should have a beginning is out of the question. It is necessarily without a beginning, since it is the cause of the imagination of time and the other conditioning factors of empirical experience. Since most of the rest of what we have to say on this topic has already been said in considering the doctrine of root-Ignorance in the Pañcapādikā, the reader is asked to consult the chapter above devoted to that work (especially M.V.132-6).

268 THE FALSITY OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE SELF-LUMINOSITY OF THE SELF

In the Nyāya Makaranda, the doctrine of the falsity of the universe is maintained with arguments that depend on the characteristic theory of error of the school.

(1) Therefore the world is neither real nor unreal nor both real and unreal. It has in fact been shown to be a false appearance, the object of an erroneous cognition, the play of beginningless, indeterminable Ignorance. As we might express it in a verse: 'This being so, the universe is a manifestation of Ignorance; for it is non-conscious and known as an object, like shell-silver and the objects seen in dream'. (N.M. pp.127-8)

One should not say that the universe is neither real nor unreal. For the unreal outside the world-appearance is inconceivable. We have already said this before (M.V.266,8, note), and ask for it to be borne in mind now.

Ānandabodha has to protect this inference against the criticisms of the opponent. The opponent says: 'This inference is contradicted by evidence revealing concrete substances (or, in a technical sense, by evidence revealing laws, dharmi-grāhakamāna, cp. Abhyankar, p.192). Again, if the world were not established as real, where would be the basis either for the proof or the examples? And will not the reason adduced always be uncertain, since the Self, being known and not false, will constitute an exception?' To these objections he replies as

follows:

(2) As for the claim that our proof was contradicted by evidence revealing concrete substances (or revealing laws) — it was a very stupid one. For we have already (N.M. pp.1-56) shown that perception and the other means of empirical knowledge cannot yield genuine knowledge of a universe of differentiation.... Nor do we owe any special family allegiance to the idea that there can be no basis for a proof unless the basis is itself formally established by a proof: the basis for a proof need rest on nothing more than general familiarity.... And this also disposes of the objection that our examples lack a basis (since familiarity is enough to establish them too). (N.M. pp.129-30)

(3) The claim that the reason we adduce for the falsity of the world would always be uncertain, since the Self was known and yet not false, was also a mere fallible human opinion, betraying shallow insight. For the Self is self-luminous and (unlike the objects of the world) does not require to be illumined by anything else. Nor is this statement a mere piece of fancy. For it is confirmed by Vedic tradition and reason. (N.M. p.130)

What we have here is an inference as to the falsity of the world, the sole proof offered being that it is the object of an erroneous cognition, illustrated by the example of shell-silver. No effort is made to exhibit the point from reasoning given in Vedic tradition, or from direct experience. And the reader might well demand to know if there was any point in the exercise at all.

The author's defence would doubtless be that throughout the whole book he had only been concerned with collecting philosophical maxims, in accordance with his initial promise 'I have made a selection of the fragrant juices of the true maxims of the previous philosophers'; and for this reason logical argumentation was bound to predominate. But inference is only a means to indirect knowledge, and it allows scope for disagreement and dispute amongst different philosophers. Inference has been applied here to such topics as the falsity of the universe and the self-luminosity of the Self, without pausing to consider how far such a method could be of real help to earnest metaphysical enquirers. These remarks more or less cover the arguments given in refutatation of mental perception of the Self (N.M. p.131) and in the refutation of the view that consciousness depends on anything else for its power to illumine (N.M. p.135).

269 PERCEPTION AND THE REST HAVE PRACTICAL VALIDITY: THE VEDA HAS VALIDITY BECAUSE IT COMMUNICATES TRUTH

The thought of the Nyāya Makaranda is based on the premise that the validity of perception and the other empirical means of knowledge is subordinate to the fact that the whole world (including those means of perception themselves) is a mere illusory appearance.

(1) Since the whole world has been shown by rigorous demonstration to be an illusory appearance, perception and the other empirical means of knowledge only have practical validity within the world. The Vedic texts on non-duality, on the other hand, communicate the metaphysical truth; they are authoritative because the knowledge they convey is not subject to cancellation. (N.M. p.145)

(2) This whole false manifestation of difference is dissolved, however, on the rise of direct vision of the reality. And though it is an illusory appearance, there can be the exercise of the valid means of empirical cognition within it, as it has the reality appropriate to a knowable object; and for this reason it is intelligible that it should contradict what is illusory even from the standpoint of worldly experience. And even the direct vision itself dissolves, as it is no more than what contradicts the manifestation of Ignorance (and when Ignorance ceases it also ceases). As the powder of the kataka nut, when thrown into impure water, first dissolves the impurities and then dissolves itself, thereby purifying the water completely, so does direct vision of the supreme Self, which is in itself of the nature of Ignorance, first banish other manifestations of Ignorance, and then banish itself, thereby establishing the pure Self in its true nature. To this there can be no objection. (N.M. pp.153-4)

The two examples of the continued feeling of sourness experienced by those with a disordered liver even when eating sweet molasses, and that of the powder from the kataka nut dissolving both itself and the impurities in water, are both cited by Maṇḍana and Vācaspati (M.V.100,1;205,4). The theory of gradual attainment of direct vision (sākṣāt-kāra) adopted by Ānandabodha is their's too. As we have already examined their doctrines, we have by implication examined a good part of Ānandabodha's already. Thus the view that the Veda is authoritative in communicating the metaphysical truth and overrides all other sources of knowledge because it is intrinsically faultless, and because it is a self-sufficient authority (N.M. p.152), all follows from the teaching of the system of Vācaspati Miśra, so that nothing further remains here to be said

(cp. M.V.191,5).

The system of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara is not exactly the same. He starts from that mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self established by reasoning based on universal experience. As long as the empirical means of knowledge, which are based on that superimposition, continue, their empirical validity holds. But the Veda negates the mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self, and thereby cancels the whole mechanism of the empirical means of knowledge. It is authoritative in communicating knowledge of metaphysical reality in that, by cancelling the empirical means of knowledge themselves, it thereby allows the self-evident Self, the principle of reality, to stand self-revealed. The Nyāya Makaranda, however, makes direct vision (which, as there understood, makes the Self the object of a form of activity) a topic for argument and dispute, and only accords it authority and validity as fulfilling an active role by acquiring the power to annul its own manifestation and that of others, as illustrated by the examples of the powder from the kataka nut and so on. This does not agree with the traditional method of teaching by false attribution followed by later retraction.

(3) Similarly, there is no room for the objection that whether the means of knowledge are rationally defensible as existent and valid or not, in either case non-duality is undermined (since, if they are existent and valid, we have a plurality between different means of knowledge and a duality between the means of knowledge and their objects, while if they are not existent and valid it is impossible to establish non-duality). For our position is that if non-duality is real, and if the differentiation implied by the means of knowledge and their objects is ultimately false from the metaphysical standpoint, non-duality is not undermined. But the existence of the means of knowledge on the empirical plane is rationally defensible, and there is no reason why the metaphysically false should not bear on and reveal the metaphysically real. And when a means of valid knowledge is rationally defensible, it cannot be right to say that its object (in this case non-duality) is unintelligible. (N.M. pp.154-5)

It is clear that the teaching here is that non-duality is established by valid means of cognition, on the ground that there can be nothing wrong with the doctrine that non-duality is true, even if the means of knowledge are taken as false from the metaphysical standpoint. But the truth of the matter is that the Upanishads do not teach that the Absolute is accessible to the means of knowledge to be known objectively and determinately as a 'this'. They teach the Absolute, as we have repeatedly made clear with quotations from the revered Commentator, through the method of false attribution followed by later retraction.

(4) Perhaps you will object that if the Absolute is not an object it could not be communicated by the Veda. But this is wrong. For it is not the aim of the Veda to communicate knowledge of the Absolute as if it were an object and characterizable as 'such and such'. On the contrary, it teaches that it is one's inmost Self and not an object. It removes the distinction between knower, knowledge and known, which is set up by Ignorance. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.V.99,1, note *ad fin.*; 256,12)

These and other such passages bring home the point. Thus the Veda is authoritative in denying distinctions before enlightenment. But after enlightenment there is no need of or scope for any means of knowledge. For enlightenment is of the very nature of the self-evident Self. 'Thus we hold that even the Veda is non-existent after enlightenment' says the revered Commentator (B.S.Bh.IV.i.3).

There is therefore no call for the Advaitin to limit himself, through fear of the hypothetical arguments of the opponent, to saying 'Non-duality is not undermined through the metaphysical falsity of the means of knowledge because our position is that non-duality is real' (N.M. p.155). One should be fearless and declare that pure non-duality alone is always and from any point of view self-evident; for the various means of knowledge themselves only acquire their existence through it.

270 HOW THE UPANISHADS CAN BE AN AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE FOR THE ALREADY-EXISTENT ABSOLUTE

When the opponent (belonging to the school of Prabhākara) hears the concluding summary of the view that, even though the means of knowledge constitute a false appearance from the metaphysical standpoint, the upanishadic texts are nevertheless an authoritative means of knowledge for the Absolute, he comes forward with the following objection.

(1) Here a learned figure (a Pūrva Mīmāṃsaka of Prabhākara's school) breaks in and says: 'The Upanishads cannot be a valid means of cognition in relation to an already established and existent entity. For their words cannot have any meaning on such a topic. The only way in which (as children) we can learn the meaning of words is through observation of the behaviour of our elders that follows when they are heard; and this knowledge of the meaning of words concerns (not established realities but only) things that have to be done'. (N.M. p.155)

This objection is answered by two inferential arguments.

(2) The words in dispute (i.e. those relating to already-existing entities) are not limited to conveying their meaning only in association with the idea of something to be done, from the mere fact of their being words, like words of command in your (follower of Prabhākara) own theory (which do not invariably convey their own command-meaning in association with *something else* to be done, cp. N.M. p.169, and which are sometimes not associated with anything to be done at all, e.g. in 'one should *not* drink alcohol', T.P. p.157). (N.M. p.168)

(3) Command that something be done is not universally correlated with the meaning of all words. For the word-meanings in themselves are different from their meanings as grammatically interrelated with other words and from the interrelation. This is the case, for instance, with words not contested by either party in a dispute, (when we consider their interrelation) with other word-meanings (in a sentence).* (N.M. p.168)

**(Commenting on this difficult sentence Citsukha appears to sum up roughly as follows. One cannot say that a word must always mean something to be done through its grammatical interrelation with other words. For the word-meaning must either be interrelated with action through the very nature of the word itself or else through the fact of the word being used together with other words in a sentence. If the word were related to action by its own nature, it would be related to action in two ways when it was further related to action through interrelation with other word-meanings in a sentence, and the theorist could not explain which way was the true one. So we must take it that (apart from words specifically expressing command) words do not relate to action by their own nature. But if they do not relate to action by nature, this fact remains true even if, on occasion, they relate to action through their interrelation with other word-meanings in a sentence which happens to be concerned with command. Citsukha's Comm. to N.M. p.169. T.N.)*

Then he raises the objection that there is the injunction 'The Self should be known'; and he counters this objection with the reply that gerundives like 'should be known' may be understood in the sense of eulogy rather than command (N.M. p.172, cp. Pāṇini III.iii.169, cp. M.V.154,7). And thus he tries to establish that words are significant and intelligible in regard to already established and existent things.

Later he denies that the words of the metaphysical part of the Upanisahds can be understood as relating to anything to be done, and sums the matter up at extracts 5 and 6.

(4) Thus the Upanishads are without any defect, and can stand as an authority revealing the Self as non-dual Light, of the

nature of unsurpassable bliss. And we say that the Veda is not at all an authority leading us to suppose, in the manner of the opponent, that the Self is the object of any action that has to be done. For the words will not bear this sense. (N.M. p.179)

(5) The Veda has been shown to be an authoritative source of knowledge *only* for what is already established and existent; and this for the simple reason that it is a valid means of cognition, like perception. (N.M. p.256)

(6) Thus the doctrine stands cleared of every defect when the entire text of the Veda, including its injunctions, is seen to be a valid source of knowledge for an already established and existent entity, as that is what a valid means of knowledge is for. Thus we ourselves, in our humble way, have been able to lay low the entire edifice of the opponent's arguments — what to say, then, of the mighty authority of the upanishadic texts, which proclaim the undifferentiated Spirit? (N.M. p.257)

And thus the author closes the topic in a manner that hardly calls for lengthy discussion.

In his commentary on Brahma Sūtra I.i.4 (*ad init.*), Śrī Śaṅkara quotes the text, 'This Absolute is without a before (cause) or an after (effect), without anything inside it or outside it in space. This Self, the Witness of all from within, is the Absolute' (Bṛhad.II.v.19). Ānandabodha pays little attention to the question of how negative texts of this kind fit in for communication of the Absolute. It is clear that a mere demonstration of the way in which words can be understood as referring to an already established and existent entity (is all very well as a refutation of the theories of the school of Prabhākara but) will not show how such negative texts fit in with the affirmative texts to communicate the Absolute jointly; and unless one does this, one has not shown how the Upanishads are an authoritative means of knowledge for revelation of the Absolute.

271 HOW THE UPANISHADIC TEXTS REFER TO A PARTLESS ENTITY

An opponent is assumed to make the following argument (N.M. pp.257-9). It cannot be, he argues, that texts like 'The Absolute is Knowledge and Bliss' (Bṛhad.III.ix.28) and 'That thou art' refer to a non-dual entity. For the words of which they consist cannot be pure synonyms. If they were, they could not be used in collaboration to form a sentence.

Nor is it correct to explain the meaning of the words 'Being, Consciousness and Bliss' in the manner adopted by the

Vivaraṇa (V.pp.672-4). The argument in the Vivaraṇa is that (in the text 'The Absolute is Knowledge and Bliss', Bṛhad. III.ix.28.7) there is a higher universal (Knowledge) and a lower universal (Bliss) placed in apposition. They do not lose their meanings as universals. And yet by this very fact the three words (Absolute, Knowledge, Bliss) indicate indirectly that the idea expressed by the lower universal, a single particular manifestation of the higher universal (Knowledge) as Bliss, is the Absolute (i.e. the Absolute is Bliss, which is a species of Knowledge).* The opponent, however, claims that this is wrong. For it does not make sense to draw in other word-meanings for an indirect indication of a meaning that can be denoted by one word ('Bliss'). To this objection Ānandabodha replies as follows:

(The phraseology shows an unambiguous reference to V. pp.672-4. V.P.S. Eng. trans. pp.442 (bottom) - 445 is almost an exact reproduction of this passage. The words Knowledge and Bliss are to be taken on the analogy of 'The pot is a substance', where, because of apposition with another word-meaning, the primary meaning of the word 'pot' as the universal 'pothood' is narrowed down to a particular pot which has the attribute 'substancehood'. The final teaching is 'The Absolute is Bliss, which is a species of Knowledge'. In introducing the Vivaraṇa's argument, Ānandabodha refers to 'Being' as well as 'Knowledge and Bliss'. But this would have represented an extension of the argument beyond what is found in the Vivaraṇa. T.N.)

(1) The words 'Knowledge' and 'Bliss' are neither synonymous nor useless. For, although the meaning that they each indicate indirectly is identical, they differ in what they negate (absence of knowledge and absence of bliss respectively). (N.M. p.260)

In this context, the author quotes (with Maṇḍana, cp. M.V.102,5, note) the phrase 'The moon is the brightest luminary' and writes:

(2) The two words 'brightest' and 'luminary' are not useless, since 'brightest' serves to divert the mind of the hearer from lesser lights like fireflies, while 'luminary' diverts it from the thick darkness of the night. Neither do they imply an internal differentiation in what they signify (the moon). For the two words are only used to refer to 'the moon' conceived as an uninflected noun (and so only to pick the moon out and not to refer to it as qualified in any way). (N.M. p.262)

And the usage is set out in the form of an inference as follows:

(3) Phrases like 'Knowledge and Bliss' may refer to what is

partless, for they are definitions concerned only with the extension (denotation), not the comprehension (connotation), of the terms. They are sentences saying 'What is such and such is named so and so', like 'The moon is the brightest luminary' or '(Amongst pots), the "kumbha" is the one with the broad bottom'. (N.M. p.263)

And then he advances an explanation of how words and phrases can refer to what is partless that is derived from Ācārya Vācaspati Miśra.

(4) (Vācaspati Miśra holds that one may cite the use of) the suffixes 'a', 'in' and 'mat' to form words that refer to the one to whom something belongs for the moment and indicate him without qualifying him with any essential attribute. (This shows that words can be used to indicate the partless, transcendent reality.) We have the example of the words meaning 'the one with the curds for the Vaiśvadevī offering' and 'the one with the stick' (daṇḍin) and 'the one with the coconut water-pot'. (N.M. p.264)

This method of explanation should be compared with that found in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries on Bṛhadāraṇyaka III.ix.28.7 and Taittirīya II.1. It is true that we find such a passage as the following at the commentary to Taittirīya II.1.

(5) The Absolute is indirectly indicated, and not directly designated, by the word 'Knowledge'.... For the Absolute is void of any of those characteristics such as genus, etc., to which speech applies. Similar conditions apply to the use of the word 'Reality' (in the definition 'Reality, Knowledge, Infinity' now under analysis). For the Absolute is by nature void of all particular characteristics. The word 'reality', which in its direct meaning designates external reality as the genus Being, when used in the phrase 'The Absolute is Reality...' merely indicates the Absolute indirectly (as that which is not unreal). The Absolute is not open to direct designation by the word 'reality'. (Taitt.Bh.II.1)

But even so, it does not seem that the Commentary is very enthusiastic in claiming that a knowledge of the Absolute can actually be communicated verbally through indirect indication.

(6) In this way the terms 'Reality, Knowledge and Infinity', placed next to one another, condition each other mutually and deny their own direct meanings of the Absolute, while at the same time serving to indicate it indirectly. Thus it is shown that the Absolute is not open to direct verbal designation, in agreement with such texts as 'That from which words fall back, together with the mind' and 'Undefined, without support' (Taitt.II.9,II.7). Nor is the Absolute the meaning of any

phrase (of subject-predicate type) like 'the lotus (is) blue'. (Taitt.Bh.II.1, cp. M.V.99,1, note)

It seems to me that the meaning of this passage in the sequel requires to be thoroughly investigated by enquirers who accept that the Absolute is not the meaning of any word or of any sentence.

(7) Thus the text 'That thou art' is a text proclaiming the identity of the soul with the Absolute, and is a sentence bearing on a pure undifferentiated identity like (read vākya-vat for vākyam) 'This is that Devadatta' (which refers *only* to the identical element in Devadatta as he is and as he was last seen, disregarding all accidental features such as location, clothes, pose of body, state or age of body, etc., cp. M.V. 256,10).

The words 'This (is) that (Devadatta)' refer to the element of pure identity indicated by the two determinate forms (of Devadatta then and Devadatta now). When such an identity has been recognized, one expresses it to another person through two words with determinate meanings (Devadatta then and Devadatta now) which give up part of their meaning to indicate another part (the pure identity).

In the same way, there will be nothing wrong if we say that, in the text 'That thou art', the words 'that' and 'thou' each give up that part of their primary meaning which conflicts with the meaning of the other, and express the identity of the individual soul and the Self through figurative usage, based on giving up one part and retaining another part of the primary meaning.

So we have the inference: The text 'That thou art' bears on a meaning that is (a pure identity) without differentiation. For the words are in grammatical apposition, and do not refer to effect, cause or substance. It may be illustrated by the example of the sentence (reporting recognition) 'This is that Devadatta'. (N.M. pp.267-9)

Here it is clear that the above inference, because it refers specifically to what abides in substances, is directed against those who hold that the self (in their case = soul) is a substance, and is for the purpose of denying that grammatical apposition in phrases referring to the Self can express substance-attribute relation, or cause-effect relation or universal-particular relation. And it is true that Vedantins do not accept that the Self is a substance. Nor do we have any objection to the treatment of examples from secular speech, if it is limited to saying that in phrases like 'the brightest luminary' the usage indicates bare (unqualified) existence as expressed by the uninflected nominal stem (prātipadikārtha), or to saying that in phrases reporting recognition, and expressed in the form 'This is that...', the reference is to

pure identity, and is made through figurative usage.

On the other hand we cannot agree that the author is correct when he insists that Vedic texts like 'Reality, Knowledge, Infinity' and 'That thou art' refer by the said figurative usage to (pure identity or to) the undifferentiated as their meaning. For, whatever be the case with secular speech, it is not sound reasoning to maintain that the Veda communicates the Self through the operations of knower, knowing and known and through sentences with the form of statement and meaning. For there is one point over which we must be clear. The Self is not the object of any means of cognition. It cannot be the meaning of anything (such as a sentence) other than itself. It is not the meaning of any sentence. For the Veda says, 'That from which words fall back, together with the mind' (Taitt. II.9).

272 EXAMINATION OF THE NATURE OF LIBERATION

In the section devoted to this topic, the author begins by stating and refuting the conception of liberation offered by the Buddhist idealists, the Buddhist nihilists, the Jainas, the Vaiṣṇavas, the Kāpālika Śaivas and the Sāṅkhyas. He then states the view of the Brahma Siddi and goes on to give his own explanation of the meaning.

(1) A respected Ācārya has said that liberation is marked by an unsurpassable joy that is constant and eternal, allied to the eradication of all suffering — and this is equatable with the disappearance of metaphysical Ignorance. (N.M. p.271, about to quote B.Sid. III.106, p.119)

(2) The Absolute is one. It is of the nature of stainless light and unsurpassable Bliss. Although not in fact associated with duality, it appears through the power of Ignorance as if it was associated with duality, and as if it was stained with the attributes of transmigratory life — in which state it is known as 'the individual soul'. Transmigratory life is equatable with beginningless Ignorance. Its disappearance is liberation. This latter depends on the rise of knowledge of the all-pure supreme Self, beyond all imaginary diversity. (N.M. pp.288-9)

(3) That knowledge and Ignorance are contradictories is well known. Knowledge of the reality eradicates the Ignorance and its impressions that may surround a piece of shell, even if that Ignorance is of long standing. It has already been shown that this whole world-appearance of duality is formed of Ignorance. So it is only right to hold 'It should be brought to an end by metaphysical knowledge'. And we have demonstrated

from the examination of many traditional texts that metaphysical reality consists in the Self alone. The sound position, therefore, is to hold that all Ignorance is brought to an end by metaphysical knowledge of the non-dual Self, and only by that, and that this is the supreme end of life. (N.M. p.289)

After this he repeats more objections in detail, refutes them and finally sums up as follows:

(4) Therefore everything will be well if we say that immediate vision of metaphysical reality implies the total eradication of Ignorance, the root of all transmigratory experience, and that this is liberation. (N.M. p.308)

As this is broadly speaking only a repetition of Maṇḍana's teaching, there is nothing special to add (cp. M.V. p.266).

273 THE SEAT OF IGNORANCE

In considering the topic of the seat of Ignorance, the author brings up a number of objections to Advaita teaching, and, after refuting them, proceeds as follows:

(1) There is no contradiction if Ignorance is taken as having its seat in the light of Consciousness. Nor does the fact that it has its seat there imply that it cannot come to an end. Nor does the concept of something bringing it to a halt imply the need to assume something else to bring *that* to a halt (as the author has shown, (N.M. p.322), by borrowing the example of the fire in the reed-bed from Iṣṭa Siddhi p.69, cp. M.V.227,2). So it is quite right to say that after the expunging of Ignorance nothing else remains. (N.M. p.322)

(2) It is true that you have explained how Ignorance cannot have its seat in the individual souls. But in doing this you did exactly what we ourselves would have wished, and we are delighted. For we, too, hold that the Absolute is the sole seat of Ignorance. And we have refuted the objection that was raised earlier against this doctrine. (N.M. p.323)

(3) As for the objection, 'How can the Absolute, which is omniscient, be the seat of Ignorance? For it would be a contradiction for an omniscient being to have Ignorance' — to that objection we reply that it is only through Ignorance that the Absolute becomes omniscient. For he who knows all is omniscient. And three ways in which this may occur are possible; he may know through valid means of cognition, or through error or through natural intuitive insight (prajñā).

Now, we have already shown earlier that knowledge of distinctions cannot arise through valid means of cognition. And there

cannot be error except in the case of one who has Ignorance. And there cannot be relationship with all things through natural intuitive insight without Ignorance, as the Upanishads say 'This Spirit is relationless' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.16). Indeed, we have also shown that there cannot be a relation of any sort without Ignorance. Omniscience, therefore, tells in favour of the supreme Self being in Ignorance, not against it. (N.M. pp.323-4)

Since the Absolute illumines all, it also illumines Ignorance, and hence is very well capable of omniscience without Ignorance's aid. Thus Śrī Śaṅkara's Taittirīya Commentary and other texts may be quoted which show that there can be omniscience without recourse to Ignorance.

(I) Because the Absolute is itself the cause of space and time and of all other conditioning factors of the objective realm, no object can be separated from it in space and time. And, because it is supremely subtle, there cannot, either in the past, present or future, be anything separate from it, greater than it and unknown to it. It is in this sense that the Absolute is omniscient. (Taitt.Bh.II.1, M.V.255,3, note)

(II) There is no self-contradiction in the proposition 'He who has eternal and constant knowledge capable of illumining all objects is omniscient'. (B.S.Bh.I.i.5, M.V.261,4, note)

(III) Now, the opponent said earlier that the Absolute could not be supposed to 'glance' (i.e. 'think', cp. Bṛhad.I.ii.5, Chānd.VI.ii.3, Ait.I.1, etc.) before the rise to manifestation of the world, as it would not then be connected with a body or other organs. But this objection is out of place, since the Absolute is constant and eternal knowledge by nature, just as the sun is light by nature, so that in the case of the Absolute it is wrong to speak of dependence on instruments of knowledge. Moreover, it is those afflicted by Ignorance, such as the individual souls under transmigration, who depend upon a body and other instruments to bring about knowledge. This is not so in the case of the Lord, for, in his case, nothing exists which could obstruct his knowledge. (B.S.Bh.I.i.5)

Resuming the argument of the Nyāya Makaranda, we find the following:

(4) Our claim is that it is the Absolute alone which suffers transmigratory experience through its own Ignorance, and which is released through metaphysical knowledge. The opponent has said that no one who makes this claim can account logically for the sequence of bondage and release. But on this the opponent is wrong. For this sequence can, in a manner, be explained if bondage and liberation are predicated of the

Absolute, but not otherwise. For as long as the Absolute is associated with Ignorance, states and changes of state can occur as in a dream. But when Ignorance has ceased (what remains is the Absolute and) we do not accept that any state or change of state occurs in the Absolute. (N.M. pp.324-5)

This is a text borrowed by the author from the Iṣṭa Siddhi (I.S. p.331) to establish his own case (iṣṭa-siddhi). As we have already examined the Iṣṭa Siddhi on this topic (M.V.232), what is said here has also been implicitly dealt with. One should turn back again and re-read such passages as Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on 'Then he knew himself' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10, see M.V.232,9-12 above) and his phrase 'If you ask "Whose is this Ignorance?"...' (M.V.113,4, with the sequel at M.V.234,4).

(5) The opponent made the point that there could not be any communication between an enlightened Guru and a pupil because there could be no Māyā for a Guru who had attained metaphysical knowledge. But this also is wrong. For the Guru himself is a product of the Ignorance of the pupil. Even if it was said that, if the Guru were imagined, he would then be non-conscious and so incapable of metaphysical knowledge and therefore not a true Guru, that also would be a weak reply. For he could very well be imagined as having metaphysical knowledge, as we might imagine a metaphysically enlightened person in a dream....

If the opponent says 'Why are you not, on your own theory, a mere creation of my Ignorance?' our reply is 'You yourself, like my Guru, are a creation of my Ignorance'. (N.M. pp.326-7)

Here the exponent of the finally accepted view is made to say to his opponent 'You and your Ignorance and my Guru are all conjured forth by my Ignorance'. Great indeed would be the power of Ignorance if it could conjure forth all that! The truth is (not that a Guru of indeterminable reality-grade is imagined by the Ignorance of the pupil but) that the illusion of a Teacher and pupil and so on is only accepted on the basis of empirical experience, and as a provisional truth accepted for purposes of teaching. Our refuge here is the Kārikā of Gauḍapāda (I.18) in which he says, 'It is for purposes of instruction (and not as a statement of metaphysical truth) that we have this teaching that there is a pupil and a Teacher and a subject taught', along with Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on that (M.V.27,5). Or one may read the following verse from the Naiṣkarmya Siddhi to silence all controversy about Ignorance once and for all. 'The objection "How can Ignorance exist (in face of the omniscience of the Self)?" is illegitimate both before and after the rise of metaphysical knowledge. Before metaphysical knowledge its presence cannot be contested, and after metaphysical knowledge it stands annulled for past, present and future' (N.S. III.116).

(6) Then there is another question which runs as follows. In all the beginningless course of the universe so far, has there or has there not been a case of anyone being liberated? If there had been, how could we now be beholding the world, seeing that there could be no other Self apart from the one that had been liberated? But if there has not been any case of liberation so far, how can there be any hope that there will be liberation for anyone in the future? Well, of these two alternatives, we accept the second (read tatrottara-) not the first, so that there is no difficulty in accounting for the present perception of the world. (N.M. pp.331-2)

(7) On the second alternative... there arises the difficulty of explaining how there could be any hope of liberation in the future. Here one must be content with the authority of the revealed teaching affirming liberation. (N.M. pp.334-5)

This is surely the lowest point of pessimism, which cannot accept such Vedic texts as 'And whichever of the gods awakened to his true nature as the Self became the Absolute. It is the same in the case of the Ṛṣis, it is the same in the case of men.... This is so even now. Whoever knows thus, "I am the Absolute", becomes this all' (Bṛhad.I.iv.10, cp. M.V.71,1). Ānandabodha even makes the extraordinary claim, 'The Vedic texts implying distinctions of state (between liberation and bondage) must be understood as mere eulogies of liberation, and taken in some figurative sense, like the text which says "The cows are present seated at the sacrifice"' (N.M. pp.335-6). He forgets even his own remark, 'States and changes of state can occur, as in a dream' (M.V.273,4 ad fin.*).*

But let us have done with all this utter nonsense. All that has to be remembered in the present context is the following. Whoever is seen in ordinary experience to be afflicted with metaphysical Ignorance, he is so afflicted, viewed from that standpoint. And that Ignorance is brought to an end by metaphysical knowledge. But from the standpoint of the highest truth one must accept the word of the true expert, 'There is no one seeking liberation and no one who has attained liberation. This is the highest truth' (G.K. II.32). One should eschew the confused conjectures of the moderns.

274 THE MEANS TO LIBERATION

The Nyāya Makaranda refutes the doctrine that liberation comes from a conjunction of action and knowledge, and defends the view that liberation comes from metaphysical knowledge alone.

(1) When immediate intuition (sākṣāt-kāra) of the fragments of shell arises, there is no question of its not putting an end to the Ignorance that produced the illusory silver. Nor is it

dependent on any external auxiliary to accomplish this. Nor can the Ignorance ever be abolished by action, but only by immediate intuition of the reality. Hence it is intelligible on the basis of ordinary worldly experience that only immediate intuition of the Absolute can put an end to our Ignorance of that metaphysical principle. (N.M. pp.336-7)

We have more than once explained above what has to be said about Ignorance and immediate intuition (M.V.84,1;100,1;204, 5-11;230). On the point about Ignorance being brought to an end by metaphysical knowledge alone there is nothing to be said, as it is accepted by all Advaitins.

275 THE CESSATION OF IGNORANCE

Ānandabodha raises the question (N.M. p.355) 'If liberation is the destruction of Ignorance, then is that destruction real or illusory?', and, after showing the defects that pertain to both views, goes on to raise the objection 'How then can liberation be the cessation of Ignorance?' On this point he accepts from Vimuktātman (M.V.228,1) the doctrine of the 'fifth kind of reality'.

(1) The destruction of Ignorance is not explicable as being real or as being unreal or as being both real and unreal, or even as being 'indeterminable as either real or unreal'. We must therefore admit a fifth kind of reality for the destruction, according to the maxim 'One must offer the food appropriate for the sprite for whom it is intended' (i.e. if one admits Ignorance and destruction of Ignorance one must give an explanation that shows how they are compatible). So deemed the respected Teacher (Vimuktātman). (N.M. p.355)

(2) When the fragments of shell are known in their true nature, the illusory silver is seen to be indeterminable as real or unreal, as no other alternative is possible. In the same way, we must accept that the cessation of Ignorance is of yet another kind (namely, the fifth kind of reality), since it presents itself and yet fits into no other category. (It cannot fall within the realm of that which is indeterminable as real or unreal, or it would be Ignorance and not the cessation of Ignorance; it cannot be real, or there would be duality; it cannot be unreal, or there could be no liberation; and it cannot be both real and unreal, or there would be logical contradiction). (N.M. pp.355-6)

(3) There are others, their intellects craven through attention to the criticism of other people, who accept defeat and say that the cessation of Ignorance is nothing but the supreme Self alone. And they quote the word of the Teacher 'Or else

the destruction of Ignorance is but the Self' (I.S. VIII.16, omitted at M.V.211,1). But (by identifying the cessation of Ignorance with the Self) they do not themselves escape from the faults we have mentioned (of implying that Ignorance is in eternal cessation, thereby rendering the Upanishads useless, or else of implying the absurd consequence that the Self has a beginning). And it is to be noted that the sentence 'Or else the destruction of Ignorance is but the Self' is not a text from the Veda, that the mere quotation of it should be enough to prove its content true. It was only thrown out as a mere suggestion, not as a doctrine on which its author would wish to insist. Or else we may say that even acknowledged Teachers make mistakes sometimes. What would be wrong in that? (N.M. pp.356-7)

The two faults alleged to be incurred by those who identified cessation of Ignorance with the Absolute were those of implying that Ignorance was in eternal cessation or that the Self had a beginning. But this allegation was wrong. For those who adhere to Śrī Śaṅkara's view could reply that, even on the view that Ignorance is in eternal cessation for the Self (i.e. does not in fact exist), metaphysical knowledge would still be needed to put an end to the false notion that it was not in cessation. For metaphysical knowledge and Ignorance themselves are only accepted from the standpoint of false attribution.

(4) But there are others who say, 'Let the cessation of Ignorance be indeterminable as real or unreal. In what way does that harm our position?... Nor would it follow that, because the cessation of Ignorance was indeterminable, its non-cessation must be real (and eternal) like the Self. For the non-cessation of the Self is conditioned (not by indeterminability but) by its reality. Or again, you might argue, 'Why should not that which exists with a false existence be destroyed by a false destruction?' Thus in the case of something neither real nor unreal, something indeterminable, nothing is impossible.

But if (as we hold) the indeterminable should be defined as that which is subject to cancellation, then the cessation of Ignorance cannot be indeterminable (but must be of the fifth kind). For the cessation of Ignorance is not subject to cancellation. And if the matter is so understood, the definition of the indeterminable does not extend too widely (as it does not include the cessation of Ignorance). Thus all is clear. (N.M. p.357;359)

Here the author copies the Iṣṭa Siddhi and follows the methods of the Logicians, who imagine, on the mere basis of hypothetical speculation, that there are different kinds of non-being (contrast M.V.222,9). This is clearly how he arrived at the strange idea that the cessation of Ignorance might be of

various kinds. To raise the question of whether the cessation of Ignorance is real, or unreal, or real and unreal, or neither real nor unreal, is all very well for one who cannot accept the reality of anything except on the basis of definitions and abstract proofs. But it is of no use to one who wishes to establish the nature of the real in conformity with direct experience.

276 SUMMARY OF THE NYĀYA MAKARANDA

At the time when the Nyāya Makaranda was written the internal dissensions of the various schools of Advaitins who followed the Bhāmatī, the Iṣṭa Siddhi or the Vivaraṇa had to a large extent subsided. It was now being considered more important to ward off the objections of philosophers coming from outside Advaita Vedanta, rather than to determine the true method for the exposition of the Advaita teaching itself. The idea arose amongst Advaita authors that the first need was to demonstrate by purely logical methods the falsity of duality and the existence and nature of Ignorance, in order to silence the objections of the Dualists, chiefly based on logical argumentation. The idea also took root that the teaching of the Upanishads can only be set on a firm foundation if the meaning of the texts is determined exclusively through the use of the maxims of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsakas; and it was also held that definitions and proofs conducted according to the methods of the Logicians were enough to establish the true nature of the real. We desist from any further examination of the work of Ānandabodha in the belief that readers will very quickly be able to see how and to what extent this change in direction of thought helped to push the true method of Vedanta into oblivion.

CHAPTER XIV
THE KHAṆḌANA OF ŚRĪ HARṢA

277 LINKS WITH NEW METHODS

It has been explained above that, from the time of Ānandabodha Ācārya onwards, Vedantins developed a taste for dialectics. Ānandabodha and Śrī Harṣa both show this same tendency. But there was a difference. Ānandabodha was concerned to defend Advaita doctrine by logical methods against the false objections raised by the Logicians on a broad range of topics; Srī Harṣa's main effort was to refute the views put forward by the Logicians themselves. For this purpose he relied on a new and original method of his own.

He says at one point, 'The authoritativeness of the Veda in general, and its authoritativeness in regard to already established and existing entities in particular, will be demonstrated in the Īśvarābhisandhi' (Kh. p.36/80).* From this we conclude that this author too, like Ānandabodha, accepted that words could be an authoritative means of knowledge in regard to already-existing entities, and demonstrated the authoritativeness of the Veda on this basis. The book referred to, however, is not available today. So we cannot tell whether the author also took immediate experience into account in establishing the authoritativeness of the Vedic metaphysical teaching.

**(Page references to the Khaṇḍana are to the Eng. trans. by Thibaut and Gaṅgānātha Jhā with those of Hanumān Dāsa's ed. of the text added after an oblique stroke. There is a highly accomplished translation of most of the material, with many supplementary explanations, in Granoff, 1978. T.N.)*

278 INTRODUCTION TO ŚRĪ HARṢA

Most historians of literature hold that the Śrī Harṣa now under

discussion was different from the one who wrote the Ratnāvalī and other plays. But there cannot be any doubt that the author of the Khaṇḍana Khaṇḍa Khādya was the same person who wrote the court epic called the Naiṣadha (or Naiṣadhīya) Carita. For each of the two books refers to the other. The Naiṣadha Carita (VI.113) speaks of its own sixth chapter being born from the same parent as the Khaṇḍana. And in the Khaṇḍana (p.79/125) the author says 'I have explained in the Canto on Praise of the Supreme Spirit of the Naiṣadha Carita how the mind can give up its restlessness and feel the joy of bathing effortlessly in the nectar-like lake of the Self'.* Though there are many people in this country who have read the Naiṣadha Carita, there are few indeed who have given themselves the trouble of going through the Khaṇḍana. For the Khaṇḍana is concerned with the refutation of the system erected by the Logicians, and a refutation of this kind presupposes familiarity with many books of other schools. The work is also written in an extremely difficult style. Indeed, the author goes so far as to say 'I have deliberately made the book knotty in places...' (Kh.II. p.247/754, cp. Naiṣadha XXII.152).

We can gather a little information about the life of Śrī Harṣa from what the poet himself writes in the Naiṣadha and the Khaṇḍana, the second of which only will come in for consideration here.

*(*The exact reference is untraced, though some refer to Canto XXI. Others hold that the reference may be to the first six Cantos, allegorically interpreted. See Granoff, pp.252-4, and* ibid. *Sanskrit intro. p.xiv. T.N.)*

(1) Śrī Hīra, himself the ornamental diamond (hīra) in the crown-like cluster of the great poets, had a son by Māmalla Devī called Śrī Harṣa, whose senses were under his control. Here ends the first Canto of his great court epic the Naiṣadhīya Carita, delightful in its treatment of the theme of love, the fair fruit of his japa and meditation. (N.C. I.145)

(2) May this work of the poet-scholar Śrī Harṣa flourish for the benefit of those who take delight in good literature! Its author is honoured by the King of Kanauj with two betel leaves and a special seat in the assembly; in ecstatic states (samādhi) he enjoys direct experience of the Absolute in its supreme form, an Ocean of Delight; his poetry scatters nectar; his formulae in the realms of logic have laid his opponents low. (Kh.II. p.247/754)

279 DIVISION OF TOPICS IN THE BOOK

The phrase 'khaṇḍana-khādya' is familiar in the medical treatises, where it means a kind of tonic. The present work is

entitled the Khaṇḍana Khaṇḍa Khādya with the idea that it trains you to enjoy the supreme delight of refuting the doctrines of others. Śrī Harṣa is not satisfied just to say that all is indeterminable because it is the effect of Māyā, which is itself indeterminable as real or unreal. Right at the beginning of the book he treats 'indeterminability' as 'incapability of being explained at all'.

(1) O ye heroes of the realm of philosophy! Do but repeat the words that follow like a parrot (and, by a play on words, like Śuka Deva repeating the Bhāgavata Purāṇa) and astonish the people with the miracle of a conquest of the world. Reduce the logicians in their overweening pride to silence everywhere by refuting their explanations of words and their meanings! (Kh. p.3/4)

The Khaṇḍana should be understood as divided into two parts — the Introduction and the part devoted to refutations. Here we shall be dealing chiefly with the Introduction. The Introduction starts by refuting the alleged rule that a debate can only be started if both disputants accept the reality of the means of knowledge and the other fifteen categories of the Logicians. Then it goes on to prove the self-luminosity of the Absolute, and afterwards to show that difference as revealed by sense-perception does not contradict and cancel the non-duality taught in the Veda. The second part of the work goes on to show that all sixteen categories adopted by the Logicians as real are in fact indeterminable.

280 NO RULE THAT BOTH MUST AGREE ON THE REALITY OF THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE, ETC., FOR A DEBATE

The first step is to refute the necessity for the acceptance of the reality of the means of knowledge and other categories of the Logicians before a debate can begin. This is done here as follows:

(1) What are the grounds on which it is claimed that a disputant must accept the reality of the means of knowledge and other categories before he can enter into a dispute? Is it (a) on the grounds that the two disputants will not otherwise be able to enter into communication, since verbal communication depends on the categories' being accepted? Or is it (b) because the acceptance of these categories as real is the cause of verbal communication between the two parties? Or is it (c) because it is standard practice to accept them as real? Or is it (d) because if this rule is not accepted there cannot be either discovery of truth or victory in debate?

The first suggestion cannot be right. For the Materialists

and the Buddhist Nihilists do not accept these categories, and yet we see them communicating copiously in debate. And if they could not communicate, your own efforts to refute them would be useless. I suppose you will be trying to tell me that it was this strange new mantram of yours, 'No one may argue who does not accept the Logicians' categories', which strikes all who oppose it dumb, that prevented Bṛhaspati from composing the Sūtras of the Materialists, that stopped the Buddha from giving out the texts of the Mādhyamikas, that caused the failure of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara to write a Commentary on the Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa. (Kh. p.4/6-7)

(2) It cannot be that the acceptance of the Logicians' categories as real is the cause of verbal communication between the two parties. That could only have been true if the causality of the categories in regard to verbal communication between disputants ceased when its reality was not accepted by either party. But this cannot be the case. For if it were the case, there could not be verbal communication between disputants who did not accept the Logicians' categories, for lack of an essential condition. And we have already made the point that the fact of the Mādhyamika Buddhists and others communicating in debate cannot be denied, even though they do not accept the categories. (Kh. p.7/13)

(3) It cannot be that standard practice shows that one who does not accept the categories cannot enter into debate. For is it proper critical standard practice that you have in mind, or the standard practice of ordinary uncultured people in the world? The first will not do. For one cannot establish that proper critical practice is being followed without first engaging in a discussion. And one would need a preliminary investigation to discover the rules for that (which would imply a debate before the categories were accepted).

But the standard practice of uncultured people will not do either. For if you accept that as your criterion, you will also have to accept that there is no soul, and also accept other materialistic propositions which do not agree with the Logicians' system. If you say that such propositions will not have to be accepted if they are cancelled later by critical reflection, then we reply that the categories, too, will have to be rejected if they are cancelled by critical reflection, though they will have to be accepted if they are not (which implies debate before acceptance of categories). One cannot say, therefore, that standard practice proves that the categories must be accepted before there can be debate. (Kh. p.9 f./18)

(4) It cannot be that the non-acceptance of the reality of the categories prevents debate because the one who does not accept it is not a fit candidate for the rewards of debate in

the form of discovery of truth or victory. For we too, who are indifferent as to the reality or unreality of the categories, accept the same rules for communication in debate as you do, who regard the categories as real. So if there cannot be discovery of truth or victory in debate for me, there cannot be truth or victory for you either. (Kh. p.10/19)

Having thus refuted the rule about prior acceptance of the means of knowledge (and other categories of the Logicians) before debate can begin, Śrī Harṣa concludes as follows:

(5) Generally speaking, worldly dealings are found to proceed on the basis of cognitions occurring to a limited number of people for a limited period of time; and it is this limited form of knowledge of reality that is a necessary element in debate. This is what is meant when we say 'Debate can only begin on the acceptance (by both parties) of the means of knowledge and so on as real for practical purposes'. Therefore he wins the argument in regard to whom the arbiter decides 'He is the one who did not overstep the boundaries previously laid down as rules on this practical basis'. He in regard to whose words the arbiter does not have this feeling loses. One must certainly accept such preliminary rules for opening a debate as 'Where the arbiter is aware of the existence of self-contradiction in the arguments of one of the disputants, the latter suffers rebuke, while the other disputant does not'. (Kh. p.12/22-3)

The essential point here is as follows. What settles the issue of victory or defeat is the decisions of the arbiter about who has kept to the rules and who has overstepped them, and not the question of who accepts or does not accept the reality of the means of knowledge and other categories taught by the Logicians. It was clearly the author's view that where the question of the reality or unreality of the means of knowledge comes up for decision in the course of the debate, the debate itself should proceed in a spirit of indifference as to whether their reality was accepted or not.

It is the claim of Śrī Śaṅkara in his Brahma Sūtra Commentary that all the play of empirical means of knowledge and their objects proceeds on the basis of Ignorance.

(6) But in what sense do we mean that perception and the other means of knowledge, together with Vedic tradition, belong to the realm of those afflicted with Ignorance? What we say here is this. Without self-identification with the body and senses expressed in feelings of 'I' and 'mine' there can be no empirical knower and so the processes of empirical knowledge cannot begin. (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro., cp. M.V.97,1, note)

It is clear that those who think that we have here an appeal to

the means of knowledge called presumption to settle questions about the means of knowledge in general do not understand the application of the means of knowledge. For when one is debating the reality of the means of knowledge in general, it is not correct to appeal to the example of a particular means of knowledge. And it is clear that those who hold that all the means of knowledge are invariably accompanied by superimposition should not enumerate the means of knowledge (as sources of impeccable knowledge), even on the understanding that superimposition is present. If all experience of the means of knowledge and their objects is established as being associated with Ignorance, the idea that one has to exercise reflection on the basis of accepting as real the means of knowledge and other categories taught to be real by the Logicians stands discredited in advance. But the author of the Khaṇḍana does not appear to have understood this. Since he specifically claims that he is *only* refuting the means of knowledge and other categories as taught by the Logicians, it is clear that he is merely engaged in refuting rules by empty logical arguments (not culminating in experience).

281 EVEN THE NIHILIST HAS A RIGHT TO ENTER INTO DEBATE

There is no rule, then, that the means of knowledge and other categories of the Logicians necessarily have to be accepted in advance by both parties in a debate. For, as has already been said, we have the example of the Materialists, the Buddhist Nihilists, and the followers of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara and others incontrovertibly engaged in arguments in support of their respective positions without accepting the categories of the Logicians. The author now turns to a new question. He expounds the view of the Buddhist Nihilists in order to show how, in their opinion, a debate could be started without accepting the reality of the means of knowledge or other categories posited by the Logicians.

(1) The formula 'One must argue according to these rules' means that the arbiter must have a cognition to the effect 'This one has argued according to the rules'. Nor should it be claimed that in the end it will have to be admitted that even that cognition was real. For in affirming its reality one would have to depend (not on a reality but only) on another judgment affirming reality. Nor can this be denied on the ground that it would lead to infinite regress. For we do not accept the need for an infinite series of tests for practical purposes of communication, and there is the maxim 'We do not require the rise of more than three or four cognitions' (Kumārila, Ś.V. II.61).

Nor should one argue that if the last cognition was unreal

all the stream of previous ones must also have been unreal, and claim through this that even the one who argues resorting to tests by cognitions cannot succeed. For let it be unreal. Even so, the fact is that people proceed by mutual agreement in debate, limiting their investigations to three or four cognitions, happy to pursue the matter no further. Otherwise, (i.e. without this agreed limitation), even if the means of knowledge and other categories were accepted as real, (the acceptance itself would be open to question and) it would be hard to avoid infinite regress anyway. (Kh. p.12 ff./23-5)

(2) And just as on your view, though cognitions and objects are alike real, it is nevetheless only the nature of knowledge as real that makes communication possible, not the reality of objects, even so, on the view that cognitions and objects are alike unreal, it is knowledge, though unreal, that makes communication in debate possible, and nothing else does.

If you say that it is contradictory to say that a thing can be unreal and yet be what makes something else (namely debate) possible, we reply that it is not so. Why should it not be equally contradictory to say that something is real, and that it is also what makes something else possible? (For an account of the subtle reasoning implied here, see Granoff, p.89 ff. T.N.) It has nowhere yet been established between the two of us that the real can make the existence of something else possible, while the unreal cannot. (Kh. p.14 f./25)

How can the unreal cause an effect? The reply of the Khaṇḍana is as follows:

(3) Both of us agree that to be a cause is to precede something and be in constant and regular connection with it. All talk of real and unreal is irrelevant, as it has nothing to do with the nature of causality. (Kh. p.20/36)

The Nihilist accepts the 'surface reality' of the unreal. The author of the Khaṇḍana defends this view against objections.

(4) A person may ask us to say whether surface reality (saṃvṛti-satya) is real or not, with the idea that if it is not real it cannot introduce any distinctions (into consciousness), while if it is real our own (Nihilist's) position will be undermined. To this we reply as follows. Both of us agree, at any rate, that knowledge is a cause of practical experience. If this knowledge is tested and shown to be true after tests limited to three or four new cognitions, then this experience will have been produced by real knowledge. But if it proves untrue, then it will have to be accepted that the knowledge that gave rise to it was unreal. The case is parallel with that of erroneous cognition, where the false object introduces a distinction into the cognition whereby it is known (a distinc-

tion of such a form as knowledge of silver). (Kh. p.22 f./40)

The question whether the Buddhist Nihilist himself would have accepted any cause-effect relation and defended it in this way may be left out of consideration here. The only points the author of the Khaṇḍana is making here are the following. The Nihilist takes both knowledge and its objects for unreal. Nevertheless, he is able even in this situation to refute the proposition 'A debate can only be begun if the means of knowledge and other categories of the Logicians are accepted'.

After considering the Nihilists, the author goes on to expound the doctrines of the Buddhist idealists who believed in the self-luminosity of cognitions. Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary lays down a thorough refutation of Nihilism on the ground that knowledge is self-evident.

(5) This ordinary empirical experience of the world, solidly established as it is through all the various means of knowledge, cannot be argued away without prior knowledge of some other real principle. For where no exceptions can be shown, an established rule holds. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.31, M.V.48,1)

(6) For that which is not real can only be negated on the basis of something that is real, as in the case of errors like the rope-snake (where, in order to negate the snake, one has to have a positive knowledge of the rope). And the whole process is conceivable only if some positive existent remains over after the negation. (B.S.Bh.III.iii.22)

One would not normally expect to find the doctrine of the Nihilists in a discourse on Vedanta. But the entry of the Nihilist, who does not accept the reality of the means of knowledge or other categories of the Logicians, may be thought proper for the Khaṇḍana, as being the right instrument for refuting the doctrines of other schools where the purely negative path of refutation has been adopted.

282 IDEALISM BASED ON SELF-LUMINOUS COGNITION

Practical experience is only explicable if the self-luminosity of knowledge is established first. Not otherwise. The author makes this point first.

(1) Knowledge is self-luminous. It is self-evident through its own power. For when there is knowledge, not even a person of a critical and enquiring turn of mind has the doubt 'Am I having knowledge or not?' Nor does anyone have the erroneous notion 'I am not having knowledge', or a right cognition of absence of knowledge. Therefore, when there is neither

incorrect knowledge of something one is seeking to know, nor doubt, nor knowledge that one does not know it, the collective absence of these forms is a sufficient guarantee that there is correct knowledge of that thing. Otherwise, people who desired to know something and were qualified and able to know it without impediment, might have a cognition suggesting its non-existence, an idea which always accompanies absence of correct knowledge of that which one is seeking to know. Therefore the true nature of knowledge (as self-revealed) is proved by the direct awareness of it experienced by all people in their hearts. (Kh. p.25 f./44)

The self-luminosity (reading svaprakāśatve) of the self-evident Self, of the very nature of knowledge, is proved by the mere fact that it is the Witness of the distinction between knower, knowing and known. If the author took steps to try to *prove* it (when it is self-evident) through a consideration of the nature of empirical knowledge, that can only have been as a concession to philosophers of other schools. In the same spirit, the author points out various defects in the doctrines of those who do not accept that knowledge is self-luminous, and declares that they do not occur in his own doctrine.

(2) But one cannot affirm, on account of these difficulties, that knowledge does not exist at all. For one cannot deny the existence of that which is evident to everyone. And we shall be explaining later (verse 26, Kh. p.78 f./124-5) how all difficulties are removed through mere acceptance of the fact that immediate experience is self-luminous. Because only that which is of the very nature of consciousness can be self-evident, no non-conscious attributes can be present within it. Consciousness, therefore, is not subject to direct denotation through speech, which proceeds on the basis of accepting positive attributes. On the basis of its not being limited by time, however, it is spoken of figuratively as eternal. On the basis of its not being limited in space, it is taught figuratively to be all-pervading. Because it is not limited to any particular mode of being, it is spoken of for practical purposes as 'the Self of all' and as 'non-dual'. (Kh. p.31 f./53-4)

Empirical knowledge, together with its instruments and objects, and including all hypothetical reasoning, depends for its existence on this very self-evident principle of Consciousness, which is of the nature of immediate experience, and does not depend on hypothetical reasoning. So one should not expect to be able to establish it by hypothetical reasoning. As Śrī Śaṅkara says: 'One cannot say "The Self does not exist, it is not known". For the Veda affirms the existence of the Self in the text "This Self is neither this nor that" (Bṛhad.III. ix.26). This shows that the Spirit proclaimed in the Upanishads is our own Self. And no one can deny the existence of

their own Self, for it would be the Self of the one performing the act of denial' (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, M.V.50,1).

(3) (It is wrong to suppose that there is any conflict with non-duality in our doctrine, on the ground that the absence of time, etc., presupposes a distinction between the absence of the thing on the one hand, and that in which it is absent on the other. For we hold that an absence is nothing over and above that in which it occurs.) This agrees with the Buddhists and the followers of Prabhākara, for whom an absence is never anything but that in which it occurs, and also with the Logicians, who hold that a non-existence following from another non-existence is nothing over and above the first non-existence. (Nor should one object that the negation of duality implies the existence of what is negated), for the existence of that which is negated is totally disproved (for all periods of time), as in the case of the negation of the object of an erroneous perception. So there is no objection against our theory. (Kh. p.32/54)

All distinctions, such as that between existence and non-existence, belong to describable objects lying within the world-appearance. But one cannot conceive of the alternative 'existence or non-existence', or of the alternative 'being the contradictory of non-existence or falling within non-existence' in regard to that which is the substratum of all imaginations of duality (reading sarva-dvaita...). As for the upanishadic text using the negative formula about the Absolute 'neither this nor that', it does not touch the Absolute itself, which is beyond the scope of words; it merely negates alternative imaginary forms that have been superimposed upon it. It should be understood that the notion that the Absolute is the substratum of imaginations is itself a piece of imagination, as the Absolute is beyond the scope of words and conceptions. One should consult Sureśvara on the point (cp. M.V.113,2).

(4) The Veda, standing as a valid means of cognition, reveals the Absolute through indirect indication; it indicates it, though it cannot express it. From the standpoint of the highest truth, the Absolute cannot be denoted and there is no word that could denote it. Nevertheless, in the state of Ignorance we speak of the Veda as a means of knowledge for the Absolute, just as the opponent does, on account of its power to indicate the Absolute. Strictly speaking, however, the Absolute is of the nature of pure Consciousness, revealed by itself alone. (Kh. p.32/55)

The supreme Self in its undifferentiated form cannot be revealed even by indirect means. For direct and indirect means of knowledge depend on it for whatever power of revelation they have. And the Veda is accepted as an authoritative means

of knowledge solely when conceived in the manner of Śrī Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara, not when conceived in the manner of the Logicians. On this, two quotations may suffice.

(I) 'When it is said that the Veda is "the final means of cognition", it means that it is an "instrument of cognition" only in the sense of putting an end to the erroneous superimposition onto the Self of properties that do not belong to it; that is to say, it is not an "instrument of cognition" in the sense of "that which makes a previously unknown thing known". And the Veda itself confirms this, saying "The Absolute which is immediately evident (i.e. self-evident), that is the Self within all"' (Bh.G.Bh.II.18)

(II) 'For the final means of knowledge (the highest texts of the Veda, which yield knowledge of the Self) brings to an end the notion that the Self is an individual capable of the act of cognition through means of knowledge. And the final means of knowledge itself ceases to be a means of knowledge the moment it brings that notion to an end, just as the (apparent) means of knowledge (perception, inference, etc.) that prevailed during a dream cease to exist on waking'. (Bh.G.Bh.II.69, M.V. 46,11)

(5) It might be said that even if there was but a slight difference between the knower-known relationship in self-luminosity on the one hand and that occurring in the case of common knowledge of external objects on the other, one or the other must be (false and) subject to cancellation. But this would be incorrect, as the two can stand, each on a different footing. Both the pot and the knowledge of the pot, being known through metaphysical Ignorance, are due to be cancelled eventually anyway; but self-luminosity, being itself the supreme reality, is uncontradictable. (Kh. p.38/63)

If the existence of a knower-known relationship is accepted as a concession to the opponent's standpoint for purposes of argument, then, from that standpoint, the line of reasoning here presented is correct, since the Absolute, being of the nature of constant and eternal massed homogeneous Consciousness, does not require any other knowledge (apart from itself) through which to be known. On this, an expert has said: 'The enlightened ones proclaim that the pure, unborn principle of knowledge, void of all representations, is non-different from the Absolute, that which has to be known. That knowledge through which the Absolute is known is itself unborn. Through this unborn knowledge is the unborn known' (G.K. III.33).

In reality, however, there is no knower or known in the Absolute. The Upanishads deny all subject-object relationship in the state of enlightenment. 'But when for him all this has become his own Self, then what could a person see, and with

what?' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14) That is apparently why Śrī Harṣa himself disapproves of the view he has just expounded and drops it immediately. He goes on:

(6) Or rather, it is better to say that we do not have to accept an act-object relation or a knowing-subject-known-object relation to explain self-luminosity. On your (Logicians') own doctrine, all that is other than the universal 'Being' is only able to exist and be referred to on account of its relationship with Being, while Being itself is Being by its own nature — and this last conception is not regarded as begging the question (ātmāśraya). By parity of reasoning, we ourselves may say that knowledge is independently self-evident, without incurring the fault of begging the question. (Kh. p.29-30/63-4)

'Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander' (tu quoque) *is the refuge of every sophist. In fact, self-luminosity can be neither proved nor disproved by hypothetical reasoning. For it is already evident before hypothetical reasoning can begin. Śrī Śaṅkara says, 'And it is known to all as the inmost Self because it is immediately evident' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.). And he has explained the difference of the Absolute as pure Being from the universal called 'Being' accepted by the Logicians in his Commentary to the Chāndogya Upanishad.*

'But is it not a fact that, even on the thesis of the Vaiśeṣikas, everything is correlated with Being, for the word and notion of Being accompanies all categories such as substance and attribute, as when we speak of an "existent substance", an "existent quality" or an "existent act"? No. This might conceivably be true in regard to the present. But in regard to the past the Vaiśeṣikas do not admit that any given effect was existent before its production; for they explicitly maintain the opposite view, namely that the effect was non-existent before production. And they are not reconciled to the (upanishadic) doctrine that Being, one only without a second, existed before the production of the universe. Thus this supreme cause called Being of which the Chāndogya Upanishad speaks, and which it illustrates from clay and other such examples, is different from the universal called "Being" as conceived by the Vaiśeṣikas' (Chānd.Bh.VI.ii.1; M.V.37,3).

Similar reasoning shows that the nature of the Self as Consciousness is different from the 'knowledge' that is accepted by the Logicians. Knowledge as conceived by them, for instance, is not present in dreamless sleep and similar states. But the Self as Consciousness is present then, even though all duality (read sarva-dvaita) has disappeared. We know this from such upanishadic passages as, 'When he does not know anything then (in the state of dreamless sleep) he is knowing when he does not know anything. There is no break in the knowing of the knower, for it is indestructible. But there

is not then (in dreamless sleep) anything over against him that he could know' (Bṛhad.IV.iii.30).

(7) Thus it is the difference of knowledge's knowledge of itself from other forms of knowledge that eventually shows it to be self-luminous. And the apagogic proof (through inexplicability otherwise) of the self-luminosity of knowledge that we have offered will force acceptance of all those differences. For example, the principle 'The knower is one and the object he knows another' is perceived elsewhere; but it must be given up in the case of the cognition 'I', as this latter experience is inexplicable unless we do so. Similarly, the principle 'Knowledge is one thing and its object another' must be given up in the case of 'I know', as this latter experience is inexplicable unless we do. The presumption arising from the impossibility of a thing being otherwise (i.e. the apagogic proof) is a more powerful authority than any other, and would overrule hundreds of arguments based merely on what is perceived. On this point it has been said (Kumārila, T.V. II.i.5, p.374): 'One must be prepared to assume things that have not been perceived, even in large numbers, if proof for them exists'. (Kh. p.39/66-7)

It is clear that this implies the acceptance of three points. Various rules have to be given up in certain circumstances (notably, if it is intended to apply them to the Absolute) because experience in those circumstances is inexplicable unless they are given up; the Absolute falls within the scope of practical experience; the self-luminosity of the Absolute is proved on the evidence of presumption, arising from the inexplicability of any other view.

But all this is incorrect. The teaching of the Upanishads is that the Absolute is beyond the scope of any of the means of knowledge, and of practical experience in general, for we have the text 'But when for him all has become his own Self, then what could a person see and with what?' (Bṛhad.II.iv.14). And the Self is present, self-luminous, in states like dreamless sleep which are not within the scope of practical experience in any form. Indeed, the author himself says later in the book that the Self is known to be self-evident through immediate experience, the chief of all the means of knowledge.

(8) Thus self-luminosity should be easy for you to accept, on account of the arguments we have provided, which are correct according to the rules for sound reasoning which you yourselves accept. As for ourselves, we accept Consciousness as independently self-evident on the basis of immediate apprehension alone. (Kh. p.40/67)

This passage is a proof that the present line of reasoning in the Khaṇḍana was only instituted to remove the taint of

suspicion that might arise from the fact that, on the doctrine that Consciousness is self-luminous, there would be difference (in knowledge's knowledge of itself) from what is found in knowledge elsewhere (e.g. in ordinary subject-object knowledge).

283 THE INDETERMINABILITY OF THE UNIVERSE OF PLURALITY

The author writes as follows to indicate the difference between Vedanta and the doctrine of the Buddhist Nihilists.

(1) As between the Buddhist Nihilist and the Vedantin, the Nihilist regards everything as indeterminable. Thus it was said by Lord Buddha in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra (II.175, p.116), 'When things are examined analytically by the mind, it is found that they have no essence. Hence they are taught as being inexplicable and without essence'. But the upanishadic school teaching Brahman (the Vedantins) say (not that *everything* is indeterminable as real or unreal but) everything *other than Consciousness* is. What is other than Consciousness cannot be real, as it is affected by the defects we are about to mention; neither can it be totally unreal, for, if it were, this would undermine all practical experience and mutual intercourse, both of worldly people and of philosophers.

It might be objected, 'If you cannot determine anything, go to the learned Teachers; explanations can be learned from them'. Well, this reproach might have been in order if we had not said that indeterminability was a feature of the knowable, and had said that it arose from defects in speakers. Any philosopher who prides himself on his ability to give explanations will find that in practice he cannot explain things, on account of the defects inherent in any statement. (Kh. p.40/68-9)

The statement that Buddhist Nihilists say 'None of the entities to which we can refer by words have any essence, as their essence is never determinable' was correct. But the statement that the Vedantins (Brahma-vādins) say 'Everything other than Consciousness is neither-real-nor-unreal' needs consideration. The Upanishads say, 'A modification is a name, a suggestion of speech' (Chānd.VI.i.4). Because the effect is a suggestion of speech, it is a mere phenomenon, and false. The text goes on, 'The truth is, "It is only clay"', thereby affirming that a modification is real only as its material cause. And that agrees with experience. And so the Upanishads say boldly 'This whole universe is the Absolute', 'This whole universe is the Self' and thereby affirm that the Self of the universe, in its true nature, is the Absolute. As we have several times pointed out (e.g. M.V.93,1, note ad init.*), on the doctrine that the universe was neither real nor unreal, the unreal would*

fall outside the universe and so could not exist in any sense.

If one is to claim that the doctrine of the Vedantins is 'What exists and is other than the Absolute is neither real nor unreal', then this has first got to be properly proved. One cannot prove that the universe is indeterminable merely by refuting people's belief that they can explain things. Not even the author of the Khaṇḍana himself holds that indeterminability arises from the defects of speakers (cp. M.V.283,1, just above).

The one who says that the world is indeterminable because he sees the defects in both the view that it is real and the view that it is unreal — does he do so because of doubt about reality and unreality, or is it because he accepts a grade of reality other than either real or unreal? The author of the Khaṇḍana raises and rejects both alternatives, pointing out the faults in each.

(2) This objection rests on a misunderstanding of your opponent's intention (i.e. of our intention). For, if a person says that nothing is determinable as real or unreal, he should not be asked how indeterminability could be real. For indeterminability is included in the word 'all', which covers the whole universe of plurality. The notion that indeterminability results from the refutation of determinability — this only arises on the opponent's principles. For it is his view (corresponding to the Law of the Excluded Middle) that, if one of a pair of contradictories (contradictories are, e.g. 'cat' and 'not-cat') is refuted, the other is consequently affirmed. So it is only through a concession to the logic of our opponents that we (sometimes) say that the world must be indeterminable. In reality, we abstain from any judgment about the reality or unreality of the world. We find abundance in the self-evident Self as Consciousness, the Absolute, the transcendent, where we rest contentedly, having gained our ends. (Kh. p.41 f./71-2)

The point that he who claims that all is indeterminable as real or unreal should not be asked how indeterminability itself could be real is correct. But the author does not say what the nature of the universe is on his own view, if the statement that it is indeterminable is merely based on a concession to the logic of his opponents. Nor will the doctrine of non-duality stand proved merely on the basis of accepting that the Self as Consciousness is self-evident. For even on that basis, no difference will have been established between this doctrine of non-duality and the dualism of the Sāṅkhyas. The view of the true expert in the tradition was: 'If the universe of plurality had been real, it could no doubt have been brought to an end. But this duality is a mere illusion. Non-duality is the final truth' (G.K. I.17). The meaning is that as the

universe has been erroneously imagined like a snake in a rope, it neither exists nor comes to an end. So the school of Śrī Harṣa (in that he offers no view about the reality or unreality of the universe) is different from that of the old classical Vedanta (which condemned the world as unreal from the standpoint of the highest truth).

We may discern four different standpoints in relation to indeterminability, labelling them A, B, C, D.

(A) The doctrine of indeterminability adopted by the revered Commentator is expressed in the formula which says, speaking of name and form in relation to the supreme Self, that name and form are 'imagined through Ignorance as if they were the Self, (the omniscient Lord), being indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything different' (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, M.V.45,1). But their 'indeterminability' concerns only their form as a perceived illusion (māyā); in reality, they are not anything different from the Self.

(3) You will ask, 'Is not this world one with the Self even now?' We reply that it is. You will ask, 'How, then, can you say it *was* one with the Self (before projection at the beginning of the world-period)?' We reply that, even though it is still one with the Self, there is nevertheless a difference. Before the projection of the world it had no manifest distinction into name and form. It *was* the Self. It could only be thought of and spoken of as the Self. *Now* it is characterized by manifest distinctions of name and form. It can now *either* be thought of and spoken of in a variety of ways, *or else* thought of and spoken of as the Self alone. That is the difference.

The matter may be illustrated by a simile. Before the name and form of foam manifests as something different from the water, the foam can only be thought of and spoken of as water. But when the foam has manifested as separate from the water through a distinct name and form, then the foam may be thought of and spoken of variously as water or as foam, or else it can be thought of and spoken of just as water alone. This is the meaning (i.e. this is the nature of the distinction between the world of name and form now, and that same world before the initial world-projection). (Ait.Bh.I.i.1, intro.)

(4) From the standpoint of ultimate truth, however, no name and form really exist for the followers of the Upanishads, such as could truly be discerned as separate principles, distinct from the principle of supreme reality, any more than the modifications of clay and other such substances are distinct principles apart from those substances. For name and form are but modifications of the supreme reality, as foam is of water and pots are of clay. And from this standpoint it is seen that texts like 'One only without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1)

and 'There is no plurality here' (Kaṭha II.i.11) do in fact refer to the supreme reality.

The case is different, however, as long as the Absolute remains, under the influence of natural (uncaused) Ignorance, unperceived in its true transcendent nature, in clear discrimination from the conditioning adjuncts of body and organs consisting of name and form. This true nature, indeed, stands untouched by the imputed adjuncts, just as the shell is untouched by the silver for which it is mistaken, and the colourless ether of the sky is unaffected by the colour and shape falsely attributed to it when it is seen as blue and concave (tent-formed). For here the natural (unregenerate) vision conditioned by the organs consisting of name and form continues, and it is under this condition that all this world is presented to us as a reality separate from our own Self. (Bṛhad.Bh.III. v.1, M.V.34,5)

(B) Indeterminability means being neither real nor unreal. It is the reason why Ignorance, synonymous with Māyā, is able to stand as a material cause. Such is the view of those who hold that distinctions are set up by positive indeterminable Ignorance. Those who hold this view include the followers of the Pañcapādikā, the Iṣṭa Siddhi, the Vivaraṇa and others. For them, the rope-snake and shell-silver and so on are modifications undergone by their material cause, Ignorance. They are not, as in the doctrine of the revered Commentator, attributes falsely imputed to the rope or shell.

(C) On the doctrine of the (Nihilist) Buddhists, all beings are indeterminable in the sense that, when examined analytically by the mind, they are found to have no determinable essence. The doctrine here is, 'The truth is that nothing has a real essence'.

(D) The doctrine of the Khaṇḍana is that 'indeterminability' means that everything but the Self is indeterminable as real and indeterminable as unreal.

Thus, outside the system expounded in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries, relationship with the indeterminable, or the appearance of it, is always the constant companion of the Self. There is therefore never total obliteration of all qualification for the Self. In the system of the revered Commentator, on the other hand, name and form are ever mere superimpositions through natural Ignorance. In reality, they are nothing but the Self, through the Self. So there is to that extent a difference between Śrī Śaṅkara and the rest on the topic of indeterminability.

It is Śrī Śaṅkara who represents the true teaching of the tradition. On the other views, there is no clear discernment that name and form are superimposed. Without it, there is no

way of explaining the texts in the Upanishads negating all else of the supreme Self. No Vedic text that negated something that had not been superimposed could be regarded as authoritative. And so it was that a true expert, even though admitting that what appeared through Ignorance as not-self was inexplicable as appearance, *nevertheless affirmed that, in its true nature, it was the Self, and emphasized that nothing else apart from the Self existed.*

(5) When a flaming torch is waved, the appearances of straight and curved lines do not arise from any external source. Nor, when the torch is held still, do they either move away from the torch or enter back into it. They never issued forth from the torch in the first place, as they have no substantial being. The same is the case with differentiations appearing in Consciousness, for they also are illusory appearances. When Consciousness vibrates in motion, the appearances that arise do not come from any external source. When Consciousness is motionless, the appearances do not either move away from Consciousness or enter back into it. They never issued forth from Consciousness in the first place, as they have no substantial being; since the causal relation does not apply to them, they are ever incomprehensible. A substance could be the cause of another substance and (in general) anything that was different from something else might (conceivably) be its cause. But the appearances now under discussion cannot be substances and cannot have separate existence from something else. (G.K. IV.49-53; cp. M.V.223,8)

'When Consciousness is in motion' means 'apparently in motion on account of Ignorance', says Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary.

(6) Considered in its true nature as the Self, this (world of) plurality does not exist as anything separate from the latter (the Self). Nor is it anything different from the Self when considered in its intrinsic plurality (because it is illusory). The various appearances within it are not distinct either from each other or from the Self, neither are they non-distinct. Such is the view of the wise. (G.K. II.34, M.V. 35,2)

Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary on this begins as follows: 'For this world of transmigratory experience, beginning with the cosmic vital energy, when discovered to be, in its true nature, the highest reality, turns out not to be any separate reality existing alongside the non-dual Self, the supreme reality. It is like the falsely imagined snake, which has no separate existence when discerned through a light as being nothing other than the rope. Nor does it ever exist in its own nature as the cosmic vital energy and so on. For it is merely imagined, like a rope-snake' (G.K.Bh.II.34).

284 WHAT IS THE PROOF OF NON-DUALITY?

The author makes out that the question is illegitimate.

(1) The question 'What is the proof of non-duality?' cannot be raised by him who does not already accept non-duality. Let us suppose a question is asked about the proof of non-duality. How could such a question be raised unless the proof were already known? You are not asking about proof in general, but about proof of a specific matter. And that would only be possible if you had knowledge of the thing to be proved....

And if non-duality, the subject of your question, is said to be known, is that knowledge valid or invalid? If you say that it is valid, then the means for that valid knowledge is itself the proof of non-duality, and one to which you yourself assent, so that it is useless to raise any questions about it....

If, on the other hand, you say that your knowledge of non-duality is not valid, what proof could there possibly be for something that is not the object of a valid cognition? To ask for a proof of what is not an object of valid cognition is a self-contradictory demand. Perhaps you will say that on your view knowledge of non-duality is invalid, while on my (Advaitin's) view it is supposed to be valid, and that you are asking about the evidence for my (claimed) valid knowledge. But this will not do either. For there is no rule that I should have to show how the instrument for *your* knowledge of non-duality was a genuine proof. Just because I always admit non-duality, it does not follow that the instrument for *your* knowledge of non-duality is necessarily a genuine proof. If a person perceives mist on a mountain that happens to have a fire, and mistakes the mist for smoke, and infers from this the presence of fire — is this enough to show that the misapprehension of mist for smoke, whereby he inferred the fire, was a valid means of cognition? (Kh. p.44 ff./76-8)

It is clear that the author is here trying to show by purely negative dialectic that the question raised by the opponent is improper. Suppose a person raises an objection in the following form: 'If there is a proof for the non-duality to which you adhere, then, from the very fact of its having a proof, it has a second thing over against it and is therefore not non-dual; if, on the other hand, there is no proof of it, then, being without proof, it should not be believed'. An answer, we are told, should be given to this problem. And the answer furnished by the author is: 'There is a proof, but this does not imply that non-duality has a second thing over against it, because the proof is indeterminable either as real or as unreal'. Such a reply cannot seem satisfactory to an enquirer into truth, as it leaves the objection unanswered.

Leaving the path of refutation, the author disposes of the question as follows.

(2) Or, whatever be the case with this question, the fact remains that the Veda is in any case the valid means of cognition for non-duality. For we have such Vedic texts as 'One only without a second' (Chānd.VI.ii.1) and 'There is no plurality whatever here' (Bṛhad.IV.iv.19). (Kh. p.46/80)

The author says: 'The authoritativeness of the Veda in general, and its authoritativeness in regard to already established and existing entities in particular, will be demonstrated in the Īśvarābhisandhi' (Kh. p.46/80). Then he raises the objection that the Veda is contradicted by perception and the other valid means of empirical knowledge, and rebuts the objection with logical arguments of the following kind.

(3) Perception and the other means of empirical knowledge do not contradict and cancel the metaphysical statements of the Veda. Those powers of perception and so on, which you regard as doing so, apply only to their own objects, for example the difference between things about you, like the pot and the cloth. There is no instance of such a means of knowledge, agreed upon by both of us, arising to apprehend all instances of difference in past, present and future. (Kh. p.47 f./81)

Then he refutes difference on the lines of Maṇḍana and others, by considering its subdivisions, and showing that the concept breaks down when the various alternative types such as essential difference, mutual exclusion, difference of attributes and so on are considered (Kh. pp.62-74/103-18). He also argues that the authority of the Veda for non-duality is not undermined by the fact that the Veda depends on distinctions for its power of communication, since distinctions do not have reality in the full sense (Kh. pp.75-8/118-22). These and other such points are passed over here, as they are of little service for determining the true method of the Vedanta, which does not depend on free-thinking hypothetical reasoning. The author sums up as follows:

(4) Thus even you, who are at present caught up in the play of Ignorance, should put your faith in this (doctrine of) non-duality, which has been presented before you with these arguments which are correct according to the reasoning and definitions proved to be sound by your own system. Through this faith in the teaching of the Upanishads you will come to desire to know your inner Self. Gradually your mind will withdraw from external activity, and you will have direct knowledge of the supreme reality, the self-luminous Witness, sweeter than honey, as your own Self. (Kh. p.79/125)

The author does not explain how immediate experience of non-duality is attained. What is offered throughout is merely a counter-refutation of the idea that the doctrine of non-duality is invalid logically. If the author obstinately persists in his claim that non-duality can only be experienced in ecstatic trance (samādhi), then this would introduce a kind of infinite regress into the operation of the text 'That thou art', and there would be contradiction with the Vedic text which made that pronouncement.

285 SUMMARY

Having refuted in various ways the definitions given by the Logicians of knowledge and the means of knowledge and other categories, Śrī Harṣa sums up finally as follows:

(1) Suppose someone thinks of a new way of explaining things, different from the views we have attributed to our opponents for purposes of refutation. And suppose he has the intelligence to rebut our objections here and there in the course of the argument. And suppose, further, that we, as critics, cannot think of a good reply. Then what we must do is to take one of the group of words used by the opponent in the course of elaborating his new position, and give a new refutation of its meaning. And if the opponent should exhaust the intelligence of the critic on that point, the latter must shift his ground, choosing other parts of the opponent's discourse. There is no fear of this being counted irrelevant, as everything that the opponent says is part of his argument. Nor is there anything improper in shifting to a new point in the midst of discussing another point. Otherwise the result would be absurd. For it would mean that, when a person had argued 'Sound is non-eternal, because it is produced', there could be no arguments raised about the meaning of 'being produced'; and that would give the absurd result that arguing on premises not accepted as proved by one of the parties would not count as a fallacy. Here we should point out that if the means of proof is inexplicable, the conclusion proved will also be inexplicable (so that it is not irrelevant to examine the credentials of the premises, even though the argument is about the conclusion).

And so I say: 'Thus my activity as a critic moves forward in three ways; I think of a new and equally powerful refutation; I apply the same refutation to a new topic in a new way; if anything resists refutation, I proceed analytically and apply a series of arguments to the words making up my opponent's propositions, robbing them of meaning one by one'. (Kh.II. p.246 f./752-3; cp. Sac V.P.P. Eng. intro. p.125 f.)

The claim of the author of the Khaṇḍana here is that all

except the Absolute is indeterminable. If you ask him in what sense it is indeterminable as real or unreal, his reply is: 'Any philosopher who prides himself on his ability to give explanations will find that, in practice, he cannot explain things, on account of the defects inherent in any statement' (M.V.283,1). And it is clear that he thinks that, by developing this point with examples, the claim about indeterminability will be substantiated. He also thinks that one establishes the authoritativeness of the Vedic teaching merely by refuting objections that have been raised against it. Consider also the following:

(2) Thus our arguments in refutation triumph at will when applied to all such philosophical doctrines. And we shall only be setting forth the arguments of the various philosophical schools in order to introduce these refutations, which are unanswerable on any other ground except (such an assertion of blind faith as) 'The whole arrangement of the world depends on the will of the Lord'. (Kh. p.80/126)

(3) For refutations have to be made in the style of argumentation called scepticism (vitaṇḍā); when such a style of argumentation is in operation there is no occasion for anyone to demand that one should turn away from it and defend one's own doctrines (as one does not have any). (Kh. p.80 f./127)

It is clear from the above that all this book is concerned with is exhibiting the methods for silencing the opponent. It is not the slightest use for determining the true method of the Vedanta. Consider, therefore, the following two passages from Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary.

(4) The aim of this school (Advaita Vedanta) is to explain the exact purport of the texts of the Upanishads, but not, like the school of the Logicians, either to prove or disprove any thesis by mere logical argumentation. (B.S.Bh.II.ii.1)

(5) For logical reasoning is accepted only as an auxiliary to Vedic revelation.... Here it is the same texts that are the authority, but with immediate experience (and firm remembrance, etc.,) added in the case of the purely metaphysical texts. For the knowledge of the Absolute requires to culminate in immediate experience (anubhava), and (unlike the part of the Veda dealing with commands and prohibitions) has an already-existent reality for its object. (B.S.Bh.I.i.2, M.V.31,7)

It is clear from these passages that independent logical speculation in all its forms, including scepticism, is of no help whatever for understanding the true method of the Vedanta. So we can dispense with any lengthy examination of the methods and results of the work of Śrī Harṣa.

CHAPTER XV
CITSUKHĀCĀRYA

286 THE PHILOSOPHY OF CITSUKHĀCĀRYA

The Advaita Vedantins who followed after Śrī Harṣa were influenced by his treatise on refutation, and exhibit more and more of a taste for independent dialectics. Citsukhācārya, however, held that the Vedanta teaching is not complete if it is limited to the refutation of opposing views. He therefore first argued with the help of Vedic quotation supported by argument, and without the raising and discussion of objections, that his own system was the one that Vedantins accepted, and then set about trying to show that the various different systems of Advaita in vogue could be reduced to unity.

287 CITSUKHĀCĀRYA'S LITERARY OUTPUT

Citsukha is understood to have been the pupil of Śrī Gauḍeśvarācārya, known as Jñānottama, author of the Jñāna Siddhi and the Nyāya Sudhā (T.P. p.606,610). We might draw attention to two of his works that have already been published, the Tattva Pradīpikā and the Nyāya Makaranda Vyākhyā. He is also said to have written a commentary on the Khaṇḍana of Śrī Harṣa. His other works include the Bhāṣya Bhāva Prakāśikā (on Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary), the Tātparyadīpikā on the Vivaraṇa of Prakāśātman, Vyākhyānas on the Brahma Siddhi and on the Pramāṇa Mālā, and the work called Adhikaraṇa Mañjarī Saṅgati. The present examination, however, will be confined to the Tattva Pradīpikā.

A reading of the Tattva Pradīpikā shows that this Ācārya was well versed in the type of dialectic found in the Khaṇḍana, and had firm faith in the doctrine of positive, indeterminable Ignorance. The book is an extremely helpful one for those who wish to educate themselves in the post-Śaṅkara Vedanta systems, and to acquaint themselves with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. But it is not able to supply us with much help on our present topic of

enquiry. The author follows the dialectical methods of the Nyāya Makaranda and the Khaṇḍana Khaṇḍa Khādhya, very often introducing their actual arguments into his own book, supported by further argumentation of his own. He refutes the positions of the Logicians in very great detail by purely negative dialectic, but, when establishing his own position, he turns in reverence to the guardian deity presiding over those very definitions and proofs that he had elsewhere demolished, like someone picking up a poisonous snake with loving hands.

Here, therefore, we shall content ourselves with a mere general indication of the contents of the Tattva Pradīpikā and of the author's mode of exposition, in order to give the reader some idea of the book. And then we shall go on to the examination of another system.

288 THE CONTENTS OF THE TATTVA PRADĪPIKĀ

The work is divided into four sections, modelled on the four Books of the Brahma Sūtras, and dealing respectively with the establishment of the author's own view, the refutation of the views of his opponents, the means to liberation and their reward, liberation in life.

The chief topics of the first section are the following. The inmost Self as self-luminous Consciousness (pp.1-56), the falsity of the objective world (pp.56-185), the authoritativeness of the texts of the Upanishads for teaching the existence even of an already established reality like the Absolute (pp. 185-280). In the second section (pp.281-527) objections are raised on the ground that the Upanishads (as interpreted in Advaita) are in conflict with the empirical means of knowledge like perception, which establish difference. Then all the various definitions of difference brought up by philosophers, and the Logicians' definitions of the instruments and objects of knowledge and other categories, are refuted in detail. The third section is concerned with the means for attaining metaphysical knowledge (pp.528-50). The point that immediate knowledge is attainable only through Vedic revelation is established with reasons, as is the further point that one's true transcendence is realized through metaphysical knowledge alone, and not through action alone or through action combined with knowledge.

The fourth section states and refutes a number of definitions of liberation, and gives the finally accepted view as 'Bondage is the concealment of the Self by Ignorance; liberation is the abolition of Ignorance through metaphysical knowledge' (pp.551-70). Afterwards the author raises the question of the seat of Ignorance and the object which it conceals. He establishes by logical reasoning set out with objections and answers that it is the Absolute that is both the seat of

Ignorance and the object concealed by it (reading avidyāyā), and refutes the doctrines that say that the individual soul and the Lord are different, using logical reasoning based on Vedic revelation for the purpose (pp.570-8). Then, mentioning the proof for the Witness incidentally, the author goes on to state in summary form the view that Ignorance is one, according to which it is the Absolute itself that undergoes transmigration through Ignorance and is liberated through metaphysical knowledge (pp.578-89). Then he goes on to show that there is nothing wrong with the view that there are many individual souls and many Ignorances, showing on the way that the doctrine of Vācaspati is rationally defensible (pp. 590-8). Finally, he considers the definition of the cessation of Ignorance, in the course of concluding the work with a defence of the doctrine of liberation in life (pp.598-610). He makes this last point (p.607) in the words: 'A remnant of Māyā does not cease (but accompanies the one liberated in life). It disappears when he enters into the state of ecstatic trance (samādhi); but at other times it remains present as the cause of the body and the world. It comes to an end when the merit and demerit that initiated the life in which liberation was attained comes to an end, exhausted through being experienced'.

289 CITSUKHA'S MANNER OF EXPOUNDING A TOPIC

The author's intention in the Tattva Pradīpikā is to establish the correct meanings for the terms he is using by definitions and proofs, topic by topic. Everywhere the method followed is to bring forward an opponent's objection saying 'There is no definition for this, and no proof of its existence'; this is followed by the setting forth of the finally accepted view saying that there is a correct definition of it and that its existence can be proved without contradiction. In general, the pattern followed on each subject is for the author to state his own position first in terse form in a verse, and then to bring out the meaning of the verse further by objections and answers. Though the author does not often introduce knotty riddles in the style of the Khaṇḍana, his work is nevertheless not easy of access to those who are not acquainted with the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā and other disciplines, and who are without experience of the terminology of the later Logicians. Furthermore, even in the exposition of the various topics, the taste for putting a whole series of objections into the mouth of the opponent and then answering them serially one by one, which had already appeared in the Nyāya Makaranda, is here exaggerated beyond measure. It is a severe test of the patience of the reader, who almost feels as if he had entered a thicket of banyan trees, hemmed in on every side by a rank growth of branches and twigs.

We will place before the reader, by way of an example, part

of the passage in which the author deals with the topic of the self-luminous right at the beginning of the work.

(1) We bow to Nṛsiṃha, of the nature of self-luminous Consciousness, who slaughtered the great demon of Ignorance with the claws of his arguments and proofs. (T.P. p.4)

The topic of self-luminosity is introduced in the course of this benedictory verse, and on this subject the opponent raises the following alternatives.

(2) Well, what does this word 'self-luminous' mean? Does it mean (1) 'itself, and that is light'? Or (2) 'itself its own light'? Or (3) 'not being subject to illumination by a light of a similar kind'? Or (4) 'light limited to, but never absent from, its own being'? Or (5) 'light that brings itself into practical experience'? Or (6) 'not being the object of any (other) knowledge'? Or (7) 'being immediately evident while not being the object of any (other) knowledge'? Or (8) 'not being the object of any knowledge, while being the object of practical experience'? Or (9) 'not being dependent on anything else of the same kind as itself for being the object of practical experience'? Or (10) 'being an immediate object of practical experience without being an object of subject-object knowledge'? Or (11) 'potential capability (e.g. in liberation) of being an immediate object of practical experience'? (T.P. pp.4-5)

After that, these alternatives are refuted one by one. For example:

(3) Not (1), for mental knowledge, that requires to be illumined by something else, the Witness, is 'itself, and that is light' (so that definition (1) would extend too far, and cover things like mental knowledge, which are not self-luminous). Not (2), for it is contradictory to suppose that one and the same thing could be the actor and the object of action in the same act. Not (3), for that would extend unduly to non-conscious objects like lamps, which cannot be illumined by light of a similar kind (to themselves). (That is, the flame of such lamps cannot be so illumined. T.N.) And the definition would imply that even non-conscious and non-luminous objects like pots would be self-luminous, since they 'cannot be illumined by a light of a similar kind (to themselves)'. Neither luminous objects like lamps, nor knowledge, have any similarity with pots (lit. 'do not include the universal "pothood"') in their nature, that pots could be illumined by a light of a similar kind to themselves. Nor can you argue that pots, lamps and knowledge are all similar in kind (belong to the same universal) in that they all belong to the great universal Being. For, since a light without Being is

impossible, this interpretation would render the qualification 'similar in kind' meaningless, and the definition might just as well have read 'not subject to illumination by a light'. Not (4) ... (T.P. pp.5-6)

And so on. Having refuted all eleven alternative *definitions* of self-luminosity in this style, he concludes, 'So we do not see that there can be any definition of self-luminosity, or any proof of its existence either', and passes over to the second part of the opponent's case, the case against the proof of the *existence* of self-luminosity.

(4) The Logician says that the Advaitin will argue as follows. The proof of the existence of self-luminous light is the following inference. Immediate intuition (anubhūti) is itself the self-luminous light that causes practical experience of intuition. This is clear from the mere fact of it being immediate intuition. For wherever there is no immediate intuition there is no self-luminous light either, as in the case of pots and other non-conscious objects.

Nor are we open (the Advaitin continues) to the charge of attributing to the subject of the inference (immediate experience) a predicate (self-luminous light) with which no one is familiar. For our opponents (the Logicians) are familiar with self-luminous light as cause of the practical experience of immediate intuition. So our proposition that immediate experience implies self-luminous light is reasonable. Nor is it correct to claim, on the ground that self-luminosity is already established for the Logicians in so far as they accept apperception of cognitions (anuvyavasāya), that we are to that extent offering an otiose 'proof' of what is already accepted anyway. For we Advaitins do not accept that apperception in the Logicians' sense really occurs. So we do not accept that it is included in the subject of the inference. (T.P. p.10)

Having thus set out an inference as he supposes the Advaitin might do, the opponent goes on to refute it.

(5) But all this is not so. For if the existence of self-luminous light as cause of the practical experience of immediate intuition were to be proved, the proof (immediate intuition) would have either to be present or not present in the proved (self-luminous light). But if it were present, then there could not be any universal negative rule to justify an inference in the form 'For wherever there is no immediate intuition there is no self-luminous light either' (cp. M.V. 289,4). But if the proof were totally absent from what was sought to be proved, there would be the fault of universal absence of the proof in the presence of that which was sought to be proved (sapakṣāvṛtti, T.P. Hindi Comm. p.11) and the proof would fail through indecisiveness. (T.P. pp.10-11)

And so on. The opponent goes on like this for ten pages!* Then the Advaitin begins his answer to the objections. In this connection, the author expresses the finally accepted definition succinctly in a single verse.

**(The number of pages has been adjusted to fit the edition of the T.P. used in this translation. T.N.)*

(6) How can you say that the definition of the self-luminous is impossible? On our view it is possible to define it as that which is capable of being experienced in immediate awareness, but which cannot be known as the object of a mental cognition. (T.P. p.16)

Having next established the definition as free from any defect, after raising and answering various possible objections, the author goes on to begin the *proof of the existence* of self-luminosity (the next subject to be taken up after the establishment of its correct definition).

(7) Therefore there is nothing wrong with our definition of self-luminosity. Nor is there anything wrong with our proof of its existence either. The inference runs: Immediate intuition is itself the self-luminous light that causes practical experience of intuition. This is clear from the mere fact of its being immediate intuition. For wherever there is no immediate intuition there is no self-luminous light either, as in the case of pots and other non-conscious objects (cp. M.V. 289,4. (T.P. p.21)

Then, after extending the series of objections up to the forty-fifth page, he finally quotes a piece of evidence from the Veda. 'And the Self is self-luminous because we have the Vedic text "In that state (dream), this Spirit is self-luminous" (Bṛhad.IV.iii.9)'. And after raising and refuting various further objections, he begins the demonstration of how darkness is a positive entity, with a view to open the enquiry into the darkness of positive metaphysical Ignorance.

(8) And so all possibility of criticism of the self-luminosity of the Self has been removed. The Self is known by the name 'Light' (jyotiḥ), and rightly so, because it both illumines the universe imagined through Ignorance, and also brings to an end the darkness of Ignorance, just as the sun and other luminous bodies illumine the world by removing that positive entity, the darkness of the night. (T.P. pp.46-7)

When the reader reflects how long the above exposition of self-luminosity took, even though presented in very abbreviated form, he will easily see what an extremely dreary and irksome task it is to go through the book. At each stage throughout the work,

in each new topic that is brought forward, the opponent's view is expounded first, by raising a number of alternatives which are all exposed by the opponent one by one as affected by some such fault as under-extension (in definition), over-extension, logical impossibility, begging the question, fallacy of mutual dependence, infinite regress or the like. Then, in the same order and using the same terminology, the Advaitin's answer is set out in full detail.

A true expert has said: 'Here it is the same texts that are the authority, but with immediate experience (and firm remembrance, etc.,) added in the case of the purely metaphysical texts. For the knowledge of the Absolute requires to culminate in immediate experience, and (unlike the part of the Veda dealing with commands and prohibitions) has an already-existent reality for its object' (B.S.Bh.I.i.2, cp. M.V.285,5). It is easy to imagine how dangerous the path becomes, how thickly beset with pitfalls, bogs, thorns and stumbling-blocks, if one pays no attention to such teaching by the true experts and pursues empty logic, based on inference and other such empirical means of knowledge deriving from metaphysical Ignorance, in an attempt to *prove* points of doctrine like the self-luminosity of the Self as Witness, which can only be known through direct experience anyway.

290 SOME DEFINITIONS AND PROOFS ACCEPTED BY CITSUKHĀCĀRYA

We will not now give any more examples of the reasoning used either by the opponent or by the exponent of the accepted view in the Tattva Pradīpikā. Instead, we will merely quote a few of the definitions and direct proofs accepted by the author. This will make it easy to compare them with the definitions given in the Brahma Siddhi, Pañcapādikā, Vivaraṇa, Iṣṭa Siddhi, Bhāmatī and Nyāya Makaranda.

(1) The falsity of an entity is its being the counter-positive of its total non-existence when identified with the substratum in which it appears. (T.P. p.67)

(2) The cloth under consideration is the counter-positive of its total non-existence in the component threads, from the very fact of its constituting a single whole, like any other cloth. In the same way, the qualities, actions, universals and so on associated with each individual thread are counter-positives of their total non-existence in the substratum in which they appear, from the mere fact of their being individual forms, like any other individual form. This analysis is to be applied throughout. (T.P. p.69)

(3) Ignorance is that positive entity which, though begin-

ningless, is subject to cancellation through knowledge. (T.P. p.97)

(4) Again, there is nothing wrong in the definition 'Ignorance is the material cause of error'. (T.P. p.102)

(5) Devadatta's valid knowledge, now under discussion, puts an end to some beginningless entity other than that knowledge, being based on a valid means of knowledge, just like the valid knowledge of Yajñadatta and others. (T.P. p.98)

(6) Further, experience in dreamless sleep, attested by the reflection afterwards 'I knew nothing', is another proof of the existence of Ignorance. (T.P. p.99)

(7) The impossibility of explaining otherwise the experience 'I do not understand the meaning of what you say' is also a proof of the existence of positive Ignorance. (T.P. p.100)

(8) And again, the Vedic texts, also, are evidence for the existence of Ignorance. For we have such texts as 'There was darkness' (R.V. VIII.7.17) and 'One should know that Nature (prakṛti) is Māyā' (Śvet.IV.10). (T.P. p.101)

(9) Error, the subject of discussion, has for its material cause something (i.e. metaphysical Ignorance) other than the (Self as the) uncontradictable ultimate cause of this knowledge, from the mere fact of its being error, like the error of Devadatta. (T.P. p.103)

The definitions and proofs given for positive Ignorance in the last four extracts should be compared with those of the Vivaraṇa (cp. M.V.238-41).

(10) The indeterminable is that which, when critically considered, is found not to be either real or unreal or real-and-unreal. (T.P. p.136)

(11) Or else we may say that the indeterminable is that which is subject to cancellation through knowledge. (T.P. p.138)

(12) Presumption (arthāpatti) is also a proof of indeterminability in that there is no other way of accounting for the fact that there are things that are subject both to apprehension and to subsequent cancellation. (T.P. p.140)

(13) The illusory silver under discussion is indeterminable, because it is subject to cancellation. What is not indeterminable is not subject to cancellation, like the Self. (T.P. p.142)

(14) 'Having a meaning beyond the realm of differentiation' (akhaṇḍārthatā) refers to the power of words that are not synonyms to produce valid knowledge that is not accessible through the mutual association of word-meanings in a sentence (saṃsarga). (T.P. p.192)

(15) Or else, 'Having a meaning beyond the realm of differentiation' means that the words of a sentence signify only the meaning of a single uninflected nominal stem. (T.P. p.192)

The commentator explains here that, although the words in the sentence are many, they only have the meaning of a single uninflected nominal stem (cp. M.V. p.826, *877).*

(16) The text 'The Absolute is Reality, Knowledge and Infinity' is a valid means of knowledge communicating indirectly something that is not accessible through the mutual association of word-meanings in a sentence. This is known from the mere fact of its being a valid means of cognition, like the sense of sight. (T.P. p.201)

(17) The fact that there could not be a definite answer to a definite question otherwise (anupapatti = anyathānupapatti) shows that all worldly and Vedic definitions refer to the meaning of an uninflected nominal stem. (T.P. p.202, cp. Sarma, p.104)

(18) The phrase 'remnant of Ignorance' refers to a certain special form of Ignorance. Metaphysical knowledge is impeded by the powerful force of the actions that initiate the life in which liberation is gained, and the enlightened person conforms to that remnant of Ignorance and to the actions and so on that spring from it. It is in this sense that we can accept the 'liberation in life' of enlightened people. (T.P. p.606)

Here the author accepts that the remnant of Ignorance is 'a certain special form' of Ignorance, which gives rise to the appearance of objects capable of immediate apprehension. He rejects the view that it is either a part of Ignorance or an impression of Ignorance.

291 CITSUKHĀCĀRYA'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF VEDANTA

After the appearance of the Tattva Pradīpikā, the idea arose amongst Vedantins that though the various different schools of explanation all contradict one another, still they can be reconciled one way or another easily enough. Seeing that the refutations invented by Śrī Harṣa to silence the opponents of other schools were in every way successful, the Vedantins began

from now on to use them to get the better of rival schools within their own fold. Intent as they were on evolving faultless definitions and proofs, they nevertheless forgot to ask whether their refutations might not undermine their own definitions and proofs as well. They completely jetisoned the principle 'The basic function of words in the Veda is to inform us of something that is evident in immediate experience; they do not prompt action'. They quoted the texts of the Veda as if the only purpose of such texts was to reveal the faults in the theories of their opponents and to establish their own theories as correct. Relying solely on empty hypothetical reasoning, the Vedantins became devotees of the art of debating for victory at any cost; they reached a state where they could not remember the true method of Vedanta even in a dream.

One cannot, however, deny that in trying to make out her case that the Vedantic position can be known through dialectical reasoning, the goddess of victory in debate chose Citsukhācārya for her favourite advocate.

CHAPTER XVI
SARVAJÑĀTMAN

292 WHO WAS SARVAJÑĀTMAN?

We find at the end of each chapter of the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka, as edited in the Ānanda Āśrama Series, a colophon giving the name of the author and his Guru, beginning 'In the work called Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka composed by Śrī Sarvajñātmamuni, the venerable pupil of Śrī Deveśvara...'. In the Vārāṇasī edition (with Madhusūdana's Commentary), we find at the end of the first chapter (only) 'In the work called Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka, which is a Vārtika on the Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara on the Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā, composed by Śrī Sarvajñātmamuni, the venerable pupil of Sureśvara...' (p.398). The remaining chapters of this edition only have 'composed by Śrī Sarvajñātmamuni...'. But the author himself composed a benedictory verse in honour of his Guru as follows:

(1) All hail to the dust of the feet of Deveśvara that saved the whole band of his pupils! By mere contact with that dust we achieved our highest end and have attained spotless fame throughout the worlds. (S.Ś. I.8)*

*(*There is a very thorough and informative edition and translation of the S.Ś. by N. Veezhinathan, Madras, 1972. T.N.)*

On this, the commentator Rāma Tīrtha remarks, 'Now he pays honour to his direct Guru Sureśvarācārya'. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his Commentary called the Sārasaṅgraha says, 'Now he pays honour to his Guru, the author of the (Bṛhadāraṇyaka) Vārtika. All hail to the dust of the feet of Deveśvara = "of Sureśvarācārya"' (p.14 f.).

In commenting on I.14, Madhusūdana quotes the upanishadic text 'Just as, my dear one, one might put bandages over a person's eyes and lead him away from the land of the Gandhāras and deposit him in a solitary place...' (Chānd.VI.xiv.1) and

expresses the opinion that the author's (Sarvajñātman's) indirect reference to that passage is an indication of the place where he himself lived. But the commentator on the Guru Ratna Mālikā, basing himself on the authority of the benedictory verses of the Bṛhat Śaṅkara Vijaya, says that the Guru appointed Sureśvarācārya to watch over the administration of the Sarvajña Pīṭha (verse 34) and appointed Sarvjña Śaṅkarārya (i.e. Sarvajñātma Muni)* in charge of the Kāñcī Pīṭha (verse 38).

For our part, we are inclined to dismiss all this as based on fallible popular tradition; we note that the actual commentators are happy to accept the name Deveśvara. The author himself refers to his Guru by the name of Deveśvara at the end of the work as well as at the beginning, saying (of himself) at the end, 'With his heart cleansed by the dust of the lotus feet of Śrī Deveśvara...' (IV.62). He does not refer to his Guru by the well-known name of Sureśvarācārya. Anyone who reflects on the way in which this Teacher is referred to under the bare name 'Deveśvara' without any embellishment as 'Ācārya' or 'author of the Vārtika' is bound to doubt very much if Sureśvarācārya could have been the person the author had in mind.

What is more, Sarvajñātman, when writing an original treatise expressing his own opinions, elaborately defends the theory of indeterminable root Ignorance, which is not found in the system of the Vārtika. On this ground alone we may say that he cannot possibly have been a direct pupil of the author of the Vārtika. There could never be such a radical difference of opinion between Teacher and pupil without some very special cause. And there is the further point that he makes the following reference to the age in which he lived.

(The author's name can appear either as Sarvajñātman or (more rarely) as Sarvajña or (when a title follows) Sarvajñātma (e.g. Sarvajñātma Muni). The form 'Śaṅkarārya' given in the V.P.P. text is correct and should not be emended to Śaṅkarācārya. The relevant verse is quoted at Vyāsācala, editor's intro. p.xv (1). T.N.)

(2) The great sage known by the name of Sarvajñātman, with his heart cleansed (like a pure mirror) by the dust of the lotus feet of Śrī Deveśvara, has composed the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka, a work to gladden the hearts of all good men, at the time when Manukulāditya of the kingly line was ruling the earth with unbroken sway. (S.Ś. IV.62)

Some historians, accepting the popular tradition mentioned above, have proclaimed that 'Deveśvara' was 'Sureśvara', and that Manukulāditya was just another name for King Āditya Cola. Others, disregarding this, declare that Manukulāditya was the name of a king who ruled in southern Travancore in the tenth century A.D. In either case it is difficult to make out that

Sarvajñātman himself was a contemporary of Sureśvarācārya, the author of the Vārtikas. And this is perhaps enough on the identification of the author, when exact information is not available.

293 THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS WORK

Of the works which adopt the standpoint that indeterminable Ignorance is the material cause of the world, the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka could fairly be said to stand supreme. This independent work, which forms a compendium of Vedanta maxims, substantiates the view that the Vedanta of the Brahma Sūtras is solely concerned with communicating the metaphysical principle of the Absolute in its true nature, void of empirical attributes. Everywhere the various topics are expounded in a style that is most attractive to read, the sentences composed of sweetly-ringing words, disposed in verses of varied metres. The author takes great pains to show that a number of earlier Teachers agree with his own system. And this is what has caused the work to be treasured as a casket of priceless jewels by earnest enquirers into the method of Vedanta. But from the standpoint of recognizing the true classical method of the Vedanta, our subject in the present work, the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka has little to offer that requires special study. We shall therefore give it only a very brief examination.

294 IGNORANCE ALONE IS THE CAUSE OF SUPERIMPOSITION

Though this independent treatise contains four chapters, on the model of the four Books of the Brahma Sūtras, dealing respectively with the harmonious co-operation of the upanishadic texts, the absence of contradiction from other sources, the means for, and the results of, Vedantic discipline — nevertheless, as if to illustrate the meaning of the term 'independent treatise' (prakaraṇa) when defined as 'a work on a peculiar topic within the broader context of a science as a whole', the author apportions the various topics in a very independent way. Here are some of his views on the topic of Ignorance, summarized from the verses to which reference is made.

(1) Those who have studied the Upanishads in the proper way come to know the Self which is of the nature of bliss, void of all pain, by nature free from all distinctions. The limited form of a soul undergoing transmigration is an erroneous superimposition onto that. Ignorance of the Self is alone a sufficient cause (nimitta) for the production of that superimposition, which is of the nature of a mutual confusion of the conscious and the non-conscious (I.26-7). For superimposition, there is no need to assume a cause in the form of the defect

of similarity, or other defects pertaining to the object or instrument of knowledge (I.28-30). Nor should one suppose that, if the Self and the not-self are superimposed on one another mutually, it follows that (they are both illusory and) the world has no real substratum and that the ultimate truth is the Void. For this objection only arises through failure to distinguish between the general aspect of the substratum (perceived as a mere 'this') called 'the support' (ādhāra), and the substratum (adhiṣṭhāna) in its true nature (the Self), and falsely labelling the mere support as 'the substratum'. The true substratum never undergoes contradiction and cancellation, so the true nature of the world is not the Void. How indeed could anyone suppose that it could be, who accepted superimposition as being an identification of the real and the false, exemplified by the rope-snake, the shell-silver and the mirage (I.32-6)?

Perhaps you will maintain that in ordinary worldly experience superimpositions are only found on external objects that have parts and are similar to what is superimposed (so that we have nothing we could show to exemplify superimposition onto the Self)? Very well, we shall show how all these characteristics hold good in a figurative sense of the Self. The revered Commentator said 'It is not altogether a non-object' (cp. M.V.142,3, note). And the same thing follows from the fact that superimpostion onto the Self is always possible, as it is immediately evident (just as the superimpositions of dream, for instance, are not superimposed onto external objects, as the sense-organs of the waking body are not then active, I.39-49).

Finitude is bondage; by finitude, the inmost Self as pure Consciousness is bound; the cause of this bondage is Ignorance of one's own Self; putting it to an end through knowledge of one's true Self is liberation. (S.Ś. I.50)

The beginninglessness of superimposition, taught in Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary (M.V.23,3), is left out of consideration here. (That is, the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka names Ignorance as the cause of superimposition (I.27); but in the doctrine of Śrī Śaṅkara superimposition is beginningless and has no cause, since all causality falls within superimposition. T.N.)

(2) Like bondage, Ignorance, too, affects only the one in Ignorance, and not the true nature of the Self, or otherwise there would be contradiction with the changelessness and non-duality of Consciousness. The unknownness of the Self is also cause by not-being-awake-to-the-Self. And one should not object (cp. M.V.294,3) that that implies circularity (or other faults) of argument. (S.Ś. I.51)

Madhusūdana says in his Commentary here: '(Now, will it not involve circularity to say that Ignorance is imagined through

Ignorance? No.) For how can there be circularity of argument if it is beginningless *Ignorance that is imagined through Ignorance, as also* beginningless *unknownness of the Self?' But the verse itself does not put the matter in that way. The objection that, if Ignorance is illusory, it must itself be superimposed is not here raised and answered.*

(3) Because Ignorance is the cause of the relation between subject and object, the relation between Ignorance and the Self must also be caused by Ignorance, since Ignorance is an object (I.52). Just as the Self illumines itself as well as the mass of its objects by its power of knowledge, and just as, in the teaching of Sureśvara's Vārtika, difference differentiates both difference and the different, so can Ignorance superimpose both itself and other things without infinite regress. (S.Ś. I.54-5)

(4) And this Ignorance has a very insecure existence. It is supported on partless Consciousness like a pat of ghee on the sacrificial fire. That which Ignorance fundamentally conceals is not the individual soul (but rather the Self), since the individual soul is itself imagined through Ignorance. Amongst the various names of Ignorance are timira, tamisra, tāmisra, tamisrā (darkness), andha-tamasa (blind darkness), jaḍimā (non-consciousness), māyā, jagat-prakṛti (Nature as primordial cause of the world), acyuta-śakti (the power of Viṣṇu), āndhya (darkness), nidrā, suṣupti (sleep), anṛta (the false), pralaya (dissolution), guṇaikya (the state of equilibrium of the three 'constituents'). (S.Ś. I.317-8)

(5) Because non-being cannot conceal anything, Ignorance cannot be bare absence of knowledge. Ignorance must therefore be of positive nature, since the Bhagavad Gītā (V.15) says that it conceals knowledge (I.320). The twofold nature of Ignorance is evident in ordinary direct experience — its non-consciousness in the objects of the world and its nature as delusion in man. By these two powers our natural state of liberation is concealed (read pihitaḥ not vihitaḥ). (I.320-2)

It is clear that the line of thought generally speaking follows the system of the Vivaraṇa throughout.

295 THE PURPOSE OF THE VEDANTA AND OF THIS PARTICULAR WORK

We find the following on the topic of philosophical reflection (vicāra) in the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka.

(1) Even knowledge derived from the texts of the Veda is useless if it is obstructed by other knowledge that is erroneous. Therefore the aim of philosophical reflection is to remove

such obstructions. It does not result in new knowledge (I.14-9). Nevertheless, the purpose of the Vedanta Śāstra (the body of treatises supporting the upanishadic teaching) is to bring the knowledge derived from the Vedic texts to its rightful fruition, through the power of that knowledge which destroys distinctions such as that between 'soul' and 'Lord' and so removes the obstacles which prevent metaphysical knowledge. (S.Ś. I.57)

(2) Metaphysical knowledge is expounded as something desirable for the sake of the supreme goal of human life. But because knowledge is not subject to human will it cannot be enjoined. As long as the Absolute remains unknown, knowledge of it cannot be enjoined (as one can only be enjoined to do something of which one has knowledge). But when it is once known, injunction to know it is superfluous. Apparent injunctions like 'The Self should be seen' have to be interpreted, not as commands, but as value judgments. The contents of the Vedanta are not anticipated (by the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā). (S.Ś. I.59-63, cp. M.V.154, 7 and note)

(3) Liberation means total eradication of pain and unsurpassable joy. Man (in his state of Ignorance) is by nature deprived of both. Therefore, when desire for metaphysical knowledge has arisen through performance of ritual and other disciplines, a qualified candidate who is possessed of discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold spiritual equipment (cp. Mādhavānanda, p.766) and desire for liberation should approach a Guru and seek metaphysical knowledge. (S.Ś. I.67-92)

296 POINTS ABOUT THE SUPREME TEXTS

The author's general view is that the chief message of the Uttara Mīmāṃsā (Vedanta) is that the supreme texts of the Upanishads like 'That thou art' communicate a meaning that transcends all differentiation, and that the qualified student attains liberation through knowledge of the supreme texts. He declares this as follows:

(1) The one direct cause of liberation is a supreme text (mahāvākya), administered by a Guru who has himself had vision of the Absolute and is a total renunciate, when that text belongs to one's own Vedic school and has been properly recited and learned according to rule, when it comes in the upanishadic section of those texts and has been cherished in the memory with reverence. The Veda itself (Tai.Br.III.xii.9.7) says 'He who has no knowledge of the Veda cannot know the great Spirit'. How can this be gainsaid? And why did that other text 'But I am asking you about that Spirit proclaimed in the Upanishads' (Bṛhad.III.ix.26) emphatically declare that the teaching of

the great Spirit was the special province of the Upanishads? The great Teachers refer to the supreme texts themselves as 'the Upanishads' and 'the Veda'. For no one can claim that there can be effective metaphysical knowledge without resort to the one means of the supreme texts. Hence one should place one's faith in them. (S.Ś. III.295-7)

Verses III.300-2 argue that the terms 'Upanishad' and 'Veda' actually have the supreme texts for their primary meaning, in that the other texts exist for their sake. It does not occur to the author to wonder why the term 'Mahāvākya' does not occur in Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary.

(2) Because the meaning of the word 'Thou' was explained in the first Sūtra (B.S. I.i.1), this second Sūtra (B.S. I.i.2) explains the meaning of the word 'that'. The meaning of 'that' has to be known to be the non-dual reality: the meaning of 'thou' as the inmost Self has already been given. (S.Ś. I.552)

That the first Sūtra of the Brahma Sūtras is concerned with the duty of enquiring into the Absolute, and the second with the definition of the Absolute, is very well known. The author makes an attempt in verses I.553-61 to explain how, by a piece of special pleading, he can represent them as referring to the meaning of the words 'that' and 'thou' in the supreme text 'That thou art'.

(3) The text 'That thou art' refers by a special figurative usage, in which the words lose one part of their meaning and retain another (jahad-ajahal-lakṣaṇā), to a meaning that is a pure identity without any differentiation (akhaṇḍārtha), as do worldly statements of recognition, such as 'This is that man...' (I.149-66). There is no rule saying that figurative usage presupposes for its object something within the range of another means of valid cognition. It is enough if the entity to which it is applied (here the Self of the hearer) is evident (whether a means of valid cognition is in operation or not, I.152). If it is accepted that, in the phrase 'I am the Absolute', the word 'the Absolute' includes in its primary meaning Ignorance plus the reflection of Consciousness in Ignorance, while the word 'I' has the ego-sense for its primary meaning, then there would be no contradiction in supposing that it represented a case of that form of figurative usage in which the words totally lose their primary meanings in favour of the figurative meanings (jahal-lakṣaṇā, I.169). Alternatively, the terms 'the Absolute' and 'I' in the text 'I am the Absolute' may also be taken as referring to the Lord and the individual soul by indirect usage based on similarity of attributes (gauṇī vṛtti, with similarity in point of interiority and consciousness), since there would be a contradiction if the primary meanings were fully retained; the mechanism is

the same as in such worldly expressions as 'The little fellow is fire' (referring to the brilliance and keenness of a young student) and 'Devadatta is a lion' (I.170). Even less important texts like 'The Absolute is Reality, Knowledge, Infinity' (Taitt.II.1) should be understood as communicating a meaning that is beyond differentiation (akhaṇḍārtha). (S.Ś. I.175-9)

The sequence observed here in interpreting the meanings of the words 'that' and 'thou' follows the view of Sureśvara. (The most exact parallel is Mānasollāsa (attrib. Sureśvara) III.13-9; cp. also N.Sid. III.2,3,9 and 26, and, on the wider question of how the Absolute can be communicated by words at all, the references given at M.V.107,3, note. T.N.) The grammatical relationship of the words is case-agreement. The relation of the (primary) meanings is that of qualified and qualifier. Then, when the two (primary) word-meanings are put in relation in a sentence, there results the idea of a contradiction. From this results the conviction that, though there are two words, there is a reference through figurative usage to a meaning that is a pure undifferentiated identity.

(4) In the Sūtra 'But that (i.e. the fact that the Absolute is to be known from the Veda, B.S. I.i.3) follows from the harmony of the texts' (B.S. I.i.4), revered Bādarāyaṇa points to the grammatical agreement (of 'that' and 'thou') by use of the word 'anvaya' (harmony, agreement). But by the prefix 'sam' (in 'samanvayāt') he excludes secondary agreement. For there is a distinction between two forms of grammatical agreement. Secondary agreement occurs when the two words in grammatical agreement express a meaning that is a synthesis (saṃsarga) of two related elements; the primary form of agreement occurs when the two words refer to a pure undifferentiated identity. (S.Ś. I.217-8)

297 HOW THE VEDA IS THE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ABSOLUTE

Verse I.239 asks how the Veda could be an authoritative means of knowledge for the Absolute in its true nature as void of all distinctions. Verses I.242-4 raise the objection that the Absolute is not within the range of speech or the mind. Among the points the author makes in reply are the following.

(1) (Our statement that what cannot be known as an object can nevertheless be known through the Upanishads was not a self-contradiction.) The metaphysical idea derived from the upanishadic texts can be a valid means of cognition merely through burning up Ignorance, the cause of the world-appearance, which it does when its form (as the Absolute) is apprehended. The followers of Kumārila hold that a sentence yielding knowledge

about consciousness is a valid means of cognition, even if consciousness is not itself in any sense an object. Similarly, the followers of Prabhākara also hold that sentences bearing on knowledge can be valid means of cognition, even though knowledge is not an object, being non-different from the consciousness that illumines cognitions of objects such as pots. In the same way, in the present context, that of knowledge of the Absolute, though pure Consciousness is not an object, nevertheless knowledge of Consciousness derived from the upanishadic texts can be a valid means of cognition in regard to it by destroying the Ignorance that conceals it. (S.Ś. I.245-6)

Metaphysical knowledge, conceived as a mental modification assuming the form of the Self, and taking the Self for its object, destroys Ignorance. Consciousness, however, is self-luminous. This teaching is typical of those who believe in a root Ignorance (mūlāvidyā) over and above superimposition.

(2) But some hold that the idea produced by the text 'neither this nor that', though negative (read niṣeddhrī-api), is completed later when the positive teaching about the infinite Self is communicated; on this theory, the negative texts are of equal importance with texts like the positive 'That thou art' (cp. P.P. p.167/38: Sac Pañcapādikā Prasthānam p.86). According to another view (that of Maṇḍana Miśra, M.V.99,1 *ad fin.*;102,1 and 2), it is the negative texts that are of more importance; for a sentence expressed in positive form cannot bring knowledge of anything like the Absolute, which has no distinctions. Positive sentences necessarily express meanings containing internal qualifications. This school does not admit that the Absolute can be communicated in positive terms through figurative usage. For they say that, since there is no objective element in the Absolute, there cannot in its case be any relationship of word and meaning, and without this much there is no basis for figurative usage. (S.Ś. I.250-2)

(3) This last view is wrong. For the function of a sentence conveying negation is only to put an end to superimposed distinctions; it cannot, like a positive sentence directly state the true nature of anything. And without a knowledge of the true nature of any unknown entity, the ignorance of it, which produces false conceptions in regard to it, cannot be brought to an end. Ignorance of the rope will not be brought to an end by the mere statement 'This is not a snake'; knowledge that actually illumines the nature of the rope (read prakāśakajñānaṃ) is also required. One should therefore see that the negative texts like 'Not gross...' and so on are only auxiliaries contributing to an understanding of the harmony of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads by correcting the literal meaning of the positive texts in favour of a figurative one:

they are not themselves direct means to liberation (I.253-6). Or, according to another acceptable view, we may say that the negative texts are mere confirmation of the knowledge previously obtained from the positive ones, as when we say 'This is a rope, not a snake' (cp. P.P. *loc. cit.*). (S.Ś. I.257-8)

(4) Therefore it stands proved that knowledge of the Absolute arises from positive texts like 'That thou art' only, supported by the explanatory texts (artha-vāda) teaching the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world (Taitt. III.1), the control of the world (Bṛhad.III.vii.1), and entry into it as the individual soul (Taitt.II.6). This justifies the meaning of the Sūtra 'But that (i.e. the fact that the Absolute is to be known from the Veda, B.S. I.i.3) follows from the harmony of the texts' (B.S. I.i.4). The author of the Sūtras himself hinted that the negative texts were only subordinate auxiliaries to the positive ones when he said 'After that negation, the text goes on to say more' (B.S. III.ii.22). (S.Ś. I.260-2)

It is clear that this explanation of the operation of the negative texts stands in contradiction both with Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Commentary and with the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika of Sureśvara (cp. M.V.28 and 116). Śrī Śaṅkara's Commentary explains the phrase 'After that negation, the text goes on to say more' differently. See also the text in Śrī Śaṅkara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Commentary (II.iii.6, cp. M.V.21,1) with its Vārtika by Sureśvara (B.B.V. II.iii.171-235, cp. M.V.116,10). Śrī Śaṅkara says: 'But if the desire is to express the true nature of the Absolute, void of all conditioning adjuncts and particularity, then it cannot be described by any positive means whatever. The only possible method then is to refer to it through a comprehensive denial of whatever positive characteristics have been attributed to it in previous teachings, and to say "neither this nor that"' (Bṛhad.Bh.II.iii.6, M.V. 21,1).

The objections and answers on the question of the authoritativeness of the Veda, which the author sets out at length, are not here discussed, as we do not find anything important for criticism.

298 MISCELLANEOUS TEACHINGS FROM THE SECTION ON THE HARMONY OF THE TEXTS

Sarvajñātman claims that the texts concerned with the Absolute as associated with attributes can be related to the Absolute in its true nature without attributes. He makes this point after summing up the previous one, which had said that, because

there can be no injunction to know the Self, 'The Upanishads teach the supreme Self as the real without any injunction to know it' (I.462). He then goes on to develop the new point as follows:

(1) Even the texts concerned with the Absolute as associated with attributes are everywhere related to (those proclaiming) the reality without attributes. (S.Ś. I.463)

(2) The Absolute as associated with attributes consists of a real and an unreal element; knowledge of the Absolute associated with attributes contains a true and an untrue element. The texts in the Veda teaching the Absolute as associated with attributes are of the same (double) kind. Hence those texts have one meaning which is subordinate, and another which refers to the real in its true form without attributes. (S.Ś. I.464)

In the next verse (I.465) the author says that the texts associating the Absolute with attributes are like such erroneous cognitions as 'this is silver'. They synthesize two meanings, and manifest something real and something false at the same time. In the following verse (I.466) it is said that the intention of a metaphysical text in the Upanishads is only to convey its meaning. The author's view was that the texts referring to the Absolute as associated with attributes might well be intended to convey the two meanings, the Absolute as associated with qualities, and also the Absolute as such (i.e. without them).

It is true that in some places Śrī Bhagavatpāda has taught the identity of the Absolute with attributes and the Absolute without attributes. For instance, we have such texts as 'The texts exhibit one and the same Absolute in two forms, according to a distinction between the two realms of metaphysical knowledge and metaphysical Ignorance' (B.S.Bh.I.i.12, cp. M.V.26,6) and 'For it is the supreme Absolute itself which is taught, in some places only and for the sake of meditation, to be associated with conditioning adjuncts of a pure and elevating kind, and to have characteristics implying modification, such as "being composed of mind" (Chānd.III.xiv.2) and so on; in this context the Absolute is referred to as being "in its lower form" (apara)' (B.S.Bh.IV.iii.9, M.V.51,2).

Nevertheless, in our opinion the author of the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka was not justified in claiming that the texts referring to the Absolute as associated with attributes can be related to the Absolute in its true nature without attributes; for these texts are predominantly concerned (not with statement of the metaphysical truth but) with prescribing themes for meditation.

(3) The texts promising rewards for meditations on prescribed

themes have aims that are different from those of the texts concerned with affirmation of the existence and sole reality of the Absolute. (B.S.Bh.III.ii.21, cp. M.V.70,1)

(4) But the other texts, which are each concerned with the Absolute associated with the particular form that they teach, are not concerned with the Absolute (in its true nature) without form. For they are predominantly concerned with prescribing themes for meditation. Such texts may be accepted literally where they do not conflict with the purely metaphysical texts. But where there is a contradiction, the texts that are concerned with teaching the metaphysical truth prevail over texts which have other ends predominantly in view. (B.S.Bh. III.ii.14, cp. M.V.49 intro.;49,1)

Here we may conclude our enquiry into the treatment in the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka of the topic of the validity of the Vedic texts by quoting the verse in which the author sums up his view of the agreement amongst the various texts at the end of his section on that topic.

(5) A text can apprise one of an already established and evident reality. It can express a meaning that is not necessarily associated with any task that has to be performed. It can express a meaning that is beyond all differentiation. A text can bring liberation as its result. (S.Ś. I.562)

299 THE ABSOLUTE AS CAUSE OF THE WORLD

The cause-effect relation of the Absolute and the world is stated in the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka as follows:

(1) The wise say that the pure non-dual Consciousness becomes the cause of the world of transmigratory experience through the instrumentality of Ignorance, associated with the reflection of Consciousness in Ignorance. Consciousness is the cause: but the instrument for causing the world of transmigration is Ignorance and the reflection. (S.Ś. I.323)

(2) Some say that the cause of the world is the Self, the real principle, in conjunction with Ignorance (cp. M.V.261,2). When Consciousness is reflected in the mind, it becomes the author of good and bad deeds. In the same way, when the supreme Self is reflected in Ignorance, it becomes the author of the world (I.326-7). But this is not correct. The term 'the Self' refers to the supreme Consciousness only. As a means of instruction, the Self as cause of the world is taught as standing in conjunction with Ignorance; when people cannot discriminate the pure Self as that to which the teaching is

intended to refer, they make the mistake of thinking that it really stands in conjunction with Ignorance. (S.Ś. I.329-30)

(3) The Pradhāna (or Nature) of the Sāṅkhyas cannot be the cause of the world either, as it is non-conscious. (S.Ś. I.324)

(4) Being the cause of the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world may be accepted as an indirect definition of the Absolute as long as the (transcendent) existence of the latter is not known (I.519). And the purpose of that is only to exclude everything that is not the Absolute (I.526). Thus the purpose of the present Sūtra (B.S. I.i.2) is to exclude time, fate, atoms, the soul, Nature (as conceived by the Sāṅkhyas), the Groups (skandha) or momentary flashes of consciousness or the Void (taught by various Buddhist schools) as possible causes of the world. (S.Ś. I.528)

(5) The Vedic texts affirm the Absolute, saying 'The Absolute is a cause of this kind', when they repeat the notion of cause that is already known (by implication, arthād), saying 'The Absolute, the supreme principle, is both the efficient and the material cause of whatever undergoes origination, maintenance and dissolution' (I.534). Nor is it correct to say that a text which was held to repeat what was known from another source, and at the same time to be an authority on its own account, would suffer from the defect of having two incompatible functions attributed to it. For it is assumed that the element of authority here derives from the other source. Such is the opinion of some eminent authorities. (S.Ś. I.536)

(6) Dreams and other such phenomena prove that Consciousness can stand as a material cause. Even the Logicians admit that empirical consciousness is the material cause in the case of mental phenomena (I. 545-6). Therefore there is nothing wrong in supposing that Consciousness is the material cause of the world. When we speak of the Absolute as the cause of the origination and so on of the world, this is only a defining mark (used to exclude the notion of anything else); for the proof of its existence we depend on the Veda, an independent authority in its own right. (S.Ś. I.547-8)

The texts quoted from the Upanishads in the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka are intended to show that the idea of the Absolute being the cause of the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the world is only an indirect definition of the Absolute, made to establish its infinitude. This author holds that they cooperate in harmony to teach the meaning of the word 'that' (I.549). And he holds that the Absolute is the material cause of the world through the instrumentality of 'Nature' (prakṛti), called 'Ajñāna'. He also holds that the role of the Absolute as efficient cause and material cause at the same time is

proved on the authority of Vedic statements, confirmed by reasoning. But he does not ask in exactly what way the statements in the Veda about cause and effect are of use for establishing the non-dual Absolute.

At another place, by outlining three standpoints, he says that one must pass beyond even Vivarta Vāda and adopt the standpoint of non-duality.

(7) The standpoint of seeing the world as a transformation (pariṇāma) of the Absolute is called the standpoint of false attribution (āropa-dṛṣṭi). The standpoint from which duality is totally obliterated is the final standpoint and is called the standpoint of denial (apavāda). In between the two is the standpoint which is a mixture of the two, and which sees the world as an illusory transformation (vivarta) of the Absolute. It is called the 'mixed' standpoint, because it includes elements from both the higher and the lower plane. The standpoint which accepts perception and the other means of empirical knowledge as authoritative at their face value is the lowest standpoint; the middling standpoint dissolves the reality of the world; the final standpoint negates the illusion by which the Absolute appeared to fall from its true nature and assume the form of the pluralistic world. The mixed standpoint has two forms, according to whether all souls are taken as one, or as constituting many different souls seeking liberation. Each of these three standpoints, when dissolved, is superseded by the next higher in the series. (S.Ś. II.82-3)

Thus the whole question of cause and effect is here treated either by merely making unsupported claims or else, at best, by the methods of empty logical reasoning. No attention is paid anywhere to the Ajāti Vāda adopted by Śrī Gauḍapāda (M.V.34,3, etc.) or to the Satkārya Vāda of Śrī Bhagavatpāda (M.V.35). So to that extent this teaching differs from theirs.

In the course of showing how the notion that the Absolute is a 'Lord' is illusory, it is explained that its role as 'Witness' and 'Cause' is also illusory (III.186-90;198). The doctrine that the effect is unreal before production, and the doctrine that it is real before production, are alike refuted (III.199-214). But although the word of a certain Ātreya,* author of a Vākya on the Chāndogya, is cited in support of the view that, in the system of Vedanta, all effects are regarded as a matter of practical experience only (III.217-20), and although the word of a certain sub-commentator on this Vākya is cited as an authority to show that the supreme reality is without qualities or distinctions, nevertheless the author nowhere demonstrates this point with reasoning based on direct experience. The furthest he goes towards doing this is to say that the status of the Absolute as cause is not real, as causality is always relative (III.189). He 'proves' through negative dialectic that the world arises from Ignorance,

posing the dilemma 'Is the Absolute active *qua* cause or inactive?' (III.224-7). He refutes the notion that the Absolute has two powers, one a power of Consciousness, the other non-conscious. He declares that the world must be made up of Māyā, since it is impossible to give a satisfactory explanation of our knowledge of it (III.231). He refutes Ārambha Vāda and Pariṇāma Vāda. And he concludes his passage about the world saying, 'Let us therefore take the whole non-conscious world beginning with the element called ether as an illusory transformation (vivarta) of this Self as Consciousness. (S.Ś. III.235)

**One person says that this Ātreya is Brahmadatta. Many commentators say it is Brahmanandin, and add that the sub-commentator in question is Draviḍācārya. At the end of Sureśvara's B.B.V. it is said that Bhagavatpāda Ācārya was a descendant of Atri (B.B.V. VI.v.23). So there will have to be a good deal more thought before we can say who Ātreya was and who the author of the sub-commentary in question was. An enquiry on these lines would be a helpful contribution to our knowledge of the Advaita tradition (Author's Note).*

300 EXAMINATION OF THE THREE STATES OF WAKING, DREAM AND DREAMLESS SLEEP

The examination of the three states is introduced in the course of the enquiry into the meaning of the term 'thou', undertaken to help establish the meaning of the 'great sentences' (mahāvākya).

(1) The Teacher replies to the pupil as follows. You are yourself the pure illuminator, unknowable as an object. With your own Consciousness you illumine your own idea that you are an individual capable of action. Your notion that you are yourself an individual capable of action must therefore be an error, since you behold all the factors of action, including sense of agency, as objects. How could there be any question of you, the Witness-consciousness raised above all change, being an individual capable of action or empirical experience? (S.Ś. III.61)

(2) The various bodies and organs of the different living beings differ in many ways. This sets up the illusion that the individual souls are different from one another in essence and many in number, as the one sun appears as many when reflected in different water-pots. The Self is one, and is the Witness. As such, it beholds the realm of the individual, the realm of the cosmos, the realm of the gods, the subtle body pervading the Cosmos (sūtra), the gross body pervading the

Cosmos (virāj). Even the notion that the Self is a Witness is set up by Ignorance associated with the reflection of Consciousness in Ignorance. (S.Ś. III.66-7, paraphrased)

(3) The notion that the Self is an individual capable of action is not natural. This point is supported by the example of illusory dream-visions. A dream is not real. It is subject to cancellation, like the well-known example of the magician's illusory display (māyā) through mass-hypnotism. And that (cosmic) Māyā is not anything different from metaphysical Ignorance (avidyā). (S.Ś. III.83-112)

Here the author expounds at length the view that Māyā and Avidyā are the same.

(4) Just as a dream-vision, though false in itself, may indicate a reality, even so something perceived in the waking state, though false in itself, may nevertheless cause knowledge of the metaphysical reality. Both the delusion of dream-experience and the delusion of waking experience dissolve into the thick darkness of dreamless sleep, the source from which the world-manifestation springs, when the portion of the unseen power (adṛṣṭa) deriving from the impressions of deeds in former lives, which prompted their manifestation, has been exhausted through experience. (S.Ś. III.116-9, summarized)

Commenting on III.117, Madhusūdana writes: 'The author speaks of the dissolution of dream into the thick darkness which is the source from which the world-manifestation springs, where by "thick darkness" he means "darkness void of any form of light". This means that the author holds that dream proceeds from root-Ignorance (mūlāvidyā)'.

(5) One who has woken up from dreamless sleep infers from his memory 'I knew nothing' that in dreamless sleep everything must have been dissolved in Ignorance. But because there is no ego-sense in dreamless sleep, there is no clear experience of Ignorance. So the idea arises that there is no Ignorance in dreamless sleep. (S.Ś. III.120-4)

(6) For this reason the revered Teacher (Śrī Śaṅkara) sometimes says, 'There is no Ignorance for the one in dreamless sleep', while at other times he says, 'The one in dreamless sleep was in thick darkness (Ignorance)'. In the same way, he sometimes says, 'The soul was then the supreme Self', 'Then he goes to the seedless state', 'There is then, verily, no Ignorance, desire or action': but also, 'There was ego-sense then. That ego-sense brings pain to the sleeper and shows it to him when he wakes up'. Such appears to be the correct interpretation. We must accept that he spoke thus, with an appearance of contradiction, because there is no *clear* experience of

Ignorance in dreamless sleep. (S.Ś. III.125-8)

(7) In dreamless sleep, Ignorance of the Self is witnessed. But the mind is not then in play, so there is no individual to experience valid cognition. There is therefore no clear experience of Ignorance. Even so, it must be accepted that Ignorance is present in dreamless sleep, as dreamless sleep is different from liberation. (S.Ś. III.132-3)

(8) But one should not raise the objection that, if things are as depicted above, Ignorance must be present constantly throughout the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, just like Consciousness, and must therefore be the Self. For the Self and Ignorance are clearly different, since the Self is known as internal, Ignorance as external.

In the same way, the three states are not attributes of the Self either; for (unlike the Self) they only manifest as objects. They also pass into and out of manifestation. The ego-sense, too, is imagined through Ignorance. It cannot be an attribute of the Self either, as it is only experienced as an object of the light of Consciousness. The Self, as a metaphysical principle, on the other hand, is real, as it is constant, while waking, dream, dreamless sleep, swoon and death come into being and pass away; and all that is other than the Self is unreal, because it is not constant.

The mind, which manifests through Ignorance and is what undergoes the three states, is not anything (real and) different from the Self. Ignorance itself is only established through the power of the Self as immediate experience, and is consequently illusory. Therefore it stands established that the inmost non-dual Consciousness alone exists, and that it is infinite. (S.Ś. III.134-40)

(9) This doctrine that the Self is (self-luminous and therefore) without the attributes of the three states is taught in the Jyotir Brāhmaṇa (Bṛhad.IV.iii.2-32) and it should be accepted totally in a spirit of faith. (S.Ś. III.141)

The teaching here, on the occasion of reflecting over the three states, is that everything other than the Self is illusory, because it is all an object for the Self. We also have the claim, 'Ignorance itself is only established through the power of the Self as immediate experience, and is consequently illusory'. Again, we hear that the mind, with waking, dream and dreamless sleep for its attributes, is not different from the Self, because it is a product of Ignorance (III.140). Here it is clear that reason alone is being used to prove that there is no second (real) thing over against the Self. If this is so, it follows that all the not-self is illusory from the mere fact of its having been superimposed on the Self. And the error of supposing that the Self is afflicted with the

three states arises because the sense of being an individual experiencer (pramātṛ) is superimposed on it, a superimposition which arises merely from failure to awaken to the fact that in one's true nature one is the Witness. All this is sufficient in itself. So why go further and assume (a root) Ignorance as a material cause for superimposition? For that also will have to be set down as illusory, for the reason that it is superimposed.

Equally vain was the assumption that the three states stand in causal relation to one another — the assumption for instance, that dreamless sleep stands as the cause, and the assumption that waking and dream are the play of Ignorance in the form of effects of dreamless sleep. And all this was certainly only an assumption, because it cannot be established by reason. The conception would require us to suppose that the states occurred in time (i.e. in one time-system). But our experience is that the different states of waking and dream belong to different time-systems. As a true expert has said: 'Even in the waking state, the ideas of fantasy with their purely private time-scheme and the ideas that are apparently conditioned from without and seem to belong to a twofold time-system (where a man may wait, for instance, till a cow has been milked) are in fact both imagined — (as the example of dream shows, where the whole dream is seen, after waking, to have been imagination, even though, from the standpoint of the dream itself, there was an apparent distinction between fantasy and ideas conditioned from without). (As all is imagined) there is nothing to cause a distinction between fantasy and ideas (apparently) conditioned from without' (G.K. II.14).

As for dreamless sleep, it is well known that there is no manifestation of time there at all. In the same way, being afflicted with the three states is only established through their being superimposed on the Self; they turn out to be a mere illusion. As the revered Commentator said: 'The fact that the supreme Self manifests as if it had three states is a mere illusion' (B.S.Bh.II.i.9).

And there is a further point for consideration. If one does not pay attention to the identity of the microcosmic individual (vyaṣṭi) with the macrocosm (samaṣṭi), taught from the standpoint of the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, then in examining the three states one is liable to end up with the conviction that the Self is limited to one's own physical body. This is another point not noticed in the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka.

301 BARE CONSCIOUSNESS IS BOTH THE SEAT OF IGNORANCE AND THE OBJECT CONCEALED BY IT

First the author affirms, on the basis of identifying Ignorance and Māyā, that the whole world of transmigratory experience,

'containing the appearance of separate beings like the Guru and others', is imagined through Ignorance, as if in a dream (II. 127). Later he goes on:

(1) All souls other than yourself, whether liberated or in bondage, whether enlightened or metaphysically ignorant, the whole universe from the ether-element down to the earth-element — know all this to be but the play of your own mind, itself springing from Ignorance. Do not think anything else for a moment (II.128).

Therefore it is the Absolute which, having descended to the state of an individual soul through Ignorance, has come to abide in your form; and from that vantage-point it observes the world from the ether-element to the earth-element and the whole company of individual souls as vibrations of your mind (II.162).

Enlightenment arises for the Absolute (after it has descended into the form of the individual soul) through the Teacher, the Veda and the traditional discipline imagined through its own Ignorance. When its Ignorance has been destroyed through the rise of metaphysical knowledge, it becomes established in its own true form as the light of Consciousness. (S.Ś. II.163)

In this way he first states that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute, and then goes on to show that the Absolute is what it conceals. It should be said that in this he follows the view of the Iṣṭa Siddhi (M.V.232,1 and 2).

One might ask how this can be reconciled with Śrī Śaṅkara's statements that Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul. The author himself raises this question, and answers it as follows. We shall quote the gist of his remarks, and make our own observations upon them.

'Ignorance as a non-conscious power is established as existing outside the soul. The world beginning with the ether-element is projected by that under the control of the supreme Lord. That same Ignorance manifests in the soul as "I am ignorant"' (II.165,167). This remark is correct in so far as it attributes Ignorance exclusively to the individual soul.

'In the case of the Lord, this Ignorance manifests as already cancelled, but from the point of view of the individual soul it appears to have the power to cancel (distort) the power of Consciousness' (II.168). 'The Māyā of the Lord, too, is of the nature of Ignorance. We infer this because it is a perceptible object, is non-conscious, is under the control of another, and has its seat in Consciousness. The inference can be supported by examples such as those of dream and shell-silver and so on. The world, from the ether-element onwards, is imagined through Ignorance alone, as it is subject to cancellation, like a dream. These two inferences show that Māyā

and Ignorance are identical' (II.169-70). 'Though Ignorance appears before the Lord, it does not cause Him any suffering; but it is a source of suffering to the individual soul, which is affected by delusion' (II.173). This agrees with the statements in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries that Ignorance has its seat in the individual soul; and, as the author himself points out (II.174), one should not follow Maṇḍana's way of interpreting this point (which prejudices liberation in life).

'The individual soul knows a little, the Lord is omniscient. This does not imply that Ignorance is present in the case of the soul, but not present in the case of the Lord. What it implies is that the soul is affected by Ignorance, whereas the Lord is not. Since the Lord has no ego-sense, and has Ignorance under his control, and assumes any body He wishes, He does not have the feeling "I am ignorant". The Lord is omniscient, of the very nature of unveiled knowledge, and illumines all Ignorance and its effects with His own self-luminous light' (II.177-87). 'The ultimately correct doctrine, therefore, is that pure Consciousness alone is the true seat of Ignorance; and this pure Consciousness it was which created the universe, with its distinction between the soul, the Lord and the world' (II.189). 'Thus the notion that the Absolute is the individual soul proceeds from Ignorance. So the individual soul cannot be (in the final view) the seat of Ignorance. On the view that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute, it does not follow that the Absolute is sullied by Ignorance, as this notion is itself only imagined — so there is no fault in the teaching' (II.195-7). 'Nor does it follow that there is a contradiction of the form "One and the same Absolute both does and does not manifest". For our view is that it manifests by very nature, while its non-manifestation is due to failure to be awake to its true nature (as manifest)' (II.203-4).

'Again, we do not claim that the non-dual Absolute, eternal bliss, is both the seat of Ignorance and the entity concealed by it, in its form as non-dual Absolute. We claim that Ignorance has its seat in and conceals the inmost Consciousness. For we are only aware of Ignorance as seated in Consciousness; we are not actually aware of it as seated in the non-dual reality. The assertion that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute is really only meant to deny that Ignorance has its seat in Consciousness as qualified by the mind and so on. There is not a shred of proof that it has its seat in the Absolute when the latter is considered in its pure transcendence' (III. 13,14). 'Therefore the finally accepted view is that it is pure Consciousness that is the seat of Ignorance, and also the entity that it conceals' (III.15).

This is an embellished form of the doctrine of the Iṣṭa Siddhi that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute. It hardly needs to be pointed out that this whole doctrine is a baseless fabric, seeing that the existence of Ignorance as anything other

than superimposition has never been proved.

302 ACCOUNTING FOR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN BOUND AND LIBERATED SOULS

The following objections might present themselves. If it is the one Absolute alone which is in reality eternally liberated, but which undergoes transmigratory experience through Ignorance, while Ignorance has that same Absolute for its seat and for the object which it conceals, how can there be a distinction between those in bondage and those liberated? And how could the texts which taught such a distinction be authoritative? The author answers as follows:

(1) To the pupil's complaint that the notion that there is no one other than himself capable of bondage or release contradicts experience, the Teacher replies that it is not the purpose of the Veda to expound any distinction between bound and liberated souls; its purpose is to expound the identity of the true Self of the hearer with the Absolute. Nor should one raise the objection that it contradicts experience to say, 'There is not, and there never was, anyone other than myself capable of bondage and liberation (read bhāgo'styāsīd)'. Experience of duality does not contradict it, for this experience is itself contradicted by realization that all is the one Self. And there can be no other experience that could contradict it (II.219). Nor is it right to say that if the Guru and the means of instruction are imagined, the Guru cannot be a source of right metaphysical teaching. For this is explicable by analogy with the fact that death can arise from a merely imaginary snake, or the fact that the ether can reveal sound, when it is only *imagined* by the Vaiśeṣikas to constitute the organ of hearing. (S.Ś. II.227,232)

One can establish anything one likes if one is prepared to overrule ordinary empirical experience.

303 METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE AND LIBERATION ARISE FROM APPLICATION TO THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

The way in which metaphysical knowledge arises, and the eternity of liberation, are expounded as follows:

(1) Ascetics who desire liberation must perform the inner discipline as an obligatory duty. The Veda says that the external discipline is a means to promote desire for metaphysical knowledge. But the inner discipline which leads immediately to an intuitional knowledge (avagati) of the Absolute is hearing, pondering and sustained meditation on the supreme

texts of the Upanishads (III.327,329). The function of hearing and the rest, when repeated, is to put to an end non-apprehension, doubt and wrong apprehension. Hearing means ascertainment according to proper exegetical rules of what it lies within the power of the highest texts of the Upanishads to communicate. Pondering has for its subject-matter the true nature of reality. Sustained meditation means absorbing the mind in pure Consciousness (III.343-5). According to another view, 'sustained meditation' refers to the result which arises naturally from hearing and pondering, being an intellectual conviction that falls short of direct experience. (S.Ś. III. 346)

(2) The metaphysical knowledge arising from the supreme texts of the Upanishads usually accrues, in the case of renunciates, here in this very life (III.348). Hearing and so on performed by those who are not renunciates will bring rewards in a future life (III.359). Only metaphysical knowledge can bring Ignorance to an end. No other extra means is required in addition (IV.1-11). The cessation of Ignorance is different from being, from non-being, from being and non-being combined, and from neither-being-nor-non-being (IV.12). Those who know the truth about liberation say that it is neither different from Consciousness, nor non-different, nor both different and non-different, nor neither-different-nor-non-different (IV.14). Or else it is the Self alone that is the cessation of Ignorance, being the idea that arises from the supreme texts. (S.Ś. IV.15)

Here he follows the teachings of the Iṣṭa Siddhi and of Sureśvara's Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika (cp. M.V.128,1; 228,4 and 6).

(3) Thus knowledge arising from the supreme texts, either when it arises or the next moment afterwards, brings Ignorance and its effects to an end, and therefore requires no other auxiliary. The knowledge arising from the supreme texts of the Upanishads brings all transmigratory experience to an end and extinguishes itself, too, 'like water sprinkled onto burning iron, which cools the iron and is itself eliminated' (IV.28). Therefore, because it is the result of knowledge (and not of action), liberation is constant, changeless and eternal (IV. 29). Or else we may say that, because the cessation of Ignorance is equivalent to (realizing that one is) the Self, it may be regarded as the dissolution of the fantasy (vikalpa) of the universe, made up of Ignorance. For on this supposition, the theory has no weak points. (S.Ś. IV.37)

304 LIBERATION IN LIFE

On the topic of liberation in life, the author expresses himself as follows:

(1) The fire of right knowledge totally consumes Ignorance and its effects immediately. So it is certain that the enlightened one has immediate liberation (sadyo-mukti). But this does not mean that the texts teaching liberation in life are useless or meaningless. They relate to one who is imagined (by others) to be liberated in life. (S.Ś. IV.38-9)

(2) Second view. Or else the concept of liberation in life may be regarded as authoritative if one accepts that the enlightened one conforms to a remnant of Ignorance, which comes to an end either of its own or through knowledge. Usages like 'remnant of Ignorance', 'faint odour of Ignorance', 'impression of Ignorance' and so on do not refer to Ignorance or to a part of it, but to the perception that Ignorance has been cancelled — this is the view given in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentaries. (S.Ś. IV.41-2)

(3) There must be such a thing as liberation in life, as there are people who have experienced it. There is a suggestion of duality in that state, as that also is known from experience. We speak of a remnant of Ignorance to accommodate this suggestion of duality. In all this, the proof is one's own experience (the experience of the enlightened person). (S.Ś. IV.43)

(4) Therefore the enlightened person remains in 'liberation in life' to experience the whole of that portion of the merit and demerit from his deeds in past lives that initiated his present birth. When he has completed this experience, which continues on for a bit on account of a faint odour of Ignorance, he attains total transcendence. The authority for this is the upanishadic text, '(if one meditates... and reflects on Him) more and more, the Māyā of the world finally comes to an end' (Śvet.I.10). Nor should it be objected that liberation is only to be attained by such routes as the Path of the Flame (on which cp. M.V.127,2, note;203); for there are Vedic texts teaching that Brahmā and others were released without travelling any path of that kind (e.g. Bṛhad.I.iv.10). Therefore, one should understand that travelling on such a path does not lead to the Absolute free from attributes, but only comprises meditation on (and knowledge of) the Absolute as associated with attributes. (S.Ś. IV.47-8)

305 THE PLACE OF SARVAJÑĀTMAN IN THE HISTORY OF VEDANTA

Sarvajñātmācārya takes the gist of the teaching about positive indeterminable Ignorance in various earlier systems and tries to establish that that is the one theory approved by Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentaries, and that this is the one theory that can set the Vedanta on a firm foundation, free from all

objections, when supported by reason and experience. There is one Ignorance. It is the 'cause' in the sense of 'instrument' for the production of the whole world beginning with the ether-element. In this role it is called 'Māyā'. It is called 'Ignorance' (avidyā) when it manifests as delusion in the mind of the individual soul. He maintained that the whole phenomenal universe of variety is created by the Ignorance of one soul, because he believed that the profoundest state of Vedanta was that in which it taught that there was only one Ignorance and only one soul.

He outlines seven different theories of Ignorance in verses II.132-8, before going on to refute them. The theories are as follows:

(1) (The seven theories are:) (1) Ignorance is pervasive in the same way that a universal pervades the particulars subsumed under it. The Absolute is the original, and the imagined individual souls are like its reflections. Amongst these, Ignorance affects the ignorant ones, but not the enlightened ones. It forsakes any individual that undergoes destruction, and takes possession of whatever souls exist, behaving in this respect like a universal with its particulars. Such is the first wrong theory of Ignorance (II.132). (2) There are many Ignorances, and souls are infinite in number. The ignorant souls attain the highest end of life through metaphysical knowledge, some in one world-period, some in another. Māyā (different from Ignorance) has its seat in the Lord. It projects every aspect of the universe, beginning with the ether-element. This is the second wrong view (II.133). (3) Just as there is no contradiction in saying that a bird both is and is not in the sky (when it is present in the sky as viewed from one part of the earth, but not present in the sky viewed from any other part of the earth — even though the ether of the sky itself is partless), even so, there is no contradiction in saying that Ignorance both is and is not present in the pure Absolute (according to the point of vantage from which it is viewed). This is the third wrong view (II.134). (4) Ignorance enters pure Consciousness through the medium of the mind. The mind stands outside Consciousness and imposes relationship with Ignorance on the Absolute (II.135). (5) The Absolute is the one subject to Ignorance. He is reflected in many different minds. Having in this way assumed the form of the different individual souls, the Absolute is bound in some of them, while in others He is liberated through the destruction of (a part of) Ignorance. (II.136). (6) The Māyā of the Lord enmeshes the souls afflicted with Ignorance, like a net enmeshing fish. This net is removed for some at the will of the Lord. Whether Māyā is called real or illusory is a matter of indifference (II.137). (7) The series of errors, followed by impressions left by those errors, is different in the case of each soul. This series is beginningless. It is destroyed

by a combination of knowledge and action. (S.Ś. II.132-8)

These seven theories are then refuted in a later part of the chapter (S.Ś. II.152-62). This shows that by the time of Sarvajñātman there were numerous sub-divisions of the theory of positive Ignorance. In writing his own work he seems to have been trying to reduce all the various theories of indeterminable Ignorance to some kind of unity, collecting them and summarizing them in the process.

Here we pass over a number of points on which the author's reasoning adds nothing new — for example, his refutation of difference (II.103-9), where his reasoning follows Sureśvara (see references at M.V.105,8).

The chief topics of this work called the Saṅkṣepa Śārīraka are the following. An explanation of the need for studying the Vedanta (M.V.295), accompanied by an explanation of superimposition with its cause (M.V.294); as a special feature, an assertion that the entire Vedanta (including all the texts of the Upanishads) is concerned (directly or indirectly) with the determination of the meaning of the supreme texts (mahāvākya) of the Upanishads (M.V.298; cp. 296,1, note); an explanation of how the supreme texts refer to an entity beyond all differentiation, on the pattern of worldly statements of recognization such as 'This is that Devadatta' (M.V.296,3); a demonstration of how the negative texts like 'neither this nor that' are subordinate to the positive ones like 'Reality, Knowledge, Infinity' (M.V.297,3 and 4); establishment of how the pure non-dual Consciousness is cause of the universe of plurality through the instrumentality of Ignorance (M.V.299,1), accompanied by an account of the identity of positive indeterminable Ignorance and Māyā (cp. M.V.301,1, note); reasons why even the texts overtly concerned with the Absolute associated with attributes really relate to the Absolute free from attributes (M.V.298); reference to a few alternative views in regard to the creation of the world (see below, Vivarta Vāda, etc.); a statement of the division of topics in Sūtras I.i.1, I.i.2 and I.i.4 of the Brahma Sūtras, showing that the real topic of the Sūtra on enquiry into the Absolute (I.i.1) is an explanation of the meaning of the word 'thou' in 'That thou art', the topic of the Sūtra 'That from which proceed the origination, etc., of the world' (I.i.2) is an explanation of the meaning of the word 'that' in the same text, while the Sūtra on the harmony of the texts (I.i.4) refers roundly to 'That thou art' and all the supreme texts of the Upanishads (M.V.296,2); adoption of Vivarta Vāda as the proper view of the causality of the Absolute, after showing the difference between Ārambha Vāda (doctrine of causation as the bringing into being of a new product through the re-combination of atoms), Pariṇāma Vāda (doctrine of the real transformation of one into many) and Vivarta Vāda (doctrine of false manifestation of one as many, S.Ś. II.57-68); exposition of how the author of the Sūtras tries to enlighten

the seeker of liberation by stages, basing himself on three standpoints, the standpoint of false attribution, the standpoint of negation and the mixed standpoint (M.V.299,7); acceptance of the theory of one soul and one Ignorance to explain the disposition of some souls as bound and others enlightened, along with kindred problems (M.V.302,1); an enquiry into the real meaning of Śrī Bhagavatpāda when he speaks of Ignorance as seated in the soul and of the absence of Ignorance in dreamless sleep (M.V.300,6); description of the distinction between bondage and liberation (M.V.303,304); an examination of the indicated meaning of 'that' and 'thou' in 'That thou art' (M.V.296,2-4); an account of the meaning of the phrase 'sustained meditation', given in the course of describing the means to liberation (M.V.303,1, *ad fin.*); affirmation of the right of lifelong celibates, householders and forest-dwellers alike to hearing and so on of the supreme upanishadic texts (M.V.303,2); determination of the true nature of the cessation of Ignorance (S.Ś. IV.4-18,37), given in the context of explaining that it (i.e. cessation of Ignorance) was the source of liberation, and accompanied by an explanation of how knowledge (alone) is what puts Ignorance to an end (IV.38); a description of the difference between 'immediate liberation' (sadyo-mukti) and liberation in life (jīvan-mukti, M.V.304,1); and a determination of the true nature of the remnant of Ignorance (M.V.304,2).

These topics are handled in a highly original manner, peculiar to the author, though he occasionally expresses his agreement with earlier Teachers; they are passed off, however, as the teaching of the Brahma Sūtras, and as if they were in agreement with the revered Commentator's explanation of that work. The reader can see at a glance how far these teachings really tally with the Sūtras and with the works of the revered Commentator, so we will not dilate further upon the divergences.

So ends the work called the Method of the Vedanta by the pupil of Śrī Bodhānandendra Sarasvatī, namely the monk called Saccidānandendra Sarasvatī, who gained access to the Vedanta through continual remembrance of the holy feet of the most venerable Parivrājaka Ācārya, Śrī Pūjyapāda Śaṅkara.

SELECT INDEX OF CONCEPTS

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MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED

ISBN 978-81-208-1358-8

9 788120 813588