

# Advaita Vedanta – A Bird’s Eye View

## Appendix: Explanatory Notes

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## Section 1 - Can Brahman be known

1. A problem faced by the Advaita preceptor is to explain the apparent contradiction between Upanishad passages like Brhadaranyaka IV.iv.9 – “It has to be realized only by the mind”, Katopanishad II.i.2 – “It is to be attained only by the mind” and Upanishad passages like Taittiriya Upanishad II.iv.1 – “Words, along with the mind, return, unable to reach Brahman”, Kenopanishad I.6. “That which man does not comprehend with the mind” In fact, Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, IV.iv.19 which says “Through the mind alone It is to be raised” (“manasaa eva anudrashtavyam”) is immediately followed by IV.iv.20 says which “It is unknowable” (“etat apramayam”). How we reconcile the apparently contradictory statements is explained below.

a) One approach is to say that Brahman cannot be known means that Brahman cannot be known as an object but there are methods by which we are made to recognize Brahman. No one will deny that he exists as a conscious being. Initially, one may mistake the mind as one’s true nature, but when a constant “I” is invoked as the same entity witnessing the changing conditions of the mind, one recognizes the ultimate sakshi. And “knowing Brahman” means that from the study of Sastra, we have to understand that the sakshi is none other than the Brahma caitanyam. In effect, the Existence and Consciousness aspect of Brahman is self-evident but the Infinity aspect, we have to learn from Sastra. In his commentary on Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV.iv.19, Sankaracarya interprets ‘manasaa eva’ in ‘manasaa eva anudrashtavyam’ as ‘purified by the knowledge of the supreme Truth and in accordance with the instructions of the teacher’. And in his commentary on IV.iv.20, he interprets ‘apramayam’ as ‘Unlike a thing being known by another, Brahman is the One only; hence It is unknowable.’ How to recognize Brahman without knowing It as an object is stated in Kenopanishad II.4 – “Being the witness of all cognitions and, by nature, being nothing but Consciousness, Brahman is indicated by the cognitions themselves, in the midst of cognitions, as pervading all of them. (“Pratibodhaviditam matam”). Kenopanishad 1.4 says that That (Brahman) is different from the known and, again, It is

different from the unknown”. Sankaracarya explains, “The known is very much within the grasp of the act of knowing, that which is the object of the verb ‘to know”. Inasmuch as everything is known somewhere, by somebody, all that is manifested (‘vyaakrtam’ is certainly known. The idea is that Brahman is different from that. But it should be taken to be unknown, the Upanishad says, ‘Again, It is different from the unknown’. ‘From the unknown’ means ‘from what is opposed to the known’. The reference is to that which consists of the unmanifested avidya which is the seed of the manifested. (Thus it boils down to Brahman being different from the evolved as well as the unevolved nama roopa).

(b) Another approach is to say that Sastra does not reveal Brahman in positive terms. (there is no *vidhimukha bodhana*). Cf. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II.iii.6 – “Now, therefore the description (of Brahman) – ‘Not this, not this’. Because there is no other and more appropriate description than this ‘not this, not this’”. Internally, we negate all names and forms like the body, sense organs, the mind and intellect and arrive at the unnegatable pure Consciousness (Cit). Externally we negate all names and forms and arrive at the unnegatable pure Existence (Sat). And we learn from Sastra that Sat is Cit; Cit is Sat and through the Mahavakyas like “Tattvamasi” one owns up one’s true nature as “aham brahma asmi”. In other words, Mahavakyas do not reveal any new entity. The consciousness available in us, the Atma, is self-evident. What mahavakyas do is to remove the wrong notion that it is limited and equate it with the infinite Brahman.

(c) Elaborating the points made above further, For defining anything in positive terms, there are five methods. (1) If it is an object that is of common experience, when we refer to it by its name, the listener understands what we are talking about. E.g., all of us have experienced the sun. So, when anybody wants to convey information about the sun, he does so mentioning the name, ‘sun’ and the listener understands what object he is referring to. This is called definition by ‘roodi’ or ‘dravyam’. Or we can define a thing by its attribute ( ‘guna’). E.g., Jasmine flower can

be defined by its fragrance. Or we can define a thing by its function ('kriya') E.g., a knife can be defined by its the work of cutting. Or we can define a thing by the species to which it belongs ('jaati'). E.g., we can define mango as a member of the tree species. Or we can define a thing by its relationship with something else ('sambandha'). E.g., we can define Rama as Dasaratha's son. In the case of Brahman, none of these is of any use, because, according to Sastra, Brahman is not an object of experience ('Brahman is aprameya'), It is attributeless ('nirguna'), It is actionless ('akarta', 'nishkriya') it is one without a second ('advayam') and it is relationless ('asanga').

(d) However, there is one pseudo-positive method. We said that Brahman cannot be defined by relationship, because Brahman is asanga. While this is so, in so far as real relationship is concerned, it is not so, when it comes to a question of unreal relationship. As an unreal relationship between adhishtanam and adhyasa, Brahman can be defined. We can define rope as the adhishtanam of the unreal snake perceived on the rope; we can define the waker's mind as the adhishtanam of the dream world. Similarly Brahman is defined as the adhishtanam of the unreal world – Brahman, the Existence, the satyam, as the substratum of the mithya nama roopa. Asangatvam (Brahman's relationlessness) is not affected because the relationship between the real and the unreal is itself unreal.

(e) In fact, in this connection, there is a debate. The opponent says that if the relationship is unreal, the definition is also unreal. The proponent answers "what does it matter if the definition is unreal as long as it gives knowledge". The opponent asks "if definition is unreal, the knowledge it gives is also unreal; what is the use of unreal knowledge?" The proponent answers, "Because ignorance is unreal, unreal knowledge is adequate to remove unreal ignorance. To cure dream disease, dream medicine will do; in fact, dream medicine alone can cure dream disease. Samsara is caused by ignorance of Brahmatvam. Moksha is not a real event. One is ever liberated (nitya mukta). What happens is that the false notion that one is limited is negated by the knowledge that one is the infinite Brahman. Both the ignorance of brahmatvam (our nature

as Brahman) and the knowledge 'ahambrahmasmi' (jnanam) are antahkarana vrittis and as such are unreal. Unreal knowledge is adequate to remove unreal, ignorance. (Ahambrahmasmi jnanam is unreal but the 'aham brahma' referred to is real; it is the infinite consciousness).

## Section 2 - Concept of a Real Creation Negated

1. In Brahma sutra, Vyasacarya points out the fallacies of philosophies which talk of a real creation and of a creator who is only the intelligent cause ("nimitta karanam") of the universe and not the material cause ("upadana karanam"). The main points are –
  - To contact the material, the intelligent cause must have a body and it must be a doer. In that case, it becomes subject to pleasure and pain, desire, hatred etc; in short, it becomes a samsari (transmigrating entity). This is contrary to the notion of God being perfect.
  - Since space, time and matter emerge only when creation takes place, there are certain questions which defy answer. They are as follows:-
    - Where was the creator when he created the world?
    - When did he create?  
(Time and space are part of creation. If you predicate a time and space, prior to creation, there has to be a time and space in which they originated and so on and that will lead to infinite regress).
    - Why did he create?
    - Where was the raw material which constituted his own body?
    - Where was the raw material which he could use to create the universe?
  - Beings appear in the universe with different physical and mental characteristics, finding themselves in different situations, undergoing

experiences involving enjoyment and suffering of diverse nature. A creator who creates this diversity will be a partial and cruel creator. Even in a scheme of transmigration with karma of men being responsible for rebirth and enjoyment and suffering, the diversity in the first creation will remain. This is contrary to the concept of a perfect God.

- If the world and the Jivatma's notion that he is a karta transacting with a real world were real, kartrutvam and the consequent samsara would be inherent and what is inherent cannot go away – which means that there would be no liberation (moksha). Since Sastra teaches moksha as the highest goal in life, it is clear that the world, the jivatma's identification with the body mind complex and his notion of kartrtvam and the consequent samsara are all unreal.
- If Brahman really transforms into jivas, Brahman will also become a samsari. and attaining a samsari Brahman would be futile.
- Advaita Vedanta avoids such problems, by saying that
  - (i) there is no real creation or creator
  - (ii) Mithya Iswara, Brahma caitanyam reflected in Maya, is the intelligent cause and mithya Maya is the material cause of the mithya universe.
  - (iii) the cycle of creation and dissolution, jivas and their karma are beginningless; there is nothing like the first creation or the first karma or the first janma,
  - iv) the cycle of creation and dissolution is an alternation of Maya evolving and manifesting as diverse nama roopa which include bodies and minds of living beings and resolving into unmanifested condition in Iswara,

- (v) the reality is Brahman, who as Existence-Consciousness-Infinity, serves as the substratum for the unevolved as well as the evolved condition of names and forms
- (vi) Iswara including Maya is mithya and
- (vii) though there is no origination for a jiva and his karma, for any particular jiva, it is possible to be free of the cycle of births and deaths by gaining knowledge of his real nature as the infinite Brahman
2. Gaudapadacarya defines reality as that is ever existent and unreality as that is temporarily existent. Pursuant to his definition, Gaudapadacarya points out that none of the three states – the jagrat, swapna, sushupti – is permanent; when the one is there, the two others are not there. When we are dreaming or in deep sleep state, the world of the waking state is not there. Therefore, the world we experience during the waking stage is also unreal.
  3. Aitereya Upanishad I.iii.12 says, “Of Him there are three abodes – three (states) of dream. This one is an abode, this one is an abode, this one is an abode.” This Upanishad is referring to all three states of experience of the Paramatma in the empirical (vyaavahaarika) form of jivatma – the waking state (jagrat avastha), dream state (swapna avastha) and deep sleep state (sushupti avastha) as states of dream. This is tantamount to saying that the world of waking experience is as unreal as the world of dream experience.

### Section 3 - Significance of videhamukti

Though, for practical purposes, there is no difference between jivanmukti and videhamukti, there is a theoretical difference. A jivanmukta continues to perceive a world through his antahkarana, though it has been falsified by jnanam. But, after videhamukti, that antahkarana is no longer there to perceive the falsified world. The consciousness which has

ever been non-different from Brahma caitanyam is no longer appears to be conditioned by the body.

#### **Section 4 - Relationship of Brahman and Maya**

Sometimes, it is said that Maya is a peculiar power of Brahman. Even saying “it is a power” is not correct, because power can increase or decrease. If power undergoes change, possessor of power has also to undergo change, but Brahman is changeless. Nor can we say it is a product of Brahman, Because Brahman is neither cause nor effect. We cannot say that it is a state of Brahman, because Brahman does not go from one state to another. It is not possible to say either whether Maya is a part of Brahman or is separate from Brahman. If we say that Maya is a part of Brahman, we are faced with two logical problems. One problem is that Brahman is partless and Maya cannot be accepted to be even a part of Brahman. The other problem is that when a part undergoes change, the whole will also undergo change. Maya does change from the unevolved condition to the evolved differentiated condition of names and forms. So, Brahman will also have to undergo change. This cannot be, because Brahman is changeless. To avoid these problems, if we say that Maya is separate from Brahman, as a real entity, we have to accept two real entities – one, Brahman, two Maya. We cannot accept this, because Brahman is non-dual, i.e., there cannot be a second real entity. So, we say that Maya is “anirvacaniya” (i.e., indefinable) and that it is Mithya (i.e., that Maya is of a lesser order of reality than Brahman.) Once we accept a status of a lesser order of reality for Maya, Brahman’s status as the only absolute changeless reality is not affected and the question of Maya being a real power or a real part of Brahman does not arise.

#### **Section 5 - Maya’s avarana sakti does not affect Iswara**

Iswara is aware that he is Brahman. Avarana sakti is like the cloud that hides the sun from the sight of human beings on earth; the cloud does not affect the sun. Like that, the true

nature of human beings i.e., the fact that they are Brahman is hidden by the avarana sakti of Maya from the mental vision of human beings. But since Iswara is himself Maya endowed with the reflection of Brahman, he is not affected by the avarana sakti of Maya. He is like the magician who produces illusory objects and deludes the audience but is himself not deluded.

Vidyaranya gives an ingenious explanation for Jivas being affected by the avarana sakti of Maya and Iswara not being affected. He says Iswara's upadhi is satva guna predominant Maya and Jiva's is rajo and tamo guna predominant Maya. (Upadhi is a technical term for an object which appears to transfer its character to another object that is close by.); Maya gives the false idea to jivas that they are different from Brahman.

## **Section 6 - Moksha not an event in time**

In Mandukya Karika, Gaudapadacarya refutes all philosophers who talk of attainment of Moksha as an event in time. His logic is that whatever has a beginning must have an end. So a moksha that is attained will be temporary. Unless, as Advaita Vedanta says, being beyond samsara is our permanent nature and what is called liberation is only the removal of the wrong notion that one is bound, moksha will be a temporary experience.

One of the examples is the story of the tenth man. Another example is digging of a well. When you dig a well you are not creating space there; space is already there. When you scoop out the mud, you are removing a covering, the false notion that space was not there. Like that liberation is removal of the covering of avidya, removal of the false notion that I am not the infinite Brahman.

## **Section 7 - Illustrations for Brahmasatyam jaganmithya**

1. Several examples are given in the Sastra to illustrate the juxtaposition of Brahman, the paramarthika satyam, the substratum (“adhistanam”) and the superimposed (“adhyasta”) mithya world, the vyavaharika satyam – Brahmasatyam jaganmithya. The example often given is clay and pot. Certain similar examples are gold and ornaments, water and waves and wood and furniture. Cf. Chandogya Upanishad- VI.i.4 –‘O, good looking one, as by knowing a lump of gold all things made of earth, all things made of earth become known. All transformation is what is initiated by the tongue and it is name only.’ Taking clay and pot, let us see what are the similar features which serve to illustrate Brahman and the universe.

(a) Clay alone is substance. Clay is the substance. Pot shape is not a substance. It is only nama roopa. When pot is made, no new substance is created. Pot shape does not occupy any space other than that occupied by clay or add to its mass or weight. Pot has no existence of its own. If clay is spirited away, there will be no pot. Clay is the sub-stratum. Pot is only a shape given to clay and a name by which the shape is distinguished (nama roopa). In this sense clay, the sub-stratum alone is real. The superimposed shape called pot is unreal. Like that Brahman as Existence (though imperceptible), as the sub-stratum (adhistanam) is the only real entity that is there; the nama roopa superimposed (*adhyastam*) on Brahman are unreal. We experience the clay and the pot shape together. Like that, we experience the real Existence and unreal nama roopa together as the universe.

(b) Pot is evanescent. Clay was there before pot was produced. Clay is there when pot has been produced and clay will still be there when pot is destroyed. Clay, the substance, the sub-stratum, remains as clay, whether a pot shape is given to it or a tile shape is given to it. The shapes appear and

disappear but clay stays. Like that, Brahman, the Existence, is there for ever (“nityam”). The nama roopa appear and disappear (they are “anityam”).

(c) The pot shape is not away from clay. It is there where the clay is. Mithya is not away from its adishtaanam. The locus of mithya is its sub-stratum. So, we say that there is no pot other than clay. The locus of the adhyasta nama roopa is Brahman, the Existence. So, we say that there is no world other than Brahman.

(d) Clay is one. Shapes are many. Clay is one. Pots, jugs etc. are many. Like that, Brahman, the sub-stratum, is one. The superimposed nama roopa are many.

(e) Functional indispensability. The lump of clay cannot hold water. Pot holds water. The sub-stratum without nama roopa is not functional. For transaction, nama roopa are necessary. Thus Brahman is not accessible for transaction (“is avyavahaaryam”). It is the nama roopa with existence borrowed from Brahman that transact with each other. (Bhagavadgita - “guna guneshu vartante”.)

(f) Mutual exclusiveness of name and form. Pot and tile or bangle and chain can't coexist in the same entity (pot does not exist in tile; tile does not exist in pot. Bangle does not exist in chain; chain does not exist in bangle) but clay exists as the sub-stratum of pot and tile. Gold exists as the substratum of bangle and chain. Like that, in the mithya universe, the nama roopa are exclusive of each other, but the sub-stratum, Brahman as existence is common.

(a) No example (*drshtaantam*) would be similar in all features with that which it is compared (*daarshtaantam*). Clay-pot is a good example to illustrate that the substance is Brahman and the universe of nama roopa that are superimposed are not substances to be counted as second entities, but when it comes to real-unreal relationship (“satya mithya sambandha”), the point becomes arguable, because the example can be construed to illustrate modifying material cause (“parinami upaadaana kaaranam”) and the reality of the cause and effect being of the same order of reality. Though not quite like milk turning into curd, clay does undergo some sort of change - a change in shape. Further, the pot maker is of the same order of reality as the clay and has to do work to bring about the change of shape. The plane on which the lump of clay and the shape as pot exist is also the same. Thus, it can be argued that the clay pot example illustrates parinaami upadana kaaranam and the sub-stratum and superimposition being of the same order of reality, unlike Brahman and the nama roopa. Brahman, as Existence, does not undergo any modification when nama roopa are superimposed on It; it is not as if nama roopa were another shape of Brahman, the Existence. Brahman does not superimpose the nama roopa. And Brahman and nama roopa are not of the same order of reality. Therefore, examples other than clay-pot are given in Sastra to show that the sub-stratum and the superimposed name and form belong to different orders of reality.

(b) In semi-darkness, a person mistakes the rope to be snake. Though the snake, as a pratibhasika entity, is actually perceived, there is no real snake there. When another person comes along with a torch and flashes the torch, it is known that what was perceived as a snake is only a rope. Similar examples - A person looking from a distance, sees the sea-shell half-submerged in the sand of the beach and mistakes it to be silver. Though the silver, as a pratibhaasika entity is actually perceived, there is no real silver there. When he goes there and digs the sand, he discovers that what he mistook to be silver is only a shell. A person dreams and takes the dream

world to be a real world existing outside. But when he wakes up, he realizes that there was no such world. Like these, jivas are ignorant of Brahman, the adhishthanam and mistake the perceived nama roopa to be real. But when the guru reveals Brahman and knowledge of Brahman is gained, the world of nama roopa is dismissed as mithya.

(c) When the snake appears, the rope does not undergo any change. It exists only as a sub-stratum for the snake to be superimposed. Like that Brahman does not undergo any change when nama roopa are superimposed. Brahman only serves as the substratum, in its aspect of existence for nama roopa to be superimposed. So, rope-snake is a good example for Brahman being vivarta upadana karanam.

(d) The rope is not affected by the snake. The poisonous nature of the snake is not transferred to the rope. The illness contracted by the dreamer or the happiness of begetting a child is not transferred to the waker. Like that the good and evil of the world does not affect Brahman.

(e) The snake exists only for the man coming across the rope in semi-darkness. From the point of view of the rope, if we imagine the rope to be sentient, at no time, there is a snake. Like that, the world exists for the jivas. For Brahman, there is no world at all.

2. So, the rope-snake and the dream are often cited as good examples to illustrate the unreality of the world. But, when the light is thrown on the object, the snake disappears; when the man wakes up from sleep, the dream world disappears. But, even after the knowledge that Brahman alone is satyam and the world is mithya is gained, the jivanmukta continues to perceive a world. Therefore, in Sastra, other examples are given, namely,

(i) the desert and the mirage that is mistaken for water and is negated on reaching the spot but water continues to be perceived in a mirage at a spot a further distance away.  
(ii) the rising and setting of the sun, which continue to be perceived as such even after it is known it is not the sun going round the earth but it is the other way about and  
(iii) the perception that the earth is flat, which continues even after it is known that the earth is elliptical.

3. Another dissimilarity to be overcome is that for the pot there is an intelligent cause other than the material cause. This problem is solved by the Advaita Vedanta thesis that Maya is the material cause of the universe and Iswara, deriving consciousness as reflected consciousness from Brahma caitanyam, is the intelligent cause.
4. When we talk of nama roopa existing in potential form in Maya and Maya unfolding the nama roopa, clay pot example is useful; all shapes exist in potential form in clay; the potter only brings out particular shapes.
5. All this has been stated only to show that any example given to illustrate the relationship between Brahman and the universe is only intended to illustrate a few aspects but not all and no example should be stretched beyond a point. Complete concordance between any example and the thing to be illustrated should not be expected; one should only take the aspects pointed out by the teacher who gives the example; the example is not invalidated if it does not fit in other aspects.
6. Mandukya karika is an elaborate and illuminating commentary on Mandukya Upanishad, written by Gaudapadacarya – Sankaracarya's 'paramaguru' – teacher's teacher-, in which the main theme is brahmasatyam jaganmithya. In the karika, in 'alaata saanti prakaranam', Gaudapadacarya gives the example of the firebrand to show the reality and non-dual nature of Brahman and the unreality of the world. When a firebrand which is a fixed single point of light is rotated and moved in various ways, we perceive varieties of light patterns. We do experience the multiplicity of light patterns but we know that they are not real. Even when the motions take place, the only thing

that really exists is the non-dual firebrand. We cannot say where the light patterns originate or where they go when the motion is stopped. It is not as if the various light patterns were produced as entities from the firebrand when the firebrand was set in motion or they were resolved as entities into the firebrand when the motion was stopped. Nor can you say that they came from something outside and went back to something outside. From the firebrand example given by Gaudapadacarya in his Mandukya Karika we learn that just as the different effulgent patterns that appear when the firebrand is rotated or moved in other ways have no independent existence and that what really exists is the single lighted tip of the firebrand, the world does not have real existence and that what really exists is only Brahman. The firebrand is only one but the patterns that appear are many. Like that, on the non-dual Brahman countless objects appear. You cannot say that firebrand is the cause and patterns are the effects. Real cause effect relationship can exist only between objects of the same order of reality. So, you cannot say that Brahman is the cause and the world is a real effect.

7. Another line of approach which Gaudapadacarya adopts in the earlier section in his Karika, the 'vaitathya prakaranam', is to show that like the world that we experience during dreams (the swapna prapanca)), the world that we experience in the waking stage (jagrat prapanca) is also unreal. He wants us to extrapolate our experience of the swapna prapanca to the jagrat prapanca. The dream world that I perceive as external to me is nothing but thoughts in the mind. While I am dreaming, I do experience a world of external objects but when I wake up I know that there was no such world, that the external objects that I experienced were nothing but thoughts passing through my mind. Gaudapadacarya says that just as the swapna prapanca is unreal from the point of view of the one who has woken up, the jagrat prapanca is unreal from the point of view of one who has understood that the only entity that exists as absolute reality (paramarthika satyam) is Brahman.

## Section 8 - Five Definitions of Mithya

2. The first definition - given by Padmapada in Pancadipika

Falsity is the character of not being the locus of either being or non-being. The falsity is constituted by being different from *sat* (being) and *asat* (non-being). The example given is the illusory silver perceived on the shell.

3. The second definition - given by Prakasatman in Pancapadika-vivarana

The falsity of a thing consists in the thing being negated for all three periods of time in the locus in which it appears. ( The falsity (*mithyaatvam*) consists in being the *pratiyogi* (negatum) of a negation (*nisheda*) which is *traikalika* (for all three periods of time – past, present and future ) in a locus in which it appears. The illusory silver is false in the sense that it is negated for all three periods of time – past, present and future – in the shell in which it is presented as an object of experience.

This is based on the scriptural text, “There is nothing else whatsoever”. The world of multiplicity is eternally negated in the non-dual Brahman which is the locus of the appearance of the world and as such, the world is false.

1. The third definition – this is also given by Prakasatman

The false is what gets canceled by cognition..This is based on the scriptural text, “The enlightened is freed of names and forms.” The illusory snake is false in the sense that it is canceled by the cognition of rope as rope. . The world is false in the sense that it is canceled by the knowledge of Brahman.

4. The fourth definition - given by Citsukhacarya in Tattvapradipika

The falsity of anything positive is its character of its being the *pratiyogin*. (counterpart) of the absolute negation that resides in what appears to be its own substratum. The shell silver is something positive and it is false. Why is it false? It is false because it is eternally negated in the very shell that appears to be its locus. The objects of the world are also false in the same sense.

For example, a cloth is a positive object and it appears to reside in the threads which constitute it. But in those very threads the cloth is eternally negated. The cloth is therefore false.

5. The fifth definition - given by Anandabodhacarya in Nyayadipavali.

What is different from the real (*sat*), i.e., that is, other than the real, is false. According to Advaita Vedanta, Brahman alone is real (*sat*); the objects of the world, like a pot or cloth, are different from Brahman. They are, therefore, false.

## Section 9 - A criterion of Mithya

In Gaudapadacarya's Mandukya karika, it is said that one of the criteria for holding that both the external world and the mind is mithya is mutual dependence ("anyonya asrayatvam") which is tantamount to absence of independent existence. The world cannot be proved without the mind. Only when a thing is perceived or inferred on the basis of certain perceptions can we say that a thing exists. So, mind is necessary to predicate the existence of objects. The other way about, if there is no world as object, there is no place for mind as subject. The known is proved by the knower and the knower is proved by the known. This is the mutual dependence which makes us relegate both the mind and the world to the category of mithya.

## Section 10 - Mithya not mere imagination

Apropos of mithya, a question that has been discussed in Advaita Vedanta literature, in the context of the example of rope snake to illustrate the unreality of the world is whether there is actual perception of a snake on a rope or is it just a thought in the mind. It is said that mere imagination of a snake cannot produce fear. Only if the cognition itself is to the effect that there is a snake in front, the person will be frightened. This is the basis for saying that snake is experienced but it is negated when the rope is revealed. Similarly, the question is asked, "Is the dream tiger a perceived object or is it mere imagination. If it was mere

imagination, the dream I, confronted with a tiger in the forest would not be frightened. The rope-snake and the dream tiger are said to be mithya of the pratibhasika variety. Like that, the world is also mithya but of the vyavaharika variety. . There is a difference between the snake mithya and the world mithya. Snake disappears when the rope is revealed. But the world continues to be experienced by the jivanmukta even after Brahman is revealed. So, Advaita Vedanta cites the example of mirage, sunrise etc. Even after we know that they are not real, we continue to experience them. Whatever is perceived but is not real is called '*anirvacaniya*' in Vedanta; it is another term for mithya.

## Section 11 - Views of Buddhist Schools about Reality Refuted

1. In Buddhism, there are two branches - Hinayana and Mahayana. There are two schools in the Hinayana branch – Sautrantika and Vaibhashika. Both the schools of Hinayana accept the existence of consciousness as well as a world of objects outside the mind and maintain that any object has only momentary existence. This is called “ubhaya astitva vada”. (There is an internal difference, between Sautrantika and Vaibhashika, which is not relevant for the purposes of this discussion. The internal difference is - for the Sautrantika, the acceptance of the existence of a world outside the mind is a matter of perception and for the Vaibhashika, it is a matter of inference.) In the Mahayana also, there are two schools – Yogacara and Madhyamika. Yogacara denies the existence of the world outside the mind but accepts the existence of consciousness. Sautrantika, Vaibhashika and Yogacara – all three – say that consciousness is momentary. (They do not accept any unchanging consciousness.) That is to say, one cognition arises, exists for just a moment and disappears before the next cognition arises. This doctrine is called “Kshanika Vijnanam”. For the Madhyamika school of Mahayana, reality is nothingness (sunya); So, it is called sunyavada. In effect, there are three main doctrines – (i) “Ubhaya astitva vada” - the doctrine that there is a world of objects having momentary existence, as well as

momentary consciousness (ii) “Kshanika vijnanam” - the doctrine that there is no external world at all ; what there is only consciousness and that consciousness is momentary and (iii) “Sunyavada” – the doctrine that reality is nothingness . In Brahmasutra, Vyasacarya and in his Bhashyams, Sankaracarya refute (i) the doctrine that there is no world outside the mind (ii) the doctrine that consciousness is momentary and (iii) the doctrine that reality is nothingness.

2. The Hinayana doctrine that any object in the external world has only momentary existence is refuted as follows:-

(i) It is contradictory to the Hinayana doctrine of cause –effect relationship (“karya-karana sambandha”). If Hinayana philosophers want to maintain karya karana sambandha, they have to give up the idea of momentary existence of objects or vice versa, because the essential nature of a cause continues to inhere in the effect; for example, clay continues to exist when pot shape is given to a lump of clay and certain chemical elements of milk continue to exist when milk turns into curd.

(ii) Our experience is – and science also tells us – that matter is never totally destroyed. It only changes from one form into another (law of conservation of energy and matter.)

(iii) Buddhism also believes in rebirth and the cycle of samsara. And it talks of deliberate destruction (“prasankyayana nirodha”) of samsara by the seeker pursuing certain spiritual practices (“sadhana”). If samsara like everything else has only momentary existence, and will in any case die a natural death, in a moment, where is the question of deliberate destruction through sadhana? So, the doctrine of momentary existence of objects and the concept of sadhana do not go together.

(iv) If it is said that every object has only momentary existence, it is tantamount to saying that every object is created out of nothing; such creation is contrary to experience. If nothingness is the cause of objects, since cause inheres in effect, we should be experiencing only nothingness everywhere, but we say ‘pot is ‘ , tree is’ etc. If

nothing is required for producing something, to accomplish a thing, no effort would be needed.

(v) The fact that for growing a mango tree, we sow mango seed and not coconut seed proves that a specific material transforms into a specific product. This proves continued existence of an object in a different form, not momentariness.

3. The doctrine of the Yogacara school of Mahayana that there is no external world outside the mind is refuted as follows:-

(i) Our experience clearly proves the existence of a world outside the mind. If there is only consciousness and there is no external world at all, how is it that cognition is not uniform but varied and differentiated like a tree, river, mountain, a man, an animal and so on and like color, sound, smell etc.

(ii) In sushupti, we continue to have consciousness but there is no cognition only because contact of sense organs and mind with external objects is severed. The moment we wake up, the contact is revived and there is cognition of external objects.

(iii) To explain cognition of differentiated objects, the Mahayana philosopher says that what appear as differentiated objects are impurities of kshanika vijnanam. This is countered by pointing out that impurities in a substance are not the same as the substance. Since the only thing that this Mahayana philosopher accepts is kshanika vijnanam, there is no place for anything else such as impurities. Now, he tries to escape by saying that impurities are also kshanika vijnanams. The absurdity of this statement is pointed out by saying that since, in this school, kshanika vijnanams are the reality, if impurities are kshanika vijnanams, impurities can never be removed – which means that there is no moksha.

(iv) Unless the existence of a world outside the mind is conceded, how can one explain the distinction between a thought arising from the contact of the mind through the sense organs with an object outside and a mere thought when no external object is present? Sitting in Chennai one thinks of Varanasi. Later, one travels to Varanasi and bathes in the Ganga. One is in office and is thinking that he forgot to tell his wife, before leaving for office, that he was taking her to a cinema in the evening. Later, one comes home and takes one's wife to a theatre. One is wondering why one's friend has not come. Later, the friend comes and one talks to one's friend for half an hour. One imagines how nice it would to have ice cream when it is so hot. In the evening, one goes to the ice cream parlour and takes ice cream. One comes back from a holiday in the Himalayas and returning to Chennai, remembers the cold in the Himalayas while he is walking in the scorching sun in Anna Salai. If there is no external world, how can all this be explained? Even for a jivanmukta, there is an external world outside the mind, on the vyavaharika plane. To this, the Buddhist uses a counter argument and cites the example of the dream which is really only thoughts in the mind but which, nevertheless, are perceived as objects. This is refuted by saying that there is a difference; objects perceived in the dream are known to be false when we wake up but the objects of the waking world are not negated every morning like that. Further, whereas swapna prapanca (the dream world) is nothing but the vasanas within the mind of the particular person and it being outside is only an illusion and no other person perceives it, jagrat prapanca actually exists outside the mind and the same objects are perceived by all persons. If it is held that jagrat prapanca is also only in the mind, one should be able to say which is the other world the experience of which could produce the vasanas which can be projected by the mind as the

jagrat prapanca. For this, there will be no answer. Further how can you explain the distinction between erroneous perception like perception of snake on the rope and right perception of rope as rope? None of the above phenomena can be explained unless the existence of an external world outside the mind is conceded. (In Advaita Vedanta also, in certain formulations, it is said that there is no external world. But, there, the existence of a world outside the mind is not denied. What is pointed out is that there is no world of the same order of reality as Brahman, the paramartika satyam; both the world and the mind are superimpositions on Brahman and are categorized as vyavaharika satyam.)

4. The doctrine of both schools of Hinayana and the Yogacara school of Mahayana that consciousness has only momentary existence (kshanika vijnanam) is refuted as follows:-

(i) If it is held that consciousness arises, exists for just a moment only and is gone before the next consciousness arises, one cannot explain memory (“smriti”). We remember only what we have experienced. Experience occurs first and recollection thereafter. Only if there is a consciousness that exists continuously from the time of experience up to the time of recollection can the mind connect the past and the present and produce the recollection vritti. That the mind so connects is adequate proof of the existence of a permanent consciousness. Unless the same consciousness which was there at the time of experience is still there at the time of remembrance, one cannot say that one remembers that one experienced a particular object in terms such as “I remember that I met Devadatta during the festival at the temple.” If there is nothing like a continuous consciousness, remembrance cannot take place.

(ii) If consciousness is momentary, recognition (“pratyabhinja”) cannot take place. The difference between smriti and pratyabhinja is that in smriti, the object experienced is not present at the time of remembrance; in pratyabhinja, the object experienced is present at the time of recognition. Pratyabhinja also proves the continued existence of the subject, besides proving the continued existence of the object. Unless the same consciousness was there at the time of the first experience and is still there at the time of the subsequent experience, one cannot recognize the object experienced previously and being experienced currently to be the same, in terms such as “The Devadatta who is now in front of me is the same Devadatta whom I met during the festival at the temple.”

(iii) To this, there is a counter-argument by the Kshanika vijnana adherents. They say that the person you see now or think you see now is not the same person you met or you thought to be there earlier. That person or the thought of that person existed only at that moment. This person or the thought of this person exists only at this moment. You are deluded into thinking that it is the same person or the thought of the same person because the person that existed then or you thought existed then and the person existing now or is thought to be existing now are similar. And they give the example of the flame appearing to be the same, though, at each moment, a separate drop of oil is being burnt and the example of the stream appearing to be a continuous entity, even though the water molecules that were there at any given point a moment ago have been replaced by another set of molecules already. The Vedantin refutes this by saying that even for recognizing similarity between an object that existed in the past or the mere thought of such an object and an object that exists at present or the thought of such an object, the same consciousness that experienced the object or had

the thought of such an object in the past should exist at present. Even if one may say that similarity of objects is possible in rare cases, how can anybody doubt the recognition of oneself as a continuous personality? One says “I who went to bed yesterday and slept soundly am now awake and am talking to my wife about our program of visits this Sunday.” Unless the same “I” consciousness that was there when one went to bed yesterday is continuing to exist now when one is awake and talking to one’s wife, how can this phenomenon be explained. (The kshanika vijnanam of the Buddhists is the ahamkara of Advaita Vedanta. In Advaita Vedanta, besides ahamkara, which is the changing consciousness, there is atma (sakshi), the unchanging consciousness, invoked as the constant I existing during the changing cognitions of the mind.)

(iv) In Advaita Makarandam, the author uses a graphic argument. A person can never know his own birth or death. One’s birth is the last moment of one’s prior non-existence. One’s death is the first moment of one’s posterior non-existence. One is not there to know either. Like that a momentary consciousness cannot know that it is momentary. It is not there when it is born and it is not there when it dies. Another momentary consciousness cannot know it either, because consciousness No.1 dies before consciousness No.2 is born and consciousness No.3 is not yet born when consciousness No.2 dies. So, the question is who is there to know that consciousness is momentary? Unless a continuous consciousness is accepted, the existence of momentary consciousness or a series of momentary consciousnesses that succeed one another cannot be established.

(v). If all that there is momentary consciousness,

(a) there cannot be any notion of means and ends. When the thought of end comes, the thought of means is gone.

(b) There cannot be any notion of possessor and possessed. When the thought of possessed comes, the thought of possessor has gone, and

(c) There cannot be the notion of an article having a name. When the thought of name comes, the thought of the article has gone.

6. Refutation of sunyavada - Commenting on the third sentence of the Chandogya Upanishad mantra VI.ii.1 – “O, good looking one, in the beginning this was Existence alone. One only without a second”, Sankaracarya says, “The nihilists (*vainaasikaa*), say that this world, before creation, was non-existence, merely absence of existence. ....Objection: If the idea of the nihilists is that before creation it existed as non-existence, one only, without a second, how can they speak of a connection with time, association with number and non-duality? Vedantin: Quite so. This is not logical for those who accept only absence of existence. And their admission of mere non-existence is illogical also because the existence of the person who denies existence cannot be denied. If it is held that the one who admits (non-existence) exists now but not before creation, then it is not so, because there is no proof of non-existence of Existence before creation. It is illogical to imagine that there was non-existence alone before creation.”
- Vidyaranya also refutes by asking the philosopher who says that there is nothing “You say that there is nothing. But are you there or not?” He cannot but say “I am”. This is enough to establish that to say that there is nothing is absurd.

(N.B 1. The refutation of Buddhist Schools about Reality described above is based on Sankaracarya's bhashyams. However, in a book, entitled " A Critical Survey Of Indian Philosophy" by Chandradhar Sharma, a retired University Professor of Philosophy (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1960), he has propounded a completely opposite view.

Dismissing misconceptions about consciousness and sunyata and citing the works of Asanga,

Vasubandhu, Asvagosha and Nagarjuna, he has established that Mahayana Buddhism is not different, in essence, from Advaita Vedanta. He has shown that in Mahayana Buddhism, the phenomenal world and the limited intellects are only empirical manifestations related to ignorance and that the ultimate reality is a permanent, immortal. Never-changing, non-dual, universal, self-luminous, Pure Consciousness. The force behind creation is the beginningless tendency inspired by Ignorance in the Absolute Consciousness to manifest itself as subject and as object. The Real Self, says Asanga, is essentially Non-dual. It is beyond Ignorance and beyond intellect. Ego is only an illusion (bhrama). Liberation, therefore is only the destruction of ignorance. (Mahayanasutralankara). According to Nagarjuna, people have misunderstood the concept of Sunyata; relating to the Absolute, it denotes Reality itself wherein all plurality is merged and all categories of intellect are transcended. In certain texts, even the word, "Brahman" is used. Lalitavistara describes Reality as full of Bliss in the beginning, in the middle and the end, One, Full, Pure and the Abode of Brahman.

In Lankavatara, Buddha himself is said to have described Reality (Tathagatagarbha) to be self-luminous (prakriti-prabhaaswara), absolutely pure (adi-visuddha), to be immanent in all beings (sarva-sattva-dehaantargata), to be immortal (nitya), permanent (dhruva), eternal (saasvata) and blissful (siva)..

[In a book entitled, "The Concept of Mukti in Advaita Vedanta" by A.G.Krishna Warriar, University of Madras, also, the author refers to a bikku who asked "What is that place where distinctions like water and earth, fire and air have no footing, where long and short, fine and coarse, good and bad or name and form cease absolutely?": the Buddha answered "It is vinnaana (consciousness) which is signless, infinite, radiant on all sides, where all distinctions cease and where vinnaana (as constituted), after cessation, disappears. (Dighanbikaya and Majjhima.)

2. Chandradhar Sharma says that, though Buddha's teaching was based on Upanishadic philosophy, after Buddha's death, the Hinayanists misunderstood Buddha's teachings. Proclaiming that the No-soul theory and the theory of Universal Momentariness were the

cornerstone of Buddhism, they reduced mind to fleeting ideas and matter to fleeting sensations. The Vaibhashikas and the Sautrantikas said that everything is momentary. Nothing is permanent. Later, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Asvagsha and Nagarjuna brought Buddhism closer to Advaita Vedanta. But Dinnaga revived the theory of momentariness. He, followed by Dharmakirti, Santakrishna and Kamalasila (Swatantra-vijnaana-vadins) put forward the theory that not only are phenomena momentary but even Pure Consciousness is momentary. They degraded Vasubandhu's permanent Consciousness to the level of a momentary vijnaana or a unique momentary Particular which they call Svalakshana. There was no later philosopher who could restore the Reality of Buddhism to the non-dual, never-changing, permanent Consciousness propounded by Asanga, Vasubandhu, Asvagsha and Nagarjuna. (Some of their works are available only in Chinese translations.)

3. If What Chandradhar Sarma says is acceptable to scholars, the problem is 'how does one explain Sankaracarya's refutation of Buddhism on the basis that reality, according to Buddhism, is either momentary consciousness or sunyata?'. The least objectionable explanation may be that the only Buddhist texts available to Sankaracarya were those of Dinnaga and other Swantra-vijnaana-vaadins like Dharmakirti.

## Section 12 - Karma not Means of Moksha

1. In Advaita Vedanta, knowledge (discovery of one's identity with Brahman) is the ultimate means of moksha. Some philosophers talk of karma or upasana as the immediate means of moksha. (Both karma and upasana are action involving motion. Karma is a movement of the body. Upasana is thought which is a movement of the mind). This is refuted by Sankaracarya.

Sankaracarya's logic is as follows:-

Moksha is attaining Brahman (i.e. identification with Brahman). The positive result of Karma is only of four types as shown in brackets. Brahman does not fall in any of these four.

(a) (Reaching a destination) Brahman is all pervading (sarvagatah); there is, therefore, no question of reaching Brahman.

(b) (Production. E.g., Seed is sown; crop is produced.) Brahman is ever one's nature. Brahman is unborn and eternal ("aja", "nitya"). The question of Brahman or Brahman-ness ("Brahmatvam") being produced does not arise.

(c) (Modification.) Brahman and one's own nature as Brahman are changeless ("nirvikara"); the question of modifying to become We read so many obituaries in the newspapers but our peace of mind is not affected. But it happens to be the death of a close relative, we are sad. Once I understand that I am not this individual body and mind but I am the infinite Brahman, nothing in the vyavaharika world which includes the individual body and mind I am born with will affect me since I have disidentified with them.

2. Another important point, emphasized by Sankaracarya elsewhere is that in karma and upasana, one has to regard the Lord to be different from oneself whereas jnana leading to liberation is discovery of one's identity with Brahman. Karma and upasana are based on dehaatmabhaava, whereas jnanam is destruction of dehatmabhava.

## Section 13 - Adhyasa

- The fundamental tenets of Advaita philosophy consist of

(i) Three orders of reality, with Brahman as the Existence-Consciousness-Infinity as the highest order of reality and the substratum, the nama roopa appearing on that substratum as the next lower order of reality, and the dream world and erroneously perceived things like snake on the rope, as the lowest order of reality – paramartikam, vyavaharikam and pratibhasikam, respectively (the latter two which have no independent existence being called mithya)

(ii) Identity of the consciousness of the jivatma and the all pervading consciousness, Brahman,

(iii) Avidya (Maya)

(iv) Iswara and

(v) Adhyasa

- By the avarana sakti of Avidya the awareness of the true nature of Jivatma as Brahman is covered (concealed from the Jivatma). The vikshepa sakti of Avidya misleads the jivatma into regarding the world as real and identifying himself with the body mind complex. This is called adhyasa. Adhyasa is defined as mistaking a thing to be other than what it really is. In the process of adhyasa, jivatma, owing to self-ignorance, superimposes anatma (the body mind complex) and its properties on atma and say, “I am fat” “I shall die soon”(false transference of the characteristic of the body on atma) “I wrote a short story today” ( false transference of the doership, the karttvam on atma) “I enjoyed my dinner today ” (false transference of the enjoyership, the bhoktrtvam on atma) “ I am a scholar” (false transference of the intellect on atma) “I am a father”, “I am a husband (false transference of the relationship of the body on atma), “ my house is leaking” (false transference of the possession on atma). So

doing, jiva is afflicted by the limitations and tribulations arising from this superimposition. The other way, when one says “I am a conscious being” it is superimposition of the consciousness belonging to atma on anatma.

- 3. Opponents of Advaita Vedanta argue that adhyasa is not possible, because the requirements of adhyasa are not there for superimposition of anatma on Atma to take place. The requirements, they say, are as follows:-

(i) The real object should be perceived in front.

(ii) There must be ignorance of the identity of the real object.

(iii) There must be similarity in features between the real object and the thing that is superimposed.

(iv) The person who is superimposing a thing should have experienced a real member of the superimposed species previously so that the impression left by that experience (*samskaara*) is there in the mind when he is superimposing.

These requirements are not met in the case of Atma anatma superimposition, according to them, as shown below.

(i) Atma is not perceived as an object,

(ii) Since atma is self-evident, the identity of atma is not unknown,

(iii) There is no similarity between atma and anatma, and

(iv) anatma is unreal; so, the question of anyone having experienced a real anatma previously does not arise and, therefore there can be no samskara of the experience of anaatma.

- 4. These objections are countered by Sankaracarya in his adhyasa bhashyam which is an introductory portion of his commentary on Brahma Sutram as follows:-

(i) For adhyasa to take place, it is not essential that the object should be perceived .It is sufficient if the entity is known. Atma is known in the sense the atma is self-evident as the sakshi, (the constant consciousness available for recognition, particularly, in sushupti).

(ii) The condition required for adhyasa is not total ignorance of the identity but part ignorance. We all say, “I am”; that means the existence aspect (*sat amsa*) and the consciousness aspect (*cit amsa*) of atma are known to us. But there is one part that is not known to us; that “I am infinite” is not known to us (the anantatva aspect of atma is not known). (Example. That there is a thing with a particular shape in front is known. But that the thing has the characteristics of a rope is not known. And the characteristics are mistaken to be those of a snake).

(iii) Similarity is not an invariable requirement. There are cases where there is no similarity and still, there is adhyasa, e.g., space is not similar to anything but we do superimpose blueness and a dome like shape on it.

(iv) No doubt samskara of a previous experience is necessary. But it need not be of the experience of a real entity. Even if the samskara is of the experience of a false entity, in the past, it is sufficient to produce the present adhyasa. (Suppose I am familiar with the banyan tree and I have the habit of doing perambulation (*pradakshinam*) of the tree. I go to a village in another region; there I see a tree with leaves similar to those of the banyan tree. I mistake it to be a banyan tree and do pradakshinam. Later I go to another village where there is a tree of the same species. On the basis of the

samskara of the previous adhyaasa, I do pradakshinam of this tree also). (The example given in a prakarana grantha called 'Vicara sagara for the first adhyasa is mistaking a butter tree, *madhuka vrksha*, *madhuca latifolia*, for a mango tree). For the question how the first adhyasa arose, the answer is that avidya which engenders adhyasa is beginningless (*anaadi*). Another example is samskara arising out of the experience of a *vyavaharika adhyasa* being the basis for a *pratibhasika adhyasa* is - . Suppose a person sees a ghost in a movie and this *samskara* (retained memory) leads to his perceiving a ghost in his dream. The ghost in the movie is not a real ghost. But the samskara of having seen that is adequate to create the perception of the dream ghost which is also unreal. Similarly the experience of having perceived a false world previously is sufficient to produce the samskara necessary to produce the current perception of a false world.

- 5. Sastra-based logic for postulating adhyasa is as follows:-

Upanishads say that atma is asangah, apanipadou, amanah. So atma is akarta and abhokta. But jivatmas identify themselves with the body mind complex and engage themselves in worldly and religious transactions. This cannot happen, unless they are deluded into transferring the kartrutvam, bhoktrutvam etc. belonging to anatma to atma.

## Section 14 - Classification Of Adhyasa. Concept of Upaadhi

7. Adhyasa is two-fold. (a) *arthaadhyaasa* and (b) *jnanaadhyaasa*. The appearance of a false object on the substratum of a real object is arthadhyasa. The thought that mistakes the false object to be the real object is jnanadhyasa. The mirage seen on the sand is arthadhyasa. The thought in the mind of the traveler in the desert that it is water is jnanadhyasa. In respect of the world, the ajnani has both arthadhyasa and jnanadhyasa. The jnani ceases to have jnanadhyasa

and he has only arthadhyasa. The ajnani takes the world to be real and, consequently, he has samsara. The jnani continues to perceive the world but he knows that it is false; therefore he is free of samsara.

1. When you say “I am the doer” or “I am the enjoyer” or “I am the thinker”, you are superimposing ahamkara on atma. This is called “dharmi adhyasa”. When you say “I am angry” you are superimposing an attribute of ahamkara on atma. This is called “dharma adhyasa”. When you say “I am conscious”, you are superimposing the ‘attribute’ of atma on ahamkara. This is also dharmi adhyasa. There cannot be dharma adhyasa involving the superimposition of atma on ahamkara. Because, first, adhishtanam cannot be superimposed on upadhi. Secondly, if you say that atma is myself, it is not error (adhyasa), but jnanam (“ahambrahmasmi” knowledge).
  
8. There is another classification of adhyasa, connected with the concept of upadhi. The entity which is superimposed on another or an entity the characteristics of which are falsely seen in another is called *upadhi* and the entity on which the superimposition takes place or to which the characteristics appear to have been transferred is called *upahitam*. The adhyasa takes place where the two real entities are close to each other or an unreal entity is located on a real entity. Two kinds of examples are given. One is the closeness of the transparent crystal and the red hibiscus flower. The redness of the flower is falsely transferred to the crystal and the crystal appears to be red. In this case, both the upadhi and upahitam are real entities. This is called *samsarga- adhyasa*. Here, what is mithya is not the upadhi but the relation of the red color of the flower to the crystal. The other example which is more suitable for the case of the superimposition of avidya and the world of plurality on Brahman is the rope and the snake. The snake is superimposed on the rope the rope appears to be poisonous and frightening. Similarly avidya and the differentiated nama roopa are superimposed on Brahman. This is called *swarooma- adhyasa*. Here, the superimposed entity itself is mithya; the upadhi is unreal and the upahitam is real.

There is an alternative terminology – *Sopaadhika adhyaasa* and *Nirupaadhika adhyaasa*. Since the superimposition of the red color on the crystal is a false transference from a real upadhi (the red flower), it is called sopadhika adhyaasa. Whereas, the superimposition of the snakeness is a false transference from an unreal upadhi, it is called nirupadhika adhyaasa. The superimposition of Maya and nama roopa on Brahman is nirupadhika adhyaasa.”

9. The very concept of Iswara and jiva is adhyaasa. Brahman, qua Brahman, is not the cause, the inner controller, or the witness of the universe, all of which are characteristics of Iswara. Similarly, Brahman is not a cognizer or an agent or an enjoyer; all these characteristics belong to jiva. But the non-dual Brahman, on account of the association with avidya appears in the dual forms of Iswara and jiva. Maya is the upadhi for Brahman to appear as Iswara and Maya’s product, the intellects of jivas, are the upadhis for Brahman to appear as jivas. When reality is attributed to the upadhis, Brahman is called *visishta caitanyam* or *visishta Brahman*. When the upadhis are understood to be mithya, Brahman is called *upahita caitnyam* or *upaahita Brahman*. Since the experienced universe is a combination of Brahman as Existence and the superimposed nama roopa, what we experience on the vyavaharika plane, is *sopaadhika Brahman*, whether we make the mistake of taking the world of nama roopa to be real or not. . *Nirupaadhika Brahman* is there only on the paramarthika plane. A day to day example for visishta and upahita is as follows: - I ask you to give me water to drink. You have to bring it in a tumbler. The tumbler is an integral part of your bringing the water. Now, the water is tumbler-visishta. When I drink the water, I swallow only the water, knowing that I am not supposed to swallow the tumbler but I am still holding it. So, at the time of drinking, the water is tumbler-upahita. Upahita caitanyam is experienced even after it is known that the upadhi is mithya, just as you hold the tumbler while drinking water, even after knowing that you can’t swallow the tumbler.

## Section 15 - Ignorance and Knowledge of Identity with Brahman

### Both Operations Of The Intellect

When Brahman is said to be “jnanam” in the mantra, “Satyam jnanam anantam Brahma” the word “jnanam” refers to the eternal consciousness which is Brahman’s nature. It is called “swaroopam jnanam”. It is not swaroopam jnanam that destroys self ignorance. If that was the case, since swaroopam jnanam is eternal, nobody would ever be ignorant. In fact swaroopam jnanam illumines ignorance as well as knowledge, through cidabhasa. What destroys self-ignorance is vritti jnanam, the vritti that I am Brahman. This vritti jnanam (knowledge) is gained by the ahamkara. The notion that I am a limited individual is destroyed by the vritti that I am the infinite Brahman. When I say “I”, if I identify with ahamkara, I am in samsara. If I own up the unchanging infinite consciousness as I, it is moksha. In both cases it is my ahamkara which does the job of identification, but the entities regarded as myself is ahamkara in the former case and Brahman in the second case.

## Section 16 - Role Of Mahavakyas

Sentences revealing the essential identity of jiva and Brahman are called mahavakyas. The four well known mahavakyas are “Tat Tvam asi’ (Thou art That) occurring in Chandogya Upanishad belonging to Sama Veda, ‘Aham Brahma asmi’ (I am Brahman) occurring in Brhadaranyaka Upanishad belonging to Yajurveda, ‘Prajnaanam Brahma’ occurring in (Consciousness is Brahma’) occurring in Aitereya Upanishad belonging to Rg.Veda and ‘Ayam atma Brahma’ (This Atman is Brahman) occurring in Mandukya Upanishad belonging to Atharva Veda. There are many other passages in the Upanishads which are tantamount to mahavakyas.

Mahavakyas do not reveal any new entity. The consciousness available in us, Atma, is self-evident – is recognised by us already. What a mahavakyam does is to remove the wrong notion that it is limited. What is revealed by mahavakyas is the Bramatvam status of the already recognised entity. To illustrate this, in Taittiriya bhashyam II.1, Sankaracarya

relates the story of a team of ten persons crossing a (dangerous river by swimming). On reaching the other shore the commander wants to check whether all have reached safely. He counts one by one. Engrossed in counting others, he misses counting himself and arrives at nine and he is sad that one of them had got drowned while crossing and wails. A person who is passing by hears the wailing, and being told the reason, counts the members of the team, one by one. He comes to the commander last, and points out 'You are the tenth man'. In this story, the passer-by is not bringing a tenth man; he is only revealing the tenth-man status to the tenth man. The consciousness in me I have already recognised. What I understand through mahavakyam is that it is infinite. You do not create space. When you are in a room, you may have a wrong notion that space is limited by the walls of the room. You demolish the walls; you recognize that what you thought was room-limited space is in fact the all pervading space.

## Section 17 - Analysis of Mahavakyas

The four well known Mahavakyas mentioned in the previous Section are sentences containing words which are in *saamaanaadhikaranya*, i.e., sentences in which the words in the sentence, being grammatically in the same case, point to the same entity, though each has a different significance. There are three main methods of analyzing the samanadhikaranyam of the words. The method of analyzing the mahavakya "Tattvamasi" occurring Chandogya Upanishad is called *jahallajahallakshanaa* or *bhaagatyaagalakshanaa*. The literal meaning (*vacyaartha*) of 'tvam' is 'jivatma' consisting of ahamkara (antahkaranam plus cidabhasa) which has limited knowledge (*alpajnatvam*) and limited powers (*alpasaktimatam*) and the original consciousness. The vacyartham of 'Tat' is Iswara, consisting of reflected consciousness in Maya with omniscience (*sarvajnatvam*) and omnipotence (*sarvasaktimavam*) and the original consciousness. The word, 'asi' says that the two are identical. The question is, 'how can we equate the jivatma, the one with limited knowledge and limited powers with Iswara, the one with unlimited knowledge and unlimited powers. So, we give up the vacyartham and take recourse to the implied meaning (*lakshaartha*) of 'tat' and 'tvam'. In doing so, we discard the mithya

parts of the word 'tvam', viz., the ahamkara and retain the satya part, viz., the original consciousness. Similarly, we discard the mithya part of the word 'tat', viz., Maya and the reflected consciousness and retain the original consciousness. And the original consciousness part of 'tvam' is equated with the original consciousness part of 'tat' by the word 'asi'. Thus 'tat' and 'tvam' are understood as being identical. Since we discard one part of the meaning and retain the other part in the words 'tvam' and 'tat', this is called jahallakshana or bhagatyagalakshana. (This bhagatyagalakshana method is what is adopted in Sankaracarya's Vakyavritti verses 44 - 48). (In "tattvamasi, the word "tat" juxtaposed with the word "tvam" negates the limitation of jivatma and the word "tvam" juxtaposed with the word "tat" negates the remoteness of paramatma.) Similarly, in the mahavakyas "aham brahmasmi" (Brahadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10, 2.5.19), "prajnaanam brahma" (Aitereya Upanishad 3.1.3) and "ayamaatma brahma" (Mandukya Upanishad 2), the vacyartha of the words "aham", "prajnaanam" and "ayamatma" is jiva and the vacyartha of the word "brahma" is Iswara. So, in these cases also, we have to apply jahal-ajahal-lakshana (bhagatyagalakshana), discard the mithya portion, the ahamkara in jiva and the reflected consciousness and Maya in Iswara and adopt the lakshyarthas and equate the pure consciousness portions. In some cases, it is necessary to substitute, for an entire word, an associated meaning. The example is "sarvam khalu idam Brahma" ("the world is Brahman" and "*idam sarvam yadayam atma*") The world of nama roopas is mithya How can the mithya world be equated with satya Brahman? So, we discard the word, 'world' entirely and substitute for it, as an associated word, viz., the subs-stratum, 'Existence'. Existence is Brahman. So, the equation becomes valid. Here, since one of the words in the sentence is discarded entirely, the method is called jahallakshana. Where the vacyartha or lakshyarthas of two or more words of the equation is the same, it is called *aikyasaamanaadhikaranyam*. Where one or more of the words of the equation have to be discarded, it is called *bhadhaayaasaamanaadhikaranyam*. ('Tattvamasi' occurs in Chandogya Upanishad 6th chapter where section 2 begins with the words, '...in the beginning this was Existence alone, One only, without a second'. So, the question is, why are we taking the vacyartha of 'tat' to be Iswara and not Brahman. The answer is that immediately after section 2, section 3 says "That visualized, 'I shall become many. I shall be born'. That created fire...." and, thus goes on to describe creation. So, the vacyartha of 'tat' which

occurs in VI.viii.7 onwards is taken to be Iswara. Similarly, in sections 5 and 6 of Chapter 6, the body and mind produced from food is described and in 6 3.3 , the entry of Parmatma in the form of jivatma is mentioned. . So, the vacyartha of 'tvam' is taken as jivatma.)

(Other types of samanadhikaranyam are – karya-kaarana-saamanaadhikaranyam, e.g. clay pot, amsa-amsi-saamanaadhikaranyam, e.g. desert land, guna-guni-bhaava-saamnaadhikaranyam (visheshana-vishishya-bhava-s.), e.g. blue lily and jaati-vyakti-bhava-saamaanadhikaranya, e.g. mango tree.)

## Section 18 - Moksha Means Knowing One's Infinite Nature

Brahman is said to be infinite, space wise, time wise and entity wise. When you talk of a thing that is attained by you, it has to be a finite thing; before attaining it, it has to be away from you. Conversely, there can be no such event as attaining the thing that is infinite. By definition, 'the infinite' precludes the existence of any second entity. So, to talk of your being away from the infinite, to start with, and your attaining it, later, is illogical. Therefore, 'attainment of Brahman' can only be a figure of speech. One is ever Brahman; one has been ignorant of this fact and the ignorance is removed through study of Sastra. In short, only if you are infinite yourself you can discover your infinite nature. Transformation from finite to another finite is useless. Transformation from infinite to infinite is not necessary. Transformation from finite to infinite is not possible. Only if we are already infinite but are ignorant of it can we discover our infinity.

## Section 19 - Importance of "asi" in "Tattvamasi"

By knowing the meaning of the word, "Tvam" ("Thou") or "Tat ("That") alone, you do not attain liberation. By enquiry into the true meaning of "Tvam", you may understand that you are not the body or the mind but the unchanging consciousness available to be invoked as the constant "I" in and through the changing conditions of the body and mind. That is not

enough. Because you may think that there are as many consciousnesses as there are bodies and minds. Similarly by enquiry into the true meaning of Tat, you may know that Brahman is the infinite Existence-Consciousness-Infinity, the only reality, the sub-stratum of all false manifestations, but what benefit is there for you in it? Only when the meaning of “Tvam” and “Tat” are tied by “asi” and when the teacher says “Tat tvam asi”, you understand “aham brahma asmi (I am that Brahman), then alone you are free from samsara.

## Section 20 – The meaning of Self-Effulgence

It is said that atma is self-effulgent (swayam-prakaasa). “Self-effulgence” means ‘self evident’ – an objectifying instrument of knowledge (pramana) is not required for it to be recognized as existing. In Taittiriya Upanishad Bhashya Vartikam, Chapter II, verse 681), Sureswacarya explains this. There are only three possibilities for atma to be known by another agency. (1) Through anatma. This is not possible because anatma is insentient. (2) Through atma itself. This is not possible because one and the same entity cannot be the knower and the known. (3) Through another consciousness. This is not possible, because there is no other consciousness. (Cidabhasa cannot objectify atma because cidabhasa itself is a reflection of atma caitanyam; the reflection cannot illumine the original).

An opponent argues “If Brahman is not known It should be treated as unknown. This rules out the possibility of attaining the knowledge of Brahman and leads to the futility of sastra.” To this, Sureswacarya answers, “This argument is untenable. Brahman is both known and unknown. Brahman is none other than pratyagatma and pratyagatma is always immediate (aparoksha). In this sense, Brahman is known. But only through sastra that one gets the knowledge that Brahman is identical with pratyagatma. In this sense, (but for sastra) Brahman is unknown.

## Section 21 - Translation of “Satyam”

## In “Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma” As Existence

In the main paper, The Taittiriya Upanishad definition of *Brahman* in 2.1.1 “*Satyam Jnaanam Anantam Brahma*” has been translated as “Existence-Consciousness-Infinity”. The logic of this translation is as follows: -

Translated literally, the English word “Truth” would not convey the intended meaning. In his commentary on Taittiriya 2.1.1, Sankaracarya explains that a thing is said to be “satyam” (true) when it does not change the nature that is ascertained to be its own (and a thing is said to be unreal if it changes the nature ascertained to be its own).. From this it follows that the word “truth” implies changelessness. In his commentary on Taittiriya 2.6.1, Sankaracarya says, “Apropos of this, existence is first being spoken of. It remains to be explained as to what kind of truth is meant in the assertion that was made thus: ‘Brahman is truth, knowledge, infinitude’. Hence it is being said: Brahman's truth is affirmed by speaking of Its existence; for it has been asserted that the existing is the true (cf. Chandogya 6.2.1). Therefore the very affirmation of existence amounts to an avowal of reality.” In his commentary on Taittiriya 2.1.1, he says, “pure existence is Truth, according to another Vedic text.” The other Vedic text referred to is Chandogya 6.8.7. Commenting on Chandogya 6.8.7, Sankaracarya explains that “the word ‘That’ refers to what has been spoken of as existence. The commentary on 6 8.7 goes on to say “That which has been spoken of as Existence is the subtle essence of the universe, the source of the whole universe. All this has got this existence as their self.... This whole universe has become possessed of a self through this atma, which is called Existence..... And the atma through which this entire universe has becomes possessed of its self (existence) that itself is the source called Existence, the Truth, the Supreme Reality. Hence that indeed is the self of the world, its inmost essence, its quintessence, its very reality.” And, in his commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad passage 6.2.1 Sankaracarya explaining the word “sadeva” says, “The word ‘sat’ means mere Existence” and goes on to describe it as a thing that is subtle,

without distinction, all pervasive, one, taintless, partless consciousness which is known from all Upanishads.” Further, he says,” That which is this universe which is perceived as a modification possessed of name, form and movement that was Existence alone,” Thus, he equates “Truth” and “Pure existence.” This is the logic of translating “Satyam” in Taittiriya 2.1.1 as “Existence .

## Section 22 - Deriving One Definition of Brahman from Another

From one item of the definition of Brahman, we can derive other items. (Most of these are specifically there in the Upanishads. But, here, we are just indicating the inter-connections. For example, Brahman is said to be non-dual (“*advayam*”). Only if there is a second entity can there be a relationship. So “Brahman is “*asanga*” is a corollary. (Sruti specifically says that *atma* is *asanga* - Brhadaranyaka 4.3.15, 3.8.8, 3.9.26, 4.2.4, 4.4.22, 4.5.15. “*Asanga*” means it cannot have any relation or transaction with anybody or anything. (Mandukya 7 – “*avyavahaaryam*) and it cannot be doer or enjoyer (cannot be “*karta*” or “*bhokta*” vide Kathopanishad 1.2.19, Svetasvatara 6.12, 6.19). Also being *asanga* (relationless) means It is neither cause nor effect, because to be cause is to have relation with effect and to be effect is to have relation with cause. When Upanishad says that Brahman is eternal (*nityam*), that it is not born nor does it die and that it is not born from anything nor is anything born from it, it not only means that It is neither cause nor effect, but it means that It has no beginning or end. (It is “*anaadi*” and “*anantah*”). That which has no beginning and has no end impels that it remains the same and is free from other intermediary changes also. So, changelessness of Brahman is also derived. Changelessness also implies that It is neither cause nor effect (“*kaaryaakaaranavilakshana*”), because cause has to undergo change to become effect and an effect is one that has an end. Changelessness also implies that Brahman is beyond time and space, because change is takes place in space and is an event in time. Brahman (Aatma) is said to be all pervading (“*sarvagatah*”, “*sarvaga*” (“*sarvavyaapi*”) .Mundaka 1.1.6, 3.2.5, 5, Svetasvatara 1.16, 3.11, 3.21, 6.13, 6.17) and

formless (*amoorthah*) (Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2, Maitri Upanishad 6.3, 7.1,2).. Change is event in time and takes place for an entity with form, that is, with boundaries, located in space. So, changelessness is derived from all pervasiveness also. Brahman is the support (*adhishtaanam*) of not only the objects of the world but of time and space which is part of *nama roopa* and is infinite,-. So, the corollary is that Brahman is beyond time and space. Cf. Swetasvatara 6.2 - Creator of time (“*kaalakaarah*”); Brhadaranyaka 4.4.16 – “the Lord.....below which the year itself rotates”; Kathopanishad 1.2.14 – “...that thing which is different from the past and the present”; Kathopanishad 2.1.13 “He is the ruler of the past and the future” (These refer to time-wise transcendence). Swetasvatara 3.14 (which, it seems, reproduces Taittiriya Aranyaka third Prasna) reads, “.” “With thousand heads and thousand feet and having enclosed the universe, the Purusha (the Infinite) stands ten inches beyond.” (This refers to space-wise transcendence. When Brahman is said to be all pervading, we have to understand it properly. It is not as if there was already a universe and Brahman pervaded it. Brahman is the eternal Existence. And on that Existence names and forms are superimposed in an alternating cycle of manifested and unmanifested condition. It is like space which is already there and you insert perceptible objects in it. So, the corollary is that atma is beyond time and space. Also, Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1 and Swetasvatara 1.9, 5.1, say that Brahman is infinite (“*anantam*”). (The word, “Brahman” itself means unsurpassably big. Only that which has no limits, i.e., only the infinite can be said to be unsurpassably big.) The infinitude applies to space, time and entity, as Sankaracarya points out in Taittiriya bhashayam 2.1. From this also, we have to understand that Brahman is beyond time and space and other entities. From infinity time wise, also, we can go to eternality of Brahman (*nityatvam*) and beginningless and endlessness of Brahman (*anaaditvam and antaraahityam*) and vice versa. Similarly, from infinity space wise, we can infer formlessness (*niraakaaratvam*) and all pervasiveness (*sarvagatatvam*) and from infinity entity wise, we can infer non-duality -, there can be no other real entity). There can be only one infinite. ‘Many infinite things’ is a contradiction in terms. Since

there can be no other real entity, the world has to be of a lower order of reality. So, Brahman defined as satyam (Existence) and jnanam (Consciousness) as also anantam (infinitude) means that the existence nature and consciousness nature of Brahman is all pervasive, eternal and non-dual. Any finite entity will be one that is attained in time or is yet to be attained. The infinite cannot be attained by the finite. Brahman, being infinite, we cannot attain Brahman unless we ourselves are infinite. There can be no two infinite entities; if such proposition is put forward, the one will limit the other; so both will become finite. So when it is said that Brahman is infinite and jivatma is infinite, as in the santipatha, 'Poornamada poornamaidam' jivatma in its real nature has to be ever identical with paramatma. That is why Brahman is called "*siddha vastu*" (that which is already attained) and not *sadhya vastu* (that which is to be attained). To have attributes is to be limited. What is big is not small. What is love is not hatred. So, when Brahman is said to be infinite, it follows that Brahman is without attributes ('*nirguna*'); Svetasvatara Upanishad 6.11 and Brahma Upanishad 3 specify that Brahman is nirguna. To have attributes is to be subject to change. Brahman which is without attributes ("*nirguna*") will therefore be changeless. "Nirguna" includes 'devoid of form'; being devoid of form is all pervading.

### Section 23 - Description of Brahman in terms of contradiction.

1. We come across apparently contradictory or intriguing passages in the Upanishads. These have to be interpreted, taking into account relevant passages where the meaning is clear. Kenopanishad 1.4 – "That (Brahman) is surely different from the known; and again It is above the unknown" Sankaracarya explains, "Inasmuch as everything is known somewhere by somebody, all that is manifested is certainly known. The idea is that Brahman is different from that (the manifested universe). The unknown is opposed to the known. This consists of the unmanifested in the form of avidya, which is the seed of the manifested. Brahman is different from that also. (In short, Brahman is different from the projected nama roopa as well as from Maya). Further, what is known is finite, mortal and

full of misery; and hence it is to be rejected. So, when it is said that Brahman is different from the known, it amounts to saying that Brahman is not to be rejected. Similarly when it is said that Brahman is different from the unknown, it amounts to saying that Brahman is not an entity to be obtained. In the '*vakyabhashyam*' for this mantra, Sankaracarya says, "Since Brahman is the atma of all, there is no other knower than It; so, It is different from the known. Cf. Swetasvatara Upanishad 2.19 – 'He (the Purusha i.e., Brahman) knows all that is to be known. There is no one who knows Him'. Brhadaranyaka 2.4.14 – 'When to the knower of the atma, everything has become the atma ...what one should know through what'. Brahman is different from the unknown because, to know an unknown thing, effort to know is undertaken by people. But Brahman is of the nature of consciousness (*vijnaana-swaroopam*) and self-evident and no process of knowing is necessary to know (recognize) Brahman. In this sense, Brahman is different from the unknown. Just as the light does not depend on any other light to be revealed, Brahman being of the very nature of consciousness is self-evident and does not depend on any instrument or process of knowledge to be revealed. Kenopanishad II.2 (where the teacher is testing whether the student has understood the teaching and the student says) - "Not that I do not know. I know and I do not know as well. He among us who understands that utterance 'not that I do not know, I know and I do not know as well', knows that (Brahman)". This, Sankaracarya says is the student repeating in another language the meaning of mantra 1.4 which has been taught to him. In the *vakyabhashyam*, Sankaracarya explains the student's statement: – "I cannot say that I do not know Brahman because I am the Brahman of the nature of eternal jnana swaroopam (*nitya-vijnaana—brahma-swaroopam*) So, I know. On the other hand, I do not know, because knowing as an attributive knowledge (*visesha-vijnaanam*) is knowing a second entity that is conjured up, not one's swaroopam. Therefore, in the paramarthika plane, I do not know.

2. Kenopanishad II.3 - "It is known to him to whom it is unknown; he does not know it is known. It is unknown to those who know well and known to those who do not know."

According to Sankaracarya, this mantra presents the two views – the view of the ignorant man and the man who has gained knowledge. In the vakyabhashyam, Sankaracarya explains– “He who has come to know Brahman as himself and, so, his desire to know has ceased, he knows Brahman. That is, he who knows Brahman as being not an object of knowledge but as himself, he is the one who knows Brahman. Since Brahman is different from the known, one who claims that he knows Brahman does not know Brahman. The former is the man of right vision (*samyagdarsi*); the latter is a man of erroneous vision (*mithyaarsi*). The erroneous vision is possible because on account of non-discrimination between Brahman and the limiting adjuncts and because of their familiarity with the limiting adjuncts such as the intellect, the man of erroneous vision considers the senses, the mind and the intellect as the atma. Kenopanishad II.4 - “Brahman is really known when it is known with each state of consciousness (*pratibodhaviditam*).” Sankaracarya’s commentary – “Being the witness of all cognitions and by nature being nothing but the power of Consciousness, the atma is indicated by the cognitions themselves, as the common factor in the cognitions. There is no other door to awareness of It. Therefore when Brahman is known as the innermost Self (witness) of cognitions, then it is known well. Only by accepting Brahman as the witness of all cognitions can it be established that It is by nature a witness that is not subject to growth and decay, and is eternal, pure in essence, the atma, unconditioned, and one in all beings, just as it is in the case of space, because of the non-difference of its characteristics despite its existence in pots, caves etc.” In the vakyabhashyam, Sankaracarya explains, “In every cognition’, i.e. in cognition after cognition’ refers to the pervasion (of Brahman) in every cognition. Since every cognition is pervaded by the eternal consciousness, the atma, every thought is illumined by that atma, like the shining of the iron ingot pervaded by the fire. Like that, through the shining of the thoughts, one should recognize the illumination by the atma. (The gist of all these Kenopanishad mantras is that atma cannot be known as an object but It has to be recognized as the witness of thoughts. When it is said that Brahman or Atma is the

consciousness recognized as the witness of all cognitions, we should not make the mistake of taking the atma to be a knower-consciousness. It is witness in the sense that, in its presence, the antahkarana becomes sentient on account of its reflection and whereas the knower-consciousness, the knower I, is a changing I, the atma is invoked as the unchanging, constant I.)

3. Katopanishad mantra I.ii.21 says, “While sitting, It goes far away; while sleeping, it goes everywhere”. Sankaracarya explains, “Sleep is the cessation of the activities of the senses. The delimitation of Consciousness caused by the senses (in the waking state, when Consciousness has such limited expressions as, ‘I am a man’, ‘I see a blue thing’) ceases for a sleeping man. When the Self is in such a state (of sleep), It seems to go (i.e. to be present) everywhere. When it is in a state of particularized consciousness, It, though stationary by Its on nature, seems to travel far, in accordance with the movement of the mind etc., because it is conditioned by the mind etc.” In short, when the mantra talks of it being stationary, It is referring to the sarvagata nirupadhika Brahma caitanyam and when it refers to It traveling far, It is referring to the ahamkara which includes the reflection of the brahma caitanyam.

4. Isavasya Upanishad 4 – “It is unmoving, one, faster than the mind” ((Sankaracarya’s commentary – “Motion is deviation from one’s own condition. So, ‘unmoving’ means that It is ever of the same nature; It is the everlasting Consciousness. ‘One’ indicates that It is the one in all beings. ;. Faster than the mind’ refers to its being characterized by volition etc.” An objection is raised “How can there be such contradictory statements that it is constant and motionless, and yet faster than the mind.” Sankaracarya explains “There is no inconsistency, for this is possible from the standpoint of Its being nirupadhika and sopadhika. As nirupadhika Brahman, in Its original nature, It is spoken of as ‘unmoving, one’. When It follows the upadhi, the mind characterized by doubt and volition It is said to be faster than the mind. The mind, though encased in the body in this world, is able to

reach such distances as the world of Brahmaa (Hiranyagarbha) in a single moment through volition; and therefore the mind is well known as the fastest thing in the world. When the speedy mind travels fast to the world world of Hiranyagarbha etc., the reflection of the atma that is consciousness is perceived to have reached there, as it were, even earlier; and hence It is said to be faster than the mind. Though the all pervasive nirupadhika atma is devoid of all worldly attributes and is immutable, in the eyes of the non-discriminating people, It appears to be many, one each in different bodies, experiencing all modifications of samsara brought about by the upadhis.

5. Kathopanishad I.ii.21 - “Remaining stationary, It goes far; while sleeping, It goes everywhere.” Sankaracarya explains that in sushupti, the differentiated consciousness of the knowing instruments is dormant and the undifferentiated original consciousness the atma is there seems to go everywhere. In the state when the differentiated knower-consciousness is active, the atma, though by Its own nature is motionless (being all-pervading) seems to travel far in accordance with the movement of its upadhi (the mind).”Kathopanishad I.ii.20 - “Atma is the subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest” (“anoraniyaan mahatomahiiyan”). Sankaracarya explains that the contradiction can be resolved if we take the substratum. As the substratum of everything, atma (Brahman) is the substratum of the greatest as well as the tiniest. Whether it is a mountain nama roopa or a microbe nama roopa, atma is the Existence. Brahman as Existence-Consciousness-Infinity is of a higher order of reality than the nama roopa. In this way, also, Brahman can be said to be greater than the greatest. Similarly, in terms of formlessness and unobjectifiability, Brahman can be said to be subtler than the subtlest. Sankaracarya’s commentary – “Whatever great or atomic thing there is in the world, its substance (aatmatvam) is the eternal atma. Without atma, they become non-existent. The very atma is subtler than the subtle and greater than the great, because It is conditioned by all names, forms and activities which are its limiting adjuncts; i.e. And that atma exists as the atma in the heart of all beings beginning with brahmaa and ending with a clump of grass.”

## Section 24 - Understanding aspects of our true nature from sushupti

1. When we analyze sushupti, not only do we realize that existence-consciousness and not ahamkara is our real nature but we appreciate various aspects of that real nature. If existence or consciousness was an attribute of the ahamkara, we would cease to be conscious and cease to exist when ahamkara is non-functional. But we continue to as existence and consciousness. What comes and goes is not our real nature. Ahamkara comes and goes but existence-consciousness does not. Therefore existence-consciousness is our real nature. Similarly, in sushupti, when ahamkara is non-functional and existence-consciousness is still there, we have no sense of location, we have no punya papa, we have no sorrow, and we have no attributes. If sorrow, punya papa etc. were to belong to sakshi, not ahamkara, they would be there in sushupti in which ahamkara is not there and sakshi alone is there. So, we can reasonably conclude that located existence-consciousness, punya papa, sorrow etc. and attributes are not our real nature. We are the unlocated, attributeless existence-consciousness, free of punya papa, sorrow etc.
2. When we apply the law that what comes and goes is not our real nature, we also arrive at the conclusion that the knower-consciousness (the ahamkara) which experiences the external world in jagrat avastha, changes as the experiencer of the dream-world in swapna avastha and becomes dormant in sushupti avastha is not our real nature. If the jagrat prapanca experiencer was my nature, I would always be awake. If the experiencer of the swapna avastha was my real nature, I would always be dreaming. If the non-experiencing ahamkara was my true nature, I would always be sleeping. What is constant through all these shifting experiences of the ahamkara is the unchanging consciousness, the sakshi. Therefore that alone is my true nature.
3. This method of reasoning is called anvaya-vyatireka. What is constant in all the states is called anvaya or anuvritti. What is there in one or more states and not in the others is called vyatireka or vyavritti. What is anvaya is the real nature. Another approach is

that if sorrow etc were my nature, i.e. if they belong to atma, not ahamkara, they cannot be removed by knowledge. But sastra says “The knower of atma transcends sorrow”. So, sorrow etc. belongs to ahamkara, not atma.

## Section 25 – Consciousness: Appreciation of Pure Existence

Can we recognise the non-dual Brahman? Brahman is the unobjectifiable Existence-Consciousness- Infinity . A vyaavahaarika example for Brahman, the imperceptible Existence –Consciousness being available for recognition as the Existence in nama roopa in general and as reflected consciousness, particularly, in minds is light. Light manifests only where there are certain other forms of matter like solids, liquids, air, etc. Light is there is a vacuum also; though it is not manifest there; it is transmitted across the vacuum. For the astronaut in outer space, it is all darkness around, because there is no air for light to manifest. But, an astronaut from one space vehicle can see the other space vehicle; the light reflected by the other space vehicle is transmitted across the airless space and falls on his retina. (This is what enables the docking of space vehicles). A day to day example is my hand that you see. I cannot show to you light directly. Pure light is invisible. So, I introduce my hand in the field of the all pervading invisible light and I tell you that there is a principle called light because of which alone the hand is visible. Then, I withdraw my hand and ask you to understand the existence of the light, even though it is not visible without the medium of the hand. Like that, Existence is there, whether nama roopa are there or not. Pure Existence cannot be perceived. When nama roopa are superimposed, together the nama roopa together with Existence are experienced as objects. That is what Brahman manifesting as the universe means. Intellectually, you have to eliminate nama roopa to appreciate pure Existence. Pure existence-pure consciousness is not available for perception. It is the mixture of the real sub-stratum, Existence, Brahman and the mithya nama roopa that is presented to us as objects. But we should have the wisdom to distinguish what is real and what is mithya. When you ask for water to drink, it has to be

brought to you in a container, say, a paper cup. But after you have drunk the water, you discard the paper cup. Pure existence-consciousness has to be conveyed to our intellect through nama roopa. Just as you drink the water and discard the paper cup, when existence—consciousness along with nama roopa manifests as the universe, you have to discard the nama roopa and understand the reality, the sub-stratum, the pure existence. It is true that you can experience It only along with nama roopa. But, you can, intellectually eliminate nama roopa, i.e., the variety of objects outside and nama roopa inside, i.e., your body and mind and then what would be left would be pure existence outside and pure consciousness inside. That is to say, we can adopt the negative method. The negative method of defining Brahman is known as “not this, not this” (“*neti neti*”). We start from the axiom that Brahman is nodal, attributeless and infinite. So, we have to negate whatever is one among many and whatever has attributes and is limited. Plurality of objects arises from attributes, called roopa in Sanskrit and, corresponding to the attributes constituting an object, a name (nama) is given to the object. What distinguishes one object or one being from another and makes it limited are the nama roopa, the set of attributes, whether it is shape, colour, vibration, texture, smell etc. in things and the life instincts, the emotional expressions and the intellectual qualities in beings. In respect of these, there are variations; therefore we experience plurality. But what is common to all is existence (isness). You look around. You see objects and beings. All are cognised in space and time. Existence is all pervading and indestructible. In between objects and beings also, there is existence. If there were no existence in between two trees, a third tree would not grow between the two trees. When a tree is cut and burnt, isness is not destroyed; it is transferred from the tree to ashes. When a pot is broken, what is destroyed is pot shape; isness of clay is transferred from pot shape potsherd shape. You go deeper and deeper, deeper than space itself. The sub-stratum of space itself is Existence. Space is a nama roopa with the attribute of sound (*sabda*). Thus, when you dismiss (negate) all nama roopa at one

level after another, intellectually, you will arrive at pure existence. This existence is to be recognized as Brahman.

## Section 26 - Recognizing Brahman as Consciousness

One may ask, “What you say is all right in theory. But, in practice, I only experience the world with *nama roopa*. If I have to see a rose, *nama roopa* like colour and shape must be there. If I have to hear music, existence, sound *nama roopa* must be there and so on. So, how can I recognize Brahman, pure Existence?” The answer is – “It is true that your experience of the world is with *nama roopa*. What you are experiencing is Brahman with *nama roopa* superimposed on It. But since pure Existence-Consciousness is not objectifiable, you are not aware that you are experiencing Brahman as well as *nama roopa*. So, it follows what cannot be objectified is Brahman. Now enquire “what is it that cannot be objectified?” What is it that does not become an object? Everything and every being in the outside world is an object for your sense organs and mind. Your own body with its sense organs is an object to your mind. You objectify your mind also. You are aware of your thoughts and the e changing conditions of your mind. So, you negate your body and your mind. But there is one thing that does not become an object. That is the I that is aware of the changes of the mind which I invoke as the same I when I talk of my having been angry yesterday bur my being calm today or my having slept happily, knowing nothing yesterday and my recollecting that state today, on waking up. This I is the consciousness, the *sat-cit* (Existence –Consciousness), called Brahman. Behind what we experience as inanimate objects, it is recognisable as existence and behind what we experience as the knowing mind, it is recognisable as consciousness. . If all objects are negated, one may be inclined to think that there is nothing. In fact, one of the branches of Buddhism says that nothingness is the reality. But to say or think that nothingness is the reality – that itself requires consciousness. There is only one thing that can’t be experienced but the existence of which cannot be denied; that is the constant I, the atma. This is the unnegatable remainder

(*nisheda avadhi*). When faced with the advice, 'neti neti', in Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, the unenlightened will ask, 'if I negate everything, nothing remains; so it is nihilism'. To that Sastra would ask 'what is it that says that there is nothing?' Even when the mind is not functioning, there is one thing that remains. That consciousness is yourself, the Brahman'. Cf. Brhadaranyaka Swayamjyotibraahmana, Ushastabraahmana and Kaholabraahmana.

## Section 27 - Recognizing Brahman by Negation of the Knower

Yet another way of recognizing Brahman is by negating the knower (pramata). Limitation arises in any knower--known situation. Knower is limited because he is not the known. And anything that is known is limited because it is not the knower. But there is no known if there is no knower. So, by negating the knower, we can eliminate the known also. When the knower and the known are negated, what remains is consciousness. The proof is our dreamless sleep. In the state of dreamless sleep (*sushupti avastha*), there is no known, knowing or knower. In the waking state (*jagrat avastha*), there is a knower in us and we perceive objects or entertain thoughts. In the dream state (*swapna avastha*), also, there is a knower in us and we perceive a dream world. But in *sushupti*, there is no perception or thought. The knower himself is not functioning. But even in that state, I continue to exist as a conscious being. The consciousness that continues to exist even when the knower is not functioning is to be recognised as the *atma*.

## Section 28 - Atma is the Same in All

In this *avastha*-, however, what we arrive at is the consciousness behind our mind. In technical language, this is called the *avastha traya viveka*", the method of analysing the states of waking dream and deep sleep. But that is not the end of the enquiry. Once I recognise that my real nature is pure consciousness-existence, observing other people I may arrive at the inference that their real nature is also pure consciousness-existence. But I have to understand that there are not many consciousnesses, but the consciousness in me

in you and the others is the same consciousness and that there is only the non-dual Brahman-Existence-consciousness that is infinite, in terms of space, time and entity which, in nama roopa, we have to recognise as existence in all objects and in living beings as consciousness as well as existence. This understanding is obtained through the study of Sastra. For the infinitude, we cannot resort to logic.

## Section 29 - Avastha Traya Viveka in Mandukya Karika

In the Avastha Traya Viveka, in Mandukya Karika, the microcosm (vyashti) and the macrocosm (samashiti) are equated to show we are not limited individuals. The consciousness associated with the vyashti *upadhi*, the *sthoola sarira* ) (visva) the consciousness associated with the samashiti *upadhi*, *sthoola prapanca* ( *Vaisvaanara*) are equated. Similarly, consciousness associated with the vyashti *sukshma sarira* (taijasa) and the consciousness associated with the samashiti *sukshma sarira* , (*Hiranyagarbha* ) are equated and the consciousness associated with the vyashti *karana sarira*, (prajna) and the consciousness associated with the samashiti *karana sarira* (Iswara ) are equated. This shows that consciousness in all bodies is the same and there is nothing like my consciousness and your consciousness.

## Section 30 - Sakshi is the Same Consciousness in All

To recognize the unchanging principle that is self-evident and immediate, we introduce consciousness through *avastha traya viveka*. But that is not enough, because we recognize consciousness through the functioning of the mind; therefore, we may think that it is located in the mind and since minds are plural, we may think that consciousness is also plural. So we have to say that it is none other than the existence that we recognize as the existence which is the common substratum of nama roopa of the world that we experience. Existence is not localized; it is not limited in space, time or by entity. Existence is also consciousness. Consciousness is also unlocalised and unlimited. It is the infinite *Brahma*

*caitanya*. Being immediate to the mind, it is recognised as the unchanging consciousness behind the mind in us.

### Section 31 - Consciousness Has No Origin or End

Sastra says that the non-dual, eternal consciousness – Brahman-Atman – is without a beginning and end. We can give supporting logic (*Sastra-sammata-yukti*) for this. To know that consciousness had a beginning at a point of time, the absence of consciousness prior to that point of time has to be known. But, can we talk of prior non-existence (*pragabhava*), in the case of consciousness? The crucial question is what was it that could know the prior non-existence of consciousness? Is it consciousness itself or is it something other than consciousness? The latter alternative has to be ruled out, because everything other than consciousness or a derivative of consciousness like *ahamkara* is insentient and what is insentient can never be credited with the knowledge function. The former alternative is also untenable. If consciousness or a derivative of consciousness exists at the time of apprehending the prior non-existence of consciousness, *ex hypothesis*, consciousness is not non-existent then. Similarly, to know that consciousness ended at a point of time, the absence of consciousness posterior to that point of time (*pradhwamsaabhava*) has to be known. For any such knowledge itself, consciousness or a derivative of consciousness is required. Therefore, consciousness is eternal. (Vide Sureswacarya's Taittiriya Upanishad Bhashya vartika Chapter II, verse 651).

### Section 32 - Existence Has No Origin or End

Similarly Sastra says that Existence is eternal. For this also we can give supporting logic. To know that existence originated at a particular point of time, a conscious entity has to exist prior to that point of time to be aware of the origin. So existence can have no beginning. To know that existence ended at a particular point of time, a conscious entity has to exist posterior to that point of time to be aware of the end. So existence has no end.

### Section 33 - Flowing eternity

In Advaita Vedanta., there is a concept of flowing eternity, as distinguished from absolute eternity. Brahman, being infinite and beyond time is absolutely eternal. But we have to have a term for entities that operate in time but the beginning of which cannot be traced. This is called “pravaaha nityam”. The cycle of srshti, sthiti, laya, the chain birth and death of jivatma, karma and karmaphalam and Maya would fall in this category.

### Section 34 - Antahkarana is matter

There is a logic in saying that antahkarana is also matter, to support the sastra (Tattvabodha) talking of the antahkarana being produced by the satva amsa of the five subtle elements and Chandogya Upanishad referring to antahkarana as a product of food. Antahkarana interacts with other forms of forms of matter; e.g., administration of electric shock for various mental disorders, the use of lie detector and psychosomatic diseases.

### Section 35 - Logic of Postulating Cidabhasa

1. Brahman is all pervading consciousness. Antahkarna functions as a conscious entity but pot does not. You cannot explain this, unless you postulate that the texture of the antakarana nama roopa superimposed on Brahman is such that it can reflect the consciousness, whereas the pot does not have that capacity. It is somewhat like the difference between a good conductor of electricity and a bad conductor.
2. This division of certain nama roopa like the mind being made sentient by consciousness being reflected in them and other nama roopa not having such capacity and hence remaining to be insentient is required for *bhoktru bhogy*a (enjoyer-enjoyed) transaction. If such division was not there, before I begin to put food into my mouth, it will fly away.

3. If the eternal, unchanging consciousness alone is there, there would be nobody who is bound and Sastra would not be taking the trouble of teaching the means to attain moksha. A conscious entity that is susceptible to be affected by the avarana sakti of Maya has to be there to listen to sastra.

4. Pratyagatma (Brahman) being changeless (nirvikara) and amanah is not *srotra* (not a hearer) or a pramata (not a knower). Sastra cannot address it. Nor can it address a mere antahkarana which is inert. So a conscious entity other than pratyagatma is required to listen to “tat tvam asi” and to say “aham brahma asmi”. This is the antahkarana which is enabled to be such an entity owing to the reflection of consciousness in it. (This logic is called *arthapatti*”).

5. As ahamkara, I listen to the mahavakyam, “tat tvam asi”. By *bhagatyaga lakshanaa*, I discard the limitedness indicated by the literal meaning of the word, “tvam” and the distance indicated by the literal meaning of the word, “tat” and retain the implied meaning of the two words, which is “caitanyam” and understand the jivabrahmaikyam. When I say “aham brahma asmi”, though the thought is in ahamkara, by “aham” I refer to atma. Once I know “aham brahma asmi” I discard ahamkara, i.e. I disidentify myself with ahamkara and abide as Brahman.

6. The expression ‘I know’ indicates two things. Since it is a verb, it indicates modification. Since it is a knowing process, it indicates sentiency. Thus for the verb ‘know’, you require a subject which is changing and which is sentient. Atma cannot be subject, because atma is nirvikara. Mind, by itself, cannot be the subject, because, though it is a changing entity, it is insentient. So, we have to introduce cidabhasa. It is ahamkara (antahkarana pervaded by cidabhasa) that says, ‘I know’. It is ahamkara, neither pure atma nor pure anatma, that can be the pramata, the karta, bhokta, the samsari and the liberated.

7. In Brhadaranyaka (III.iv.2 etc.), the Upanishad talks of atma as the seer of the seer (“*drashterdrashta*”), knower of the knower (“*vijnatervijnaata*”) etc. From this it is clear that there is a knower-consciousness and another consciousness which is the substratum of that consciousness. This does not mean that atma perceives or knows ahamkara. To perceive anything or to know anything, the consciousness has to undergo modification. Atma being changeless cannot be seer or knower. The meaning is that, in the presence of atma, cidabhasa is formed in the antahkarana. This is also what is meant when it is said that atma, as Sakshi, illumines the antahkarana. It is like my standing in front of a mirror. I don't do anything. By my mere presence, reflection is formed in the mirror.

8. The eternal unchanging consciousness cannot be said to be the instrument of knowing specific separate objects, one after another. For having pot knowledge, tree knowledge, tiger knowledge, one after another, and each person having different cognitions, we need to have separate, changing consciousnesses in each person. Antahkarana with reflected consciousness is what meets this requirement. If the knowing consciousness was not in the form of separate individual consciousnesses, and if there was only the original consciousness common to all as a pramata, the objects of the world would all enter the common consciousness, in one jumbled confusion – confusion, space-wise and time-wise. For example, you may see water in fire, cow in pot, the garbage in the food you are about to take. You may see a grandfather who died long ago holding the new-born grandson – and so on. We cannot even imagine the state of everybody perceiving everything together and, not only that, perceiving the past, present and future simultaneously. At the same time, to be able to be aware that I am the same person in and through the changing conditions of the body and the mind, I have to invoke an unchanging consciousness. Thus we have to postulate cidabhasa, the reflected consciousness in individual minds as well as the unchanging, all pervading consciousness, the atma.

9. In Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, there is a statement, “*na pretya samja asti*”. One interpretation is that this refers to the disintegration of the karana sarira and sukshma sarira of a jnani at the time of videhamukti. How this is support for cidabhasa has been explained in the main text. Another interpretation is “In the body, after death, there is no consciousness”. When the Upanishad says that after the body dies, there is no consciousness in it, it cannot be referring to the eternal, all pervading consciousness; the all pervading, eternal consciousness is there everywhere, in everything and at all times. It is there in the dead body also. If the Upanishad cannot be referring to the eternal consciousness available in the individual, the atma, the sakshi caitanyam, what is it that it is referring to when it says that consciousness is not there in the body after death? It must be referring to a consciousness which is in the body when it is alive and which goes out when the body dies. What goes out when the body dies is the sukshma sarira. Cidabhasa is a part of the sukshma sarira. So, it is the cidabhasa that is referred to in the mantra.

10. The existence of a changing consciousness separately in each of us by which each of us separately cognizes different objects one after another is a matter of experience. But when we connect the pramata of a cognition involved in a past experience and the pramata of the cognition involved in a present experience, as the same entity, we are invoking an unchanging, constant, I, which was behind the pramata of the past experience and is now behind the pramata of the present experience . What is present in the changing pramatas is cidabhasa and what is invoked as the changeless, constant I is the cit (atma).

11. Cidabhasa is mithya. It belongs neither to atma nor the intellect. The example is the reflection of my face in the mirror. If the reflection of consciousness belongs to the mirror, the reflection should continue to exist even after I have walked away from the mirror. If it belongs to the face, there should be a reflection of the face even after the mirror is taken away.

## Section 36 - Mind is objectified by cidabhasa

Mind is not self-effulgent; it becomes a knower-consciousness on account of the reflection of cidabhasa in the antahkarana. But the thoughts in our mind and the changing character of the mind itself are known to us. In this sense the mind is self-evident. As and when a thought arises, cidabhasa pervades it and on account of this we become aware of our thought. Similarly, on account of the pervasion of cidabhasa in the antahkarana we are aware of the changing character of the mind, the changes caused by vasanas.

## Section 37 - Original and reflected consciousness - An illustration

In Pancadasi, Vidyaranya gives beautiful examples for the original consciousness, the reflecting medium and the reflected consciousness (1) at the macrocosmic level and (2) at the microcosmic level. The examples, respectively, are (1) space pervading the cloud, water vapor laden cloud, space reflected in the conglomerate of water vapor droplets in the cloud and (2) space conditioned by a water filled pot, the water in the pot and space reflected in the water in the pot. At the macrocosmic level, Brahma caitanyam is compared to space pervading the cloud. The reflecting medium, namely, Maya, is compared to the conglomerate of water vapor droplets in the cloud. The reflection of the consciousness aspect of Brahman in Maya is compared to the reflection of space in the conglomerate water droplets in the cloud. At the microcosmic level, Sakshi caitanyam is compared to the space pervading the pot. The reflecting medium, namely, the sukshma sarira is compared to the water in the pot. The reflection of consciousness in the sukshma sarira is compared to the reflection of space pervading the pot in the water contained in the p.

## Section 38 - Original and Reflected Consciousness

The difficulty of distinguishing the original consciousness, the Sakshi, from the reflected consciousness, the cidabhasa is illustrated by Vidyaranya. He gives the example of a wall on

which the general sunlight falls. On the same wall, superimposed on the general sunlight, reflected sunlight emanating from a mirror also falls. In this situation, one cannot perceive the general sunlight and the reflected sunlight separately. Similarly, in jagrat and swapna both Sakshi and cidabhasa are functioning simultaneously. So we are not able to distinguish Sakshi clearly. If the mirror is taken away, then one perceives the general sunlight separately. Like that, in Sushupti, when the antahkarana is dormant, Sakshi alone is 'shining'. So, by analyzing the sushupti experience, an intelligent man can recognize the Sakshi.

### Section 39 - World is Like Shadow

My shadow is non-separate from me, in the sense that I can't walk away, leaving my shadow. But it is not part of me either. When I go to the coffee kiosk, I don't order two cups of coffee, one for me and one for my shadow. Brahman and the nama roopa are like a man and his shadow. The nama roopa are superimposed on Brahman; the Nama roopa are not away from Brahman. But they are not part of Brahman.

### Section 40 – Exceptions to Jnani has no rebirth

Once ahambrahmasmi jnanam is gained, the sancita karma is destroyed and there is no aagami karma. Only the unexhausted portion of prarabdha continues till the physical body falls. When the physical body falls, the sukshma and karana sariras are dissolved; there is no rebirth; the jnaani 'becomes' Brahman. There is a discussion in Brahma Sutra 3.3.32, whether there are exceptions. A person cites instances from Smriti (Itihasas and Puranas) of certain jnanis being reborn and raises the doubt whether ahambrahmasmi jnanam leads to liberation. The examples are the Vedic teacher, Rishi Apantaratamas who was reborn as Veda Vyasa (Krishna-dwaipayana), at the behest of Vishnu, at the junction of dwapara and kali Yuga, of Vasishtha who was reborn as Mitra-Varuna, as directed by Hiranyagarbha, of Bhrgu and others who were reborn from the sacrifice of Varuna and of Daksha, Narada etc.

The Vedantin maintains that *ahambrahmasmi jnanam* does lead to liberation. But in the case of certain jnanis, called *adhikaari jivas*, even though they become *jivanmuktas*, they take rebirths. These rebirths are for the sake of fulfilling missions, entrusted to them by Iswara, relating to the welfare of the world like propagation of Veda. They retain their *jnanam* and continue to be *jivanmuktas*. They have control over the materials required for bodies, sense organs and minds and create new bodies and minds. The bodies and minds created may be one after another in succession or many bodies simultaneously. These are controlled by the reborn *jivanmukta*. These *adhikari jivas* remember their past lives. The rebirth is not account of *sancita karma*; *sancita karma* has already been destroyed. The mission for which they take bodies is a part of their *prarabdha*. These are special *prarabdhas*, where a part relating to *loka sangraha* remains, even after the end of the *janma* in which *jnanam* is gained. The missions may extend to many *yugas* even. When the *loka sangraha prarabdha* is over and the missions are fulfilled, these *jivanmuktas* attain *videhamukti*. Since once merged in Brahman there can be no rebirth and the *jiivanmuktas* having rebirths and fulfilling missions is itself a *vyavaharika* phenomenon, it is reasonable to assume that until they attain *videhamukti* and 'become' Brahman', they are merged in Iswara. The *adhikaari jivas* should be distinguished from reincarnations (*avatars*) of Iswara. *Adhikari jivas* are reborn on account of *prarabdha*, whereas *avatars* are born out of Iswara's wish. (Incidentally, in the *Smriti*, there is mention of a *jnaani* having entered another body in the present *janma* itself. A woman-*jnani*, *Sulabha*, wanted to have a discussion with *Janaka*; she entered *Janaka's* body and after finishing the discussion with him, reentered her own body.) (In *Brahmasutra* 3.3.32, there is also mention of certain *ajnanis* remembering their past lives. They are called *jaatismaras*.)

## Section 41 - Iswara srshti and jiva srshti. Iswara, karma and free will

(This is an elaboration of a topic already included in the main paper.)

1. Iswara srshti does not bind us. If it did, jnanis would also be bound because they also continue to live amidst jiva srshti. World is Iswara srshti. Our body and mind are also Iswara srshti. What binds is the reality (satyatvam) we attach to the world and our body and mind. Attaching reality to the world and our body and mind is jiva srshti, (it is our own making). The cause is avidya. As already mentioned in the main text, jivatmas who have not attained knowledge of jivabrahmaikyam are governed by karma. Iswara is the administrator of the karma (karmaphaladata) and, through Maya, creates the world including bodies and minds in accordance with the requirements of the myriads of jivatmas to go through enjoyment or suffering as warranted by their karma. The physical and mental equipment a person is born with, in which family he is born, in which environment he has to lead his life and the major situations he has to face in life will depend on his karma. Not all situations in life, though, arise solely out of one's own karma. Karmas of many people can combine to create a situation. There is also what is called *niyati*, examples of which are drought, flood, war etc. which affect all people in a region or the world as a whole. How a person takes the initiative to create situations, how he faces situations created by others, how he makes use of the opportunities available to himself to develop himself, how he reacts to actions, behavior and conduct of other people, all these depend on his free will. In the same school, with the same teaching faculty and library, one works hard and studies well; another with an equally good brain wastes his time and fails to make the grade. One manages his office, being a friend of all; another manages the same office as a ring master. The situations we are faced with are Iswara srshti. How we face them is Jivasrshti. . What is there in creation is Iswara srshti. How one reacts to it is jiva srishti. The glaring example of this distinction is that we read so many obituaries in newspapers with emotional indifference but when it comes to a question of our own kith and kin we cry.

2. Another factor which operates in our life is *vasanaas*, tastes and attitudes resulting from the impressions of the experiences of our previous lives. Vasanas govern our action in the sense that towards the same object, different people have different likes and dislikes and

the same situation different people face with different attitudes. One loves music; another can't stand any music One loves swimming; another does not want even to have a bath. One loses heart at the slightest obstacle; another bulldozes through the toughest situations. Vasanas of the past can also be changed or overcome by free will, with determination. Thus our life is interplay of Iswara srshti including niyati, our karma and vasanas and jivasrshti.

3. The very fact that human beings have a choice to do a thing, or not to do it or do it in a different way, is proof of free will. A powerful argument for free will is that, unless you accept free will, moksha will be impossible. Aspiring for moksha and making use of the opportunities available for spiritual advancement are matters of free will. Punya karma may even give you birth in a family of spiritual seekers, but whether you yourself take to the spiritual path depends on your free will. Papa karma may give you birth in a family of materialists, but, with your free will, you can transcend those surroundings and, if your aspiration is intense, you will seek and find the set up where you can pursue your spiritual sadhana.

4. If free will is not accepted, there will be certain other problems –

(i) The commandments and prohibitions of scripture will become meaningless. Scripture is advising man to do good actions and avoid evil actions only because scripture assumes that man has free will.

(ii) If man has no free will and not merely his karmaphalam but fresh action is also impelled by Iswara, Iswara becomes responsible for the good action and bad action done by man. The problem then would be two-fold. By making some men to do good action and some men do bad action resulting in punya and papa followed by enjoyment or suffering as karmaphalam later, Iswara would become partial and cruel. Secondly, if Iswara is responsible for man's good action and bad action, no one can be rewarded nor can any

criminal be punished. A murderer will say “I am not responsible for what I did. The Lord made me do it.”

5. Since no one knows what one’s karma is, the best way to act is to do action according to Dharma. Dharma in, the modern context, should be defined as principles of self-improvement, developing one’s potential, putting forth utmost efforts to achieve legitimate goals, morality – not only personal morality but what may be called social morality - such as doing or not doing to others what you would like them to do or not to do to you, working for the greatest good of the greatest number, adhering to values like non-violence,, truthfulness, charity, having regard to ecological balance etc. When one is in doubt in any situation whether what one is intending to do is right or wrong, there are two ways; follow the example of great people, if available, or see that your motive is pure and do what your conscience dictates.

## **Section 42 - Enjoyment And Suffering Depends On Upadhi As Well As One’s Reaction**

1. The word. ‘upadhi’ is used here in the meaning of the body-mind complex of living beings. Enjoyment and suffering depends not only on the object of enjoyment but on the upadhi, the physiological and the mental equipment. Human equipment enables man to enjoy music, but a buffalo’s is not adequate for that. The dog can hear frequencies of sound that we can't. For a snail the line it moves on consists the whole of its world. Animals – a dog, a cat, a horse – are two-dimensional beings. Their universe has the appearance and properties of a surface. What we regard as the properties of three dimensionality of objects appear as movements to them.. A horse passing a stationary bush feels that the bush has moved towards it and turned round and waved a branch. We, human beings know that the world is not a surface, whereas animals cannot know it. They accept everything as it appears. They cannot correct what the eye sees. We can measure in three directions,

because, unlike the animals, we have concepts. Taking a cube, while measuring in one direction, we keep in mind the two others. For an animal, a sphere will resemble a vibrating undulating surface. For an animal, a new sun rises every morning. To Hanuman, the ocean he was crossing to go to Lanka was a puddle of water in a depression caused by a cow's feet. When the demon, Surasa grew in stature by stages in order to swallow Hanuman, Hanuman could outgrow her and she was then like a mosquito which would go in and fly out of his mouth. If I had the capacity to see atoms, I would be seeing you not as a man with a head, hands and feet, but as waves or particles moving in concentric orbits. In *vayu loka*, your upadhi will enable you to travel in air without any vehicle. To the prodigy, Sakuntala, it takes only a minute to solve arithmetical problems which will takes several days to solve. But, even the loka where you are born and the upadhi with which you are born depends on karma. However the upadhi can be improved by free will within the limits of the loka in which you are born (-- there are *nava avadhaanis* who have, by yoga practice, developed the capacity to grasp nine different questions or attend to nine different matters simultaneously and give answers. Developed by yoga practice, instances of *siddhis* - physical feats like floating in the air, swallowing crushed glass etc. and even changing the structure of a part of the body to make it like stone which will deflect a sword or like air to let the sword to pass through and mental feats like foretelling the future, reading another's mind etc. are also on record.

2. Enjoyment and suffering depends not only the objects and upadhi but your reaction to experiences, which again can be regulated by free will

### Section 43 - Sukshma sarira is a continuous entity

A living being will be reborn only as a living being, because, the sukshma sarira is a continuous entity, going from one janma to another, carrying with it the karma which has to be exhausted in successive janmas.

## Section 44 - Role of miracles, yogic powers etc.

Apart from the physical laws governing the universe, there are divine forces in the empirical plane. Evidence of such forces is found in certain temples, churches, mosques, drachmas etc. We have authentic accounts of miracles in the form of the sick getting cured in such places. There are also authentic accounts of certain persons who have acquired or have carried forward from previous janmas Yogic powers by which they are able to bring about changes in the life of devotees. In regard to temples etc., in certain cases, the powers are attributed to Yogis who have attained samadhi there and have deliberately left their powers to operate there. The important point to note, in all these cases, is that not all who visit and worship at the places mentioned above get the benefit of the divine or miraculous powers. This can only be explained by postulating that what happens in these places does not fall outside the law of karma. Based on this premise, we should say that if a particular person gets a benefit, by way of cure or some other material advancement, it is predestined according to his karma itself that his suffering should be over at that time. It is just as a matter of the medium through which that takes place. In these cases, the medium for ending the suffering is the divine or miraculous force at such a place, just as the medium in other cases is a skilled doctor or a generous benefactor. Here also, free will comes into operation inasmuch as the choice of and the decision to go to a place of worship, like the choice of and decision to go to a skilled doctor is a matter of free will.

It is also possible to explain these things in another way. Sastra concedes that prarabdha karma can be mitigated by *prayascitta karma* ( ritual, worship etc. done in a spirit of atonement for one's papa.). We can say that miraculous or yogic powers to which one resorts to, in a spirit of faith and devotion for atonement of one's papa, takes the place of prarabdha karma. In any case, to what extent prarabdha will be mitigated will depend on the relative strength of prarabdha and the remedial measure. Sankaracarya concedes the existence of siddhis, acquired by yoga sastra sadhana, powers such as foretelling the future,

reading another's person's mind etc. So, it is possible that persons with such powers can produce psychic vibrations which can affect the devotee. Where Sastra talks of a jnani being a sathya-sankalpa i.e., one who can obtain material, or provide remedy or accomplish desired ends for devotees by merely exercising his wish, we should interpret it as the psychic vibrations of a pure, unselfish, compassionate mind having an effect on the forces of nature.

### Section 45 - Suspension of Prarabdha

Normally, prarabdha quota of the sancita which is next in the queue determines the next birth. But in the case of those who have performed religious sacrifices (yagnas) or done upasana of deities, that prarabdha is postponed until they have enjoyed the fruits of that yagna or upaasana in the appropriate higher world.

### Section 46 - Maya Does Not Have a Cause

Does Maya originate? No. Maya (moola avidya) is beginningless (“*anaadi*”) but Maya is not beginningless in the sense that nitya Brahman is. Maya is said to be *anaadi*, because for Maya there is no cause. (*Maya ca avidya ca swayam eva bhavati* – Nrsimhapoorvatapanaiya Upanishad 9.3). Brahman is beginningless in the sense that It is eternal, infinite. There are only four possibilities to consider in trying to find out whether Maya has a cause – Brahman, Iswara, the universe (“*jagat*”), jiva, Brahman cannot be the cause because Brahman is eternal and changeless and for anything to be a cause of an effect, the cause has to undergo change. Iswara cannot be the cause, because Iswara is himself constituted of Brahman-consciousness reflected in Maya; the reflection cannot precede the reflecting medium. Neither jiva nor jagat can be the cause, because jiva and jagat themselves are effects (*karya*) of Maya. It is on account of Maya that Iswara, jagat and jiva are superimposed on Brahman. Maya is *anaadi* but Maya is has an end (it is “*sa-antah*”) for every jnaani; every one who understands his identity with Brahman is free from

the avarana sakti of Maya. For Brahman and, therefore, for the videhamukta Maya never exists.

### Section 47 - Maya Cannot be Paramarthika

If Maya was also paramarthika, there will be no moksha. Maya generates ignorance of Brahmatvam and that leads to our notion of plurality (dwaitam) Real dwaitam cannot be eliminated. Dwaitam has to be vyavaharika, if ignorance of our Brahmatvam is to be dispelled. Moreover, if you say real dwaitam goes, it means advaitam (the state of being the non-dual Brahman) has come. So, advaitam becomes one with a beginning (“*sa-aadi*”). That which has a beginning will have an end. So, you have to accept that the advaitam that has come will go away, some time or other. That means your moksha will be temporary.

### Section 48 - Content (Vishaya) and Locus (Asraya) of Maya

10. In sastra, there is discussion about the content (vishaya) and locus (asrsaya) of Maya. By vishaya, what is meant is the entity that is covered from our vision (understanding). It is our nature as Brahman that we, human beings are ignorant of. Therefore Brahman is the vishaya of Maya. To be precise, Brahman is covered from our ‘vision’ by the veiling power (“*aavarana sakti*”) of Maya. On this point, there is consensus.
1. But in regard to the location (asraya) of Maya, there is difference of opinion. Maya is mithya; it does not have existence of its own. So, like the snake on the rope, it has to depend for existence on a real entity. That is what is called its locus. According to Sankaracarya, Sureswaracarya and Prakasatman the locus is Brahman. According to Vacaspati Misra, the locus is jiva.
2. Pros and cons of the two views –
  - (a) Jivas are, as parts of the creation of the universe, the products (karya) of Maya; Maya is the cause (Karanam). Though both Maya and jivas are

chronologically beginningless, in the logical cause-effect order, Maya, as cause, is prior to jivas, the effect. Therefore, it would be illogical to say that jivas are the locus of Maya. In pralaya also, jivas are contained in seed form, in Maya, not the other way about. Secondly, Jiva themselves are mithyas. One mithya cannot be the sub-stratum for another mithya. Thirdly, if avidya is in jivas, since avidya produces jagat and reflection of Brahma caitanyam in Maya is Iswara, we should have the phenomenon of many jagats and many Iswaras. Iswara cannot be the locus because Iswara Himself comes into being by the reflection of brahma caitanyam in Maya. The only real entity and entity logically prior to emergence of any other entities is Brahman. So, it would be logical to say that Brahman is the locus of Maya. In this connection, we should note that for Brahman there is no Maya; the location is only from the view point of jiva; “located in Brahman” means superimposed on (*adhyasta*) Brahman.

(b) The objection raised by those who hold the second view is that if Maya (moola avidya) is located in Brahman, since Maya is a single entity and liberation (moksha) consists in destruction of moola avidya, when any single human being, through knowledge of his nature as Brahman attains moksha, all others will also be automatically liberated. But this does not happen; even after any one human being attains moksha, all others continue to be afflicted by the avarana sakti of moola avidya and undergo samsara.

(c) The upholders of the first view adhering to their stand explain that though moola avidya is a single entity and it is located in Brahman, caused by the avarana sakti of moola avidya, each jiva, separately, has the dehaabhimaana (identification with his own body mind complex).. It is this that is destroyed when a particular jiva gains ahambrasmi jnanam. The

dehabhimana of other jivas continues. It is somewhat like an object concealed in a dark room; there is no light; people are groping around to discover it; one person managed to go near and touch it; he perceives it; others are still ignorant.

11. Another objection that is raised is that Brahman, being of the nature of jnanam (knowledge), Avidya (Maya) being of the nature of ignorance Are opposed to each other. Therefore Brahman cannot be the locus of Maya. The answer to this is three-fold. (a) When Brahman is said to be of the nature of jnanam, it is not pramana jnanam (vritti jnanam) involving the distinctions of the knower, the known and the knowledge that is meant, but swaroopo jnanam. It is vritti jnanam that is opposed to ignorance, not Swaroopo jnanam. Moreover, Maya is mithya. Swaroopo jnanam which is satyam is not opposed to mithya Maya. On the other hand, swaroopo jnanam through cidabhasa illumines Avidya (Maya); not only is Brahma caitanyam reflected in Maya, but swaroopo jnanam, through cidabhasa, reveals avidya; by study of sastra, the wise man comes to know about Maya and the avarana sakti and overcomes it by gaining knowledge of Brahman. Thirdly, when the word, 'ajnanam' is used for Maya, it does not mean ignorance of objects but a power which produces ignorance of Brahmatvam in jivas' mind. It does not produce ignorance in Brahman. What is opposed to ajnanam in the sense of ignorance of Brahmatvam in jivas' mind is vritti jnanam; the ahambrahmasmi vritti jnanam destroys jivas' ignorance of Brahmatvam.

## Section 49 - Status of Time. Relation of Maya and Time

We cannot say that time has a beginning. Anything that begins has to begin in time. Therefore to say that time began, we have to postulate another time during which this time began. And we have to postulate a third time to locate a beginning for the second time, and so on, without end. So, to say that time has a beginning will lead to infinite regress (*anavastha dosha*). So, we have to accept that time is beginningless. Since time is without a

beginning, we cannot say that time is a product of Maya. Thus, time, along with Maya, Iswara, the cycle of creation and dissolution, jiva and karma, is a beginningless entity. Seeking a definition of Maya, the author of Vicara Sagara says that time is the relation of Brahman and Maya. Relation is not either of the related entities; so, time is a part of neither Brahman nor Maya. The relation of a real and a mithya entity is also mithya.

## Section 50 - Iswara, the Inner Controller (Antaryaami)

The whole dream world is in our mind. Vasanas in our mind alone modify to become the dream. Like that Maya is Iswara's mind. In Maya, Iswara's mind, the nama roopa part of the universe is in seed form and, in creation, Iswara's mind, Maya, modifies to become the differentiated nama roopa. This unfolding of nama roopa takes place within Iswara. Unlike our being unaware that the dream is only a projection of our vasanas, Iswara is aware of what is happening in creation. Iswara is omniscient and is aware of what is for us the past and the future as well as the present. The potential condition of the universe is Iswara's causal form (kaarana prapanca is Iswara's kaarana sariram.). The subtle (invisible, amoortha) aspect of the universe, the sukshma prapanca, is Iswara's aspect called Hiranyagarbha and the gross (visible, moortha) aspect of the universe, sthoola prapanca is Iswara's aspect called Virat. Iswara is not only the creator (srshti karta) and the ground of resolution of the universe (layasthaanam), but is also the sustainer of the universe (sthiti karta). In his function as a sthiti karta, He is called the Inner Controller (antaryami). We get a description of Iswara as antaryami in Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 3.7.3 to 3.7.23, such as "He who inhabits the sun, but is within it, whom the sun does not know, whose body is the sun, and who controls the sun from within, is the internal Ruler, your own immortal self", " He who inhabits the intellect, but is within it, whom the intellect does not know, whose body is the intellect, and who controls the intellect from within, is the Internal Ruler, your own immortal self" The words, 'immortal self' refers to the fact that the essential nature of Iswara is Brahma caitanyam, the atma. As the Internal Controller

Iswara is the regulator of cosmic laws and administrator of karma phalam. Incidentally, in this connection, we also find the answer to the question where are undiscovered laws are located. For example before Newton's discovery, what was the location of the law of gravity? The answer is 'in Iswara'.

Iswara is witness of avidya and of everything that takes place in the universe. That is to say, the cidabhasa part of Iswara is aware of the *avyakta* (the unmanifested) and the *vyakta* (manifested) condition of the universe and of not only the present but the past and future. Time does not resolve in *pralaya* (when the universe resolves into unmanifested condition). Iswara watches the fructification of the karma of jivas and initiates a new creation.

## Section 51 - For Brahman there is no Maya or universe

1. Earlier, it was said that Iswara, Maya and the universe exist as lower orders of reality only from the point of view of jivas who, like Iswara, Maya and the cycle of creation of the universe, are beginningless and that for nirguna Brahman, there is no Iswara or Maya or universe even as lower orders of reality. There are two reasons why we jivas have to postulate Iswara, Maya and the universe. The eternal, non-dual, changeless Brahman devoid of instruments of knowledge and action is said to be the cause of the universe, but we do experience a universe; therefore we have to postulate an intelligent cause and a material cause other than Brahman. That is Iswara and Maya, respectively. Secondly, we, jivas, Sastra says, are by nature Brahman but are ignorant of the fact and we suffer in samsara. Therefore we have to predicate a power which hides our real nature from us. And that is Maya. Since Brahman is non-dual, all these that we predicate have to be assigned a lower order of reality. But all these predications are only for us jivas. For Brahman, there is no Iswara or Maya or a world of nama roopa, not even as lower orders of reality. As cited earlier, Upanishads say that

Brahman is acakshuh (devoid of eyes), asrotram (devoid of ears), arasah (devoid of tasting faculty), and amanah (devoid of an objectifying knower-consciousness). nishkriya (devoid of action) etc. So, there is no question of Brahman perceiving or knowing a universe or jivas or Maya or Iswara or a world of nama roopa, even as lower orders of reality -Vide Chandogya 7.24.1 “The Infinite is that where one does not see anything else.....know anything else.”. “Kaivalya Upanishad 23 – “For Me there is neither Earth nor Water, nor Fire nor Air nor Space. (‘Me’ refers to the ‘I’ mentioned in verse 22 – ‘I alone am the theme taught in the Vedas’ – thus ‘for Me’ means ‘for Brahman)”. Mandukya Upanishad mantra 7 – “....beyond empirical dealings.....in which all phenomena cease.....non-dual (...avyavahaaryam.....prapancopasamam.....advaitam). Verse 32 of Vaitathya prakaranam of Mandukya karika – “There is no dissolution, no origination, none in bondage, none striving or aspiring for salvation, and none liberated. This is the position from the standpoint of paaramartika satyam”. This means that, the vyavaharika world exists only for jivas who are in the universe. For nirguna Brahman, there is no world and there is no Maya or Iswara.

2. We see from Brhadaranyaka II.iv.12, that that once the physical body falls, (“pretya”), for the videhamukta, there is no longer the objectifying knower-consciousness, the ahamkaara, and we know from other passages that he becomes Brahman Itself. Brhadaranyaka 3.2.11, and 4.4.7, Prasna 6.5 and Mundaka 3.2.7, read with 3.2.6 also say that a sukshma sarira of a Jivanmukta dissolves at the time of videha mukti in the cosmos, when he becomes Brahman Itself. Without a sukshma sarira with ahamkara, where is the question of there bring anything else for Brahman to know?
3. Rememebering that an example is not an illustration in all respects, we can take the rope and the snake. Snake is a superimposition. It is seen by the passer-by in semi-darkness. When light is brought it disappears. Rope is like Brahman; it is the adhishtanam. Snake is like the world. Semi-daarkness is like Maya.The passer-by is

like the jiva affected by the avarana sakti of Maya. Disappearance of the snake when the light is brought is like the disappearance of the world for videhamukta. If we assume, for the sake of argument, that the rope is a conscious entity, we can say that for the rope there is no snake. Like that, for Brahman there is no world.

12. In Brhadaranyaka Upanishad Bhashya Vartika, (I.4.299 and 1.4 300-30.4 ?) Sureswaracarya says that for Brahman there is no world or avidya at all. Sureswaracarya says expressly that for Brahman, there is no world or Maya. Sankaracarya also says in Brahmasutra bhashyam II.i.14, “Thus the Upanishads speak of the cessation of all empirical dealings in the state of the Highest Reality (*Evam parama-artha-avasthaayaam sarva-vyavahaara-abhaavam vadanti vedaaantaah sarve*)” which means that in the paramartika plane, there is no world at all.

## Section 52 - Dream Is Example for Unreality of Jagrat Prapanca

1. In Advaita Vedanta, dream world (*swapna prapanca*) is taken as an example to show that, just as the *swapna prapanca* is realised to be unreal when we wake up, the waking world (*jagrat prapanca*) becomes unreal when we gain knowledge of the non-dual Brahman.. That the *swapna prapanca* is nothing but thoughts in the mind of the ‘waker’ is known when he wakes up from sleep. (‘Waker’ is a term adapted for convenience to refer to a person who has gone to bed and is having a dream, to distinguish him from the subject in the dream experiencing the dream objects, which we shall call “dream pramata” or “dream I” or “pratibhasika I”) In the dream, the waker sees an elephant or a mountain. Where is the required space in his head for either? Or, in the dream, he goes from New Delhi to New York when only a minute of *jagrat* time has passed. Where is the time required for the journey? And when he wakes up, he finds himself, not in New York but in New Delhi. In the dream he meets his old friend and talks to him, but when he gets up he knows that the friend died a few years ago. Or, a barren woman dreams that she has a son. Or a blind person may dream that he has eyesight (Cf. Chandogya 8.10.1). Or a person is ill but is still in his house when he goes to bed. In his dream, he is hospitalised and when he is discharged, the Doctor advises him to continue for another week

with the tablets of medicine a part of which he is taking home. Will he find the medicines when he wakes up? Or, when he goes to bed, his bank balance is Rs.10000. In the dream, he wins a lottery of 20 million rupees. When he gets up, can he issue a cheque against that? Or one goes to bed on a new moon night switching off all lights but in the dream one is basking in the sun. Or one has gone to bed after a full meal but in the dream one feels ravenously hungry or vice versa. And one sees things in dream, which are strange from the point of view of jagrat experience, such as oneself with the head of an elephant or water flowing upwards or oneself flying the air or cutting one's own head or oneself with eight hands or oneself riding an elephant with four tusks.. In the dream, a chariot may turn into a man in the dream itself or a man may turn into a tree. When we wake up, we know that we had a dream, but often, we do not remember what the dream was, and, if sometimes we do, we remember it only vaguely. Thus, the space, time, patterns of behaviour and cause-effect relationship as they are required for jagrat experience are not there in the swapna prapanca. So we regard the swapna prapanca as unreal.

1. Sub-dream within dream clearer example of unreality of jagrat prapanca .

Within my main dream, I may have a sub-dream. I go to bed at New Delhi and have a dream. In the dream, I see myself going to Chennai. Obviously this is not myself lying in the bed. This is a dream I projected by my mind while I am still lying in bed. This dream I does a lot of shopping in Burma Bazaar and being tired falls asleep as soon he reaches the Taj Coramandel Hotel. There, the dream I has a sub-dream. In this sub-dream, the sub-dream I is going to New York, stays in Waldorf Astoria, and goes to bed there after a sumptuous dinner. When the New York sub-dream I wakes up, he finds that he is not in New York but at Chennai; then the Chennai main dream I realises that his going to New York etc. were unreal and he has remained in Chennai. When the waker who was having the dream wakes up, he finds himself at New Delhi; then the waker realises that even his

shopping in China bazaar at Chennai was unreal. Now the dream as well as the sub-dream has become unreal. If we substitute the sub-dream for *swapna prapanca* and the main dream of the waker for our *jagrat prapanca*, we can understand what we mean by saying that the *jagrat prapanca* as well as the *swapna prapanca* that we experience are unreal. Just as, when the waker wakes up at Chennai, both the Chennai main dream and the New York sub-dream become unreal, for one who has “woken up” to the knowledge of *jaganmithya brahmasatyam* both the *swapna* and the *jagrat prapanca* become unreal (*mithya*).

2. What happens during the state of dream (*swapna avastha*) is as follows:-

During the course of sleep, when a person is dreaming, his physical body and his sense organs are resolved and are non-functional but his *ahamkara* is functioning. But the *ahamkara* is not in a position to contact the external world because the physical body and sense organs are not available. In this state of the *ahamkara*, *vasanas*, also called *samskaras*, i.e., impressions stored in the citta portion of the *ahamkara*, based on the person's experience during the *jagrat avasthas* of past period of life (*janma*) and even of past *janmas* are activated. In any particular *swapna avastha*, some of these *vasanas* emerge in the mind of the waker and the waker's *ahamkara* projects a dream world based on those *vasanas*. The dream world is not, really outside the waker's *ahamkara*. But, due to the power of *nidra* (sleep), a mini-*Maya*, what are only thoughts within the waker's *ahamkara* appear to him as a world outside his mind. That is how the waker perceives a dream world. In this dream world, there are not only dream objects (*swapna padaarthaas*, *swapna prameyam*), but a dream knower (a *swapna pramaata*, a dream I) who perceives the *swapna*

*prameyam* including other dream persons, dream animals, dream trees etc. and dream instruments of knowledge (*swapna pramaanam*) which includes not only dream sense organs (*swapna indriyas*) but also a dream mind (a *swapna ahamkara*). It is with the *swapna indriyas* that the *swapna pramaata* contacts the *swapna prameyam* and it is with the *swapna ahamkara* that he cognises the *swapna prameyam*. During the dream, the waker is identified with the *swapna pramaata*. Identified with the *swapna pramaata*, the waker takes the *swapna avastha* to be real. As soon as the he wakes up, he realises that what he thought was a real world was merely thoughts in his own mind based on his *vasanas*. Thus he knows that the *swapna prapanca* is unreal.

In Mandukya karika, in *Vaitathya prakaranam*, the example for *jagrat prapanca* being *mithya* is *swapna prapanca*. In *Advaita prakaraman*, the example is pot space. If pot space were real, when a pot is taken from Adyar to Besant Nagar, there should be a vacuum at the point where the pot was in Adyar and a struggle for the pot to enter at the point to which the pot has been brought in Besant nagar.

3. Features of dream that show unreality of *jagrat prapanca*. In *Sastra*, the *swapna avastha* is taken as an example for the unreality of the *jagrat prapanca*, from the point of view of the *paramarthika satyam*. Just as the waker, during the *swapna avastha*, divides himself into *swapna pramaata*, a *swapna prameyam* and a *swapna pramanam* and, in ignorance, takes them to be real, the *jiva* who in his real nature is the divisionless Brahman, divides himself, in the *jagrat avastha*, out of ignorance, into a *jagrat pramaata*, a *jagrat prameyam* and a *jagrat pramaanam* and takes them to be real. Like the waker realising, when he wakes up, that the *swapna prapanca* was unreal, when the *jagrat jiva* “wakes up”, i.e., gains the knowledge of his real nature as Brahman, he dismisses the *jagrat prapanca* as *mithya*. The waker identifies

himself with the swapna pramaata and experiences the pleasure and pain of the swapna pramaata. If the swapna I, as bhokta, is having sexual contact with a woman, the waker feels the pleasure of the contact. If the swapna I, as the victim in an accident is mauled by a tiger, the waker is scared and often, the fright is so intense that he wakes up suddenly. Like that, the jiva, who is really the asanga atma, identifies himself with his body and mind and takes the pleasure and pain of the body and mind to be his pleasure and pain. When the waker wakes up from the dream and becomes the vyavaharika jiva, he is disidentified with the dream I. He realises that what happens in the swapna prapanca cannot affect him. A dog may have bit the dream I in the dream but the vyavaharika jiva does not find even a scratch in his body. The dream I may have met a beautiful girl in the dream in a house which appeared like a house known to him in the waking state and may have wanted to marry her; when the vyavaharika goes to the house where he met the girl, all that he finds there are an old woman and his wife. In the dream a person may have won a million rupees in a lottery and deposited it in his bank. After he wakes up and goes to the bank he will find that his bank balance is just the two thousand rupees entered in the pass book on the previous day. In the *swapna* example, there are two conscious entities – a pratibhasika conscious entity, the dream I and a vyavaharika conscious entity, the waker I lying in bed. In the same way, in *jagrat avastha*, there is a vyavaharika conscious entity, the *pramaata* I and a paramarthika conscious entity, the *sakshi*. Just as the waker, when he has woken up as the vyavaharika jiva, realises that the swapna prapanca is mithya, when the vyavaharika jiva wakes up, i.e. gains knowledge of his true nature as the infinite Brahman, he realises that the jagrat prapanca is mithya.

4. When Advaita Vedanta gives the example of *swapna prapanca* for saying that, just as the *swapna prapanca* (which is *pratibhasika*) is unreal relative to the *jagrat prapanca* (which is *vyaavahaarika*), the *jagrat prapanca* (which is *vyaavahaarika*) is unreal, relative to the *paramartika plane*, an opponent argues that both the *swapna prapanca* and the *jagrat prapanca* enjoy the same order of reality. His argument is that the only difference is that the *swapna prapanca* is within the head of the waker and the *jagrat prapanca* is outside his head

and both his head and the outside space are *vyaavahaarika*. The Vedantin's answer is that when the opponent says "the world is inside the head of the waker" he is talking from the point of view of the waker after he has got up from sleep. But from the point of the waker when he is in the state of dream, the *swapna prapanca* is outside his head. The *adhyasa* of the jivatma in the jagrat avastha – the jivatma taking the world to be real - is comparable to the waker's experience – the waker taking the dream world to be real - when he is still in the stage of dream and the *jaganmithya brahma satyam jnanam* of the *jivanmukta* is comparable to the realisation of the unreality of the dream world by the waker when he has got up from sleep.

5. Visishtdvaitins hold that swapna prapanca is also a world created by the Lord and the jiva's sukshma sarira goes out and experiences that world. Advaitins agree that, through the identification of the waker with the swapna I, the jiva does exhaust some of his prarabdha through his role as the swapna I experiencing the swapna prapanca. Whether the swapna prapanca is called Iswara srshti or jiva srshti, the fact remains that it is pratibhasika and that the sukshma sarira of the jiva is not separated from the sthoola sarira lying in bed. The experience is not by the sukshma sarira going out but by its identifying itself with the dream I that is out there in the swapna prapanca and is experiencing objects. If the sukshma sarira has gone out into the swapna prapanca, it means that only the sthoola sarira is lying in bed. In that case, which is the entity which gets scared when the swapna I is mauled by a tiger in the swapna and makes the sthoola sarira get up? If the sukshma sarira has gone out and fallen in love with a girl in a house that appears to be no different from a house known to him in the jagrat avastha, he would go to that house when he wakes up and ask for the girl's hand in marriage.

### Section 53 - Refutation of Plurality of Atmas and of Atmas Being Part of Brahman

1. Visishtadvaitins also accept that Brahman is being all pervading is, no doubt, is immanent in the universe. Their Brahman (paramatma) is a saguna Brahman, a personal God, called Narayana or Vishnu. He has a twin property (*ubhaya vibhuti*) – *Leela Vibhuti* in the universe which exists

for his sport (*Leela*) and enjoyment (bhoga, and a *Nitya Vibhuti* –transcendence in the divine world called Sree Vaikuntha Paramapadam. (The transcendental body has five modes (*prakaras*) – *para, vyuha vibhu, antaryaami, haarda roopa and archa*). Paramatma is the material cause (*upadana karanam*) as well as the intelligent cause (*nimitta karanam*) of the universe and the one who sustains it and resolves it unto Himself. The universe consists of insentient matter, prakriti, called acit and sentient beings, jivatmas, called cit. Cit and acit are the worldly body (*sariram, prakara, viseshanam, dharma*) of paramatma. Before creation, they are in subtle (*sukshma*) form without form, name and identification in paramatma.

Creation is the unfolding by paramatma of the cit and acit with name, form, identification etc. The attributes of the paramatma are satyam (independent existence), jnanam (eternal, unchanging consciousness) and anantam - not limited in space or time or by entity (*vastu* ; freedom from limitation entity wise is on account of paramatma's ubhayavibhuti (i.e., paramatma alone is there in transcendental mode and as Sriman Narayana and as the worldly mode(*prakara*) in the form of cit and acit), omniscience (*sarvajnatvam*), omnipotence (*sarvasaktimatvam*), rulership (Iisitatvam, rulership over cit and acit), power to bring about whatever he wills (*sarvakalpatvam*), changelessness (*nirvikaaratvam* being the support (*aadhaara*), and the Controller (*niyamaka*) and Lord (*seshi*) of cit and acit etc.. These are His attributes (*dharmaas, viseshnams*); they distinguish Him from the insentient, finite, changing acit and the finite cit whose knowledge as attribute is subject to contraction. By the very function of distinguishing Him from cit and acit, they constitute His nature (*swaroopam*) like the attributes of a cow (which distinguish it from horse etc.). (Vide Ramanuja in Vedanta Sangraha -(*Swaroopa niroopana dharma sabda hi dharma mukhena swaroopam api pratipadhyanti gavaadisabdavat*). Thus, for example, He has dharma jnanam as well as swaroopa jnanam. There are countless jivatmas. Each jivatma (called *cit*) has a separate atma of his own, besides his body. This atma also has two aspects, one, knowledge and bliss (jnanam and aanandam) as His nature (*swaabhika, swaroopa*) and jnanam as attribute (*dharmabhoota jnanam*). The dharmabhoota jnanam, contracts in the state of samsara on account of beginningless karma

involving ignorance of one's own swaroopam and of paramatma; this dharmabhootajnanam expands to its full stature in the state of moksha. The goal of jivatma is to know paramatma's perfection. Sadhana, with free will conferred by paramatma, consists of cultivation of virtues, study of Veda, karma yoga, spirit of surrender to the paramatma, and *bhakti* consisting of meditation on the paramatma, resulting, with paramatma's grace, in attainment of release from samsara (moksha). (Vision of paramatma is not possible with the ordinary means of perfection. Bhakti is the unique form of knowledge which enables the devotee to get a vision of paramatma.) It is paramatma, by His Grace, that effectuates the jivatma's release from samsara. Moksha is not cessation of individuality; it is attainment of residence in Vaikuntha with the benefit of constant, blissful, adoration of paramatma. Even in moksha, the mukta jivatmas maintain their separate individualism with *desa* and *vastu pariccheda* (limited in space and by entity). (Even nitya *suris* like Garuda, Adishesha, and Vishvaksena etc. who are eternally without karma and hence never have *prakriti-sambandha*, have the *desa* and *vastu pariccheda*.) Visishtadvaitins also claim that in spite of being the material cause of creation, paramatma is changeless inasmuch as it is paramatma's body alone which gets expanded as cit and acit and becomes the universe but there is no change in paramatma's swaroopam. They say that Svetasvatara mantra "*nirguna*" means, not that paramatma is without attributes (*nirvisesha*), but that paramatma is pure and free of all evil attributes; the word only denies imperfections characteristic of finite existence. He is *sarvakalayaanagunaaakaraka*. Paramatma, cit, acit, creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe are all equally real.

2. The proposition that, apart from Brahma caitanyam, there are myriad caitanyams, as the body of Brahman, and that these jivatmas remain, both in the state of samsara and in the state of moksha, remain as separate entities is opposed to the Advaita doctrine of jivabrahmaikyam. The thesis that the body of paramatma is transformed by paramatma into myriad jivatmas, each with a separate atma of its own, different from Brahma caitanyam, with two types of jnanam, one eternal swaropa jnanam and the other contracting and expanding dharma jnanam is, also, according to the Advaitin, contradictory to Sruti statements. Apart, from the four *mahavakyas*,

there are numerous Sruti statements which assert that the atma of jivatmas is non-different from Brahman. Inter alia, Taittiriya 2.1.1., first defines Brahman “*satyam, jnaanam, anantam Brahma*” and in the same mantra says “from *atma* was born *aakaasa*” and it thus equates Brahman and atma. . In Sankaracarya's' commentary. he says, “Since in the text, ‘From that Brahman indeed which is this atma (was produced this space)’, the word atma is used with regard to Brahman Itself; it follows that Brahman is the atma of the cognising individual. “One who worships another god thinking ‘He is one, I am another, he does not know” (Brhadaranyaka 1.4.10), “One only without a second” (Chandogya 6.2.1). Chandogya 8.14.1 and Swetasvatara 1.12 equate Brahman and atma. Brhadaranyaka IV.iv.18 also, which describes the sakshi as the Prana of the prana, the Eye of the Eye, the Ear of the Ear and the Mind of the Mind, equates atma and Brahman. Brhadaranyaka IV.iv.25 – “That great, birthless atma is undecaying, immortal, ....infinite. Brahman indeed is fearless. He who knows the atma as the fearless Brahman becomes the fearless Brahman” In his commentary on Brahma sutra 1.4.14 also, Sankaracarya says, citing Taittiriya 2.1.1, ‘By using the word, atma” with regard to Him (Brahman) subsequently, and by placing the atma successively inner and inner in a series of sheaths, counting from this body, He (Brahman) is shown to be *pratyogatma* (Taittiriya 2.2 to 2.5). Brhadaranyaka IV.iv.13 – “All is his atma, and he again indeed is the atma of all”. Taittiriya 2.1.1 defines Brahman as infinity. The infinite cannot have parts. If it has, it ceases to be infinite. In Brhadaranyaka 3.4.1 and 3.5.1, Ushasta and Kahola ask Yagnavalkya to teach them the Brahman that is immediate and direct - the atma within all and Yagnavalkya starts the teaching saying “This is your atma that which is in all “.In the same Upanishad, in 3.8.11, Yagnavalkya tells Gargi “This *aksharam* is beyond thought but is the Thinker; It is never known but is the knower” and adds “There is no other Thinker than It; there is no other knower than It.” (This is a clear statement negating many conscious beings as jivas, separate from Paramatma). In 4,3,7 the question is asked, “Which is the atma?” and Yagnavalkya answers, “ this infinite entity (“*Purusha*”) that is identified with the intellect and, attaining the likeness of the intellect, thinks ‘as it were’ and shakes ‘as it were’.”. Swetasvatara 3.18 talks of the Lord of the universe dwelling

in the body going out and contacting objects through the sense organs. 3.13 talks of Brahman dwelling in the heart being the Lord of the mind. In Brhadaranyaka 1.4.7 Brahman is said to have entered into the universe including the bodies of beings. And the Upanishad goes on to say that when It does the function of living It is called *praana*.....when it thinks, It is called the mind. Aitereya Upanishad, 1.3.11 says that Brahman wanting to enter the *indriyas* and the mind asks, “if seeing, hearing and thinking can be done without me, who am I?” All these indicate that Brahma caitanyam and the atma that enables the sense organs and the mind to function as conscious entities are the same caitanyam. In Mundaka 2.2.8 (in some texts it may be 2.2.7), it is said Brahman (called “the savajna” and “*sarvavid*”) seated in space within the luminous city of Brahman (i.e., the mind) is said to be conditioned by the mind. In Brhadaranyaka 4.4.5 also, “the atma indeed is Brahman (*ayam atma brahma*) is spoken of as “identified with the mind, the intellect, praana and the sense organs.” Again, in the same strain, in 3.1.2, Aitereya Upanishad talks of atma as the mind and in 3.1.3 enumerates various vrittis of the mind like thinking, suffering and memory as names of Consciousness (*prajnaanam*) and in 3.1.4, says that this *prajnaanam* (the consciousness behind the individual minds) is Brahman.“. In Brhadaranyaka 3.4.1, the atma equated with Brahman which is within all is spoken of as that ‘which moves forward through the prana etc. Brhadaranyaka IV.iv.18 – “Those who have known the Prana of the prana, the Eye of the eye, the Ear of the Ear, and the Mind of the mind have realized the ancient primordial Brahman. In all the passages cited above, whether we take the Brahma caitanyam as merely conditioned by the mind or as reflected in the mind, in all these passages, since the same Brahman is said to be associated with praana and the mind, t talk of plurality of atmas would be contradictory. Mundaka Upanishad says expressly that anyone who knows that supreme becomes Brahman. So, how can jivatmas be said to remain as separate entities even in the state of moksha? Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.5, 3.2.6 and 3.2.7 also go against the part whole theory. 5 says, “Having attained Brahman (i.e., having identified themselves with Brahman), being contented with the knowledge ‘aham brahma asmi’, remaining free of desire and tranquil, the seers (*rishis*’) attain the all pervading entirely and, when the body falls, merge

in the Brahman that is all.”(Sankaracarya compares it to space apparently confined within a pot merging in all pervading space on the breaking of the pot.) 6 says, “Those to whom the entity presented by the Vedic knowledge has become fully ascertained, at the supreme moment of final departure all of them become identified with the supreme Immortality in the worlds that are Brahman. Sankaracarya explains ‘in the worlds that are Brahman’ means “in Brahman” and adds “like a lamp blown out or like the space in a pot when broken.”) 7 says “all become unified with the Supreme Undecaying.”” In Mundaka Upanishad, II.ii.9, (in some texts, it will be 2.2.10) it is said that anyone who knows that Brahman becomes Brahman indeed. Kaivalya 10 says, “Seeing one's own atma in all beings and all beings in atma, one attains the highest Brahman. And Kaivalya 16 says, “That which is the supreme Brahman, the atma in all.....That alone art Thou, Thou alone art That”. Brhadaranyaka IV.iii.32 – “It becomes (homogenous) like water, one, the witness and without a second. This is *brahmaloka* (the paramarthika state of Brahman)”. Chandogya Upanishad 8.12.3 is significant. It says “This tranquil one (the reference is to jivatma), rising up from this body (the reference is to videhamukti), ‘becomes one with the supreme light’ and ‘is established in his own nature’. Brhadaranyaka 4.4.6 is also significant. Talking about Jivanmukti and Videhamukti, it says”.....being but Brahman, he (i.e., Jivanmukta) is merged in Brahman” Words like “Becoming one with the supreme light” and “is established in his own nature” “being but Brahman, he is merged in Brahman” constitute incontrovertible proof that the atma in us is no different from Brahman. In Brhadaranyaka 2.4.12 (repeated in 4.5.13, the Upanishad, talking of videha mukti, says that the (particular) consciousness of jivas ceases at that time (“*na pretya samja asti*”). Whether we take ‘samja’ as cidabhasa or the mere adhyasa of being separate individuals or, as Visishtadvaitins would have it, as multiple atmas separate from Brahman, this passage is sufficient to refute the proposition that jivatmas retain their identity as separate entities even in the state of moksha. That consciousness is only one and though, conditioned by the body-mind complex, it may appear as many, when the conditioning ceases, the apparent many merges in the one original consciousness is well illustrated by the salt water example in Brhadaranyaka IV.v.13.

3. As regards refutation of atmas being parts of Brahman there are specific Sruti statements that Brahman is divisionless (without parts) (“*nishkalam*”) (Kaivalya 23, Swetasvatara 6.19, Mundaka 2.2.9 (in some texts, it is 2.2.10), 3.1.8, Brahma 1, Brahmabindu 21, Dhyabnabindu 13, Nadabindu 17) “It should be realised in one form only” (Brhadaranyaka 4.4.20) (Sankaracarya’s commentary – “It should be realised in one form only, viz., as homogenous pure consciousness. Without any break in it, like space.”). Brhadaranyaka IV.iv.13 “As a lump of salt is without exterior or interior, entire, and purely saline in taste, even so is the atma without interior or exterior, entire and pure consciousness. It acquires particular consciousnesses on account of the association with (the products of) the elements (body-mind complexes). When a body mind complex is destroyed, this particular consciousness is destroyed. When the body falls, there is no longer any particular consciousness”. Brhadaranyaka IV.iii.7 -“Which is the atma?. ‘This infinite entity (purusha) that is identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the organs, the light within the heart, *hrdayantarjyotih*. Assuming the likeness – i.e., the likeness of the intellect, it moves between two worlds; it thinks., as it were, and shakes, as it were”.) In his commentary, Sankaracarya says, “..’*Vijanamaya*’, identified with the intellect; atma is so called because of our failure to discriminate its association with its limiting adjunct (*upadhi*), the intellect, for it is perceived as associated with the intellect..... ‘Within the heart’;....heart, here, means the intellect, which has its seat in the heart.....The word, ‘within’ indicates that the atma is different from the modifications of the intellect. Atma is called light, because it is self-  
effulgent, for, through this light, the self-effulgent atma, this aggregate of body and organs – i.e.,the body-mind complex - goes out and works, as if it were sentient, like the shining of a jar placed in the sun .Or like an emerald or any other gem dropped into milk etc imparts its lustre to the milk etc., so does the effulgent atma..... imparts its lustre to the body and organs, including the intellect. ....The intellect being clear (*svacca*) and close to the atma, easily catches the reflection of the atma.....next comes the manas which catches the reflection of the atma through the intellect; and lastly the body through the organs”. .....That is why, depending on the degree of discrimination, each one identifies himself with one or other component of the body

mind complex.....'It thinks as it were'; By illumining the intellect, which does the thinking, atma, through its self-effulgent light that pervades the intellect.....seems to think. ....Hence the people think that the atma thinks but really it does not.”

## Section 54 - World being Real Effect Refuted

Visishtadvaitins and Dwaitins say that the world is as real as Paramatma .In the earlier portions we have already discussed, how, in the light of various Sruti statements, such a view would be illogical.

## Section 55 - Refutation of Brahman Being Saguna

4. As regards the Dwaita and Visishtadvaita thesis that Brahman is *saguna* (one with attributes) the Advaitin replies that to have attributes is to be limited. To be small is not to be big. To be good is to be not bad. Exclusion is limitation. If Brahman is credited with any attributes, we would be making Brahman a limited entity. To be limited, entity wise, Brahman has to be attributeless (“*nirguna*”). Svetasvatara Upanishad 6.11 specifically says that Sakshi (Brahman) is “*nirguna*”. This occurs also in Brahma Upanishad 3. Nrsimhaottarataapani says “*aguna*”. Apart from this, there are numerous passages which talk of Brahman being free of attributes, mentioning specific attributes – vide Mundaka 2.1.2 – “ formless, without vital force and without mind”; Katha 1.3.15 – soundless, touchless, colourless, odourless”; Katha 1.2.22 – “ without vital airs and without mind”; Mundaka 1.1.6 – “without features, eyes and ears; which has neither hands nor feet” Brhadaranyaka 3.8.8 – “neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long, neither red colour nor oiliness, neither shadow nor darkness.....neither flavour nor odour, without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind, ....without the vital force nor the mouth..” – Prasna 4.10 – “Shadowless, bodiless, colourless” All these go against the proposition that Brahman is endowed with attributes. Mandukya 7 makes it clear that Brahma caitanyam is not the objectifying consciousness (“*Na prajnam*” – Sankaracarya’s commentary – “By ‘na prajnam’ is denied the awareness of everything by a single act of consciousness; i.e. dharmabhoota

jnanam is negated.) The interpretation of Visishtadvaitins that “nirguna” means that Lord Narayana who is Brahman, is devoid of all evil and has only all auspicious attributes (*sarvakalyanagunaakaara*), we have the Kathopanishad mantra 1.2.14 which says that Brahman is beyond *dharma* as well as *adharma* (virtue as well as vice). As Sureswacarya points out, the distinction between the sacred and the profane is meaningful only in the vyavaharika plane.

5. What has been said above is sufficient to refute the view (of Visishtadvaitins and Dwaitins that the Supreme Being is not only swarupa jnanam but He has, as one of His attributes, *visesha jnanam* (what they call *dharma jnanam*) and they talk of Brahman as omniscient (*sarvajna*) etc. . Any knowledge, even omniscience, involves triputi - and to make Brahman a pramaata entertaining perception or thought of objects (*prameyam*) involves *pramanam* (knowing instruments). This will not be in accordance with Sruti statements that Brahman is *amanah*. The word “*sarvajna*” is not applicable to Brahman because Brahman is non-dual (*advayam*) and there is no second entity for It to know. Cf. Chandogya Upanishad 7.24.1 – “The Infinite is that where one does not see anything else, does not hear anything else and does not know anything else”.

## Section 56 - Moksha Only After Death” Refuted

Dwaitins and Visishtadvaitins say that liberation (*moksha*) happens for a successful spiritual seeker only after death. But, as shown in Part II, in the section, entitled “Liberation in this life itself – *Jivanmukti*”, there are a number of Upanishadic passages which establish that a person who gains knowledge of *jiva brahma aikyam* is free of *samsara*, that is, gets *moksha*, in the very life in which he gains the knowledge.

## Section 57 - Moksha by Negation of Jivas Is Not Futile

Visishtadvaitins say that in Advaita, since *moksha* involves negation of jivas, *moksha* is a futile attainment; jiva himself is not there to enjoy moksha. The answer is that when we talk of jivatma as bound and liberated, of the mixture of Brahma caitanyam in the form of pratyagatma and ahamkara. What we say is destroyed on attainment of moksha is the ahamkara. The pratyagatma, which is non-different from Brahma caitanyam, is not destroyed. Once there is videhamukti, there is no longer any need to use two terms. All that there is is Brahma caitanyam, the infinite consciousness. The Advaitin's moksha is discovery of Brahmatvam as a jivanmukta and, in videhamukti, being Brahma Itself. What more does one want than being the Existence-Consciousness-Infinity?

(The contention of Visishtadvaitins mentioned above is based on their failure to distinguish the atma from ahamartha.

## Section 58 - Misinterpretation Of Avarana Sakti Of Maya

1. Visishtadvaitins refer to the Advaita doctrine of avidya and say that the covering of consciousness, which is the essential nature of Brahman, means the loss of Brahman itself. This misconception has to be corrected from many angles. One is that the covering is not for Brahman, but for jivas; it is like sun being covered by a cloud and one is unable to see the sun from the earth. So, when avidya exerts the avarana sakti, it is the jiva who is unable to have a vision of Brahman. For Brahman, there is no avidya at all. Avidya is mithya (a lower order of reality) and it cannot affect the paaramarthika, Brahman. We do say that avidya is located in Brahman, because any mithya entity must have a sub-stratum for it to appear. The snake cannot appear unless there is a snake. We have to have some location for Maya. Since there is no other go, we say that Maya is located in Brahman. Being located itself is mithya. There is no Maya at all, as far as Brahman is concerned. Location is only from the point of view of the jiva. There is no real snake located on the rope. It is only for the on-looker

in semi-darkness that a snake appears to be located on what he sees as an object, without understanding its nature in full; if you imagine the snake to be a conscious entity, it would not see a snake at all. Like that jivatmas are aware of the existence of a conscious entity within themselves, but are not aware that that conscious entity is the infinite consciousness. So, they regard themselves as limited beings. Therefore there is no question of the swayamprakasatvam of Brahman being destroyed by avidya.

6. Secondly, the Visishtadvaitin's argument proceeds on the basis of equating Brahman and knowledge and avidya and ignorance and saying that ignorance is opposed to knowledge. But Advaita makes a distinction between *swaropa jnanam* and *vritti jnanam*. Secondly avidya itself is not ignorance; it is a power that engenders ignorance. Brahman is knowledge (jnanam) in nature not in the sense of vritti jnanam but swaropa jnanam. What are opposed to each other are not swaropa jnanam and ignorance but vritti jnanam and ignorance. In fact, on the vyavaharika plane, swaropa jnanam (Brahma caitanyam) illumines ignorance as well as knowledge; through the conditioning of the intellect or reflection in the intellect illumines the ignorance of brahmatvam caused by avidya as well as the knowledge of aham brahma asmi imbibed through Sastra. Swaropa jnanam (Brahma caitanyam) is eternal (nityam). Vide Brahadaranyaka IV.iii.23 - The vision of the witness can never be lost, because it is imperishable (*Na hi drashturdrsherviparilopo vidyate avinaasitvaat*). Further, since Brahman is eternal, the critic can be hoisted on his own petard. If an eternal Brahman of the nature of knowledge is opposed to ignorance of the nature of avidya, avidya would have been destroyed at the very outset and there would no jivas at all ignorant of their nature as Brahman.
2. Thirdly, the opponents cannot ignore the Advaita doctrine that Brahman is satyam and avidya is mithya. Mithya cannot affect satyam. Therefore, there is no question of avidya destroying Brahman.

## Section 59 - Meaning Of Jivatma Being Resolved In Brahman In sushupti

In sushupti, jivatma is said to be resolved in Paramatma (Brahman). This should not be taken literally, because the aavarana sakti of moola avidya (Maya) is not destroyed. Vikshepa sakti is suspended, but the avarana sakti is still maintaining Brahma ajnaanam (ignorance of Brahmatvam) in the resolved antahkarana. So, unless he is a jnaani, when a person wakes up, he does so with Brahma ajnaanam and the consequent adhyaasa. In sushupti on account of temporary suspension of identification with upadhis, the distraction by the world created by the vikshepa sakti of Maya is not there. Adhyasa engendered by the avarana sakti comes into play only when the world created by the vikshepa sakti is there as the premeyam. Since the pramaata is resolved in sushupti, there is no premeyam for the person in sushupti. So, there is no adhyaasa for the time being and samsara is suspended for the nonce. When the person wakes up, he says, "I slept happily; I did not know anything". The absence of cognition of external objects and of internal cognition is registered mechanically in the resolved antahkarana (antahkarana in karana avastha). Ananda (happiness) is also registered. The source of the ananda is the ananda swaroopam (the anantatvam) of atma. Since the resolved antahkarana is in a calm state, the atma ananda is reflected in it without it being aware of it at that time and that is registered by the resolved antahkarana. In technical language, there is a sukshma vritti in them antahkarana, called avidya vritti pertaining to non-experience of external objects, to the absence of internal disturbance and to happiness. (When the vritti is taking place, the person is not aware of it but vritti is taking place). Otherwise, we cannot explain the ability of the person to say, on waking up, "I slept happily; I did not know anything" (*sukham aham asvaaptam na kincit avedisham*). What was not registered cannot be recollected. By arthapatti pramanam, we know that atma caitanyam had illumined sukham in the kaarana sariram during sushupti. We also know that the original consciousness (atma caitanyam) as well as ajnaanam (ignorance of Brahmatvam) continues to exist in sushupti.

## Section 60 - Meaning Of The Words Used In Sastra Depends On The Context

1. Jivatma, inseparably until videha mukti, is a mixture of (a) the all pervading consciousness (b), the reflecting medium, the antahkarana and (c) the reflected consciousness. The word, “Jivatma” means, in different contexts a different combination of these three. When Mundaka Upanishad is interpreted as referring to Jivatma and paramatma as two birds sitting in the tree, one eating the fruit and the other looking on, “Jivatma” means the mixture of (b) and (c). When in Chandogya Upanishad 6.3.3, Brahman is said to have entered into the three deities as jivatma, “jivatma” should be taken as (c). When the jnani says “I, the jivatma, am Brahman”, jivatma" means (a). When Sastra talks of travel of jivatma, after death, to other lokas and of rebirth, Jivatma means the mixture of (b) and (c).

2. When it is said that there is no world other than Brahman, the reference is to brahmasatyam jaganmithya. When it is said that Brahman is free of the world, the reference is to the paramartika status of Brahman.

3. In Brahma Sutra, based on the six-fold criteria for finding the purport of the text, there are a number of discussions how various words should be interpreted. Examples are ‘praana’ and ‘aakasa’ which in certain contexts refer to Brahman.

## Section 61 - Mixing Up Orders Of Reality

One should not mix up orders of reality. Suppose, one convicted of murder pleads, “Atma neither kills nor is it killed. I am Atma, so, I did not kill and, therefore, you should not punish me.” The judge would turn round and say “I am not punishing your Atma; I shall punish only your body.” It is in this strain that Ramakrishna Paramahansa relates a story of a man thinking that the elephant is atma and I am atma and so, the elephant cannot kill

me. So saying he goes and lays himself in front of a rogue elephant. The body of the elephant comes and crushed the body of the man.

## Section 62 - Guru and Brahman synonymous

A Jivanmukta identifies himself with Brahman. On the vyavaharika plane, he is looked upon as Iswara. That is why guru is glorified as Paramatma in the famous sloka “gururbrahma gururvishnu gururdevo maheswara; gurureva parambrahma tasmai sri gurave namaha”. Correspondingly, when a devotee does namaskara to a guru, the guru accepts it with the thought that the devotee is doing namaskara, not to the guru’s body, but to Iswara or to the atma jnanam in the guru.

## Section 63 - Who is a Brahmana?

Brahadaranyaka Upanishad III.v.1, IV.iv.22 and IV.iv.23 use the word, “Brahmana” for those who utilize karma yoga to attain purity of mind, pursue jnana yoga and know Brahman. . In the Jabala Upanishad, the sage Atri asks Yajnavalkya, “May I ask you, Yajnavalkya, how is one without the sacred thread a Brahmana? Yagnavalkya replied, “The conviction ‘I am the atma’ alone is his sacred thread.” Vajrasucika Upanishad discusses ‘Who is a Brahman? It says that a Brahmana is not a Brahman because of his caste or his learning, or his righteousness but by perceiving the atma directly (*aparoksha jnanam*). In the Bhagawadgita, Lord Krishna talks of *jaati braahmanas*, persons born in a family of the brahmana caste, *karma braahmanas*, persons who are engaged in noble activities and *guna braahmanas*, the seekers or accomplishers of jivabrahma-aikya jnanam. There is no virtue in being merely a jaati Brahmana; the karma Brahmana deserves respect; the highest aspiration is to be a guna Brahmana. There is a sloka which says that at birth one is *sudra*, becomes *dwija* by noble action, *vipra* by learning and *braahmana* by knowing Brahman. (‘Sudra’ indicates self-ignorance, ‘dwija’ refers to one initiated for the pursuit of studies, ‘vipra’ refers to a learned man and ‘brahmana’ refers to the knower of Brahman.

## Section 64 - Process Of Cognition

When I say, “I know this,” the “I”, the “know” and “this” are not simultaneously cognized. Each piece of knowledge requires a triputi – a pramata, pramanam and prameya (or, to put in another version, a *karta*, *karanam* and *karma*). E.g. “I know the tree”. Tree becomes the object of knowledge. When tree is the object of knowledge neither ‘I’ nor the act of knowing can be the object of knowledge. . When “I” is the object of knowledge, neither “tree” nor the act of knowing can be the object of knowledge. When the act of knowing is the object of knowledge, neither “I” nor “tree” can be the object of knowledge. “I”, “know” and “tree” - each requires, separately, a knower, knowing and known. So the awareness of “I”, “know” and “tree” takes place successively, through a separate triputi in each case – such as “I know the tree”, “I know the act of knowing” and “I know the I that knows the tree”, but so quickly that it appears to be simultaneous.

## Section 65 - Five-fold Pramanas

1. Knowledge (“prama”) is obtained by five fold pramanaas – “pratyaksha”, “anumaana”, “upamaana”, “sabda”, “arthaapatti” and “anupalabdhi”.

(i) Pratyaksha Pratyaksha is direct cognition, external as well as internal. E.g., I know that there is a flower pot out there in the garden; I see it. Or I know that nadasvaram is being played in the far distance, even though I can't see it; I hear it. I know that a rose has bloomed in the neighbor's garden beyond the wall; I smell it. My eyes are closed; someone puts sugar in my mouth; I know it is sugar because the taste is similar to sugar which I have tasted before. I know that there is fire in the fire place even when my back is turned towards the fire because I feel the heat on my skin. If anger arises in my mind I know it.

(ii) Anumaana is knowledge by inference. Inference is ascertainment of the existence of a thing we come to know even though it is not perceived (called “saadhyam”) because of the existence of

a thing that is perceived (called “hetu”) on the basis of the previous experience of the invariable concomitance of these two things (called “vyaapti”). E.g., I see only smoke rising on the top of the mountain; I know from previous experience, say, observation of what happens in the yaagssaala (sacrificial hall) or in the kitchen that whenever there is smoke there is fire; so, I come to the conclusion that there is fire in the mountain.

(iii) Upamaana. Upamaana is knowledge obtained by comparison, where features similar to a thing which one already knows are observed in a freshly observed thing. E.g., a person goes to a forest and sees a “gavaya” (a species of ox). He observes similarity between that animal and the cow in his house. Then he has the cognition “My cow is similar to a gavaya” These are cases of similarity of entities which are not identical.

(iv) Sabda . The distinctive (exclusive) means of knowledge by sabda , i.e., verbal testimony is called “sabdapramaana”. When the statement gives information that is not already known and for which its syntactical relation that is purportful is not sublated by other evidence, that statement is sabdapramaana. (Vide Vedanta Paribhasha). The pramaana excludes absurd statements like “Let it be made wet by fire”. The knowledge arising from verbal testimony should be above contradiction by any other valid pramaana like pratyaksha. Sabda pramana is of two kinds - that which is in the form of written or spoken testimony of a trustworthy person (*aapta*) and that which is impersonal (*apaurusheya*), viz., sruti (Vedic testimony).

2. “For the study of sastra, the criteria of valid knowledge (*pramanam*) are that (i) it should produce knowledge (*pramaa janakatvam*), (ii) the content should be something that is not already known through any other means of valid knowledge (‘not already known’ except recollection) (*pramanaantara-anatigatatvam*), (iii) it should be free of ambiguity (*asandigdhwatvam*), (iv) it should not be sublated by another valid means of knowledge (*abaadhitvam*) and (v) it should be have utility (*arthavatvam, prayojanatvam*). The purport of a topic has be ascertained by six criteria – (i) the concordance of what is taught in the beginning

and what is taught in the end (*upakarama-upasamhaara-ekaroopam*), (ii) what is repeatedly taught (*abhyaasa*) (iii) what is not already known by other valid pramaana (*apoorvata*) (iv) what contains a statement of the benefit of the teaching (*phalam*) (v) what is praised and the opposite of what is condemned (*arthavaada*) and (vi) what is logically acceptable (*upapatti*). For example, we ascertain that the purport of the sixth chapter of Chandogya Upanishad is to teach about Brahman

(i) from the passage in the beginning, "All that there is here is atma" "*etat aatmyam-idam-sarvam*" according with the passage at the end, "That is the Reality. That is atma" "*Tat-satyam tat-aatma*"

(ii) the repetition of the sentence, "Thou art That" ("*Tattvamasi*") nine times in 6.8.7 etc

(iii) the fact that the identity of jivatma and paramatma is not known from any other pramanam

(iv) the statement "For a man who, having a teacher, acquires knowledge in this world, the delay is for as long only (as the remaining prarabdha is exhausted). Then he becomes merged in Existence." "*(Aacaaryavaan Purusha veda. Tasya taavat-eva ciram yaavat-na vimokshye atha sampathsye*" (6.14.2)

(v) The praise of a knower of Brahman and the condemnation of the ignorant by the example of a man who mutters a lie being burnt by the fire compelled to be kept in the hand, as test in olden days, and the one who spoke truth not being burnt, to demonstrate the rebirth of the ignorant and the merging of the knower in Brahman (6.16.1-3) and

(vi) the demonstration that there is no substance in the form of the world, the effect, other than Brahman, the cause through the example of the clay and pots, jars etc.

3. Anupalabdhi. In this non-cognition of a thing serves as pramaana. This applies in the case of objects which would ordinarily be capable of being perceived by positive means of cognition, had they existed in the locus in which they are not perceived now. In other words, when all the conditions for the perception x is present, and yet x is not perceived, such non-perception would lead to a true cognition of the absence of x. For example, there is a garden in which there are flower pots; among the flower pots, normally, there is a pot with a beautiful rose. One day when

I look out from my widow, I do not see the flower pot with the rose. Therefore, I conclude that there is non-existence of the flowerpot with the rose in the garden. (Only by anupalabdhi pramaana, the details pertaining to one ritual, for example, are known to be not the same as the details of some other ritual. Certain details which do not belong to a particular ritual can only be known by this pramanam).

## Section 66 - Duties Of A Householder: Grahastha, Asrama and Dharma

Threefold duties –

(1) Fivefold yajna (sacred duties) – (a) Deva yajna , i.e. Vedic sacrifices pertaining to the worship of deities, (b) Rishi yajna , i.e., adhyayana (chanting) and study of Veda, (c) Pitr yajna, i.e., rituals pertaining to worship of ancestors who are supposed to have gone to one of the upper lokas, called pitr loka, on account of their punya, (d) Manushya yajna i.e., service to humanity and (e) bhoota yajna i.e., promotion of the welfare of the animal and plant kingdom and respect for nature and ecology-

(2) Daana (charity) (if material assistance is beyond one's resources, one should impart knowledge to those who need it) and tapas (austerity in life, aparigraha -not acquiring wealth and other things beyond what is required for sustenance of oneself and one's family and the requirements of yagna and sama dama, restraint in speech, thought and action, not causing physical or mental hurt to others which involves, inter alia, adherence to satyam, i.e, truthfulness which should be hitam and priyam and ahimsa (non-violence). Examples for satyam that is hitam and priyam - Suppose that your son is taking to evil ways. You have to advise him. You have to tell him what is the correct way of life but you should not scold him while doing so. Suppose an innocent person fleeing from persons trying to murder him has taken refuge in your house and those people come and ask you whether he is in your house; you should not disclose the fact that he is in your house; you should, dodge the

people who are searching him. What is *dharma* (righteousness) should be the guiding factor.

## Section 67 - Pratyabhinja

*(This is a condensed version of a topic already discussed in the main paper)*

We generally refer to ourselves with the help of the 'I' thought. Oneself revealed through the I thought is of three types. One I is the I experienced at present. This presently experienced I is the *ahamkara*. The second type is the I which oneself had experienced in the past and which is remembered now. This I which had been experienced in the past and which is remembered now is also the *ahamkara*. But there is a third I. This is a recognized I. This occurs in the form of the expression, "The I that I had experienced in the past and the I that I that is experienced now are the same I." The Sanskrit word for recognition is *pratyabhinja*. The I experienced in the past and the I that is experienced at present are different in terms of place, time and attributes. For example, the past I was experienced at Chennai in the year 1935 and the present I is experienced at New Delhi in the year 1975. At Chennai, in 1935, the I belonged to a young and cheerful but immature student. At New Delhi, the I belongs to an old man, saddened by many tragedies but wise by virtue of various experiences. In technical language, the *vacya* of the past I and the *vacya* of the present I do not tally. But I still equate the past I and the present I when I do the recognition and say that the Chennai I is the same as the New Delhi I. In any situation when this happens, we have take recourse to *lakshyarth*. (*Vacya* is the literal meaning. *Lakshyarth* is the implied meaning). When we take recourse to *lakshyarth*, in this case, we adopt the method called *bhaagatyaaga lakshanaa*, that is, we discard the features that do not tally and retain the aspect which tallies to make the equation valid. Now the features to be discarded are the youth, cheerfulness and immaturity of the past I and the old age, sadness and wisdom of the present I. What

remains is the conscious being devoid of the differences of place, time and attributes. This conscious being I refer to in equating the past I and the present I validly after discarding the different features is not the ahamkara but the sakshi. Ahamkara is consciousness associated with attributes. Sakshi is consciousness devoid of attributes. One's real nature is not the ahamkara but the sakshi. The presently experienced and the past remembered I are the ahamkara. The recognized I is the sakshi. The recognition doesn't necessarily have to be distant in time, place and attributes. Even when I do the recognition by saying I who listened to the Gita bhashyam class yesterday am the same I who am listening to the Mundaka bhashyam today, even here, the recognized I is not the ahamkara but the sakshi.

## Section 68 - Vedic Support for Possession by Spirits

In Brhadaranyaka 4.3.1, there is Vedic support for saying that people can be possessed by spirits. Bhujyu says to Yajnavalkya that when he and some others went to the Madra kingdom, they went to the house of Patancala and saw that his daughter was possessed by a *gandharva*.

## Section 69 - Conversion of secular events into religious ceremonies

In Hinduism, the important events in a person's life are regarded as religious ceremonies. Cremation of the dead body is treated as the last holy sacrifice (yajna), the dead man conducts. Since the body is dead, the son conducts this yagna on the behalf of the deceased. The woman is regarded as the sacred fire (agni) in which the gods are invoked to offer the seed and out of that offering the human being is born (Brhadaranyaka 5.2.13). The nuptial is called 'garbha-daana-yagna'. Brhadaranyaka 5.4.20 gives the mantra to be uttered – "He embraces her saying, "I am the prana, you are the speech; you are speech, and I am prana. I am the sama veda and you are the rg.veda. I am heaven, and you are the earth' This mantra is meant to engender harmony in the relationship of the husband and wife. The sexual union of the husband and wife is undertaken as a sacred act for producing good children. It

is called *vaajapeya yaga*. In the mantra connected with it, the husband invokes Hiranyagsarbha to enter him, In what is called *sthanadaana* mantra, when the husbands hands over the baby to be suckled by the mother, he implores Saraswati, the goddess of learning to enter the mother and feed the child. In what is called the *naamakararana* ceremony, the father gives the child a secret name and that name is 'Veda'. Here, the word, 'veda' means caitanyam, The father says ' You are caitanyam', i.e., 'you are none other than brahman'. So, as soon as the child is born, 'Tattvamasi' is injected into the child, hoping that when he grows up, he will understand ' ahambrahmasmi'. In the *karma-japa* ceremony, the father utters the word, '*vaak*' three times in the child's right ear. Vak represents veda . Three times to say 'let rg.veda enter the child and purify it' 'let yajur veda enter the child and purify it' and 'let sama veda enter the child and purify it'. In the *iannapaasana* ceremony, the child is fed curd, honey and ghee and the father says, when he feeds curd, 'I am giving you bhoo-loka', when he feeds honey, he says' I am giving you bhuvarkala' and when he feeds ghee, he says' I am giving you suvaarkala" ; It is an expression of good wishes for the child to possess everything in life. At the time of delivery, the father does *prokshana*' (sprinkles water) praying to prana-devata, so that *praasootika vaayu* would effect easy delivery – "O, Indra – referring to prana devata – from the mother who is the ocean bring out the child like the waves without destroying the mother'. A homa (sacrificial fire ceremony) is done even before the umbilical cord is cut; the father keeps the baby on his lap and prays to various devatas for the longevity, healthy life, prosperity and continuity of the cultural and spiritual tradition. In Brhadaranyaka mantra 6.4.28, the father glorifies the child, 'You have out-shone your father and your grand-father. You have reached the extreme limit of attainment through your splendour, fame and brahmavarchas (brahmanical power). The husband also thanks the wife, "You have done a great job. You have given us a child'. Eating food is called *prsaana-agnihotra*' and bits of cooked rice are put in the mouth as offering to the five aspects of prana - prana, apana, vyana, udana ,

samana – and the eating is regarded as offering to *vaisvanara devata*, the presiding deity of digestion.

## Section 70 - Illness Looked Upon As Tapas

Brhadaranyaka V.xi.1 advises us to look upon illness as an opportunity to practice austerity or penance (*tapas*). ‘Tapas’ means willfully subjecting the body to discomfort or pain. adopting an attitude of prayer. It is a training to do without comforts, to develop the capacity to bear the opposites of material conditions and facilities with equanimity and get a sense of self-satisfaction when the attempt is successful. In this mantra, by the words, “pretam agnou abhyaavahadhati’ cremation is indicated as the proper funeral for a grahastha’s dead body. If illness one knows will send in death, one is advised to look upon the journey of the dead body as vanaprastha asrama.

## Section 71 - Meaning of “Saakshi-Bhashyam”

We come across statements in the Sastra that that our mind is illumined by sakshi (is *saakshi-bhaasyam*). . Similarly it is said that the dream world is sakshi-bhashyam. Sakshi is not the knower-consciousness. ‘Illumines’ means ‘made known’. So, we cannot attribute any act of knowing to sakshi. So, what we mean by saying that sakshi illumines or witnesses the mind and by saying that the sakshi illumines or witnesses the dream is that in the presence of sakshi, cidabhasa is formed in the mind and cidabhasa pervades the vrittis in the mind and by that process, objects of the external world or objects of the dream world mistaken to exist outside the mind are perceived.. Similarly, when we say that our mind is self-evident, what we mean is that as and when a thought arises, cidabhasa pervades it and that is how we become aware of our own thoughts The example for the expression ‘sakshi illumines the mind’ or ‘sakshi illumines the dream’ is the sun and the reflected sunlight. The mirror is bright on account of the reflected sunlight but we do not say that the reflected sunlight illumines the mirror; we say that the sun illumines the mirror.

## Section 72 - Philosophical Interpretation of Rg. Veda

1. (a). Hinduism is not pantheism or animism or paganism. If we go by Visishtadvaita or dwaita, it is monotheism. For Visishtadvaita the universe and the souls of living beings with separate consciousness of their own are the body of the One Supreme Being personified as Lord Narayana. For Dwaita, the universe and the living beings are separate from Lord Narayana and the living beings are dependent souls. But if we go by Advaita Vedanta, Hinduism is not even monotheism. It is centred on one and only all pervading Supreme Being of the nature of Existence- Consciousness- Infinity, called Brahman. This is not a personal God but a formless, attributeless, all pervading, non-dual entity, identical with consciousness of living beings. The world that is experienced which includes the bodies and minds of human beings world is a combination of the all pervading Existence aspect of Brahman and unreal names and forms superimposed on It. by an unreal power called Maya. Even this is there only on the empirical plane. On the plane of absolute reality, i.e., for Brahman, there is no world at all there is no world at all. The intelligent cause that visualises creation and guides Maya is Iswara, an unreal semblance of Brahman-consciousness in Maya. Owing to Maya's power of veiling and projecting, living beings, ignorant of their true nature as Brahman, regard themselves as limited individuals, separate from Brahman, the outer world and other individuals and undergo a cycle of action, enjoyment, suffering, births and deaths, called samsara. Liberation from samsara consists in the realisation of their identity with Brahman. The knowledge of identity with Brahman requires an undisturbed, concentrated mind. Spiritual practices to refine the mind consist of worship of and meditation on Iswara. But since Iswara also is not a personal god and only a principle, scriptures provide a variety of forms as symbols of Iswara in various cosmic aspects. The Rg Vedic hymns are addressed to such deities. If they are worshipped with the notion that they are real gods, it becomes polytheism. But if they are worshipped as symbolic representations of Iswara, it becomes the spiritual practice to refine the mind.

(b) The Vedas in four compilations called Rg., Yajur, Sama and Atharva Veda), in not very clearly demarcated divisions called Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. Samhitas are hymns (mantras) in praise of deities (*devas*). Brahmanas are commentaries on the mantras and description of sacrifices to be performed along with the chanting of mantras in praise of the devas... Upanishad is the philosophical portion, at the last part of the Vedas. Aranyakas stand between Brahmanas and Upanishads and contain portions partaking of the nature of both but is generally regarded as Vedic literature relating to Upasana (meditation). ( For example, Aitereya Aranyaka 3.2.3 – “This is this Paramatma indeed that the votaries of the Rg. veda meditate upon in the great Ukhta, the Adhvaryus in fire, the Chandogas in Mahavrata; Him in the heaven, Him in the Akasa, Him in the waters; in the osadis; in all beings. That One they call Brahman”. )

2. (a) The misconception that Hinduism is polytheistic arose from the interpretation of the Vedic gods as real entities. Madwacarya selected about forty hymns of the Rg. Veda and formulated a philosophical interpretation of the Vedic hymns. This approach was adopted later by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Aurobindo. In a recent Malayalam treatise, called ‘Tattvamasi’, on the same lines, Sukumar Azhikode has shown that the Samhitas are the forerunners of the philosophy of the Upanishads. The divinities (*devas, devatas*) to whom mantras are addressed are not personal gods but the ancient rishis’ poetic description of the One Supreme Being and Its manifestation as the cosmos. The negation of any idea of personalisation is evidenced by the fact that Vedic mantras equate all deities with the one Supreme Being and where when any one deity is praised the mantras talk of that deity as all deities or as the universe or as pervading the universe or as controlling the universe, as shown below.

(b). Dirghamas sukta ( Rg. veda.1.164.46) - . “They call this deity Indra, Mitra, Agni, the divine Suparna and Garuda). That which is one and which is Existence the wise call by many names (*ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*) - as Agni, Yama, Matarisvan etc. (The

same idea occurs in Yaska's Nirukta (7.4) – “The one only atma is worshipped in many names. All the deities are like limbs of the one Atma”.) Sukla Yajurveda (Vajaneya samhita) 32.1 known as Tadeva sukta (That alone hymn) - “ Agni is that, Aditya is That, Vayu is That, Chandramas is That, Light is That, Brahma is That, .....”. Atharva Veda 13.4.20-21 - “To him who knows this God simply as One. Neither second nor third nor fourth is He called. Neither fifth nor sixth nor seventh. Neither eighth nor ninth nor tenth is He called. He oversees all – what breathes and what breathes not. To Him goes the conquering (supreme) power; He is the One, the One alone. In Him all deities become One alone” Skambasukta (10.7.) and Uccishtasukta (11.7) of Atharva Veda talk of the One Supreme Power. Skambasukta says that the knowledge of all the devatas is the same. Rg. veda 3.55 says repeatedly in 22 mantras that the divinity of all the deities and their greatness are the same. This sukta reveals the only one all pervading caitanyam by which lightning flashes, plants blossom, the sun rises and sets. In Rg. Veda 10.114. 4-5. The seer's poetic imagination sees the atma as the auspicious-winged bird (*suparna*) which pervades the whole universe and repeats the statement that the one is imagined by the saints as many. Rg. mantra 4.40.5 which talks of *hamsa* referring to Aditya says that he exists as the light for the earth, as *vayu* in the antariksha and as the consciousness caitanyam in man. And ends with the statement “you are the only reality and the creator of waters, of rays, of truth and mountains”. Rg. Veda 8.52.2 talks of Agni, Surya and Dawn (*Ushas*) being the same and repeats the seminal Vedic refrains of the one appearing as many. Rg. Veda 3.5.4 talks of Agni becoming Mitra, Varuna and Vayu . Rg. Veda 3.54.8 – “One that is all (*visvam ekam*) is the Lord of the moving and the steady, of what walks, what flies – this multiform creation”. Rg Veda 1.89.10– “Aditi is the space, the antariksha, and the life source and support of all”. Atharva veda 4.16– “ Whatever a man does, whether he stands, or moves secretly or lies down or gets up or whispers, Varuna knows Whatever transaction takes place, He is there as the third. This earth and the space are His. His two sides are the two oceans. At the same time, He is inherent in every drop of water. Varuna is omniscient –

*sarvajna* – and the inner controller of all”. Rg. mantra 1.2. 17 – “ The entire universe is encompassed in the steps of Vishnu”.

(c) There is also direct negation of the idea of deities being different entities. In Hiranyagarbha sukta, Rg. Veda 10.121.1-10, an intelligent seeker asks, “To which deity (*Deva*) are we to offer havis (*kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema*)? The Deva who is the creator of all beings and is the support of heaven and earth and who alone was before creation, the Deva who is the source of life and consciousness, the Deva whose command all the gods obey, the Deva whose shadow is mortality and immortality?” The devatas of the sukta is “*kaha*”, the word of interrogation – which means, in reality, there is no deity at all other than the Supreme Being.

(d) These are the forerunners of the Upanishad declaration that there is only one reality which manifests or appears as many unreal forms. . The negation of the multiplicity is explicit in the Upanishads. In Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 3.9.1-9, we have the Vigadha Yagnavalkya dialogue starting with the question, “How many deities are there?” and ending with the question and answer “Which is the one Deity?” “The vital force. It is Brahman, which is called Tyat (That)”.Taittiriya Upanishad 1.5.1. “It is Brahman; it is the atma. The other gods are the limbs”.Kathopanishad 2.2.2 – “ As the moving (sun) He dwells in heaven; (as air) He pervades all and dwells in the inter-space (*antariksha*); as Fire He resides on the Earth; as Soma He stays in a jar; He lives among men. He lives among Gods; He dwells in Truth; He dwells in space; He is born in water. He takes birth from the Earth. He is born in the sacrifice; He emerges from the mountains; He is unchanging; He is great”. Wherever non-dualism is spoken of, it goes without saying that there is nothing like many deities. Brhadaranyaka 4.4.19 (also Kathopanishad) 2.1.11- “*na iha naanaa asti kincana*). He who sees differences, as it were, goes from death to death”; (Mandukya karika- “This birthless becomes differentiated through Maya, and it does in no other way than this. For should it become multiple in reality, the immortal will undergo mortality”); Chandogya

Upanishad 6.2.1 “One only without a second (*ekam va advitiyam*). Chandogya 3.14.1 “All this is Brahman (*sarvam khalu idam Brahma*). Mandukya Upanishad 2. “All this is Brahman” (*sarvam hi etat Brahma*). Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 2.1.20 “The vital force is truth and It is the Truth of truth”. Brhadaranyaka 4.4.20 – “It should be realised in one form only”.

3. (a). In the priesthood dominated ritual oriented period of the Brahmanas, what, in the Samhitas, were figurative presentations of the all pervading Supreme Being and Its manifestation as the cosmos in the Samhitas got converted to physical performance of elaborate rituals involving offerings to various gods regarded as anthropomorphic persons with a view to acquiring wealth and prosperity on earth and a life of pleasure in heaven and, in Puranas, stories are woven around them. Offerings which started with ghee, milk and cooked cereals, passing through soma juice, deteriorated into meat involving the slaughter of animals, For example, the Asawamedha yagna of the Rg veda is the contemplation of atma caitanyam envisioned as effulgence. In the Brahmanas, Asawamedha yagna becomes a physical sacrifice in which the horse is slaughtered and the meat is offered to the deities. Still later, more than 350 domestic animals and 250 wild animals were required.). Like that, not being able to understand the metaphysical significance of the question “kah” in Rg. Veda 10.121.1-10, the later authors of Brahmana verses interpreted “kah” to mean Prajapati and reserved a yajna called “*kaayam*” for this devata. .Similarly, where Rg. veda 1.140.1 talks of knowing the one who is pure, dispels darkness and rides in the white shining chariot, the implied meaning of which is the one and only atma caitanyam, Samana interprets it as a commandment to cover the sacrificial fire with firewood. In the same way, the Infinite Brahman, called Purusha, becomes, in Puranas, Vishnu sleeping on the bed which is a serpent called Anantasesha in the milky ocean. The all pervading aspect of the Supreme Being is presented as the avatara, Vamana, covering the earth and heaven with two steps and Mahabali having cornered to offer his own head for the third step.

(b) In the Mahabharata, at the end of Asvamedhaparvam, 91<sup>st</sup> chapter, yajnas that involve violence are condemned. Rg. Veda 8.70.3 says that Indra cannot be reached by yajna karma. Even in the Brahmanas and Aranyakas, we come across references, presumably belonging to their earlier phase, to atma and atmajnanam and denigration of actual performance of sacrifices. Taittiriya brahmana (3.10.8) says that atma is omnipotent. Aitereya second aranyakam starts with “This is the path, This is karma, This is Brahman, This is existence”. The Satapatha brahmana (14.,3.2.1) which says that the atma of all beings is yagna echoes the Rg. Mantra (1.164.35) “yagna is the navel of the universe”. Satapatha brahmana (2.2.4.7.8 . 10.5.3.3) specifies that, above all, yagna is meditation and it should be continued throughout life and, in 10.5.4, 16, it says that by physical yagna one cannot attain moksha. We see the denigration of rituals as kama karma in passages such as in Chandogya 5.10.3 , Brhadaranyaka 3.8.10, Brahadaranyaka 4.4.10, Mundakopnishad 1.2.7-10. Isavasya Upanishad 9, etc. (Sacrifices and rituals that are denigrated refer to those done as kama karma, sacrifices conducted for obtaining material benefits, here or hereafter and not the nitya naimittika karma performed as nishkama karma for acquiring purity of mind, as preparation for the pursuit of jnana yoga, cf. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.22).

4. (a) The Samhitas are the initial exposition of atma vidya in the symbolic and poetic language used by the seers who saw the invisible divine revelation and transmitted it to mankind. The Upanishads negated the ritualism of the Brahmanas and rejuvenated the sprouts of atma vidya of the Samhitas and gave direct, though often poetic, expression to atma vidya in all its range and subtlety. Upanishads shine as the loftiest metaphysical expression of human thought in the form of the philosophy of atma vidya but the nucleus of it can be found in the Samhitas by any one who studies them in depth. (Satapatha Brahmana 10.3.5.12 talks of the Upanishads as the essence of the Vedas).

(b) The horse of the Asvamedha yagna of the Samhitas is not a four-legged animal. A deep study of the suktas of the Rg. veda 1.112.163, relating to the Asvamedha yagna will show that the sacrificial horse is nothing but a figurative description of effulgence which is how atma caitanyam is often referred to. To this we can juxtapose Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.1.1 – “ The head of the sacrificial horse is the dawn, its eye the sun, its *prana* the air, its open mouth the fire called Vaisvanara, its body the year, its back the heaven, its belly the sky, its hoof the earth, its sides the four quarters, its ribs the intermediate quarters, its parts the seasons, its joints the months and fortnights, its feet the days and nights, its bones the stars, its flesh the clouds, its half-digested food is the sand, its blood-vessels the rivers, its liver and spleen the mountains, its hairs the herbs and trees. Its fore-part is the ascending sun, its hind-part is the descending sun, its yawning is the lightning, its shaking the body is the thundering, its making water the raining and its neighing is voice”.

(c). In the Samhitas, we come across deities called Vishnu, Surya (Savita), Varuna, Agni, Indra etc. A deep study of the relevant suktas will show that they are not anthropomorphic personalities but figurative and symbolic representation of the Supreme Being or Its aspects in cosmic manifestation. (In the Brahmanas, they become persons and in Puranas stories are built around them.) The meanings intended by the seers of the Samhitas will be clear if we go by Yaska’s Nirukta which is a commentary on the Vedic terminology called Nikandu. According to Niruktam, “Vishnu” means the rays representing atma caitanyam pervading the universe; “ Savita” means creator ( of the universe); “Surya” means the Inner Controller inherent in all beings. The Surya of the Rg.veda 1.150.10 is not the physical sun but one who is beyond tamas and papa. If we go by Rg.veda 10.85.3, 10.85.4, 10.116.3, 1.1638.3, 1.179.5, 1.179.10, and 1.107.9 which talk of the Soma juice drunk by the knowers of Brahman, as a thing to be drunk by the heart and as not a thing accessible to mere mortals, we will understand that the Soma juice prescribed as offering in sacrifice is not the juice of a creeper. According to Rg.veda 4.5.3, “Agni” is one who has gained the most secret knowledge. Cow (*go*) means rays. A comparative study of mantras 1, 2, and 3 of the 62<sup>nd</sup>

sukta of the first mandala of the Rg veda and the 5<sup>th</sup> mantra and 18<sup>th</sup> mantra of the 23<sup>rd</sup> sukta of the second mandala will show that what the story of cows being stolen and hidden in a cave by an asura and the cow slaying the asura is the figurative expression of Ajnaanam (ignorance of one's true nature) being destroyed by atma jnanam (knowledge of the Supreme Being). This is also the meaning of the story of Vrtra being slain by Indra. Very often, we come across prayer for “*dravinam*”. But what is referred is not secular wealth. Rg. veda 2.23.15 will show that the prayer is for the spiritual splendour obtained by atma-jnanam. In Rg. mantra 1.163.1 “horse” stands for the power of the intellect. The “Indra” of Rg. Mantra 8.92.2 is also atma jnanam that destroys ajnanam (knowledge of atma) that dispels ignorance. (The “Indra” of Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 2.5.19 we know is none other than Brahman itself.).

5. (a) Certain suktas of The Veda Samhitas anticipate the philosophy of the Upanishads, The rishi Dirghatamas says ( Rg. Veda 1.125.5 ) that atma is *acittam* i.e. not accessible to human intellect – which means that atma cannot be comprehended as an external or internal object and can only be recognised intuitively as oneself. To this, we can juxtapose Taittiriya Upanishad 2.9.1 – “Words, along with the mind, return, unable to reach Brahman (yato vaco nivartante apraapya manasa saha)” and Kenopanishad 1.6 – “That which man does not comprehend with the mind (yat manasa na manute)” etc. In Yajurveda 31.2, there are mantras asserting the immanence as well as the transcendentalism of the Supreme Being; they talk of the Supreme Being being all pervading in the universe and at the same time being beyond space and time. The all pervasiveness and immanence are elaborately discussed in Brahadaranyaka Upanishad third chapter, eighth section and transcendentalism can be seen in 3.9.26, 4.3.15 and 4.4.16, Kathopanishad 2.1.12-13, Mundaka 2.1.2 etc. In Advaita Vedanta, Brahman, the Existence-Consciousness-Infinity being the satya sub-stratum of the mithya nama roopa is immanence and advaitatvam and asangatvam are transcendentalism.

*Ombhoorbhuwassuvah, tatsavituvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo nah*  
*pracodayaat* - is a prayer. Superficially, it is an invocation of the Sun God (Suryadevata) –  
 “We meditate upon that sacred effulgent Sun God who illumines (activates) all our  
 intellects”. But if we go by root-derivation and implied meaning (*lakshyartha*) of the  
 words, we arrive at a philosophical interpretation – “Dhimahi” = We meditate upon. “Tat  
 savitu varenyam” = the sacchidananda swaroopan of the creator of the universe. Tat = the  
 Existence aspect ., Bargha = eflulent ( from ‘bharjate’ = that which burns down darkness,  
 i.e. destroys ignorance) = the consciousness aspect . “Varenyam” = literally, that which is  
 worth choosing by us, what is it that is chosen by all? Everyone chooses only ananda,  
 poornatvam ; so ananda swaroopam. “Tat bhargo varenyam”, together = sacchidananda  
 swaroopam . (Of) “ Savitu” = the creator ( sooyate iti savita). “Devasya” = the Lord who is  
 also the intelligent cause of the universe. “Tat savitu varenyam bhargo devasya”, together,  
 the saccidananda swaroopam of that Lord, Iswara, who is both the material and intelligent  
 cause of the universe). “Yah” = which saccidaananda swaroopam, “Pracodayat” illumines  
 (activates by giving satta and spoorti , existence and consciousness), Nah diyo” our  
 intellects . Thus, according to this interpretation, “tatsavituvarenyam bargho devasya”  
 would indicate Brahma caitanyam and “diyo yo na prachoayat” would indicate atma  
 caitanyam.. Thus the mantra would read “Let us meditate on that Brahman, who, as  
 Iswara is the creator and whose nature is the existence-consciousness- infinity  
 (sacchidananda ), non-different from the consciousness of our own intellects which are  
 illumined by Brahman).” And so, the prayer becomes an *abheda dyanam .*”, with a  
 meaning similar to that of mahavakyams like “prajnanam brahma” of Aitereya  
 Upanishad, “ayam atma brahma” of Mandukya Upanishad, “ahambrahmasmi” of  
 Brhadaranyaka Upanishad and “tattvamasi” of Chandogya Upanishad.

(c) As already stated, Dirghatamas sukta (Rg. Veda 1.164.46) corresponds to  
 Brhadaranyaka 4.4.19, though the Advaita Vedanta interpretation goes further and

relegates the entire universe including all the gods and all other beings and even Iswara, to the category of mithya.

(i) Purusha sukta (Rg.veda 10.96, also in Atharva veda 19.6, also in Yajurveda Chapter 31) – “A thousand heads has He, the Purusha, also a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. He envelops the earth on all sides; He pervades it and is beyond it as far as ten fingers can count. (‘Thousand’ stands for ‘countless’ and ‘being beyond as far as ten fingers’ stands for ‘transcendence’.). Purusha is this, entire all that has been in the past, all that is coming in the future and all that exists. He is the ruler of immortality. He is the totality of all beings.

What we see here is all the greatness of Purusha but yet there is more than this. One fourth of Him only evolves in the universe. Thence, as He spread in all directions, appeared all those creations that eat food and all those that eat not. Three fourth of Him rises above as the Infinite.

This Purusha shines like the sun beyond tamas. By knowing Him one becomes immortal. Other than knowing Him, there is no way of conquering mortality. Though unborn It appears to born in diverse ways.” (When all pervasiveness and being the past and the future and transcending all are talked about, the reference is to immanence and transcendence of time, space and entity.) (In the eight Rk.of this sukta, creation is spoken of as the result of the yagna of the all pervading one (*Purusha*). The creation cycle is said to be endless.). “Both the Purushasukta and the Hiranyagarbhasukta (cited earlier) describe the Saguna form of Brahman pervading the universe, inhering in it and modifying into names and forms. We can also see in them the idea of transcendental Brahman being the adhishtanam of the nama roopa.

(ii) To these we can juxtapose Brahadaranyaka 1.2.3 – “He (Virat) differentiated himself in three ways, making the sun the third form and air the third form. So this Prana (Virat) is divided in three ways. His head is the east and his arms that (north-east) and that (south-

east). And his hind part is the west, his hip-bones that (north-west) and that (south-west), his sides the south and the north, his back heaven, his belly the sky, and his breast this earth. ...”. Mundaka 2.1.4 – “The indwelling atma of all is surely He of whom heaven is the head. The moon and sun are the two eyes, the directions are the two ears, the revealed Vedas are the speech, air is the heart and it is He from whose two feet emerged the earth”; Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.11 – “All this is in front is but Brahman, the immortal. Brahman is on the right, as well as the left; above and below is extended Brahman alone. This world is nothing but Brahman, the highest.” “Brhadaranyaka 1.4.7 - “It differentiated into name and form..... This Self has entered into these bodies....”; Mundaka 2.2.2 – “ That ..... in which fixed all the worlds as well as the dwellers of the earth is this Immutable Brahman”; Mundaka 2.2.5 – “Know that atma alone that is one without a second, on which are strung heaven, the earth and the inter-space, the mind and the vital force together with all the other organs”; Chandogya Upanishad 7.1.3 – “I have heard from masters like you that he who knows Brahman transcends sorrow”; Kaivalya Upanishad 9 – “He alone is everything which is in the past, which is the present and which will be in the future. Knowing Him one overcomes mortality. There is no other path for liberation; Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.1 – “ The wise ones who know this supreme abode, this Brahman, in which is placed this universe and which shines holy, having become desireless ....overcome rebirth”; Mundaka 3.2.8 – “As rivers, flowing down, become indistinguishable on reaching the sea by giving their names and forms, so also the illumined soul, having become freed from name and form, reaches the self-effulgent Purusha that is higher than the higher (Maya) .The immanence and transcendentalism of the Supreme Being is described in Brhadaranyaka Third chapter, seventh section and in 3.9.26. and 4.4.16., Isavasya Upanishad, 1,8 From the Advaita point of view, immanence of Brahman in the universe is in the form of Existence which is the sub-stratum of names and forms. Transcendentalism of Brahman is in the form of being the sole reality, unrelated to the mithya names and forms of the universe. In the Saguna form, as Iswara, all pervasiveness is in the form of manifested

nama roopa, immanence is in the form of being the Inner Controller (antaryami) in the universe and transcendentalism is in the form of the omniscient and omnipotent creator and ruler of the universe.

(e) The Nasadiyasukta (Rg. Veda 10 129) talks of the state before creation and the incomprehensibility of creation. –

“ There was neither non-existence nor existence (*na asat asit n sa tadanim*). There was neither air nor space. What is it that is covering and where? In whose protection? Was water there, unfathomable, deep? Death then existed not. Yet, nor was there life immortal. There was no knowledge of day and night.

That which was the One. (the non-dual ) breathed without air, by its own nature. Apart from It there was nothing whatsoever. Darkness there was, at first concealed in darkness. All this was water unseen.

That which was covered by Void, that One stirred, by the might of Its tapas and came to be. Desire, the first sprout of mind, arose.

Sages who searched within their hearts discovered the connection of sat in asat. Their line (of vision) was extended across. What was above? What was below? There were begetters; there were mighty forces, the material universe (*swadha*) below, impulse above.

Who verily knows, who can declare whence it was born and whence comes this creation?

The gods are subsequent in the creation. (Even they cannot know); who knows then whence it first came into being?

He, the first origin of creation, whether he formed it or did not form it?

He who is presiding over it all indeed knows, or maybe He does not.”

(To this, we can add Rg.Veda 10.81.6 - "Where was the place, which was the primeval material, and of what kind, from which Vishwakarma (the creator of the universe) created the world and disclosed the heavens, he who is totally eye?" Hiranyagarbhgha sukta cited earlier (Rg.veda 10.121). Yajurveda Vajaneyasamhita 32.8 - "The loving sage beholds that Mysterious Existence wherein the universe come to have one home; therein unites and therefrom issues the whole; the Lord is warp and woof of created beings" Agamarshana sukta - "This world was brought into being by that luminous god, the impeller of all action in accordance with the laws of creation and the law of life. Primordial matter lying in darkness began to evolve. By this evolution, the great expanse of matter began to gain momentum. From this movement came into existence space and time.....The sustainer of the world caused the sun and moon, the luminous bodies and the earth, the heavenly region, as in the previous cycles of creation".)

(f) The Nasadiya sukta will bring to our mind Upanishad passages such as "Taittiriya 2.7.1 "In the beginning all this was the unmanifested (asat). From that emerged the manifested (sat). That Brahman created Itself by Itself." Taittiriya 2.6.1 -He (the atma) wished, 'Let me be many, let me be born'. He undertook a deliberation (*sah tapah atapyata*) .Having deliberated, he created all that exists"; Kathopanishad 1.3.11 - "The Unmanifested is higher than Mahat; the Purusha is higher than the Unmanifested.". Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.3 - "That (Existence) visualised". Mundaka Upanishad 1.1.9 - "From Him who is omniscient in general and all-knowing in detail and whose tapah consists in the exercise of His omniscience evolve Hiranyagarbha and this universe of nama roopa".

(g) From the point of view of Advaita Vedanta, one can see in this sukta the nucleus of the ideas of Paramatma, Iswara and Maya which we come across later in the Upanishads. "There was neither existence nor non-existence can be taken to refer to the paramarthika plane beyond the avyakta (Unmanifested) and vyakta (Manifest) conditions of Maya. (For Brahman, there is no universe). "By tapas (deliberation) He awoke and desire arose "can

only refer to Iswara, because Brahman is amanah (devoid of mind). The entity that covering what was there can refer to Maya. “He who is presiding over it all indeed knows” from whom this creation came into being ...He verily knows” should refer to the omniscient Iswara. “Maybe He does not” can refer to Brahman, because Brahman-consciousness is not a knower-consciousness. When we look at the Rg.veda mantra 10.81.6, we are in the midst of the riddle, “Since space, time and matter are themselves are part of creation, where was the creator? When did he create? Out of what did he create?” and we have to take recourse to the Advaita Vedanta concept of unreal creation.

### Section 73 - Sastra Is Basis For Any Inferential Proposition In Vedanta

1. Brahma caitanyam (the original consciousness) can never be objectified. – Vide Mundaka “adresyam, agrahyam.....” .Taittiriya 2.4.1 - “Yatho vaco nivartante aprapyaa manasa saha” , Kena 5 “yat manasa na manute....” , Kena 3 – “Eyes do not reach That nor do words and not even the mind’. But we infer that we can recognize a changeless consciousness other than the mind in us, which expresses as a constant I in and through the changes of our body and mind we can infer from avasta traya vivieka etc. We also infer that there must be a consciousness in us from which the mind derives its knower-consciousness, because Sastra says that mind is matter, vide Chandogya 6.5.4 and 6.6.2. That consciousness is the Brahma caitanyam we know only from Sastra. Apart from mahavakyas, we have Katopanishad 2.2.12, 13, Svetasvatara 2.14, , 3.7, 4.17, , Brahadaranyaka 4.,4.23, Taittiriya 2.2.1, Kaivalya 23, Mundaka Upanishad etc. E.g., Mundaka describes the transcendental, all pervading Brahman (called Purusha) in the first section of the second chapter and in 2.1.10, says that he who knows this immortal Brahman as existing in the heart destroys here the knot of ignorance. In the second Chapter also, having described Brahman in 2.2.4 and 2.2.5, in 2.2.7, it says, “ That (that Brahman) which is omniscient and all-knowing which is of this kind is seated in the space within the luminous city of the heart.”Ya

sarvajnah sarvavid asya esha mahimaa bhuvī divye brahmapure hi esha vyomne atma pratishthitah” Having described the nature and glory of Brahman, the Upanishad says that paramatma is installed (i.e. available for recognition) in the heart of everyone. The heart is called the residence of Brahman, because in the heart only the mind is located and in the mind alone Brahman is manifest as the sakshi caitanyam. Really speaking, Brahman is not located in the heart, Brahman, as sastra tells us, is all pervading, vide Taittiriya 2.1 – “...anantam”, Swesvatara 3.11, 3.21, Mundaka 1.1.6). The all pervading cannot be confined to any particular location. Brahman is everywhere, but only in the heart (i.e., in the mind within the hear) Brahman is manifest. The Upanishads says ‘the heart is shining’, because within the heart alone mind is there and in the mind there are thoughts and thoughts are like mirrors reflecting the sakshi caitanyam in the form of cidabhasa like pools of water reflecting the sun. The Upanishad calls Brahman ‘manomaya h’ because you cannot objectify the Brahma caitanyam ( the sakshi); you can recognize it only through the cidabhasa., the reflection of the sakshi caitanyam in the thoughts arising in the mind.

(vide Sankaracarya’s commentary – “ ....the omniscient, the effulgent One of such glory, illuminated by all the states of the intellect, this being the place where Brahman is evermanifest in its nature of Consciousness; in the space that is within the heart, Brahman is perceived as though seated in that .....; for any going or coming or staying, in any other sense is impossible for one who is all-pervasive like space. He, the atma, as seated there is revealed variously through the mental states; and hence He is associated with the mind, being conditioned by it”. (“ Sa esha sarvajna mahimaa devah (divye\_) dhyotanou iti sarvaboudhdha-pratyayakrta dhyotane, (brahmapure) brahmanah atra caitanyaswaroopena nitya abhivyaktvaat brahmanah puram hrdayapundarikam tasmin-aakase hrdayapundariika-madhyasthe, pratishthitah iva upalabhyate.. Na hi aakasavsat sarvagaytasya gatih aagatih pratishthou anyathaa sambhavati”). The same idea is reiterated in Mundaka 2.2.9 – “In the supreme bright

sheath is Brahman, free from taints and without parts. It is pure and it is the light of lights.” (“Hiranmaye pare kose nirajam brahma nishkalam; yat subhram jyotishaam jyotih-tat-aatmavidah-viduh”). Sankaracarya’s commentary- “In the supreme bright sheath’; it is called a sheath because of its being the place for the realization of the nature of the atma, just as a scabbard is in the case of a sword. It is supreme because It is the inmost of all and shining, being illumined with the intellectual perceptions.”)

Thus, logic can carry us to the point where we can recognize a consciousness other than the mind. But that that consciousness is none other than the infinite all-pervading Brahman, we have to know only from Sastra.

2. By observing the regressive transformation of objects (e.g., pot being broken and becoming potsherd and potsherd decaying and becoming earth), we can infer that while attributes of objects change, the existence of an object in some form or other remains. But it is only from Sastra that we come to know that (a) existence is the essence and the reality, (b) that our experience of a world of objects is due only to the superimposition of nama roopa consisting of attributes on existence which is the substratum (c) that that existence is all pervading, existing not only in objects but outside, (d) that Existence is also Consciousness and (e) that that Existence- Consciousness, called Brahman is not different from our inner consciousness called atma.
3. Sastra says that Brahman is non-dual, eternal, changeless, devoid of instruments of cogitation and action. From this, we have to understand that (i) the world we experience cannot have the same status and (ii) Brahman cannot be the actual creator. As regards the status of the world, we rely on Sastra – vide Taittiriya 2.6, which indicates three orders of reality, Brhadaranyaka 4.3.31,2.4.14,45.15, which qualifies the existence of things other than Brahman with the words, ‘as it were’, Brahadaranyaka 2.3.6, which calls Brahman as the Truth of truth, the praana (which stands for the universe) etc. As regards the actual creator, in the form of Iswara associated with

Maya, again, we have to rely on certain statements in the Upanishads, such as Swetasvatara 4.9, 4.10 etc.

4. We experience a universe of objects that exist. By our intellect, we cannot know that it consists of the sub-stratum of existence which is none other than Brahman and names and forms (nama roopa) superimposed on that sub-stratum and what are created and resolve later are only the superimposed nama roopa consisting of various attributes like shape, color, smell, emotions, thoughts etc. We know this only from Sastra, such as Kathopanishad 1.2.1, 2.2.8, 2.31, Brhadaranyaka 2.5.15, Mundaka 2.2.2, Chandogya 8.14.1, Taittiriya 3.10.3, Swetasvatara 1.8, Brhadaranyaka 1.4.7, Chandogya 6.1.4,5,6,6.3.2,, 8.4.1 etc.
5. Upanishad says in mahavakyams etc. that our real nature is the infinite Brahman. But we identify with our body mind complex and regard ourselves as limited individuals. That is to say, we are ignorant of our real nature as Brahman. What is the ignorance due to? That we can know only from Sastra, such as Kaivalya Upanishad 12 and Krishna Upanishad 12. `Kaivalya 12, 13 – “ The jivatma deluded by Maya identifies with the body and does all actions ( which stands for all perceptions, feelings and thoughts) undergoes experiences in the waking state”, :”The jiva experiences pleasure and pain, by his own *maaya* ( i.e., mistaking the false to be true), in the dream world conjured by himself. The power of Maya to create ignorance of their Brahmatvam in jivas (avarana sakti) is indicated in Swetasvatara Upanishad 1.3 and 1.4.
6. Sastra declares that one who knows himself as Brahman attains Brahman. But we see bodies dying, while people are still in a state of ignorance. We also know that we have a mind, apart from the body. So, we have to conclude that the mind (sukhma sarira) continues after death and will have rebirths until it gets the knowledge of identity with Brahman. (cf. Katopanishad 2.2.7).
7. We observe, in life that there is suffering and enjoyment for people unrelated to their present actions, virtues and vices. Attributeless Brahman cannot be responsible for this

divergence. Nor can you attribute motive to Maya which is inert matter, vide Swetasvatara 4.10 which uses the term ‘prakriti’. (The word prakriti, borrowed from Sankhya philosophy refers to the material cause the universe.) That leaves Iswara. That it is not Iswara who is responsible for the unequal experiences of jivas and that our enjoyment and suffering are the result of our own actions and thoughts in our past lives we have to learn from Sastra. Vide Brahadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.6 – The man who has desires transmigrates , together with his karma, enjoys the results (in the other world) and he returns from that world to this world for (fresh) work.”; Prasna Upanishad – Udana ( a sub-division of prana that carries the jiva in its travel after death) leads the jiva to a virtuous world as a result of (his) virtue and to sinful world as a result of (his) sin and to the human world as a result of both (*punyena punyam lokam paapena paapam ubhayam eva manushyalokam*). Having talked of the blissful state of sushupti., Kaivalya Upanishad 14 says tat, due to the karma of past janmas, the jiva comes back to the swapna and jagrat avasthas from the blissful state of sushupti ( to undergo suffering and enjoyment).

8. We know that we have a knower-consciousness in the form of ahamkara. That this ahamkara is the inert mind made sentient by its closeness to Brahma caitanyam (in the sense of its being subtle) we know only from Sastra, such as Taittiriya 3.71 – “Because if the space-like, all pervading Brahman was not there, who could inhale and exhale?.....This one, this supreme atma which resides in the heart blesses everyone with consciousness and happiness”; Swetasvatara 6.11 – “Hidden in all beings is the non-dual Effulgent One. It is all pervading.....It resides in all jivas; it is the sakshi; it is what makes (the mind) conscious (*cetayita*). Kenopanishad 1.2 talks of atma as the mind of the mind. Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.10 and Kathopanishad 2.2.15, having described the original consciousness in a poetic language, say, “It alone is the light.... It is by Its light all else shines”. Kathopanishad 2.2.9 and 10 talk of the atma inside all beings assuming separate shapes in accordance with different forms, like fire assuming

the form of each log of wood and air assuming the shape of the objects in which it is enclosed. Brahadaranyaka 2.5.18 says Brahman entered the bodies as a bird (the word 'bird' is interpreted as the sukshma sarira.) In 2.5.19, it is said that Brahman transformed Himself in accordance with each form; and that form of His is for making Him known (*roopam roopam pratiroopo behoove, tadasya roopam praticakhanaaya*). Chandogya Upanishad 7.3.2 talks of Brahman entering into the three gods in the form of the jivatma of each individual being.

9. Having been taught that the transmigration of jiva is due to the punya papa of jivas and punya papa is the result of the acts and thoughts of jivas, the question arises, "What about the first janma. What is it due to? If there is no jiva doing action and engaging in thoughts, there is no punya papa. If there is no punya papa jiva would not be born. Since this vicious circle leads to infinite regress, we have to say that the cycle of jivas, their actions and thought, punya papa and rebirth is without a beginning (it is anaadi). Similarly, Iswara, the creator has to exist somewhere but space itself is a nama roopa created by Iswara through Maya. This is, again is a vicious circle. Therefore, here also, we have to say that Iswara and Maya are anaadi. Swetasvatara Upanishad 1.9 says, in effect, "Jiva, Iswara and Maya are anaadi."
10. We suffer in samsara because of our identification with the body-mind complex and taking the world of nama roopa to be real. Sastra says that the means of liberation from samsara is negation of the sense of reality of the world that we perceive and knowledge of identity with Brahman (brahmasatyam jaganmithya). If our being body-mind complex and the world of nama roopa were real, we cannot be free of these by mere knowledge. Therefore it is logical to say that they are unreal. As cited in the main text and also earlier here, there are numerous texts to show that the world of nama roopa is unreal.
11. That the means of liberation is knowledge of our identity with Brahman, we know only from Sastra. Upanishad passages to this effect have been cited in the main text.

12. That liberation is possible in this very life we know only from Sastra. Upanishad passages to this effect have been cited in the main text.
13. That there is a Brahman which is of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Infinity and It is without any attributes, that itself we know only from Sastra. Upanishad passages conveying this idea have been cited in the main text.
14. There are two corollaries in respect of the means prescribed by Sastra for liberation from samsara, namely, disidentification from the body-mind complex and identification with Brahman – (i) He becomes free of the sancita karma pertaining to that body-mind complex which he has disowned. (ii) By virtue of identification with Brahman, he is no longer to be regarded as a karta or bhokta. Passage to this effect we get in Mundaka Upanishad 2. 2.8. But to know that prarabdha that remains after its exhaustion until the rise of knowledge continues we know only from Sastra, vide Chandogya Upanishad 6.14.2.
15. That when a jivanmukta dies (what is called videhamukti takes place), the sthoola, sukshma and karana sariras disintegrate (dissolves in the cosmos) and the caitanyam that is his real nature is merged in Brahma caitanyam, we know only from Sastra. Upanishad passages to this effect have been cited in the main text.
16. The question is often asked, “If the world is unreal, why does Sastra teach creation? The answer is that on the principle that you have to go the known from the unknown, and since a beginner is coming after experiencing a concrete world, Sastra goes along with him and talks of the creation and evolution of the world and later, when he advances in the learning, negates the nama roopa, as in “There is no diversity whatsoever in It”, “Not this, not this”) and teaches brahma satyam jaganmithya. This method is called *adhaaropa apavaada*. It is because ultimately, the whole world is to be dismissed as mithya that we find variations in the details of creation in various Upanishads. (For example, the order of creation in Taittiriya is space, air, fire, water,

earth, vegetation, food, man. In Chandogya, the order is fire, water, from water food, from food body and mind .In Aitereya, creation is simultaneous.)

## Section 74 - Departure Of Presiding Deities Of Indriyas When A Person Dies

When a person dies, the presiding deities of the indriyas withdraw from the sense organs. So, when he travels to the next world, after death, the sense organs are non-functional. So, until he takes rebirth in one of the worlds and the presiding deities return to the sense organs there is no memory or enjoyment. The punya papa of the karma and upasana done and vasanas acquired in that life are carried by this non-functioning sukshma sarira. - vide Brahadaranyaka 4.4.1 and 2.

## Section 75 - Step By Step Teaching Of Upahita Caitanyam

In Brhadaranyaka , from 3.7.2 to 3.8.11, the Upanishad leads us from the subtle principle of the universe (Hiranyagarbha, called *sootra*), from sootra to the causal principle ( Iswara, called *antaryami* and *aakasa*) – up to this, the vyaharika prapanca - and from akasa to the absolute , Brahman, called *aksharam* (the Immutable) – i.e., from the *samashti sukshma prapanca upahita caitanyam* to *samashti kaarana prapanca upahita caitanyam* and from the *samashti karana prapanca upahita caitanyam* to *nirupaadhika caitanyam*. (This is to teach us that the ultimate essence is nirguna Brahman, not any form of saguna Brahman). In 3.7.23, dealing with the Inner Controller, Iswara and 3.8.11, dealing with nirguna Brahman as” it is never the known, but is the Knower; there is no other Knower than He/It”, the description in the same terms indicates that Iswara, in His real nature is Brahman. There is only one Brahman on which the notions of jiva and Iswara are superimposed. In his commentaty on 3.8.12, which concludes the topic, Sankaracarya says, “What is the difference between them, the Immutable (*aksharam*) and the Internal

Ruler (*antaryaami*)?. Intrinsically there is neither difference nor identity among them, for they are by nature pure Consciousness.....The unconditioned Self (*nirupadhika atma*), being beyond speech and mind, devoid of attributes and one, is designated as ‘not this, not this’; when it has the limiting adjuncts (*upadhis*) of the body and organs, which are characterized by *avidya*, desire and work, It is called the *samsari jiva* and when the atma has the limiting adjunct of the power of eternal and unsurpassable knowledge (i.e. Maya), It is called the Internal Ruler, Iswara. The same atma, *nirupadhika*, absolute and pure, by nature, is called the Immutable, the Supreme. (*aksharam, para*). Similarly, having the limiting adjuncts of the bodies and organs of Hiranyagarbha, the Undifferentiated, the gods, the species, the individual, man, animal, spirits etc., the atma assumes the particular names and forms. Thus we have explained through the Sruti vakyam ‘It moves and does not move’ (Isavasya 5). In this light alone, such texts as ‘This is your atma (within all) (Brhadaranyaka 3.4.1,2 and 3.5.1), “He is the inner self of all beings” (Mundaka 2.1.4), “This (Brahman) is hidden in all beings”( Katho 1.3.12), “Thou art That” (Chandogya 5.8.7), ‘I myself am all this’ (Chandogya 7.25.1), ‘All this but the atma’( Chandogya 7.25.1) and ‘There is no other witness but He’ (Brhadaranyaka 3.7.23) will not become contradictory; in any other view they cannot be harmonised. Therefore the entities mentioned above differ only because of their limiting adjuncts, but not in any other manner, for all the Upanishads conclude “One only without a second” ( Chandogya 6.2.1).

By saying “*Vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam*”, Chandogya establishes that *kaaryam* (effect) is *mithya* and *kaaranam* (cause) alone is *satyam*. In the universe, every *karanam* itself is a *karyam* of something. By saying “*idam agra aasiit ekam eva advidiiyam*”, the Upanishad establishes that Brahman, the ultimate cause (Taittiriya 2.6, Chandogya 6.2.3) not being a *karyam*, is *satyam*. The first stage of teaching is that I is different from *anitya anatma*. (Waves which have location are different from the locationless water.) But we have to avoid *dwaitam*. So the final stage of teaching is that there is no *anatma* other than *atma*. (There is no wave other than water; what appears as wave is water only.) Infinite

existence-consciousness alone is the reality; anatma has no existence of its own. If gold is withdrawn there will be no ornament. Without Brahman, there will be no world for jivas. (*sa ya esho anima etat aatmyam idam sarvam tat satyam sa atma tattvamasi swetaketo* – Chandogya 6.8.7). The purpose of introducing srshti and later negating it (by the adhyaropa apavada method) is to teach *Brahma satyam jaganmithya*. But whenever creation, sustenance and dissolution are talked about, “Brahman is cause” means that as Existence, Brahman provides the sub-stratum and as Consciousness, in Its presence, cidabhasa is formed in Maya, enabling Iswara to do creation etc. Failing to reach Brahman, words along with the mind turn back (*yato vaco nivartante; apraapya mnasaa saha* (Chandogya 2.4.) .Therefore the upanishad takes recourse to this devious route.

## Section 76 - Claimant Of “Aham Brahmasmi”

*Pramaata* cannot claim to be Brahman. *Saakshi* cannot say, “I am Brahman” either, because sakshi is devoid of the instruments of speech and mind. It is the mixture of sakshi and pramata (with *cidabhasa*) that says, “I am Brahman” but the “I” in that statement refers to sakshi alone.

## Section 77 - Significance Of Negation Of Kosas In Pancakosa Viveka

While studying the *pancakosa viveka* in Taittiriya Upanishad, we can appreciate the significance of the successive stages of negation of the *kosas*. When sruti says that annamaya is atma it enables us to get rid of identification with wife, children etc.; my body is different from yours. (Incidentally, in karma kanda, one of the exceptions to the rule that one who does karma enjoys karmaphalam is the provision that if the father is ill, the son can do sandhyavandanam etc. on the father’s behalf, as a proxy; son does the karma and the phalam goes to the father.) Example for absence of disidentification with the family is the sanyasi. When annamaya is negated and manomaya and vijnamaya are said to be atma, we get rid of the fear of death and we can appreciate that if the physical body itself is atma,

when it dies there will be unexhausted karma and there will be I (the fallacies of someone else undergoing karmaphalam or karma going without karmaphalam.) When pranamaya is negated, we can appreciate the statements of people around when some one dies that prana has gone. When manmomaya and vijanamy are negated, we can appreciate that they are instruments that we use and what we use as instrument cannot be ourselves. When anandamaya is negated we can appreciate that the samsara that we are free from during sushupti does not belong to atma and the happiness that we recollect is not *swaroopa ananda* but its reflection registered in the *kaarana sariram*.

## Section 78 - Illumination By Sakshi

Sakshi illumines the mind means is that cidabhasa is formed in the mind and the mind is able to illumine the external world and to know its own thoughts.

## Section 79 - Happiness Is Reflected Anandaswaroopam Of Brahman

Temporary happiness of ajnanis on achieving a desired object before another desire arises is the ananda swaroopam of Brahman reflected in cidabhasa. Objects are not the source of ananda (*Vishaye ananda naasti.*) If objects give ananda, the same object must give to all and to any particular person all the time. What is sweet to one man is another man's poison. Pudding is sweet to me when I start but after the fifth or sixth helping I develop aversion. Objects only provide the occasion for the ananda swaroopam of Brahman to be reflected in the calm mind. The constant happiness of the jnani who has the knowledge that he is Brahman is the reflection of the infinitude of Brahman. (*Pibhare ramarasam. Raso vai rasah.*) Tasting *brahmarasam* is owning up the fact that *poornatvam* is my permanent nature. The consequent sense of utter fulfillment is called *brahmarasa-anubhava*.

## Section 80 - Mutual Superimposition Of Atma And Anatma

A Purvapakshi raises objections to mutual superimposition of atma and anatma.

1. Can anatma be superimposed on atma? Superimposition requires the following conditions:-
  - (a) The general characteristic of the sub-stratum should be known and special characteristics should be unknown
  - (b) The sub-stratum should not be clearly perceived
  - (c) There should be similarity between the sub-stratum and the superimposed entity.Atma, being nirguna, does not have any general or special characteristics. Atma is always self-effulgent. Atma has no similarity with the anatma. Therefore atma cannot be the sub-stratum for any superimposition.
2. Can atma be superimposed on anatma? The sub-stratum of superimposition has to be a real entity. If the sub-stratum as well as the entity superimposed are mithya, it will result in *sunyavada*. Since anatma is mithya, it cannot be the sub-stratum of superimposition . If it is claimed that anatma is real, it can never be sublated and there will be no possibility of liberation.
3. Only when it is established that anatma is superimposed on atma can atma be said to have some concealed characteristic and similarity with anatma. Only after it is established that the atma has some concealed characteristic and similarity with anatma can it be said that anatma is superimposed on atma. Thus there is the fallacy of mutual dependence.
4. If it is argued that mutual superimposition is possible, because it is due to avidya, it cannot be of any help, because avidya itself is not logically possible in atma which is self-effulgent. Avidya can be mithya only if it is superimposed on atma by itself but this will have the defect of mutual dependence. If another avidya superimposes this avidya, there will be the fallacy of infinite regress. If the superimposed is real, there can be no liberation.

5. If everything is due to superimposition, there can be no distinction between illusion and right knowledge. To say that the same atma is the means of knowledge, the object of knowledge, the knowledge itself and the knower is contradictory. If it is claimed that there is no contradiction, then it becomes *vijnaanaavaada* in which everything is nothing but internal cognition.

Refutation by the Advaita Vedantin is as follows:-

It is well known that everyone has knowledge in the form, “I am a man, I am a karta and a bhokta”. This is not a mere remembrance; it is a direct experience. It is devoid of the cognition of difference between himself and his body. It is not right knowledge. Sruti statements such as Brhadaranyaka 4.3.7, 2.5.19, 3.9.28, 3.4.1, 3.5.1, 4.3.15, Taittiriya 2.1.1. and Chandogya 8.7.1 declare that atma is not a karta or bhokta and is none other than Brahman which is of the nature of supreme bliss. So, when a man says “I am a man; I am a karta and a bhokta”, it is not right knowledge. Logic also leads to the same conclusion. Things which undergo change (such as the body and the mind) have necessarily to be limited in time, space and with respect to other objects and, therefore, they cannot be the all pervading, eternal, non-dual atma. Consciousness (swaroopa jnanam) is an undifferentiated changeless entity. It is different from the objectifying knowledge (vritti jnanam) such as ‘knowledge of pot’, ‘knowledge of cloth’ etc.(obtained either through the reflection of consciousness or conditioning of consciousness in the antahkarana). The notion of origination and destruction of knowledge is only due to the necessity of relating the knowledge to the object of knowledge, since we have to say which particular object knowledge is about. If swaroopa jnanam is split up and considered to be many, then space, time and directions will also be considered to be many. Moreover, if kartrtvam etc are real, then, there can be no liberation at all, because what is the real nature of a thing can never be removed from it. If atma is not self-effulgent, the whole universe will be insentient. Being the object of supreme love of all, atma is of the nature of bliss. Therefore, atma is

devoid of qualities, eternal, self-effulgent and of the nature of bliss.

Therefore, there is no escape from the conclusion that the cognition, “I am a man’ etc. is only a delusion. And it is necessary to postulate a proper cause for the delusion. The cause has to be something which has the capacity not only to conceal the atma from the vision of the jiva but also to make the jiva who, in reality is the atma, identify himself with the body and the mind and regard himself as a karta and a bhokta. That cause is the indeterminable avidya which is superimposed on the non-dual atma. Atma cannot be the cause of the delusion because it is immutable. Mind, etc, cannot be the cause of the delusion because they are themselves the products of avidya. Avidya is revealed in Sruti statements such as – “(They realized) the power of the Supreme Being which is concealed by its own gunas” (Svesvatara 1.3), “Know Maya to be Prakriti and the wielder of Maya to be the supreme Lord” (Svesvatara 4.10), “The supreme Being is perceived as having manifold forms because of Maya” ((Brahadaranyaka 2.5.19), “They are covered by the untrue” ( Chandogya 8.3.2), “Covered by mist” ( Taittiriya Samhita 4.6.2.2), and “( By identification with Iswara one) finally becomes free from Maya which is in the form of the form of the universe” (Svesvatara 1.10). The fallacy of self-dependence on the ground that avidya is the cause of its own superimposition is ruled out because avidya is beginningless.

## Section 81 - Vritti Vyapti And Phala Vyapti

Upanishad says that atma is swaprakasa (self-evident). It also says that atma is to be known by the mind (cetasaa vedityam). How do we reconcile this? It means that what is required for atma to be revealed is removal of ignorance, the false notion, “I am the changing body-mind complex”. When this notion is removed, what remains as the constant ‘I’ is the consciousness, This is not known as an object but is invoked as the very subject. In technical language, for knowing anatma, *vritti vyaapti* and *phala vyaapti* are required but

for recognizing atma, vritti vyapti (to remove the ignorance) is required but phala vyapti (to illumine the atma) is not required.

Example. In a dark room, there are two things – a flame and a stone. Each is covered by a pot. One of your hands is engaged otherwise. In the other hand, you are carrying a torch with a long handle. With that handle you knock off the pots that are covering the objects. Knocking of the pots is like vritti vyapti. To see the stone, you have to direct the torch light at the stone, because it does not shine of its own accord. Directing the torchlight is like phala vyapti. But to see the flame, you don't have to direct the torchlight at it; it is self-shining (self-evident).

## Section 82 - Emergence And Dissolution Of Cidabhasa

In Anubhuti Prakasa, elaborating Brhadaranyaka Upanishad mantra 2.4.12, and following Sankaracarya's commentary, Vidyaratanya discusses the emergence and dissolution of cidabhasa based on the example of the ocean and the lumps of salt given in the Upanishad. First, he disposes of a possible objection. Upanishad itself says that Brahman is *karyakarana-vilakshanah*; Brahman has not come out of anything and nothing has come out of Brahman; then, how can we say that jivatma has come out of Brahman? The answer is that it is a phenomenon created by Maya. In the paramarthika plane, there is neither arrival nor departure of the world. In the vyavaharika plane, there is arrival and departure of the world. Thereafter he discusses which aspects of the ocean-salt lumps example should be compared to what. Paramatma is compared to the ocean. Jivatmas are compared to the lumps of salt. Lumps of salt do not appear in the ocean as such. For lumps of salt to be produced salt pans are required. The sthoola sukshma sariras are compared to the salt pans. The heat of the sun is required for evaporation of the water; Avidya and the consequent adhyasa are compared to the sun and its heat. Pure atma cannot be a knower because atma is nirvikara and knowing is modification of the mind. Anatma cannot be a

knower because antma is inert (*jadam*). Maya produces a third entity which borrows consciousness (*cetanatvam*) from the atma and *savikaratvam* (modifying capacity) from anatma. This savikara cetana entity is cidabhasa, the reflected consciousness in the antahkarana. This combination of antahkarana and cidabhasa does karma and undergoes karmaphalam. *Kartrutvam* (sense being a doer) presupposes free will. Only if jiva is responsible for his action he can be required to undergo karmaphalam. Once cidabhasa is formed, localization and finitude happen to jivas. Neither localization nor finitude is real but jiva has the adhyasa of localization and finitude. Only by study of sastra under a guru, particularly analysis of mahavakyas, do jivas discover their identity with Brahman and the adhyasa of localization and finitude is removed. The juxtaposition of tat-padartha with tvam-padartha removes localization and finitude (*pariccinnatvam*) of jivatma and the juxtaposition of tvam-padartha with tat-padartha removed the remoteness (*parokshatvam*) of paramatma and the identity of the real nature of jivatma, the consciousness with paramatma is recognised. This is the state of jivanmukti. When the lumps of salt are dissolved in the ocean they merge in it indistinguishably. Like that, at the time of videhamukti, the sthoola, suskhma and karana sariras along with the cidabhasa in them dissolve and the jivan muktas 'merge in Brahman' indistinguishably.

Formation of lumps of salt are events in time. But jivatmas are *anaadi* (beginning-less). The example should not be extended to the aspect of an event in time.

### Section 83 - Antahkarana And Cidabhasa In Producing Knowledge

According to Sastra, perception of outside objects happens by antahkarana, along with cidabhasa, going out and pervading the object and assuming the shape of that object, like light emanating from a lamp contacting an object and assuming the shape of that object.

In respect of any object, there are two things - an externally existing object and a mental object of that object. What you experience (*bhogyavastu*) is not the external object

(*Iswara-srshti*) but the internal image (*jiva-srshti*). The mental image of the same external object, say a woman, is coloured in the minds of different people in different ways, according to their tastes and values, their likes and dislikes (*raaga dwesha*) etc, which constitute a complex pattern due to *prarabdha* (the quota of karmaphalam allotted for exhaustion in a particular span of life (*janma*) out of the accumulated punya papa (*sancita karma*), *vaasanas* (imprints of tastes, attitudes tendencies and wisdom in the mind on account of the experience in previous janmas), and training, knowledge undergone and wisdom gained in the current janma.

The external object (*bhoutika vastu*) is illumined by pramata. (*pramtru-bhaasyam*). From pramaata, a mode of thought surcharged by cidaabhaasa (*saabhaasa vritti*) goes out, like a ray of light, through sense organs (*karanam*). The vritti envelops the object, assumes the shape of the object and removes ignorance. This is called *vritti vyaapti*. Vritti is a mode of the mind; it is a modification (*vikaara*). When the vritti vikara takes place, the pramaata, as the antahkarana surcharged with cidaabhasa, also undergoes modification. Vritti by itself is inert (*jada*). So, we cannot say that vritti illumines the object. The cidabhaasa in the vritti envelops the object simultaneously and illumines the object. The pervasion and illumination of the object uncovered by vritti vyaapti is called *phala vyaapti*. Thus knowledge of the object is produced. We said, earlier that the experience of the object is not an external phenomenon; it is an internal phenomenon; the experience is in the form of the image formed in the mind by vritti vyaapti and phala vyaapti. What about the vritti involved in this image? Vritti is jada, not self-illuminating (not *swayam-prakaasa*). (The word, 'illumination' stands for the functioning of consciousness.) We cannot say that vritti is illumined by another vritti. That would lead to infinite regress (*anavastha dosha*). The Brahma caitanyam present in jiva (*saakshi*) illumines the vritti involved in the internal image. How does sakshi illumine? By the very formation of reflected consciousness (*cidabhasa*) in that vritti. The very pervasion of the vritti in the internal image by the cidabhasa is called illumination by saakshi (*saakshi-bhaasyam*). So, also, in the same

sense, any vritti involved in a thought in the mind, without the current presence of an external object, like recalling a thing or incident, or speculation or theorising, is also said to be saakshi-bhaasyam.

Example. Sun is up above. Mirror is on the ground placed in an appropriate angle. Sunlight falls on the mirror. The sunlight reflected from the mirror illumines the dark room. We don't say that mirror illumines the room. We say that the sunlight illumines the room. Sun is responsible for the sunlight; therefore we also say that sun illumines the mirror.

## Section 84 - What Happens In Videha Mukti

Only when jivas, identifying themselves with the body-mind complex do action, entertain thoughts and undergo experience with the sense. "I am the doer" (*kartrvam*) and I am the enjoyer (*bhoktrvam*) that they incur puny and papa. A jnani does not any action or entertain any thought with dehabhimana. Even when he uses the body-mind complex as the instrument of action and thought, he is identified with atma, not the body-mind complex. Mentally, he is akarta and abhokta ( '*Aham naiva kincit karomi*' ). So, there is no agami karma after attaining jnanam. Sancita karma of past janmas and agami up to the point of attaining jnanam become functus officio, there being no owner for them. The prarabdha gets exhausted biologically, without psychological repercussions, during the survival of the body. So when the body of the jnani falls, the karma balance is zero. The sukshmaand karana sarira merge in the samashti. The Jivanmukta is said to merge in Iswara from the vyaavahaarika point of view.

From the Paaaramaarthika point of view Jiva is ever Brahman. There is no event of merging in Brahman . Even the word, 'videha mukti' is only vyvahaarika term.

## Section 85 - Spontaneous Invocation Of Identity With Brahman By The Jivanmukta

In the course of jnana yoga, in the beginning, when provocative situations arise, one has to deliberately recollect “aham brahmasmi”, I am not the body or the mind. But later, the aham brahmasmi attitude becomes spontaneous. Not that when engaged in any secular activity, the jnani has to go on thinking “I am Brahman”. Because his mind has to be engaged in that activity and no two thoughts can co-exist. But, when a situation arises in which an ajnani would react, identified with his body or his mind, feeling sorrow, anger, etc., in the case of a jnani, his firm knowledge “I am atma” comes into play spontaneously and governs his reaction. His thought will be “This is not happening to me, the atma. Why should I worry?”, “This cannot affect me, the atma”.

## Section 86 - Animals Do Not Acquire Agami Karma

Animals have no free will. So, they do not acquire *agami karma*. Exhaustion of *sancita karma* does not require free will.

## Section 87 - Strong And Weak Prarabdha

Praarabdha is of two kinds – strong (*prabala*) and weak (*durbala*). Atonement (*parihaaram*) for praarabdha is possible if it is durbala, not if it is prabala and parihaaram such as yagna, puja, dhyana, etc, can counteract or attenuate durbala praarabdha. In the case of miracles we hear about, the tapo sakti or yogic powers of the saint or yogi, applied by him in favour of his devotee, becomes a substitute for the devotee’s own parihaara karma. The compassion of the pure mind of a jnanai can produce vibrations which can affect the natural forces in favour of the devotee..( Jnanan and Yoga are not connected. One can be a jnani but not a yogi or one can be a yogi but not a jnani or one may be both. If a

jnanaj is a yogi, he will exercise yogi powers only for loka sangraha.). If praarabdha is prabala, neither one's own parihaara karma or a tapo sakti of a saint or yogic power of a yogi can counteract the praarabdha. That is how we often find some people being benefited by approaching a saint or yogi but some others getting no benefit by approaching the same saint or yogi.

## Section 88 - Correcting Others

If you are correcting a person because you have a feeling of being hurt by his action, it is wrong. But if, without such feeling, you want to correct the person in order to make him realise his mistake and as guidance for his future behaviour, correcting is all right.

## Section 89 - Sanyasa And Grahastha In Relation To Moksha

Sanyasa is of two kinds – (1) *vividisha sanyasa*, sanyasa taken for sravanam, mananam and nididhasanam, when one finds that the preoccupations of secular life does not allow time for these. (2) *vidwat sanyasa*, sanyasa taken by a person who has acquired adequate jnanam by sravanam and mananam and adopts sanyasa asrama to engage himself exclusively in nididhasana. We can, perhaps, cite the example of Yagnavalkya.. However, Even a grahastha can get moksha through jnaanam. Cf. Gita 4<sup>th</sup> ch. Sloka 23. Sankaracarya accepts this in his bhashyam. He says, “If, on account of praarabdha, a person is unable to take sanyasa, say, compulsion of household duties, jnaanam cannot go without phalam; he will also get moksha. The idea is that in sanyaasa, more facilities are there for vedantic study. A grahastha has less facilities on account of preoccupation with worldly duties. That is why Sankaracarya, in many places insists on sanyaasa as the asrama that is a must for pursuit of jnaana yoga. We have to take it that what Sankaracarya is emphasising is the practical point of view..

“*Iswarasysa sankalpamaatrena sarvam aavirbhavati*”. For the mind of jivas, there is a world outside the mind, as a vyaavahaarika phenomenon. But for Iswara, there is no world outside. The world is in Iswara, i.e., in Maya part of Iswara, whether it is in pralaya condition or srshti condition and Iswara, the consciousness aspect of Iswara knows that the world exists in his mind, as it were. Maya can be said to be Iswara’s mind, Iswara knows that the world is in his mind, whether it in manifest form or unmanifest form.

## Section 90 - Jivanmukta’s Choice

On the vyaavahaarika plane, sarvaatmakatvam is related to Brahman being the satta of the entire range of superimposed nama roopa. In the paaramaarthika plane, there is no world; there is only the infinite non-dual Brahman. A Jivanmukta can have the sense of sarvaatmakatvam (“I am everything”) and so lacking nothing, be contented and thus enjoy ananda, which is kosa ananda. Or he can have sense of himself being infinite. Dismissing the prapanca as non-existent, he can abide in brahmabhaava. This is also an antahkarana vritti, a sense of being all relative states. Perhaps, ‘nirvriti’ may be a word that gives an idea of it.

## Section 91 - Visva, Taijasa, Praajna

The memory of an experience or knowledge is stored as memory in the mind. This is in the passive part of the mind. The passive part of the mind is *kaarana sariram*. This memory vritti is illumined by *karana sarira cidabhasa* called *praaajna*. When you recollect it, the vritti is illumined by the *sukshma sarira cidabhasa* called *taijasa*. When the same *sukshma sarira cidabhasa* illumines a vritti pervading an object, it is called *visva* or *pramaata*

## Section 92 - Known And The Unknown Lodged In Iswara

Ignorance of a thing in a particular antahkarana of a thing which is known by some other antahkaranas (e.g., "I don't know Chinese") is also illumined by kaarana sarira cidabhasa. The knowledge, say, that I know Russian, is also illumined by kaarana sarira cidabhasa.

What about knowledge not discovered yet by any human being, e.g., the law of gravitation before Newton discovered it. It must exist somewhere. You cannot discover a non-existent thing? It exists in samashti karana sariram, Maya, and that it is illumined by cidabhasa in Iswara.

### Section 93 - Jnanabhrashta

Those who have studied Vedanta under a guru but fail to reach the stage of being a jivanmukta, in the current life, owing to some obstacle or other like some *vipariita bhavana*, called *jnaanabhrashta*, are reborn in a family and grow up in an environment conducive to the resumption of the study, with the advantage of the *samskara* (the carried-over *vasana*) of the study already done in the previous life. The example in Upanishads is the Vamadeva rishi who became a full-fledged jnani even while he is in the womb. In modern days, we can cite the case of Ramana Maharishi

### Section 94 - Saamaanaadhikaranyam (Lakshanaa)

1. These are terms related to the technique of arriving at the implied meaning of a sentence. When the words in a sentence in the same case denote the same object through different phrases, such words are said to be in samanadhikaranyam. The method of arriving at the implied meaning of the sentence is called lakshanaa.

The main lakshanaas are mentioned below.

- a. Ajahal-lakshanaa, Where the vacyartha (the literal meaning of) a word in a sentence, as it is, is retained and to arrive at the lakshyartha (the implied meaning) another word relating to the vacyartha is added, it is called ajahal-lakshanaa. The example is "The red

is running (sona dhaavati”). Red, as a mere colour, can’t be running. So we add the word “horse” and arrive at “The red horse is running.” Another example is ‘Kakebhyo dadhi rakshanaam’ (See that the crow does not overturn the lid of the vessel containing curd’ (mother who is going out telling the child). If the child doesn’t bother if the lid is overturned by any other bird and does not drive it away, the child has not understood the mother. The mother’s intention is to retain the word ‘crow and to add ‘or any other bird’. In Brahma sutra examples are given where a sruti passage talks of one or two features of atma but asks us to add other features mentioned elsewhere, by applying ajahal-lakshana.

- b. Jahal-lakshana – Where one of the words in a sentence is rejected and a related word is substituted. Example “Village on Ganges”. A village cannot be located on a river. So, instead of the river, the bank of the river is adopted and we interpret the sentence to mean a “village on the bank of the Ganges”. Here, the words are said to be in “baadha samanadhkaranyam”. So, also, “sarvamkalvidambrahma’ (The world is Brahman) is to be interpreted with jahallakshana. World which is mithya has to be rejected and the adishtaanam, Brahman which is reality is accepted.
- c. Jahal-ajahal-lakshanaa – The mahavakyam “Tat tvam asi”. The vaacyaatha (the literal meaning) of “Tat” is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Iswara and the meaning of “Tvam” is the jiva with limited knowledge and powers and location. The word ‘asi” indicates that the two are one and the the same. This is not logical. So, we go to lakshyaatha (the implied meaning). Tat, Iswara is a mixture of Brahma caitanyam, the real and cidabhasa and Maya, the mithya. Like that, tvam, jiva is a mixture of Brahma caitanyam (called pratyagatma), the real and the body-mind complex, with cidabhassa, the unreal. Here we take real part of Tat and of Tvam and reject the mithya parts and equate the caitanyam called pratyagatma and the caitanyam called Brahman and interpret the sentence to mean “the consciousness in you and the consciousness that

- is Brahman are the same” (The teacher is saying this to the student). So also ‘aham brahmasmi’, the mithya part of I is rejected and the real part, Brahman, is accepted.
- d. The popular example of jahal-ajahal-lakshana is ‘sah ayam ayam Devaduttah’. Here the vacyartha of the Devadutta of the past time and the place where I saw him in the past and the vacyartha of the Devadutta of the present time and the place where I meet him at present do not match; What I saw was a lean young man with dark hair 30 years ago at New Delhi. What I see now at Chennai is an old man with bald head. So, I go to lakshyartha, discard the discrepant features and retain the person, Devadutta and recognize him as the same person.
2. An allied technical terminology is ‘tatastha lakshanam’ and ‘swaropala lakshanam’. .When a visitor to a village wanting to know Devadutta’s house and a resident of the village points to particular house as ‘ see that house where the crow is sitting on the roof’ it is tatastha lakshanam. crow sitting on the roof is not an integral part of the house; it is incidental. When the house is pointed out as ‘ see that house with gabled roof’ it is swaropala lakshanam; gabled roof is in an integral part of the house. The process of teaching in Advaita Vedanta is called ‘*adhyaropa apavada*’. Since none of the usual criteria of definition popular concept, attribute, species and relationship can be used for the non-objectifiable, attributeless, non-dual, relationless Brahman, Upanishads employ tatastha lakshanam and talk of Brahman being the cause of the experienced universe. This is called adhyaropa. Later, Brahman is said to be neither cause nor effect and the world, the so-called effect is said to be mithya. This is apavada. (What was previously called *kaaranam* (cause) is now shown to be *adhistaanam* (sub-stratum). An example of Swaropala lakshanam of Brahman is the Taittiriya Upanishad passage (II.1.1), “Satyam, jnanam anantam Brahma’. (Brahman is Existence-Conscious-Bliss).
3. There is another set of terminology – vritti vyapti and phala vyapti. In secular knowledge, it is said that *vritti vyapti* and *phala vyapti* are required. Vritti vyapti (the mental mode confronting the object) removes the covering of ignorance surrounding the object (*aavaranam* of *vishaya*

*avaccinna caitanyam*) and phala vyapti, i.e. cidabhasa illumines the object. In the case of Brahman, vritti vyapti is required. While any jiva knows that he exists as a conscious being (nobody doubts 'I am'), the ignorance that I am limited has to be removed by the mental mode, acquired through Sastra, that I am the infinite Brahman. But that infinite Brahman cannot be objectified. It is in this sense that it is said that phala vyapti does not apply to Brahman.

## Section 95 - Endless Entities

Apart from Brahman that is the paramarthika infinite, there are vyavaharika entities in regard to which it is not logical to say that they had a beginning as an event in time, So, we say that they are beginningless (anaadi). These vyavaharika entities are time itself, Maya, the cycle of creation and dissolution, Iswara , jiva and karma. Why we can't say that time had a beginning is explained in Note No. 49..If Maya and Iswara are said to have a beginning, then we cannot explain creation. If the pair of cidabhasa part of Iswara, the intelligent cause and Maya, the material cause of the creation dissolution cycle is said to have a beginning, then we have to postulate a prior pair of causes for the origin of that pair of causes and then, a still prior pair for that prior pair and so on. This will lead to infinite regress (anavastha doshai). So, there is no escape from saying that Iswara and Maya are beginningless. If creation is said to have a beginning, we cannot explain where was the pair of the intelligent and material causes of creation at that time and when it did the first creation. We cannot postulate a point in space and a point of time for the existence of the pair of causes of creation, because then we have to talk of a prior space and a prior time and this will lead to infinite regress. So, we have no go but to accept a beginningless cycle of creation and dissolution. As regards Jiva and Karma, If we postulate a beginning for jiva, we have to say how did the punya papa responsible for the birth of the jiva arise and if we postulate a beginning for punya papa, we have to talk of a prior jiva who did karma in the form of actions in order to produce the punya papa. Thus we cannot but accept that jiva and karma also form a beginningless cycle.

## Section 96 - Ramanuja's and Dwaitin's objections to the advaita concept of avidya

(Items of the debate that are too technical to be easily understood have been omitted)

Asrayaanupapatti – Logical inconsistency in regard to locus

Objection: Avidya (nescience) cannot have jiva as its locus of operation because the jiva himself is a product of Avidya. Nor can Avidya be located in Brahman because Brahman is self-effulgent knowledge and knowledge is opposed to nescience.

1. **Refutation:** .The objection is based on the misconception that there are two distinct real entities, Brahman and jiva and that Avidya is a third real entity. In Advaita, jiva is a mithya entity, constituted by the association of Brahman with the mithya upadhi in the form of Avidya, or its product ,the intellect. (association in the form of a seeming or actual reflection or conditioning, depending on the whether the prakriya is pratibimba vada or aabhasa vada or avacceda vada). Nescience (Avidya) is opposed not to Brahman as self-effulgent knowledge, pure consciousness ( swarooपा jnanam) but to vrittijnanam, the combination of antahkarana and consciousness seeming to be reflected or actually reflected in or conditioned by the antahkarana. Therefore, there is no bar to Brahman being the locus of Avidya. Even if jiva is taken as the locus of Avidya, there is no problem; because Avidya and Jiva are both mithya and equally beginningless.

Tirodhaanaanupapatti – logical inconsistency in regard to obscuration (aavaranam).

(This is another version of the discussion already included in Note No. 58.)

**Objection:** To hold that Avidya obscures Brahman which is eternal self-effulgence amounts to saying that the nature of Brahman is destroyed.

Refutation: The obscuration conceived in Advaita Vedanta is not actual blotting out of Brahman's effulgence. The obscuration ( tirodhaanai) is in the form of jiva's nonapprehension of jiva himself being Brahman. This non-apprehension no more affects Brahman than a blind man's failure to see the sun or the formation of a cloud hiding the sun from a man's vision

affects the sun.. Anirvacanayaanupapatti – The concept of non-categorisability is untenable.

2. **Objection:** The inability to categorise Avidya as either real or unreal is not tenable. All categories must be based on experience and experience has to be of either real or unreal entities.

**Refutation** - The definition of Avidya as neither real nor unreal (sadasadvilakshana) has to be understood in the light of what is meant by sat (the real) and asat (the unreal). What is meant by the word sat (the real) is that which is not amenable to sublation at any time (past, present or future) (trikalaabaadhyami). What is meant by asat (the unreal) is that which does not appear to be real in any locus whatsoever. Avidya is vyavaharika. The pratibhasika example is rope-snake; it is not asat in the sense that it is not absolutely unreal like hare's horn or barren woman's son. Since the snake appears to be real in illusory experience in semi-darkness. It is not absolutely real, because it is sublated when a light is directed at the rope. In the state of self-ignorance, Avidya appears to be real. But when Brahman is known, it is sublated. Nivartakaanupapatti – Incapacity of Brahman-knowledge to sublimate positivenescience.

3. **Objection and refutation:** For the Advaitin, the knowledge that sublates positive nescience must be that of nirguna Brahman. But Ramanuja says that Brahman is never without attributes and, in support, cites passages describing Brahman as a personal being with exalted attributes. Ramanuja explains even explicitly advaitic texts (e.g., "ekam eva advitiiyam") to suit his thesis that Brahman has attributes. The point at issue is one of textual interpretation. The task is one of distinguishing passages meant for meditation (upasana) which is a part of the preparatory sadhana to qualify for jnanayoga, where Brahman with attributes is described from passages which explicitly present nirguna Brahman the knowledge of which is the means for liberation. There are numerous mantras in the Upanishads revealing Brahman as attributeless (nirguna) and mantras specifying that knowing nirguna Brahman one can get liberation.( Readers can refer to Part III, Section 4.) Nivrtyanupapatti

4. **Objection;** Positive nescience cannot be established at all. Ramanuja argues that since bondage is real, the knowledge of identity of Brahman and atma cannot abolish Avidya. Only the grace of God (Paramapurusha) moved by devotion can abolish real bondage. This position is also dogmatic and based on his concept of bondage. It is a part of the view of the ultimate reality being a personal God with jiva as a separate real entity and the jiva being in reality Brahman Itself whereas samsara undergone by jiva is due to jiva's ignorance of his real nature on account of the aavarana sakti of Avidya. As a saadhana, devotion ( bhakti) is not ruled out in Advaita Vedanta but Advaitins maintain that, ultimately, liberation is only the abolition of the self-ignorance which must ensue the knowledge of nirguna Brahman and one's identity with that infinite Brahman.

In the wake of Ramanuja, Venkatanatha asks in his Satadushani whether Avidya is different from Brahman or not. If different, Advaita breaks down. If not different, Brahman can never free Itself from it.

Advaitin's answer is that Avidya is a category sui generis. It is sadasadvilakshanam in the sense explained above. The other word for that is mithya. Being mithya there is no question of affecting Brahman being non-dual and there is no danger to advaya. Though located in Brahman, it is of a lower order of reality, like the illusory snake located in the rope. The failure to appreciate the concept of mithya is at the root of Visishtadvaitin's and Dwaitin's objections.

## Section 97 - Maya - Dwaitin's Objection Refuted

In the Pancapadika, Padmapada defines mithya as "being indefinable as "sat"

(existence) or "asat" (non-existence). In Nyayamrita, Vyasatirtha raises an objection.

He asks "What is meant by sat and asat? Does it denote (a) negation of existence qualified by non-existence or (b) total negation of both existence and non-existence or (c) total negation of non-existence qualified by total negation of existence?"

In Advaitasiddhi, Madhusudana Saraswati gives the answer. He says that (b) and (c) are entirely

tenable. The main point to bear in mind is that in using the terms “existence” and “non-existence” in the definition of mithya, the Advaitin does not denote a contradictory or incompatible status. Both the judgments “the pot is existent” and “the rope-snake is existence” are intelligible. Yet, evidently, the kind of existence in the case of the pot is not the same as that of the rope-snake. In the case of the pot, existence denotes unsublatability (abaadhyatvam) in empirical experience, whereas in the case of the rope-snake, existence denotes existence which is liable to sublation in empirical experience, as evidenced by the later judgment, “this is not snake”. When Advaitin talks about the world being mithya, different from being real or unreal (“sadasadvilakshana”), the word ‘sat’ is used to mean nonsublatability at any time (trikalaabadhyam”) and the word ‘asat’ is used to mean unfitness to appear as existent in any locus (i.e., the utterly non-existent like the hare’s horn – ‘tuccam’). Therefore what is meant by saying that the world is mithya is that while, located in Brahman, it does appear and is experienced, with jivas attributing reality to the world (which includes the body-mind complex) in the state of ignorance. It is negated, i.e., dismissed as unreal when they come to know Brahman, the paramarthika reality and in the paramarthika plane it is totally non-existent. Thus for Brahman, the universe is non-existent, whereas for the jivas, it is existent, in two forms, appearing to be real for the ignorant and known to be false for the knower of Brahman. It is this unique combination of non-existence and existence that is called mithya.

## Section 98 - Recapitulation of the important points in the teaching

Brahman is the only reality. The nature of Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Infinity (satyam jnanam anantam ).

For Brahman, there is no universe. But we, living beings (jivatmas) experience a universe. The universe is unreal. In the universe, itself, there are certain things which we regard as real when we experience it but which turn out to be false later.

To accommodate this phenomenon, Advaita Vedanta postulates three orders of reality, (a) the absolute (paramarthika), in which category Brahman alone is, (b) the empirical (vyavaharika) in which category the perceived part of the world experienced by us in the waking state falls and (c)

illusory (pratibhasika) in which the world that we experience during the dream state falls, as also erroneous perceptions like a snake being seen on a rope, space being seen as blue etc. The universe that we experience is a mixture of existence belonging to Brahman, the sub-stratum, and nama roopa (attributes like shape, color etc. of things and the characteristics of our body and mind) superimposed on the sub-stratum. The sub-stratum is real and unchanging. The nama roopa which are superimposed on it is unreal and changing. Not only do individual nama roopa undergo change, but the whole set of nama roopa changes in a cycle of differentiation (srishti) and resolution into a seed form (laya). The one who is responsible for this srishti and laya is an entity called Iswara, constituted of an unreal thing, called Maya, located in Brahman, in which the consciousness aspect of Brahman (Brahma caitanyam) is reflected. With the conscious aspect, Iswara visualizes creation and from the matter aspect, which is Maya, the nama roopa which are in seed form are unfolded by Maya through its vikshepa sakti. We jivas are a mixture of the indivisible Brahma caitanyam, available for recognition as consciousness behind our mind, specially during sushupti (called atma or sakshi caitanyam), the subtle body (sukshma sarira including the mind) in which Brahma caitanyam is reflected. Our real nature is Brahma caitanyam. The rest of us is unreal. But, owing to the veiling power (avarana sakti) of Maya, we are ignorant of our real nature as brahma caitanyam and identifying ourselves with our body and mind and regard ourselves as limited individuals. Atma is devoid of instruments of knowledge and action; It is neither a doer (karta) nor an enjoyer (bhokta) but though we are really the atma, we have the false notion that we are the doers and enjoyers and with the aid of ahamkara interact with objects of the world and other jivatmas. In the process, we undergo suffering and enjoyment. The suffering and enjoyment among the jivatmas is unequal and not related to current actions and thoughts. This is due to the law of karma, according to which for whatever actions we do or thoughts we entertain we incur puny papa and have to pay a price in the form of suffering and enjoyment in future janmas. Iswara is the administrator of the law of karma (karmaphaladata). He designs each creation and each janma of a jivatma, correlating the punya papa and the objects, surroundings and situations of the universe as well as the physical and mental equipment of the jivatmas. The cycle of srishti, sthithi, laya, the jivatmas, karma, Iswara and Maya are

beginningless (anaadi). Jivatmas have a free will by which they can alter the prarabdha , the fructified part of punya papa allotted for suffering or enjoyment in the future in this life and add punya to the accu.mulation of punya papa bundle (sancita). In deed it is only by free will that a jiva is enabled to do preparatory sadhanas and pursue jnana yoga and attain liberation from samsara. The means of liberation from the cycle of action and thoughts, rebirths and enjoyment and suffering (called samsara) is knowledge of identity with Brahma caitanyam (jivabrahma- aikya jnanam). To gain this knowledge and assimilate it, one has to study sastra (the core of it is the Upanishads) under the guidance of a teacher (guru) who has come in the lineage of the teacher-student succession (gurusishya parampara) and who has himself gained and assimilated jiva-brahma-aikya-jnanam (srotriya brahmanishta). The preparatory spiritual practice to gain what is called sadhana catushtaya samapatti (sadhana) consists of karma yoga and upasana. Thereafter we have to study sastra under a guru who is srotriya brahmanishta. Listening to the teacher expounding and interpreting the sastra is called sravanam. Getting remaining doubts cleared by reflection and discussion with the guru is called mananam. Emptying the mind of the notions and attitudes born out of the identification with the body mind in janma after janmas by dwelling on the teaching of sastra to accomplish total, mental identification with Brahma caitanyam is called nididhyasana. If this course of sravanam, mananam and nididhyasanam is gone through successfully, one gets liberated from samsara. (One attains moksha). Moksha is only discovering what was hidden from us, i.e., our real nature as the infinite Brahman. The benefit is unalloyed peace and happiness. It is possible to get moksha in the very life in which one gains jiva-brahma-aikya jnanam. A person who has gained jivabrahma-aikya jnanam is called a jivanmukta.

When the shoola sariara of a jivan mukta falls, the sukshma and karana sariras dissolve and merge in the samashti (macrocosm). As a vyavaharika phenomenon, this is merging in Iswara and is called videha mukti. From the paramartika point of view, the jivan mukta ( indeed like any other jiva, if we ignore the upadhi, the body-mind-oomplex with which he identifies himself) was, is and ever will be Brahman. Though, as figures of speech, ‘merging in Brahman’, ‘attainment of Brahman’ etc are used, there is no event such as atma caitanyam merging in Brahma caitanyam. And there is no surviving

entity such as a videhamukta. Caitanyam is non-dual, imparitite, changeless and eternal. As the absolute reality Brahman alone ever is. Jivatvam was only mithya.

## Section 99 - Meaning Of Saantipaatha Of Sukla –Yajur-Veda

1. The first sentences of saanti paathas of the four Vedas is as follows:-
  - Rg.veda – Om vangme manasi pratishtitaa
  - Sukla Yajurveda - Om poornamadah poornamidam poornaat poornamudacyate
  - Krishna Yajurveda – Om sahnaavavatu sahanou bhunaktu
  - Samaveda – Om aapyaayantu mamaangaani vak praanacakshuh srotram atho balam indriyaani ca sarvaani
  - Atharvaveda – Om bhadram karnebhih srunuyaama devaah bhadram pasyemaakshabhiryajatraah
2. The full text of the Sukla Yajurveda ssantipaatha is “Poornam adah poornam idam. Poornaat poornam udacyate. Poornasya poornam aadaaya poornam eva avasishyate. Om saantih saantih saantih.”
3. If one goes by the literal meaning (vacyartha), the saantipaatha will read as follows:-

That is whole. This is whole. From that whole this whole is born. When this whole is taken away from that whole, that whole remains.”

This would look like a riddle. So we look for the implied meaning (lakshyartha). The lakshyartha is discussed below.

The first sentence is ‘poornamadah poornamidam’.

Adah = That Paramatma

Poornah = (is) limitless

Idam = This jivatma

Poornam = (is) limitless.

Thus we have, “That Paramatma is limitless; this jivatma is limitless”. We know that the limitless, the infinite, can be only one; infinity and existence of two entities are contradictory. Since there can be only one poornam, infinity, we conclude that paramatma and jivatma are one and the same. Thus we arrive at jivatma paramatma aikyam.

Sopadhika paramatma, who is sarvajna, sarveswara, sarvavyapi and sopadhika jivatma whom is alpajna alpasaktiman and alpavyaapi (possessing limited knowledge, limited powers and limited spatial existence) cannot be identical. So, when we talk of identity (aikyam), we are talking of the identity of nirupadhika jivatma and nirupadhika jivatma.

Literal meaning of the sentence ‘poornaat poornam udacyate’ would be ‘from poorna paramatma poorna jivatma is born’. This will contradict the previous conclusion that jivatma and paramatma are identical, because karana karya sambandha (cause effect relationship) is always between two entities. So, we have to conclude that the meaning of the sentence is that from sopadhika paramatma sopadhika jivatma is born, i.e., jivas are created by Iswara.

The next sentence is ‘Poornasya poornam aadaaya poornam eva avasishyate’. Poornasya = from sopadhika atma

Poornam = poorna atma

Aadaaya = is separated

Poornam eva avasishyate = poorna atma alone remains.

Thus we have ‘from sopadhika atma, poorna atma is taken away, poorna atma alone remains’.

From Atma + upadhi, if we take away atma, what should remain? Upadhi. But the Upanishad says that atma alone remains. That means when atma is not there, there is no upadhi. The idea is that upadhi cannot exist independently of atma. What has no independent existence is mithya. So, we understand that anatma is mithya. The nama roopa including our body-mind complex is mithya.

The final meaning of the santipatha is “Nirupadhika paramatma and nirupadhika jivatma are identical. From sopadhika paramatma sopadhika jivatma is born. Upadhi is mithya. Nirupadhika atma alone is satyam.

Thus, this santipatha is the essence of the entire Upanishad – ‘brahmasatyam jaganmithya’.