

GUIDE-LINES TO SHANKARA-VEDĀNTA

“अद्वैतवाद्-मुकुटः किल शङ्करस्य
गाढं कदर्थ-रजसा तममानुलिप्तः ।
तस्यैव भाष्यमवलम्ब्य मया कृतोऽस्मिन्
कामं मलापनयनेऽस्य महान् प्रयत्नः ॥”



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SHANKARA-VEDĀNTA**

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—AUM—

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it is very essential to know Āchārya Shaṅkara's teachings in its true perspective according to his *Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas*, because Shaṅkara-Vedānta has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by the sub-commentators on Shrī Shaṅkara's Bhāshyas. Accordingly the seekers are confused and confounded by many distortions, misinterpretations and misguiding versions of Shaṅkara's original Bhāshyas. To comprehend the fullest import of the teachings of Shaṅkara, we have to take the traditional works of *Gaudapāda's Kārikā* on Māndūkya Upanishad, *Upadesha Sāhasrī*, an independent work of Shrī Shaṅkara and *Sureshvara's Vārtikas* on Taittiriya and Brhadāranyaka Bhāshyas of Shri Shaṅkara and his independent work called *Naishkarmya Siddhi*. All these contain the idea of pristine pure Vedānta in unequivocal voice. Teachings based on these works are not easily available to the aspirants of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. To remove this scarcity, *Shrī Shrī Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmīji* of Karnataka State, has made a sustained effort to show the genuine teachings through his writings. The first book is published in Kannada viz. "Shaṅkara Vedānta Sāra." In the introduction to this book Swāmīji has declared that "never before in any part of the world a book of this type which contain subject-wise classification of the sentences of the Bhāshya and traditional books referred to above has been published." In this direction he has published hundreds of books in three languages viz. Kannada, Sanskrit and English.

Fortunately for me I came across Shrī Swāmīji and studied most of his books and followed his guidances for

nearly twenty years (1954-55 to 1974-75). I have also propagated this teaching in some parts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra and also to some foreign aspirants. By this experience of 25 years of teachings and discussion with various kinds of people I have gathered some definite ideas regarding the methodology of teaching this pristine pure Shaṅkara-Vedānta.

According to this methodology an aspirant should know at first the *fundamentals of Shaṅkara-Vedānta*, which work as a key to open the treasury to Shaṅkara Vedānta. Without a thorough understanding of these fundamental principles, the aspirant will not be able to follow or to grasp the subtle teachings of the Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas.

At the outset it may be mentioned that these fundamentals (=basic rules of interpretation) are mainly five in number :

i) Relying on the intuitive experiences of universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life (सार्वत्रिक पूर्ण अनुभव)

ii) Realising the Witnessing principle of life which is beyond ego (साक्षी दर्शन)

iii) The methodology of deliberate Superimposition and subsequent Rescission (अध्यारोप-अपवादन्याय)—the Vedantic devices adopted in the Upanishads for the purpose of teaching the nature of Absolute Reality.

iv) The distinction of the empirical standpoint and transcendental standpoint, i.e. Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti and Paramārtha Dṛṣhti (व्यावहारिक दृष्टि-पारमार्थिक दृष्टि)

v) Understanding the difference between the Sādhanas of Vastutantra and Kartṛtantra (वस्तुतन्त्र-कर्तृतन्त्र विवेक), i.e. knowledge depending on ontological facts (वस्तुतन्त्र) as

against action depending upon human will or effort (कर्तृतन्त्र OR पुरुषतन्त्र).

These five are the vital principles to know Shaṅkara-Vedānta. Strictly speaking these are the foundations on which the edifice of Shaṅkara-Vedānta is built. Unless and until the seeker can discern these fundamentals, it will be very difficult for him to reconcile the seemingly contradictory statements of Bhāshyas. There have arisen divergent views (misconceptions) not only among the followers of adverse school (like Mādhva, Rāmānuja etc.) but also among those that owe their allegiance to Shaṅkara's tradition itself (like Bhāmatikāra, Vivaranāchārya etc.). These differences of opinion are, due mostly to either disregarding these basic rules of interpretations or overlooking the needful importance to these five fundamentals mentioned above. According to Shri Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmīji's teachings based on Shaṅkara Bhāshyas, if we try to understand the various standpoints adopted for the purpose of teachings, then all our misconceptions and doubts will get removed. For this purpose I propose to explain here these five fundamentals briefly, as interpreted by the Revered Swāmīji of Holenarsipur, only to understand the subject-matter of Shaṅkara-Vedānta in its true perspective.

Shri Swāmīji, my Gurudev, has explained these five fundamentals in his various works. I propose to put them in one book-form. These fundamentals have been culled out from the various works of Shri Swāmīji. So they are not new inventions of my own. I am indeed greatly indebted to my Guruji for this.

After going through this book very carefully, an aspirant will realise that he is in a position to study the Shaṅkara Bhāshyas. Apart from this, he will be able to realise that the teachings of Āchārya Shaṅkara are consistent with life and experience and these form definite means to get peace and tranquility in this very life. Hence this book is appropriately titled '*Guide-lines to Shankara Vedānta*.'

Without the guidance of the Upanishads as taught by a Guru, who is well-versed in the traditional method of instruction (श्रोत्रिय) and who has realized or intuited the ultimate Reality (ब्रह्मनिष्ठ), the nature of Reality cannot be easily comprehended. For this purpose I have discussed the full significances of ten important suggestions (guidances) of Shri Swāmiji as mentioned in his book "Misconceptions about Shaṅkara" in the Appendix.

The credit for writing this book should go to *Shri R. B. Gopinath, Bangalore* and *Shri Manas Kumar Sanyal Calcutta*. Both are ardent students of Shaṅkara-Vedānta and keen followers of the teachings of Shri Shri Satchindanandendra Saraswatī Swāmiji. May the Almighty and Shri Sadguru bless them in all the aspects of life.

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Guide-lines to Shankara-Vedanta

CHAPTER—1

The first fundamental: Relying on the intuitive experiences of universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life.

II. SPECIFIC FEATURE OF VEDĀNTAS (UPANISHADS) :

According to Shri Shankara though the Upanishads are indivisible part of Vedas, the teaching contained in the Upanishads is quite unlike the other types of teachings like rituals (*Karmas*), meditations (*Upāsānās*), taught in Vedas. Hence the deliberations on Brahman, i.e. *Brahma-Jijnāsā* has been taught separately from the deliberations on Dharma, i.e. *Dharma-Jijnāsā* which mainly teach us the rituals and meditations. To perform rituals etc. one should observe Varnas, Āshramas, age, condition etc. So it is not applicable commonly to all. This Dharma-Jijnāsā runs on the common belief that "I am so and so, I am a doer of actions, I am happy, I am miserable" etc. accepting agentship and enjoyership. This part of the text of Veda is authoritative in its own field. This is accepted by Shankara as it has been accepted by other Mimāṃsakas as he is himself a follower of *Sanātana Vaidika Dharma*. But his main contention is that apart from this Dharma-Jijnāsā there is Brahma-Jijnāsā, i.e. deliberation on Brahman which is also taught by Veda in the last portion thereof which are called Āranyakas (Upanishads). This Brahma-Jijnāsā is based on Universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life. Though this is the fact, these two forms of Jijnāsās are not rival to each other, because Brahma-Jijnāsā nourishes the Dharma-Jijnāsā in one aspect and the Dharma-Jijnāsā will lead to Brahma-Jijnāsā in another aspect.

Thus they are complementary to each other. Hence Shankara declares in Br̥ha Bhāshya—2/4/10 thus :

“The Veda is absolutely valid with regard to its subject-matter. Therefore those who aspire after the well being must accept the verdict of the Vedas on knowledge or on rites, as it is.”¹

It was also shown by Shaṅkara how the conflict with the injunctions about the rites and duties is to be resolved by a reference to the distinction between the enlightened and unenlightened men. (S Br-1/3/19)

According to Shaṅkara, the Dharma-Jijnāsā, i.e. the deliberation on religious matters has taken for granted the common belief of the agentship and enjoyership. It has not set out to determine the true nature of the Self. So it is authoritative in its field only. For this purpose Shaṅkara declares in his Adhyāsa Bhāshya :

“It is a fact that a man performing religious duties or Karma does not attain the exquisite fruits of scriptural duties unless he has acquired a knowledge through belief in the Shāstras that his essential nature of Ātman is separate from his body, senses etc. Still a knowledge of the absolute Reality that is the Self, is not a pre-requisite for such a man who is ignorant of his true nature, for the knowledge of Reality has no relevance here, and it is opposed to agentship of action in as much as the nature of Ātman (as taught in Vedānta) is beyond hunger and thirst, free from such differentiation as Brāhmin caste, Kshatriya caste etc, and is not subject to birth and death (Br̥ha—3/5/1 & 3/4/6). And the scriptures, which are operative before the dawn of the real knowledge of the Self cannot transgress the limits of their dependence on people grouping in nescience”

¹ “वेदस्य हि निरपेक्षं स्वार्थं प्रामाण्यं, तस्माद् यत्तेनोक्तं तत्तथैव प्रतिपत्तव्यम् आत्मनः श्रेय इच्छद्भिः—ज्वानं वा कर्म वा ॥”

So it is evident that the scriptural texts belonging to the Karma-Kānda is meant for those ignorant people who do not know the essential nature of Ātman. And in the ultimate Reality of Ātman, there are really no castes, no relationships with body, sense organs, mind, intellect etc. and no categories of the nature of action, means of action and fruits of action at all. So Shaṅkara distinguishes the Brahma-Jijnāsā from Dharma-Jijnāsā. For this reason when he comments on the first Sharīraka Sūtra, he discusses as to what the word “अथ”, i.e. ‘afterwords’ denotes. Here we have to observe that it is not the meaning of this word that after completing Dharma-Jijnāsā alone one will be fit for Brahma-Jijnāsā. But before or after the Dharma-Jijnāsā he who has got the pre-requisite qualities such as (i) discrimination between eternal and non-eternal (नित्या-नित्यवस्तुविवेकः); (ii) dispassion for the enjoyment of the fruits of work here and here after (इहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविरागः); (iii) a perfection of such practices as control of mind, control of senses and organs etc (शमदमादिसाधनसम्पत्); and (iv) an intense desire for liberation (मुमुक्षुत्वञ्च) can undertake a deliberation on the Upanishadic texts for getting a direct knowledge of Brahman. So these are the inevitably required qualities to deal with Brahma-Jijnāsā. These are called as Sādhana Chatustaya Sampatti.

One important difference between these two types of deliberations on *Dharma* and *Brahman* is shown in Sūtra Bhāshya—1/1/2.

“न धर्मजिज्ञासायामिव श्रुत्याद्य एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायां,
किन्तु श्रुत्यादयः अनुभवादयश्च यथासम्भवमिह प्रमाणम् अनुभवाव-
सानत्वात् भूतवस्तु विषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मविज्ञानस्य ॥”

In this sentence Shaṅkara emphatically declares that the deliberation on Brahman should and must culminate in one’s own intuitive experience. So here the *Vedāntic Anubhava* (Vedāntic intuition) is also a Pramāna, but not

merely the Shruti alone just as it is in the case of Dharma-Jijnāsā. In the case of religious duty, the utterances of the Shrutis etc. would be the only means of knowledge, because no direct experience is needed in support. But the knowledge of Self, which relates to an already existing entity, culminates in experience. Hence it is evident here, that the Brahma-Jijnāsā starts on the firm ground of universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life. Hence this is the first fundamental of Shaṅkara Vedānta—relying on common experience and taking the full view of life. As an elaboration we shall explain the significance of common experience or universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life in the following pages.

II. UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE OR COMMON EXPERIENCE :

To determine the reality we have to rely on the firm ground of common experience meaning the experiences which are common to all irrespective of caste, creed, gender, age, stage of life (Āshrama), time, place etc. For example, the knowledge about fire that it is hot, the knowledge about ice that it is cold or direct perception just as we see external things through our eyes (the acquisition of knowledge through a contact of the eye with some objects) etc. These types of common experiences never change their nature. Shaṅkara thus says in Bṛha Bhāshya—2/1/15 :

- (i) “For a thing can never change its nature, just as fire invariably burns and illumines straw, tender grass etc, that come in contact with it. If it does not, we cannot assert that fire burns or illumines” (Bṛha Bh—2/1/15)

Shaṅkara has hence declared in his Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya—2/2/11 thus :

- (ii) “तच्च सम्यग् ज्ञानम् एकरूपं वस्तुतन्त्रत्वात् एकरूपेण हि अवस्थित यः अर्थः सः परमार्थः । लोके तदविषयं ज्ञानं सम्यग्ज्ञानम् इति उच्यते, यथा अग्निः उष्णः इति ॥”

“And that true enlightenment has no diversity, since it must conform to an existent fact (वस्तुतन्त्रत्वात्) । That content of knowledge is said to be the most real since it ever remains the same and in the world, the knowledge of that kind is said to be right knowledge as for instance, the knowledge about fire that it is hot.”

Here Shankara gives the example that the fire is hot—this denotes the universal experience (common experience—भूयोदर्शन). For this purpose he often uses such words—“दृश्यते” “अदर्शनात्” “दृष्टत्वात्” “अदृष्टत्वात्” etc. in his Bhāshyas.

(iii) “In all the bodies, liquids such as secretions, blood etc. are *seen* (दृश्यते) to present in abundance.”

[S. Bh—3/1/2]

(iv) “For the organs cannot either go or stay anywhere unless they have a material support, since this is contrary to *experience*, it is not *noticed* (अदर्शनात्) in any living creature.”

[S. Bh—3/1/3]

(v) “Accordingly it is a matter of *common experience* (लोके अनुभवः) that the nacre appears as a river, and a single moon appears as two.” [—Adhyāsa Bhāshya]

So to determine the reality we have to rely on the common experience, i.e. a truth can be called as such only if it is acceptable and verifiable by every one at all times. Shaṅkara emphatically declares in Gītā Bhāshyas (18/16) that, “even a hundred Shruti texts cannot be considered to be valid if they pronounce fire to be cold or non-luminous,¹ In Bṛha Bhāshya (2/1/20) also he says : ‘you cannot prove that fire is cold or that the sun does not give heat, even by citing a hundred examples, for the facts would already be known to be otherwise through another means of knowledge.’”

¹ न हि श्रुतिशतमपि ‘शीतोऽग्निरप्रकाशो वा इति ब्रुवन् प्रामाण्यमुपैति (गीताभाष्य—18/66)

To determine the transcendental reality Shaṅkara has followed the footsteps of the utterances of the Shrutis which denote and culminate in the universal acceptance (i.e. common to all persons) and comprehensive tribasic vision of life (i.e. which follows the experiences of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep). So the truth should be based on this firm ground and not on the experience of an individual soul. Shaṅkara himself never said that it is my own experience. He says, everything should be proved by direct universal intuition and reasoning based on such intuition as far as possible. The truth should not be based merely on the utterances (study of teachings) of any great Soul or Omniscient being or Prophet or Philosopher or the thinker, nor does it depend on the implicit faith alone in the mere utterances of the Scriptures. Truth, however, is one and what is against common experience must be rejected, whoever says it even if he be the Lotus-born—(Brahmā). Strictly speaking the Advaita Siddhānta is not creation of Shaṅkara but it is universal truth based on common experience. The transcendental Reality is called as *Brahman* or *Ātman* in the Upanishads and in Gītā. It is declared in these Shāstras that this Reality is the Self of all. For examples :

- “एक देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः” (Shvetashvatara—6/11)
 एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा” (Katha—2/2/9, 19, 11)
 क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु” (Geeta—13/2)
 “ईश्वर सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशे... तिष्ठति” (Geeta—18/61)
 “समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु” (Geeta—9/29) etc.

By this we can understand that the transcendental Reality which is taught in the Upanishads and in Gītā is the Self of all. So it should be cognised on the basis of common experience alone and not on the individual mystic experiences which have been gained by some practices like Yōga, Samādhī etc. These types of individual mystic experience are there but they are not useful to determine

transcendental Reality which is called *PARAMĀRTHAHA*. Shri Shaṅkara has clarified that pure Consciousness which is the Witnessing Self can be cognised and experienced as it is our own true Self which can neither be denied or accepted. It is transcendental, but can be experienced intuitively. Shaṅkara gives supreme importances to universal experiences (but not on individual experiences) in determining the validity of the statement of Scriptures.

So it is proved here that to know the significance of Shaṅkara-Vedānta we should rely on the universal acceptance or the common experience. This is called *Sārvatrika Anubhava* (सार्वत्रिकानुभव) Now we shall deal with the comprehensive vision of life, i.e. *Pūrṇa Anubhava* (पूर्णानुभव).

III. POORNA ANUBHAVA OR COMPREHENSIVE VISION OF LIFE :

A. Partial view of life according to the physical science and all other systems of Philosophy except Vedanta,

The common experience of the worldly life is divided into two parts, i.e. the subject and the object. The external world is the object and the perceiver of this is the subject. All empirical experiences consist of the subject-object relationship. On this supposition all other sciences, first want to discover the truth regarding the objects. In this process also every science, e.g. Physics, Chemistry, Engineering etc. takes a part and partial view of the objective world. From this standpoint there are so many subject-matters which are variously divided and every science deals with a particular subject-matter. Apart from this the Psychology also deals with the subject which consists of analysing the mind of other persons and creatures which are objects for their own mind. According to this there are so many varieties such as human psychology, child psychology etc.

Sometimes they take the subjective mind of their own and they infer regarding the objective mind on the basement of the behaviour of other persons, creatures etc. So the material science and the psychiatry which are very important these days, have not got or relied on the comprehensive vision regarding the universe. For example, even in the case of a person who has studied whole of the solar system which is the universe, one will come to the conclusion that in view of there being so many solar systems in this vast universe it will be impossible to know everything in this universe. From this standpoint all sciences are dealing with a part of the universe and not the universe as a whole with comprehensive aspect. This is the position of the material sciences.

The above sciences deal with the objects which are regulated by time, space and causation. Hence the sciences which are dealing with the part of the universe are bound by these factors and they have no capacity to extricate themselves from these regulations.

B. VĒDANTIC VIEW REGARDING THE UNIVERSE :

In Vedānta the whole phenomenon of the universe is divided into three planes :

- i) the Divine plane :—*Ādhidaivika Prapancha*
- ii) the Material plane—*Ādhibautika Prapancha.*
- iii) the Corporeal plane—*Ādhyātmika Prapancha.*

The first is the *divine plane* which means (from the Sanskrit root-*Dīv*, to shine) the sun, the moon, the stars, planets etc, which are millions and billions in number ; the divine worlds according to the religious beliefs such as heavenly worlds upto Brahma-Lōka—including all these, the Vedānta takes in one group as divine plane or *Ādhidaivika Prapancha.*

The *material plane* means the world which we see—the conglomeration of the five elements—Ether, Air, Fire, Water and the Earth; all types of bodies of all creatures, all the things which we see and all types of scientific machines etc. which are already invented and to be invented in future such as computers robots, etc—all these are to be taken in this plane, i.e. the material plane or *Ādhibhāutika Prapancha*.

The *corporeal plane* is concerned with the subject, while the above said two planes are coming in the category of the objects or the objective world. In this corporeal plane the body, vital force, organs of action and sense organs, mind, intellect and feelings of sorrow and pleasure etc, including the “Me-notion” are included. This group is called as Corporeal plane or *Ādhyātmika Prapancha*, because all these are assembled together just like any machinery like a watch assembled with dial, springs etc. This group is called in Vedānta as *Kārya-Kārāṇa Sanghāt* (Gi-13/20). This is the technical term of Vedānta which denotes the corporeal plane. All these form the third group.

Besides these three planes, we have to take the infinite idea of time, space and causation. The time-space factor appear in our daily life as if they are real and beginningless and endless and hence infinite. The question will be absurd that, “In which time does the time factor appear? In which place the idea of space is there?” Because without the concept of time or space there will be no kind of dealings such as thinking, talking and acting. For this purpose philosophers who started thinking regarding the truth of time and space which are meta-physics have come to different conclusions in this matter :

a) Some say that the distance between two things is called as ‘space’ and the intervening period between two events is called as ‘time’.

b) Others say that the above view is not correct because to count the things 1, 2, 3, etc. the space is requir-

ed. as the substratum. So also in the case of events, without the substratum of time, there will be no counting of series of events.

c) Others hold the view that the notion of time and space are there where there is the mind and hence these are the a priori notion of the mind.

d) Others say that time, space and causation—all these are relative to each other. There is no absolute time, space or causation. Neither time nor space has any existence of its own ; each exists or seems to exist only in constant relation to and association with other. So, all the dealings are coming under the relativity alone. There may be an absolute truth, it may be God (= a Great Geometer) also. This final conclusion is drawn by *Einstein*. Here we have to remember that "bereft of time factor, there will be no causation," because 'cause' means that which exists inevitably before the effect (*Kārya Niyata Pūrva Vṛttihi Kāranam*). This is the judgement of Nyāya-shāstra (Indian logician). So, the idea of causation cannot be considered apart from the time factor.

The Vedāntic view of the Universe comprehends all the infinite idea of time, space, causation etc, with all the multiplicity of the universe including the "Mention" and is considered as a single unit of the appearance of the universe. This whole unit of the universe appears in the waking state. Shri Shankara explains the nature of the universe itself in a comprehensive way in his S-Bh- 1/1/2 as follows :

"...this universe that is manifested through name and form, that is associated with diverse agents and experiencers, that provides the support for actions and results having well-regulated space, time and causation, and that defies all thoughts about the real nature of its creation".

This is the Vedāntic view of comprehensive vision of the phenomenon of the universe.

C. Method of observing the life as a whole :

The physical sciences seek the aid of instruments, gadgets and appliances to establish their truths, and even so they can never reach any finality because they thrive only in one state—the waking state, discarding the universal experiences of two other states of life i.e. dream-state & deep sleep-state. This is evidently a partial view of life and the truths arrived at thereby are also only partial. But Vedānta takes into consideration the whole life in all its manifested and unmanifested forms, i.e. the Vedānta takes the human experiences of all the three states viz, Waking, Dream & Deep sleep to arrive at its conclusions. So Vedāntic conclusions which are based on intuitive experiences, become irrefutable and valid for all times. No other system of philosophy except Vedānta bases its enquiry on a comprehensive tri-basic view of life and on the principle of universal acceptance.

Where there is an appearance of the waking state, the state contains the whole of the above said unit (mentioned in the previous article No. III B). When the waking state disappears, there is no appearance of the above said dualistic universe. For example, in deep sleep there is no appearance of the waking state. Where there is the appearance of the dream, in that state also another kind of the unit of universe appears just as it is described in the case of waking state. But when dream state disappears the whole unit of that universe also disappears.

So in Vedānta, the comprehensive vision of appearance and disappearance of the dualistic world is taken together. These two are described as *manifested and unmanifested* forms of the universe. These are technical terms used in Vedānta as *Vyakta* (व्यक्त) and *Avyakta* (अव्यक्त) in Gītā—8/18 ; *Sat* (सत्) and (असत्) in Gītā—13/12 ; *Kshara* (क्षर) and *Akshara* (अक्षर) in Gītā—15/16 ; *Vidita* (विदित) and *Avidita* (अविदित) in Kena-Upanishad

—1/4 ; *Mūrta* (मूर्त) and *Amūrta* (अमूर्त) in *Bṛha-Upanishad*—2/3/1 ; *Sambhūti* (सम्भूति) and *Asambhūti* (असम्भूति) in *Ishāvāsyōpanishad*—12 etc Here Shaṅkara says the meaning of these as *Vyākṛta* (व्यक्त) and *Avyākṛta* (अव्यक्त) in *Sūtra Bhāshya*—2/1/27.

The revered Swāmīji of Holenarsipur has given this practical and all embracing outlook of comprehensive vision of life while explaining Tribasic method of Vedānta, i.e. AVASTHĀTRAYA based on Shaṅkara Bhāshya Māndūkya-Māntra—5 in his *Māndūkya Rāhasya Vivṛtihi*. Here he explains the whole range of life which is divided into parts : That is *arhana Vṛtti* (—the states of waking & dream where one sees something else) and *Adarshana Vṛtti* (—the states of deep sleep and trance wherein one sees nothing) [‘दर्शनादर्शन वृत्तयोः तत्वाप्रतिबोधलक्षणस्य स्वापस्य तुल्यत्वात्’—Mān-Bh—5]. In Upanishads and in *Gītā* the same method is taken as shown above. Taking these both sides of life (= the whole of life in all its manifested and unmanifested forms) and determining the truth is an important thing in Vedānta All types of experiences just as common man’s experiences, mystic experiences of Yōgis, Upāsakas and so on, are all included in the *Vyakta or Darshana Vṛtti*. And in deep sleep, when there is no appearance of the dualistic world, it is said from the standpoint of waking state that it (=dualistic world) exists in the unmanifested seed-form, meaning that it disappears for the time being etc. This experience is common to all and is called *Avyakta or Adarshana Vṛtti*. It is an undeniable fact that there is no third category of experience besides the two states—*Darshana Vṛtti* and *Adarshana Vṛtti*.¹ This is comprehensive vision of life. This is common to all and so it is universal acceptance. This is the *method of observing the life as a whole*. This type of analysis is not based on any individual experience. The individual experiences which

1. The three states are the objects of knowledge for, there cannot be anything knowable besides these three states,

are gained through efforts are bound to time, space and causation factors but one's own being which is the substratum of the Darshana and Adarshana Vṛttis is clearly beyond the dualistic condition such as space, time etc. The locus or substratum of all these various illusory phenomenon of manifested and unmanifested forms is certainly the pure consciousness—the Ātman alone which is really real. On this firm ground of one's own Being (=the Witnessing principle of life) is Shaṅkara-Vedānta built. Those who have overlooked the principle of Tri-basic view are unable to understand Shaṅkara properly.

Thus after observing this comprehensive view of life, one can easily cognise his own Being which is the substratum of these two appearance and disappearance of the universe. This Being is the real nature of the Self. So Shrī Shaṅkara describes this comprehensive view of life in Māndūkya Bhāshya—3 thus :

“सर्वस्य प्रपञ्चस्य साधिरैविकस्य अनेनात्मना चतुष्पात्त्वस्य विवक्षितत्वात्” meaning “in as much as the intention is to show that the entire phenomenal universe and the world of Gods, together with this gross cosmic Self, contribute to the constitution of the four aspects of Ātman.”

D. Correct meaning of the term Sārvatrika Pūrna Anubhava (सार्वत्रिकपूर्ण अनुभव) :

Commonly in Shaṅkara Vedānta, to realise the true nature of the Self a common belief was prevailing is that we have to get some individual mystic experience like Samādhi, etc. On this belief the aspirants were trying to understand Shaṅkara's teachings. Till Shrī Shrī Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmīji dawned on the horizon of Vedānta, there was no usage of this first fundamental, i.e. universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life. The word “सार्वत्रिक पूर्ण अनुभव” denotes the above said criterion. The readers are referred to Sanskrit introduction to

Māndūkya Rahasya Vivṛtti by Swāmijī —Anubhavasya Prāmukhyam—the predominance of Anubhava. Here he has given the correct meaning of the term “Anubhava”. The word “Anubhava” is not used in Vedānta in the sense of perceptions, feeling or emotion or newly acquired mystic experiences through the practices of Japa, meditation or practice of Pātanjala Yōga which are called mystic experiences, which are concerned with the individuals and which also vary from one individual to another. But that which is common to all, by which the waking, dream and deep sleep states are directly intuited and which reminds the experience of the dream and deep sleep directly to the waking intellect and that which gives room to differentiate the waking state from other two states and which is not relying on the functions of the sense organs or the mind etc. and which is itself the true nature of consciousness of one’s own, that Witnessing Self itself is called as *Sākshi Anubhava* or Intuition in Vedānta.

This clarity regarding the word Anubhava representing the true Shaṅkara Prakriyā has not been told by any Vedāntin except by Shri Swāmijī of Holenarsipur in the hoary history of Vedānta. So this is a revelation in the field of Shaṅkara-Vedānta brought about by Shri Swāmijī. By this, Vedānta has been rescued from the belief that the Advaita Vedānta also is a cult just like Dvaita, Vishishtādvaita etc. Swāmijī has thus showed that this is the universal truth which could be understood by any one if one has got the capacity of understanding.

IV. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS REGARDING THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL :

Thus the comprehensive vision of life and universal acceptance is the first fundamental of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. In Shruti and Smṛtis the transcendental reality, i.e. the real nature of the Self is described as the Self of all. So here we have to take the common experience of all. For example :

In Upanishads :

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः—Shvetashvatara—6/11
एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढो आत्मा—Katha 1/3/12
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा—Katha 2/2/9, 10, 11
etc.

And in Geeta :

“समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु”—Geet —9/29
“समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्”—Geeta—13/27
“अहमात्मा गुडाकेशः सर्वभूताश्च यस्थितः”—Geeta—10/20
“ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशे तिष्ठति”—Geeta—18/61
“क्षेत्रञ्च च मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु”—Geeta—13/2 etc.

In this way the comprehensive vision of life which is explained above is another important thing is Shaṅkara-Vedānta.

This is hinted by the following Mantra :

POORNAMADHA POORNAMIDAM Brha—5/1/1.

(पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

Here it is hinted that by the word 'Idam' (इदं) the appearance and disappearance of the universe is to be taken as a whole. This is the comprehensive vision regarding the world. By the word "Adaha" (अदः) it is denoted that one's own true nature of being which is the substratum of the appearance and disappearance of the universe, i.e. the Brahman or the real nature of the Self. And then one should observe the pervasiveness of this self in the appearance of the whole universe (पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते).

By this, when the universe is falsified, then this falsification is called as *Pūrnasya Pūrnamadāya* (पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय) Shaṅkara writes here as TIRASKRITYA (तिरस्कृत्य), i.e. by negating the universe which is only an attribution due to ignorance, by Brahma-Vidyā. After negating, the infinite Brahman alone remains (पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते).

So here the life in its reality is the pure Being and the substratum of the appearance of the universe which is the infinite and the universe which is the appearance of the pure being (from the standpoint of ignorance) are also taken as a whole. Apart from these two—the pure being as substratum and the appearance of the universe due to ignorance, there is no third type of experience in our life. Hence this is the correct view of comprehensive vision of life. No other science except Vedānta has got this type of comprehensive vision of life. All other sciences have relied on the biased opinion of waking state alone and taking the individuality as our true nature. But in Vedānta, the microcosm (व्याप्ति अहंकार—the individual Jeeva)—and the macrocosm (समष्टि अहंकार—the cosmic Self, i.e. the Hiranyagarbha) are taken together as one unit (which are of adventitious and ephemeral nature) along with the substratum which is our true nature. Hence this view is a method of seeing the life as a whole. This is the first fundamental of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. If an aspirant understands this it will be easy for him to know all other teachings of Shaṅkara Vedānta.

Now we have to discuss on the second fundamental principle, i.e. *Cognising the Witnessing Principle of life* which would be very easy after knowing the above first fundamental of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. We shall see this in subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER—2

The 2nd Fundamental :

Cognising the Witnessing Principle of Life which is the substratum of Vyakta & Avayakta.

NATURE OF WITNESSING SELF :

Shri Shri Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmīji has declared that until and unless one cognises that the Witnessing principle, which is his true nature and which is called as the Witness or *Anubhava Swarūpa* or *Sākshi Anubhava*, is quite separate from the two types of experiences such as,

- i) Pratyaya Anubhava—the perception which comes with the contact of other objects through sense organs, and
- ii) Vedana Anubhava—the emotions or feelings or mental conceptions which occur bereft of the functions of sense organs only in the mind just as anger, happiness, devotion, jealousy etc. including the mystic experiences of Yōga philosophy.

it is impossible to recognise that there is our true nature which is called as *Anubhava Swarūpa* and in which all types of experiences culminate and which is the witness of all modifications of Antahkarana including the 'Me-notion' and hence it is difficult to penetrate the secrets of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. Echoing this view Shri Shaṅkara has declared in his Sūtra-Bhāshya—1/1/4 that,

Objection : Atman being the object of the 'Me-notion it is not reasonable to say that he is known only from the Upanishads.

Reply : Not so. For we have refuted this position by saying that this Ātman is the *Witness of that Ego*.

(To explain): Leaving aside the erroneous) knowledge of the Self as the agent (of actions) as contained in the idea of "I", the real Self—which is the witness of the idea of "I" which exists in all creatures, which is without any difference of degrees, and which is one, unchanging eternal, and all pervasive consciousness—(such a Self) is not known as the Self of all by anyone in the section of the Vedas dealing with virtuous deeds, or in the scriptures of the logicians.

This is the bed-book of the huge building of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. So at first an aspirant should cognise this Witness as one's own Self through the teachings of the Shāstra and the Guru. After cognising this, he will be able to take a stand in this true nature and then he will be fit to understand the secrets of the teachings of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. This is the most important principle in Shaṅkara-Vedānta.

Commonly in the empirical dealings when one wants to know something, he does so with his instruments such as mind, intellect and sense organs. With the aid of these instruments one gains the knowledge of the external phenomena. This position is called as the knowership or Pramātr (प्रमात्र) This Pramātr is described in the above Bhāshya-sentence as Aham Pratyaya Kartr (अहं-प्रत्ययकर्तृ) meaning, knower, doer enjoyer etc., and all these are included in one word, i.e. the 'Me-notion' or the 'sense of I'. This type of procedure is enough to know the other objects as well as the psychological plane. But in Vedānta, it is a very difficult and subtle task as one has to cease his identification with mind-intellect-sense organs through discrimination according to the teachings of the Shāstra and the Guru. So here an introvert mind is necessarily required.

When an aspirant turns inward upto the Witnessing principle of life, which is beyond the 'Me-notion', at that time he remains as the Witness and he can objectify his own

‘Me-notion’ or ‘Ego’, This *remaining* as the Witnessing Principle is called here as *cognising* the Witnessing Principle of life. Here ‘cognising’ means quite unlike the cognising of the other objects. Here it is just remaining as the Self. To stay in one’s own nature is called by Shaṅkara as “निष्क्रियात्मस्वरूपावस्थानम्”—Gī-Bh—3/30 & 18/49 ; स्वात्मानुभवनिश्चयरूपेण अवस्थानम्”—Gī-Bh—18/54.

In this connection, one should not misunderstand that the ‘remaining as the Self’ means we shall attain a state like *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* etc., where there are no dealings. That is why Shaṅkara has warned in S.Bh-2/1/14, thus :

‘This also follows from the teaching that the embodied soul, is Brahman in essence in the passage, ‘that is the That Thou art, Shvetaketo’. This identity of the embodied soul, that is taught, is a self-established truth and it is not to be accomplished through some extraneous effort.

“स्वयं प्रसिद्धं हि एतत् शारीरस्य ब्रह्मात्मत्वम् उपदिश्यते, न यत्नान्तरप्रसाध्यम् ।”

From this it follows that like the idea of the rope removing the ideas of snake etc. (superimposed on it), the acceptance of the unity of the individual Self with Brahman, as declared in the scriptures, results in the removal of the idea of an individual soul bound up with the body, that is a creation of beginningless ignorance. When this false notion that embodied soul is the real Self is removed, all those activities become sublated which are based on that assumptions, which are created by ignorance, and for supplying a rationale for which a separate diversified part is imagined in Brahman. It is farther shown by the Upanishad, with the help of such passages as, ‘But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self then what should one see and through what?’ (Br̥ha—2/4/13) etc, that in the case of one who has realised Brahman as the Self, all empirical dealings cease that are

concerned with action, instruments and results. It cannot be said that this negation of dealings (in the Self) is confined to a certain state (during liberation only), for the identity of the Self and Brahman stated in, 'That Thou art' is not contingent on any particular state."

So here, the determination or the discerning factor on the firm ground of one's own intuitional experience, is the main criterion.

II DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTELLECTUAL EXPERIENCE AND INTUITIONAL EXPERIENCE :

Now we have to understand as to what is the intuitional experience, because to cognise or to take a stand in the Witnessing Principle of life, the intuitional experience (साक्षी अनुभव) is the only means and not the intellectual process of thinking (प्रमातृ अनुभव). So in Vedānta when we say discrimination or Vichāra (विचार) etc, it is not the thinking process of the intellect as being an Ego, but the introvert process of relying on the intuitional experience of life, and only here one will realise one's own intuitional Self which is separate from the intellect or the mind. Even though the mind is required to follow the intuitional experience, here, it turns inwardly unlike its habitual flow towards the outer objects through the sense organs. That is why Shaṅkara says :

"—The mind that is purified by the instructions of the scriptures and the teacher, and control of body and sense organs etc. become the instrument for realizing the Self". (Gī-Bh—2/21)

So at first the aspirant should discriminate the intuitional experience from the intellectual process of thinking. The *discriminating process* is given below :

How do we know that there is 'Me-notion' ? How do we know that 'I dreamt' or 'I slept happily' ? How do we know that 'I am awake now' ? Commonly all are puzzled

and think that they know these things through their mind. But strictly speaking, the mind has no capacity to objectify the "Me-notion", because one generally says, 'My mind is wandering here and there' etc. So the 'Me-notion' is the user of the mind. The mind which concerns to the waking state has no capacity to extricate itself from this state and pass on to the other states such as dream or sleep. Suppose the waking mind really goes to the dream, then it would have said that 'I have come here temporarily from the waking state etc.," just as a man says when he travels temporarily to other places from where he originally belongs to. But in our experience we do not find such a happening in the dream state. And in deep sleep there is no trace of mind at all. This is in the experience of all. If it is there it would not be called as deep sleep. So, the presence or the absence of the mind is understood through one's own nature of Witnessing Principle of life and it is expressed through the mind and the intellect taking the grab of 'Me-notion'. Due to lack of this deep discrimination all wrongly think that 'we know everything through mind or intellect.'" Hence through the teachings of the Guru and the Shāstra, we have to discriminate the intuitional experience (बोधिज्ञप्रत्यय) from the intellectual process of thinking (बौद्धप्रत्यय).

In the above said manner when we say 'I dreamt' or 'I slept happily.' —these experiences are called as intuitional experiences in Vedānta, The word *Intuition* (अनुभव) has got different meanings according to dictionary but here in Vedānta the meaning of this word is: '*Tuition*' (= *Bōdha* or knowledge) which comes from '*in*' (=inside) to the intellect, so it is called as *Intuitional experience*. To get these experiences there is no need of any of the activities or functions of the sense organs or the mind. It comes directly from the inner bosom which is our true nature. So our nature which is absolute nature of consciousness directly reminds the experiences of dream and deep sleep to the waking mind. So in Vedāntic termi-

nology it is called as *Sākshi Anubhava* (साक्षी अनुभव)' This *Sākshi Anubhava* is quite separate from *Anubhavas* which have been described above as perceptions, conceptions etc.

When we are in the range of perceptions or emotions (conceptions), inevitably we have taken the identification with our mind and sense organs. But when we turn our observations towards this intuitional experience, at that time we lose our identification with our mind or the *Antahkarana* and automatically we remain in our true nature and objectify the *Antahkarana* by our true nature. This is the *difference between the ordinary thinking process of the mind and the discriminating process of Vedānta*. For this purpose it is said that *Viveka* or *Vichāra* does not mean the ordinary process of thinking of the intellect. To take a stand in one's own true nature of the Witnessing Principle of life, this type of discrimination is the only means and through this means only the cognition of the Witnessing Principle of life, meaning getting *Sākshi Anubhava* is possible. From this standpoint when one follows the *Vedāntic* teachings one will easily grasp and realise at last the non-dual absolute Self as the whole and sole reality.

III. THE WITNESS AS DISTINCT FROM ACTIVE EGO.

Process of Discrimination

At first an aspirant should know that there are two types of 'I' One is the acting 'I' ('Me-notion' in empirical life) and the other, the real 'I' (*Sākshi* or Witness of all). In empirical dealings also these two types of 'I' are prevailing—just as an actor takes part in the drama as the king or an emperor and on the stage he acts just like a king having all the adjuncts such as dress etc. At that time, he says 'I am an emperor' and performs all the actions related to that part. This is the acting 'I'. But what he really is—a man in the world—that his being is the real 'I'. Having

the adjuncts of a dress of a king when he comes later from behind the curtain, even though he is still in that dress of the king, he deals with other persons from the standpoint of his true nature as a man. At that time his adjuncts are not important but his true nature is the predominant factor.

Similarly, commonly when we say 'I am so and so,' 'I am a doer of actions' 'I am happy or miserable' etc, then this is the acting 'I' which has taken the part of individual soul in the stage of waking and dream. This individuality is called as 'Me-notion', 'Pramāṇ (प्रमाँ), 'Aham Pratyaya Vishaya Kartr' (अहं प्रत्ययविषयकर्तृ) and 'enjoyer' (भोक्ता) etc. in the empirical life. This individuality appears as if it is real due to adjuncts like mind, intellect, sense organs, body etc. which are only false appearances and of adventitious and ephemeral nature, restricted to a particular state—either waking or dream, and are conjured up by ignorance. Where these adjuncts disappear like in the state of deep sleep etc, there remains the real 'I' (Sākshi or Witnessing Consciousness) as it is, in its true nature. This is clearly said in Chandōgya-Upanishad-6/9/3 thus: "All individuals remain in their true nature in deep sleep" This true nature is not at all affected by the appearance of individuality which appears due to adjuncts. At that time also, it continues to exist as it was before.

Shaṅkara declares this thing in his Sūtra Bhāshya—
3/2/7 :

‘अपि च न कदाचित् जीवस्य ब्रह्मणा संपत्तिर्नास्ति, स्वरूपस्यान-
पायित्वात् । स्वप्नजागरितयोस्तु उपाधिसंपर्कवशात् पररूपापत्तिमिवा-
पेक्ष्य तदुपशमात् सुषुप्ते स्वरूपापत्तिर्वक्ष्यते । सति संपन्नस्तावदेक-
त्वान्न विजानातीति युक्तम् ॥’

“Besides, there is no time when Jīva has not become one with Brahman, for one's intrinsic nature cannot be alienated. Only in view of the seeming foreign aspect

which he assumes in dream and waking owing to contact of conditioning associates, it is proposed to say that he attains his own form on the dissolution of that foreign aspect. It is but reasonable that the Jīva merged in Pure Being (Brahman) is not conscious because of (absolute) unity."

And the same thing he confirms in S. Bh—1/1/9 thus :

"The individual soul keeps awake so long as it is under the influence of the characteristics of those objects of sense-perception which it apprehends as a result of its contact with the conditioning factors constituted by the diverse manifestations of the mind. It assumes the name of mind while seeing dreams under the influence of the latent impressions of the experiences of the waking state. And when these two conditioning factors disappear in the state of deep sleep, it appears to be merged, as it were, in the Self, (स्वात्मनि प्रलीन इव) owing to the absence of particularization created by limiting adjuncts, and hence it is said to have become merged in its own Self."

In these two Bhāshya-quotations we have to observe the words *Pararūpāpattimiva*, meaning He appears as if He has become an individual Jīva which is not his true nature but only a garbed one. Similarly in the second quotation the word *Pralīna Iva* (प्रलीन इव), meaning the individual soul appears to be merged, as it were, in its own Self, owing to the absence of limiting adjuncts. Strictly speaking there is no emerging or merging with one's own true nature for him. But due to disappearance of the adjuncts in deep sleep it is described as "as if he has merged in his true nature." So one's own true nature is the Witness of the 'Me-notion'. This true nature need not be gained newly by some efforts or through some experiences of states like Samādhi etc, where there is no kind of dealings.

This truth is declared by Shaṅkara in S. Bh—2/1/14 in *SVAYAM PRASIDDHAM HI ETAT...NIBANDHANATVAAT*. The gist of this Bhāshya-quotation is 'Being Brahman is very nature for all if it is recognised through the teachings of Shāstra and Guru that the previous wrong notion that 'I am an individual' is a false appearance and at the same time all types of dealings will also get cancelled or falsified which are based on the pivot of individuality. The Shruti says that after knowing the real nature of the Self there remains nothing regarding any dealings. This is not restricted to any particular state where there are no dealings because, being Brahman is one's true nature and hence it is not restricted to a particular state. So, this true nature of the Witnessing Principle of life is to be cognised through discrimination (Viveka) alone. So to cognise the Witnessing Principle, the discrimination or Viveka is the only means. Shaṅkara says this time and again in his Sūtra Bhāshya. For example .

—'Before the dawn of discriminating knowledge, the individual soul's nature of consciousness remains mixed up as it were, with the body, senses, mind, intellect, sense-objects and sorrow, happiness, but the same individual is said to have its real nature when the discriminating knowledge dawns from the Upanishads. Therefore the individual soul continuing in the state of its unmanifested nature, owing to the absence of discriminating knowledge, is said to have its real nature manifested when discriminating knowledge dawns'. (S Bh.—1/3/19)

Therefore the result of the discriminatory knowledge (विवेकज्ञान) is the attainment of its real nature, its realization of its nature as the absolute Self. The function of Antahkarana which take place at the time of discrimination is as follows. According to the teachings of Vedānta and Āchārya when the aspirant turns inwardly, then

- i) The Antahkarana stops to see the outer things

through the sense organs (i.e. the Antahkarana starts ignoring the external objects).

- ii) It gives up the thinking regarding the outer things through the mind.
- iii) It rejects imagining or inferring the matters through the intellect.
- iv) It gives up the idea of 'I am so and so,' 'I am a doer of actions,' 'I am happy,' 'I am miserable' etc.—the feelings which will arise by taking the identification with the ego.
- v) Lastly he completely turns his attention towards Witnessing Principle of the ego through the discrimination and concentration.

At that time the aspirant himself remains as the Witness. And the Antahkarana which has followed this nature, also starts to appear in the form of the Witnessing Principle as it is completely pervaded and directly illuminated by the Self just like the mirage that is illuminated and pervaded by the sunshine. Thus the seeker arrives at the final intuition of Ātman after abolishing all the superimpositions.

IV MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING THE WITNESS AS MANY AND ONE ACCORDING TO SUB-COMMENTARIES :

The doctrine of Post-Shankaras, who hold that perception is of two kinds, to wit, Jeeva-Saakshi and Ishvara-Saakhi, is totally opposed to Shruti and reason based on intuition as well as to the Bhaashyas.

Some misconceptions regarding this nature of Witnessing Principle life are still prevalent. For example, the Witness (Sākshi) of the ego is separate in each individual

soul. And hence Jiva-Sākshi (जीवसाक्षी) are many : the Witness for Ishvara, i.e. Ishvara-Sākshi (ईश्वरसाक्षी) is one, i.e. Brahman. The Brahman is like Mahākāsha (महाकाश) and the Witness which are many are like Ghatākāshas (घटाकाश), etc. These types of misconceptions are there due to not-knowing the true nature of the Witness according to the teachings of Bhāshya and also due to non-cognition of Anubhava and relying only on the intellectual inference. So it is essential to know or to cognise that the Witnessing Principle of life is the predominant thing.

According to Shaṅkara's teachings, we have to cognise the nature of the Witness as it is. While explaining the Pūrṇa Anubhava (Chapter—1), it is said that the whole phenomenon of the universe including all multiplicity of the souls and the world with the concept of infinite time, space, causation etc. is Upādhi (उपाधि) for Pratyagātman (प्रत्यगात्मा). The Bhāshya-Vākya has been referred earlier which is said in Māndūkya Mantra—3 Bhāshya, thus, 'सर्वस्य प्रपञ्चस्य साधिदैविकस्य अनेनात्मना चतुष्पादत्वस्य विवक्षितत्वात् । एवं च सति सर्वप्रपञ्चोपशमे अद्वैतसिद्धिः ॥' Here Shaṅkara says that the Witnessing Principle of life is the substratum of the universe and hence it is not an individual one. For example, when we realize that the Witness is beyond the ego then it is evident that it is transcendental reality of this multiplicity, because the multiplicity of the universe appears only when there is the appearance of the ego. So, in this process of discrimination we have to take macrocosm with microcosm. If this view is missed, then our thinking process will lead us to the doctrine of Kapila Sāṅkhya who has accepted the multiplicity of the Selves. This thing has also been explained by Shaṅkara in the Bhāshya portion quoted above. So it is wrong to assume that there are many Witnesses.

Holding the view that there are many Witnesses is itself an illogical statement. The many entities to whom

this multiplicity has appeared—that subject is the only entity fit to be called as Witness, and those which have appeared to this Witness become the witnessed because they are objects. The Vedānta is a subjective science and not an objective one. To accept the many entities inevitably we have to accept the existence of the time-space factors. These factors are only in the realm of the ego. When we say that Witnessing Principle of life is beyond ego and it is the Witness of the ego, then naturally it is beyond the concepts of time-space etc. It being so, how can there be many Witnesses ? For this reason the doctrine of one and the same Witnessing Ātman as the universal Self of all beings has been proclaimed in the Shruti :

“एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः
 सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।
 कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः
 साक्षी चेता केवलो निगुणश्च ॥”

(Shvetāshvatara—6/11)

—“One and the same shining one (*Deva*), is hidden in all beings, the omnipresent, the *inmost Self* of all beings, the overlord of all acts, presiding over all beings, the *Witnessing consciousness*, one, and without attributes.”

We have explained this thing while explaining the Sārvatrika Anubhava, the universal acceptance of the of the Vedāntic teaching. Hence the belief that there are many Witnesses—one for each individual—is a wrong notion and contrary to the Shruti and the reasons which are based on intuitional experiences and to the Bhāshya. The multiplicity appears either in waking or in the dream and in deep sleep there is no multiplicity. This presence and absence of multiplicity is known or objectified through one’s own Being which is the Witnessing Principle of Life. It being so, how is it possible to say that ‘that Principle is many’ ?

Like this, holding the view that there is Ishvara-Sākshi (ईश्वर-साक्षी) is also equally absurd. In Māndūkya Mantra-6, the Self who remains in deep sleep and in whom both the states merge and emerge from him, that Self is described as Ishvara (एष सर्वेश्वर) and so also in Brhadāranyaka—4/4/22, the same Ātman who is the Witnessing Principle of life is described as “एष भूताधिपतिः, एष भूतपालः...” etc. By this we can easily understand that the *Self itself is called as Ishvara*. In Sūtra Bhāshya—2/3/41, Shaṅkara identifies this Witness with Ishvara. He writes thus :

“अविद्यावस्थायां कार्यकरणसंघाताविवेकदर्शिनः जीवस्य अविद्यातिमिरान्धस्य सतः परस्मात् आत्मनः कर्माध्यक्षात् सर्वभूताधिवासात् साक्षिणः चेतयितुः ईश्वरात् तदनुज्वया कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वलक्षणस्य संसारस्य सिद्धिः ॥”

—In this sentence Shaṅkara has described that the Supreme Self who presides over all activities and resides in all beings and who is the Witness of all is the Supreme Lord. So the Witness himself is the Ishvara. and here all the description of the Shvetāshvatara Mantra (6/11) is taken. By this Shaṅkara emphatically says that the *Witnessing Principle itself is Ishvara* which means that the Sākshi and Ishvara are synonymous terms.

From the standpoint of reason also saying that there is Sākshi for Ishvara is incongruous. Because, if there is a Sākshi for Ishvara then this Ishvara comes into the category of the witnessed (साक्ष्य). That which is the Sākshi alone is fit to be called Ishvara and not the witnessed ones, because witnessed ones also are merely objects to the witness. Shaṅkara has explained this in Māndūkya Mantra-6 :

“एष हि स्वरूपावस्थः सर्वेश्वरः साधिदैविकस्य सर्वस्य ईश्वरः ईशिता ; नैतस्मात् जात्यन्तरभूतोऽन्येषामिव ।”

The significance of this sentence is that the true nature of the Self of everyone is himself Ishvara, but Ishvara is

not other than the Self as the logicians hold the view. According to the logician Ishvara is separate from the individual Selves.

When we look from the standpoint of comprehensive vision of life there can be only two parts—one is the Self which is one's being and everything else will come into the category of non-selves and this includes the "Ego-sense" or "Me-notion".

The not-self is of an adventitious and ephemeral nature and hence it is a false appearance due to ignorance and the Self is the only reality. If we hold the view that the Ishvara is different from the Self, then he comes into the category of not-self. Then there will be no Ishvaratva (ईश्वरत्व) for him.

Hence the Witnessing Principle of life itself is called as Ishvara from the standpoint of appearance and disappearance of the universe, as the Self is the substratum of the universe. For this reason Shaṅkara calls the Self as TAT-(तत्) pada in S. Bh-4/1/2—

“एष व्यावृत्त सर्वसंसारधर्मको अनुभवात्ममको”—“This object called Brahman, which is denoted by the word 'That' which is free from all mundane attributes and which is by nature Consciousness, is well intuited (known) to the people who are adepts in the Upanishads”.

In this description that which is of the nature of consciousness, whose nature is called as "Anubhava" (See Upadeshasāhasri—12/8¹) is called as "TAT" pada

¹ विज्ञातेर्यस्तु विज्ञाता स त्वमित्युच्यते यतः ।

स स्यादनुभवस्तस्य ततोऽन्योऽनुभवो मृषा ॥”

(Upadeshasāhasri—12/8)

—“It is the knower (Br̥ha—3/4/2) of knowledge that is referred to by the word 'Thou' in the Shruti (Ch—6/8/7). The understanding of the term 'Thou' in this sense is correct. The other sense (i.e. the Self with intellect etc. superimposed on it, i.e. "Me-notion") different from it is due to superimposition.”

meaning Ishvara. Hence the Witnessing Principle itself is Ishvara from the standpoint of the appearance and disappearance of the universe which is conjured up by Avidyā. Hence it is wrong to hold the view that there is Ishvara Sākshi (ईश्वर-साक्षी) which contradicts the Shruti, reason and Bhāshya.

The nature of the Witnessing Principle is non-dual one, meaning ever devoid of all types that exist in dualistic world. Hence it is described as *Prapanchōpashama* (प्रपञ्चोपशम) in Shruti (Mān—7). But for the purpose of teaching, the witnesshood is attributed on the non-dual Self from the standpoint of “Me-notion”. Strictly speaking, there are no two entities such as *Sākshi*, the Witness and *Ahampratyaya*, the Pramātr. Through the adjuncts like Antahkarana, body etc. which are conjured up by ignorance, the same Witnessing Principle appears as if he has taken the garb of “Pramātr or Ahampratyaya”. When these adjuncts are falsified through discrimination, the non-dual nature of the Self alone remains. At this stage of Self-realization of the Pramātr or Ahampratyaya himself remains as the Witness. This is said in the 2nd Slōka of “Brahmavid Gāthā” (=traditional saying) quoted by Shaṅkara at the end of S. Bh—1/1/4 :

“अन्वेष्टव्यात्मविज्यानात् प्राक्प्रमातृत्वमात्मनः ।
अनिष्टः स्यात् प्रमातृव पाप्मदोषादिवर्जितः ॥”

—“Before the realization of Ātman to be sought out, the Ātman is a Pramātr (=knowing agent). When the search has been finished, the Pramātr himself would become the one Supreme Witnessing Self free from all evils of good and bad and the like.”

So, the witnesshood is attributed for the purpose of teaching the non-dual Self from the standpoint of ego just like the Ishvarahood is attributed on the same Witness from the standpoint of the universe.

V. WITNESS IS SELF-ESTABLISHED REALITY :

According to Nyāya-Shāstra, the nature of the Self should be determined through Pramānas, but in Vedānta the Pramātr (=Ego sense) who is the user of Pramānas like mind, intellect, sense organs etc, is himself a Self-established entity in all dealings. So Pramātr is not proved through Pramānas where as the existence of Pramānas and correctness is to be proved by the Pramātr. To know the Prameyas (प्रमेय) or the objects, Pramānas are required, but not for determining the nature of the Self, even as a Pramātr. Shri Shankara says in S. Bh-2/3/7 .

“न ह्यात्मा आत्मनः प्रमाणमपेक्ष्य सिद्धयति । तस्य हि प्रत्यक्षादीनि प्रमाणानि अप्रसिद्धप्रमेयसिद्धये उपादीयन्ते ॥”

—“Ātman Himself is not established with the aid of any right means ; for His sake the perceptive means etc. are utilised in order to ascertain the objects which are not known.”

In Gītā Bhāshya—2/18 :

“सिद्धे हि आत्मनि प्रमातरि प्रमित्सोः प्रमाणान्वेषणा भवति । न हि पूर्वमित्थम् अहमिति आत्मानं प्रमाय पश्चात् प्रमेयपरिच्छेदाय प्रवर्तते । न हि आत्मा नाम कस्यचिदप्रसिद्धो भवति ॥”

“Only when the Self stands predetermined as the knower, there is a search for a means of knowledge by the knower. Indeed, it is not that one first determines oneself as ‘I am such’ or ‘I am not such’ through the instruments of knowledge and then takes up the task of determining an object of knowledge. For what is called as ‘Self’ does not remain unknown to any one.”

In this connection one thing that should be remembered is that in most of the editions the reading is “आत्मानं अप्रमाय”, which is wrong-one. The correct reading

is “आत्मानं प्रमाय”. The meaning here is “no one wants to determine one-self whether ‘I am’ or ‘not’ etc, through Pramānas before going to know the outer objects. So it is ĀTMĀNAN PRAMĀYA (this is the correct reading).

In the empirical view when the Pramātr himself is Self-established there is no necessity to say that the nature of the Self, who is the Witness of the Pramātr should be known by Pramānas. For this reason Shaṅkara has said here in chronological order the words SIDDHE HI ĀTMANI (सिद्धे हि आत्मनि —this denotes the true nature of the Self who is the Witness) PRAMĀTARI (प्रमातरि —this denotes that the same true nature appears as if he has taken the garb of Pramātr or Ego through the adjuncts like mind, intellect, sense organs etc.). By this it is proved that the true nature of the Self being a Witness comes first and then the same Self appears as Pramātr (as per chronology). So the Witness is the Self-established one who is of the nature of pure consciousness (अनुभवात्मक) as already said as per S.Bh—4/1/2 and no Pramānas (instruments of knowledge) are necessary to prove it. Hence there is no necessary to take view points of Nyāya Shāstra and Tarka Shāstra which rely on Pramānas to prove anything, in Vedānta. The Self is *Aprameya* (अप्रमेय).

(i) Br̥ha—4/4/20 : “एतदप्रमेयम् ध्रुवम्” ॥

(ii) Gītā—2/18 : “अनाशिनो अप्रमेयस्य ॥”

It is true that in Vedānta also it is accepted that the Shāstra is the Pramāna to know the Self and the Upapatti (उपपत्ति), i.e. Tarka is necessary to perform Manana. Though this is the thing, Shāstra is Pramāna here only to negate the not-self and to rescue the aspirant from the wrong identification with not-selves. But Shāstra never tells that Brahman is an objectifiable one. On the other hand, it declares that the Brahman is not objectifiable by any means, i.e. It can neither be perceived by means of the senses nor can It be conceived by means of

the mind or intellect. It is your Self and remains as the Eternal Witness. Hence from standpoint of removing the wrong notion regarding Brahman only the Shāstra is called as Pramāna. Further it may be noted that after following teaching of Shāstra the dealings like Pramāna, Prameya, Pamātr etc. cease to exist.

Thus the view-point of Vedānta that the Shāstra is the means to know the Self is only to negate the not-self alone, but not to objectify the Self. The reader is referred to the following Bhāshya quotations regarding this :

—“But the Scripture is the final authority (Pramāna) by way of merely negating superimposition of qualities that do not belong to the Self, it attains authoritative-ness with regard to the Self, but not by virtue of making some unknown thing known.”

(Gī-Bh-2/18)

- (ii) “Opponent : If Brahman be not an object of knowledge, It cannot logically be presented by the scriptures as stated in B. S—1/1/3.

Vedāntin : Not so, for the scriptures aim at the removal of the differences fancied through ignorance. Not that the scriptures seek to establish Brahman as an entity referable objectively by the word ‘this’ (i.e. Brahman is not presentable positively by saying, “This is so”.)

What do they do then ?

By presenting Brahman as not an object on account of It’s being the inmost Self of the knower, they remove the differences of the ‘known’, the ‘knower’, and the ‘knowledge’ that are fancied through ignorance (अविद्याकल्पितं वेद्यवेदितृवेदनादितेदमपनयति).

(S. Bh—1/1/4)

So, here Shāstra is pramāna from the point of superimposition, which is quite unlike the other pramānas. So

Erratum Please read “bed-rock” instead of “bed-book” wrongly printed in Page 24, line 10.

also Lakshana (लक्षण) of the Self or Brahman is described in “जन्मादस्य यतः” (B.S—1/1/2) and “सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म” (Taittiriya—2/1) etc, are also called as Lakshanas from this standpoint alone, because the nature of the Self is Alakshana (अलक्षणम् —Mān-7. “व्यापकोऽलिङ्ग एव च”—Katha—2/3/8 etc.) The dialectic system which is used in Manana (मनन) is the *Shrauta Tarka* (श्रौततर्क) itself, which is relying on the intuitional-experiences but not the gymnastics of the intellect. So this dialectic system also has taken its shelter in Anubhava, i.e. intuitional experience, Shri Shaṅkara has clearly stated the nature of such Shrauta Tarka in S. Bh—2/1/6.

VI. SOME IMPORTANT SENTENCES REGARDING, THE NATURE OF WITNESSING CONCIIOUSNESS :

The following sentences are very useful to take a stand in one's own true nature of the Witnessing Principle of life through Viveka. This process is called Anusandhāna (आत्मानुसन्धान). A few sentences are shown here as examples.

i) a) “तया अविपरिलुप्तया.....दृष्टेर्द्रष्टा भवति ॥”

(Brha-Bh—1/4/1)

—The seer has two kinds of vision, one eternal and the other transitory. Through that unfailing eternal vision, the Self always sees the other transitory vision in the dream and waking states, as idea and perception respectively and becomes the seer of sight.

b) “स्वप्नान्तं जागरितान्तं चोभौ येनानुपश्यति ।
महान्तं विभुं आत्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥”

(Ka—2/1/4)

—“The wise one having ascertained that great and all pervading Ātman through whom one sees the contents of both dream and waking, does not grieve.”

In these two sentences one's own nature which is the Witnessing Principle of life which illumines the appearance and disappearance of the waking and dream states, is shown.

ii) “सर्वप्रत्ययदर्शी.....सम्यग् दर्शनमित्यर्थः ॥”

(Kena—2/4)

“The Self, that encompasses all ideas (acquired through the intellect) as its objects, is known in relation to all these ideas. Being the Witness of all cognitions and by nature nothing but the power of consciousness, the Self is indicated by the cognitions themselves in the midst of cognition, as non-different from them. There is no other door to its awareness, Therefore when Brahman is known as the innermost Self (i.e. Witness) of cognitions, then It is known, that is to say, then there is Its complete realisation.”

Here there are three points are to be observed. The nature of Self is the Witness for all Vṛttis including the “Me-notation”. (b) Vṛttis are many but the illumining-Self is only one (c) The Vṛttis including the “Me-notation” are pervaded by the nature of consciousness of life. So these Vṛttis are like the waves in the ocean of consciousness. Observing this, when the pervasiveness of the consciousness is discerned in the Vṛttis, then that nature of consciousness is Pratyaya Pratyagātma (प्रत्यय-प्रत्यगात्मा). The same thing is shown in the following Gītā-Bhāshya also.

iii) “दृशिकर्मत्वापत्तिनिमित्ता.....अवगति अवसानेनैव ॥”

(Gī. Bh—9/10)

—“All the activities of the world in the form, ‘I eat this ; I see ; I hear this ; I experience this happiness I suffer this sorrow ; I shall do this for that purpose ; I shall do this for this purpose ; I shall know this etc.’ indeed arise owing to their being the objects of consciousness, They verily exist in consciousness and culminate in consciousness.”

The significance of this sentence is that the word *Avagati* (अवगति) denotes the true nature of the Self and all types of *Vrttis* or notions or ideas appear in this nature of pure Consciousness and merge in the Consciousness alone, just like waves in an ocean.

iv) “एवं जहंप्रत्ययिन्म अशोषस्वप्रचारसाक्षिणि प्रत्यगात्मनि
अध्यस्य तं च प्रत्यगात्मानं सर्वसाक्षिणं तद्विपर्ययेण अन्तः-
करणादिषु अध्यस्यति ॥” (Adhyāsa Bhāshya.)

—“In the same way, one first superimposes the idea of ego, i.e. “Me-notion”, on the Self, the Witness of all the manifestations of that ego; then by an opposite process, one superimposes on the internal organ (Antahkarana etc.) that Self which is opposed to the not-self and which is witness of everything.”

Here Shaṅkara has used the direct word *Sākshi* (साक्षी), the Witness and has shown that it is different from *Aham-Pratyaya* (अहंप्रत्यय). This sentence resembles

“न हि अहंप्रत्ययविषयकर्तृव्यतिरेकेण तत्साक्षी सर्वभूतस्थः समः,
एकः, कूटस्थनित्यः पुरुषः विधिकाण्डे तर्कसमये वा केनचिदधिगतः
सर्वस्यात्मा ॥” (S. Bh.—1/1/4)

which has been described as *the bed-rock of Shaṅkara's Bhāshyas* because this is the basic principle on which the whole of Shaṅkara's teaching is based. This has already been stated and interpreted at the beginning of this chapter.

v) Gī Bh—13/22

“भोक्ता अनुगृह्यवत्भोक्ता आत्मा इत्युच्यते ॥” “परमात्मा
देहादीनां.....विलक्षण आत्मेति परमात्मा”

The significances of these two sentences are as follows :
(a) The nature of the Witness is the nature of pure consciousness. The *Pratyayas* or the notions such as pleasure, pain, delusion etc. which pertain to *Antahkarana*, are illumined by this *Sākshi* and pervaded by that *Sākshi*.

CHAPTER—3

THE UNIQUE METHODOLOGY OF VEDĀNTA : ADHYĀRŌPA & APAVĀDA

1. Why this methodology of Adhyaropa and Apavada alone is employed exclusively in Vedanta :

The traditional teaching of Vedānta has got the above said only methodology to teach Brahman, the the ultimate Reality. The Brahman is the very Self (i e. Swarūpa) of the aspirant. So it is not an understandable, or objectifiable or realisable thing to be gained newly by efforts. In this strict sense knowing the Brahman, realising the Brahman etc. are impossible because it is not a separate thing from the very Self of the seeker. Hence, here no effort is required to know the Brahman, but the effort is required only to cease or to remove the false identifications with the not-selves. This is clearly said by Shaṅkara in Gītā Bhāshya—18/50, thus :

—“Therefore, we have only to eliminate what is falsely ascribed to Brahman by Avidyā ; we have to make no more effort to acquire a knowledge of Brāhman as He is quite Self-evident. ... Hence, effort is not needed for knowledge, but only for the removal of the thinking what is not the Self as the Self.”

In these two sentence Shaṅkara clearly says that there is no need to stress for knowing the Ātman or Brahman because the Ātman himself appears in the form of the universe due to ignorance. So, one should negate or discard the appearance of the universe, that is to say, one has to cease to have the wrong identification with the not-selves—from ego to body and the corresponding world that are superimposed on Ātman through ignorance.

To illustrate by an example :

When the elephant, king, chariot and so on made of sugar are shown to the children, they see the various forms and they insist on having a particular form. But here the truth is that only sugar appears in all these forms. To the buyer and the seller there are really no forms, i.e. no interest in the form but only in the sugar because they discard the appearance of the forms and cognise that the sugar is the reality. To teach this reality of sugar to the child the only way is to discard the appearance of the form and no necessity of telling or commanding the child that he has to understand that this is sugar. If he negates the forms naturally the sugar alone remains there. Similarly, in the case of teaching the nature of Brahman also it is taught only to negate or rescind the false appearances superimposed on It due to ignorance, for Brahman is devoid of all specific features and as such, can never be described in positive terms. The scripture and the teacher only tell the student what Ātman is not. They follow the methodology of Superimposition and Rescission for pointing out the Reality.

So, the method used here is deliberate *Superimposition* (अध्यारोप) and subsequent *Rescission* (अपवाह).

II. NATURE OF METHODOLOGY :

Reference to the method by some ancient Vedāntins in Shaṅkara Bhāshyas.

Before negating the false appearance the Shāstra and the Guru accept the existence of the superimposed things tentatively as if, they are really related to the truth though they are, in fact, false appearances. After teaching gradually, the truth is pointed out and the aspirant himself remains as the final truth of Brahman Itself and automatically he realises the falsehood of the attributed things which was taught previously. This is said clearly by Shaṅkara in Gī-Bh—13/13 and introduction, to 13/14 :

Here Bhagavad Gītā states that, "Ātman is neither called 'being' nor 'non-being' (ब्रह्म न सत् तत् न असत् उच्यते) This statement makes the seeker think that Ātman either is non-existence (शून्य) or is insentient (जड़). In order to dispel this misconception, Ātman is said to pervade all living beings and function through their hands, feet etc, by assuming these as qualities of the knowable Ātman, just to convince the seeker of Its existence. Because of the *superimposition* of the organs like hands, feet etc which are adjuncts, lest there be the misconception that the Ātman has sensory and other organs and that It really has such activity as moving etc. the Gītā at the very next stage *rescinds* this misconception by saying that Ātman is devoid of all limiting adjuncts. and It is Nirguna (निर्गुण) (in Gītā-13/14). Here Shaṅkara declares that, "this is the traditional method of vedānta—those who have known the tradition say that the Self who is ever devoid of all kinds of attributes or mundane qualities is taught through the method of superimposition and rescission."¹ An illustration is given below :

The teacher teaching geography. at first tells the pupils that the sun rises in the east in the morning, comes up above our head at noon and sets in the west in the evening, and so the sun has got rising and setting capabilities. And from December to June the sun goes from south to north and from June to December, the sun goes southwards, and sometimes the eclipses take place on the sun etc. The pupils nod and understand as such. After that the teacher says the truth that (in higher classes of course) the sun has really no such transition. Due to the movement of the earth, all these dealings are attributed on the sun. And when the moon comes between the earth and the sun, then we say that there is solar eclipse, but strictly speaking the sun has no such eclipsing effect.

Here, in this illustration, accepting the attributes such

¹ तथा हि सम्प्रदायविदां वचनम् 'अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्प्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्चते ।"

as sun rises and sun sets etc, is called *Adhyārōpa*, superimposition, deliberate superimpositions. To show the real nature of the sun the teacher should negate all types of dealings which had been attributed on the sun previously for the purpose of teaching. When the children understand the negation of the dealings by taking the standpoint of the position of the sun instead of taking the standpoint of the position of earth, automatically they will give up the wrong notions regarding the sun even when the dealings such as rising, setting etc, appear to be there in daily life. Mr. Gaelileo who discovered that the earth is moving, he himself was talking in terms of morning and evening even though there cannot be such dealings with regard to the sun. The same is the case with the Brahman .

In his Bṛhadāranyaka Bhāshya (-4/4/25) also Shaṅkara has set forth the nature of this method, thus :

“It is to bring home this purport (viz, He who knows It, the Self as such as the fearless Brahman. certainly becomes the fearless Brahman) that the ideas of projection, maintenance, dissolution etc, as well as those of actions and its factors and results are *superimposed on the Self*. Again, by their negation —by the elimination of the superimposed attributes through a process of “Not this, not this’ the truth has been known.”

(for further references to this method in Shankara’s work see section vii of this chapter).

With a view to turning the attention of the enquirer towards the Brahman, the ultimate Reality, the Scriptural texts use the method of superimposition. Due to misconception regarding the Reality, one by nature, attributes certain features on the Reality which, in fact, are non-existent To remove this innate misconception the scriptural texts deliberately attributes certain other superior features which are in due course rescinded. At this stage, the Transcendental Reality alone subsists and

this is called as the cognition of the Reality in Vedānta. at that time the seeker himself takes a stand in his own intuitional experience of his true nature. This is the nature of this methodology.

Gaudapāda, the grand-preceptor of Shaṅkara, also has resorted to this device of superimposition (अध्यारोप) from the empirical standpoint as a means and its final negation (अपवाद) when the intuition of the Absolute unborn, non-duality is achieved :

—“As the Shruti passage, ‘This is the final instruction. It is not this, not this’, on account of the incomprehensibility of Ātman, *negates* all dualistic ideas *superimposed* upon Ātman (as the means for the attainment of Ātman), Therefore the birthless, non-dual Ātman alone exists and not the duality.” (G. K—3/26)

III The Meaning of the word Rescission :

Shaṅkara has clearly stated the meaning of the word Apavāda or rescission in S, Bh-3/3/9.

“APAVĀDA NĀMA ..YATHĀRTHA BUDHYĀ NIVARTATE”

The meaning of this sentence is “Apavāda or rescission occurs when a subsequent true idea of an object, happens to sublimate the earlier unreal idea regarding it. For instance, the idea of selfhood persisting with regard to the assemblage of the body and the senses is removed by the subsequent idea being born out of the teaching, ‘That thou art’. The word Apavāda in Sanskrit commonly has got the meaning allegation. But here it is used in the sense APAVĀDA meaning denying or ablation or abrogation or negation or discarding etc. what is said before. This word is used here in this sense only.

When the not-selves have been negated through the teaching which is based on the firm ground of one’s own intuitional experience the seeker realises the falsehood of

the not-selves and he remains himself as the Self. So the realisation of the Self is not stressed but the realisation of the falsehood of the not-selves is the main thrust. Hence, "deliberate superimposition and subsequent negation" is the only method that is possible and adopted in the Upanishads.

IV. Kalpita Samvṛti alone should be taken in this methodology, but not the Loka-samvṛti :

In this method only we have to go with the deliberate attributions made by the Shāstra for the purpose of teaching the Brahman, that is to say that the *Kalpita Samvṛti*.¹ (=deliberate ascription) alone should be taken here, but not the *Lōka-Samvṛti*² or *Paratantra Samvṛti*, i. e. the ordinary human procedure due to Avidyā or Adhyāsa, because the former (कल्पितसंवृति) is purely a conventional device employed by the Shāstra or the preceptor only for enlightening the intellect of the seeker so that he can realize the Truth. This is said by Shaṅkara :

"The empirical knowledge in respect of scriptures, teacher and taught is illusory and imagined only as a means to the realization of the ultimate Reality."

(G,K Bh—4/73)

Except this method there is no other way to teach the Brahman as it is not an object. It being so the enlightened people also at first accept the attributions and after denoting the truth the attributions automatically get falsified, So the negation of the attributions is the only way to teach the Brahman.

1. *Kalpita-Samvṛti* means the procedure adopted by the Shāstra or the preceptor as a device for teaching the means of knowing the truth (G K. Bh—4/73)

2. *Lōka-Samvṛti* means 'Vyavahāra', the experiences of the empirical world which are caused by metaphysical ignorance (G. K. Bh-4/57).

But when the Brahman is taught to be meditated with some names and forms, then the positive attributions are predominant. But when we have to know the nature of the Brahman as it is, then the only method used is superimposition and rescission (negation). It is a general rule that to get the Jnāna or realisation of Brahman and to meditate (i.e. to do the Upāsanā of Brahman for fruits to be enjoyed in this life or for joys to be experienced in the other world)—in both cases attributions are to be taken, but there is a great difference between these two. In the process of realisation of Brahman through *Viveka* (discrimination) the aspirant should give up the Upādhis (attributions) and take his stand in Brahman (i.e. the attributes are ultimately rejected in the case of knowable Brahman). While in the case of Upāsanā or meditations of the Brahman that are prescribed in the Shāstras, the Upāsaka has to keep the Upādhis and with the Upādhis only (i.e. without rejecting the attributes) he has to meditate.¹ The meditations that are prescribed for realisation is based on deliberate attribution of names and forms and at the same places Brahman is described as the cause of the universe and this also comes under the category of the above said methodology. This is clearly shown by the Swāmīji of Holenarsipur in his Kannada book 'Shaṅkara Vedānta Sāra' and also in his Sanskrit books, 'Suddha Shankara Prakriyā Bhāskara and 'Vedānta Prakriyā Pratyabhijñā'. The gist of the same is furnished in the next section.

V TEACHING OF BRAHMAN BY MEANS SUPERIMPOSITION IS ONLY FOR NEGATING WHAT IT IS NOT CORRECTLY :

The general line of this methodology adopted in Vedāntic writing and its significance are clearly shown by Shri Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmīji in his books

¹ “एकमपि ब्रह्म अपेक्षितोपाधिसम्बन्धं निरस्तोपाधिसम्बन्धञ्च उपास्यत्वेन ज्ञेयत्वेन च वेदान्तेषु उपदिश्यते ॥”

mentioned above, In these books he has set forth some different varieties of superimposition indicating that some particular superimpositions are intended to negate some other particular features. For examples,

1) By superimposing 'attainability' (प्राप्यत्व) on Brahman "ब्रह्म-विदाप्नोति परम्"—The knower of Brahman attains the Highest—Tai-2/1 (although It is eternally 'attained' because of Its all pervading and also because of its being the very Self of every one), the Shruti negates that it is *attainable by any means other than knowledge*.

2) By attributing *knowability* (ज्ञेयत्व) on Brahman, the Shruti negates the *knowability of objects other than the Brahman* For example in the text. एतज्ज्ञेयं नित्यमेवात्मसंस्थम्—Shve—1/12

3) Through the attribution of the '*knowership*' (ज्ञारुत्व) on the Self, the previous attribution (i. e. *Knowability*) is removed, as in the text ; "एष हि द्रष्टा,..... बोद्धा, कर्ता, विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः"—Prasna—4/9 ; "विज्ञातारमरे केन विजानीयात्"—By What means, my dear, can the knower be known ?—Br̥ha—2/4/14.

4) By attributing the '*Ātmanhood*' (आत्मत्व), the *knowership* is removed, For example in the text, "आत्मैत्येवोपासीत"—The Self alone is to be meditated upon—Br̥ha—1/4/7.

5) By attributing the '*Witnesshood*' (साक्षित्व) of the ego, the *Selfhood* is removed, i.e. the *individuality* is removed, as in the text, साक्षी चेता केवल निर्गुणश्च"—The Witnessing consciousness is one and without attributes—Shve—7/11.

6) By certain other texts the very essential nature of Ātman is pointed out as in the text 'स एषः नेति नेति आत्मा'—He is *neti neti*, not such not such—Br̥ha -3/9/26, in order to negate all specific attributes including *Witnesshood* of the ego. The unborn Ātman shines forth of its own accord.

7) Again, by attributing that the Self is Brahman, i. e. attributing '*Brahmanhood*' (ब्रह्मत्व) on the individual Self, the *finiteness* (परिच्छिन्नत्व or अल्पत्व) is removed. For example in the text, 'अयमात्मा ब्रह्म सर्वानुभूः'—Brha-2/5/19, Māndūkya-2.

8) By attributing the '*Selfhood*' on Brahman, the *indirectness* (परोक्षत्व) of the Self is removed. For example in the text 'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि'—Brha-1/4/10 ; 'यत् साक्षाद्-परोक्षाद् ब्रह्म य आत्मा सर्वान्तरः—The Brahman that is immediate and direct—the Self that is within all—Brha—3/4/1.

9) By attributing that the Brahman is *knowable only through the Vedāntic sentences or teachings* (वाक्यगम्यत्व), the Shruti has removed the idea that the Self can be known through *Pramānas* such as *perception* (प्रत्यक्ष), *inference* (अनुमान) etc. For example in the text, "तं त्वौष निषदं पुरुषं पृच्छामि"—I ask you of that Being who is to be known only from the Upanīshads—Brha—3/9/26.

10) The attribution of '*मनोगम्यत्व*' i. e. Brahman is *ascertainable by the mind*, is sometimes taught to indicate that it is *not known through sensuous knowledge*. For example in the text, 'मनसैवानुद्रष्टव्यम्'—Through the mind alone It is to be realised—Brha—4/4/19.

11) Again, by asserting that the nature of the Self is *beyond the sphere of speech and thought* the very idea of the Brahman as an object (*Vishayatva*-विषयत्व) is removed. As for instance in the case of texts like this : 'यतो वाचो निर्वर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह'—Failing to reach that Brahman, words turn back along with the mind—Tai—2/9.

12) By attributing that the Brahman is the cause of the universe (*Jagatkāranatva*—जगत्कारणत्व) the idea that the Brahman is the product (*Kāryatva*-कार्यत्व) of any thing is negated, as in the text : "तस्माद् वा एतस्मादात्मनः आकाशः संभूतः"—From that Brahman, which is the Self, was produced space—Tai—2/1.

13) After that, by asserting that the effect, i.e. the appearance of the world is only a *Vikalpa* (विकल्प), i. e. concocted by ignorance, the *causehood* of Brahman is also negated by the Shrutis saying “अथात् आदेशो नेति नेति”—Now therefore the description of Brahman: Not this not this, — Br̥ha—2/3/6 ; तदेतत् ब्रह्म अपूर्वमनपरमनन्तमबाह्यम्” —That Brahman is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior—Br̥ha-2/5/19.

14) By attributing the ‘*generalhood*’ (Sāmānyatva—सामान्यत्व) on Brahman, the *particulars* (Visheshaha) are negated. For examples in the texts, “यथा दुन्दुभेर्हन्यमानस्यशब्दो गृहीतः”— When a drum is beaten, one cannot distinguish its various particular notes, but they are included in the general note of the drum or in the general sound produced by different kinds of strokes. [Similarly nothing particular is perceived in the waking and dream states apart from the (general) Pure Consciousness]— Br̥ha—2/4/7 (See also Br̥ha—2/4/8 & 9)

15) Asserting that the Self is of untainted nature (*Asangatva*—असङ्गत्व), the previous *generalhood* is removed. As for instance in the text like : “असङ्गो ह्ययं पुरुषः”— The Self is untainted by these two states (waking and dream)—Br̥ha—4/3/15.

16) By attributing the ‘*mundanehood*’ (संसारित्व) on the Self, the *insentient nature* (जड़त्व) of the Self is negated. For example in the texts, “आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति” But for one’s own sake that it is loved—Br̥ha—2/4/5.

17) By attributing the nature of the Self as being the subject of meditation (“*upāsyatva*—उपास्यत्व) the previous nature i. e. *mundanehood* is negated. For example, “एतत् वै सत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदौंकारमभिध्यायीत”— O Satyākāma, this very Brahman, that is known as the inferior and superior, is but this AUM which is to be meditated.—(Prashna—5/2).

18) By attributing the 'Witnesshood of the three states' (अवस्थात्रय-साक्षित्व) on the Self, the Shruti removes the wrong idea that the Self is circumscribed by the body, i. e. *Parichinnatva-Bhrānti* (परिच्छिन्नत्व-भ्रान्ति) is rescinded. As for instance in the text like this :

“स्वप्नान्तं जागरितान्तं चोभौ येनानुपश्यति ।
महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥”

“The wise one having ascertained that Great and all pervading Ātman through whom one sees the contents of both dream and waking, does not grieve.” [Ka-2/1/4]

19) By attributing that the Self is the fourth, i. e. *Turiyatva'* (तुरीयत्व), the Witnesshood of the three states is also negated. For example in the text :

“नान्तः प्रज्ञं न वहिष्प्रज्ञं...न प्रज्ञानघनं...एकात्मप्रत्ययसारं चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते स आत्मा ।”—Turiya is not that which is conscious of the internal subjective world (here it is indicated that it is not Taijasa , not that which is conscious of the external objective world (here it is denied that Turiya is Vaishvānara), not of consciousness amassed throughout (here it is denied that it is a condition of deep sleep), having the notion of the Self only as a means of knowing Him. This is what is known as the Fourth (Turiya).” Mā-7

20) By attributing the 'aspirationhood' (साधकत्व) on the Self the Shāstra negates the wrong notion that the Ātman is *Nityasamsārī* (नित्यसंसारि) meaning Ātman is ever suffering from the mundane qualities. For example in the text, “तस्मादेवं विच्छ्रान्तो दान्त उपरतस्तिथिः समाहितो भूत्वा आत्मन्येवात्मानं पश्यति, सर्वमात्मानं पश्यति ।”—“Therefore he who Knows it as such becomes calm, self-controlled, withdrawn into himself, enduring and concentrated and sees the self in his own Self (body) ; he sees all as the Self” Brha—4/4/23

21) By asserting that the nature of the Self is ever devoid of all types of mundane qualities (नित्यमुक्तत्व अधारोप), the Shāstra negates the *Sādhakahood*

attributed previously. As for instance in text like “प्रपञ्चोपशमं शान्तं शिवमद्वैतम्” (Mā—7)—“By describing Turīya as ‘negation of all phenomena’, the attributes which characterise the three states, viz. waking etc, are negated. Hence it is ever Peaceful, all Bliss and it is non-dual, i. e. devoid of illusory ideas of distinction of Sādhya, Sādhaka and Sādhana.

In short, the very soul of this methodology consists in superimposing some particular attribute or character, as pertaining to Brahman with a view to negate or discard another gross misconception concerning Brahman and then abrogating the previous superimposed character by yet another superior superimposition, ultimately leading to the realization of the true nature of the Self by abolishing all attributions.

VI. Different ways of the usage of the Attributions :

Shrī Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmīji has shown another type of usage of the attribution in his Kannada book, “Shaṅkara Vedānta Sāra” as well as in his Sanskrit book “Suddha Saṅkara Prakriyā Bhāskara.”

In the above portion it is shown that to remove a particular misunderstanding the Shāstra has used a particular attribution on the Self, but here it is shown that we ‘may use a particular attribution to remove various misunderstandings. Vedāntins have used in this way the attribution already. To illustrate by an example :

“The Ātman is the only reality to be known”—this attribution of ‘*knowability*’ on Ātman commonly denotes that other than the Ātman nothing else deserves to be called as knowable. Besides this we can determine the following points on this single attribution of knowability on Brahman.

i) The cause for the false appearance of the not-self, (i. e. duality) is the ignorance alone regarding the real nature of the Self.

ii) If one knows the real nature of the Self it automatically follows that he has known all the not-selves (i. e. one becomes omniscient by the knowledge of Brahman), This is clearly stated in Mundaka—1/1/3,—“Which having been known all this becomes known.”

iii) If one cognises the real nature of the Self, for him the ignorance gets destroyed or falsified completely.

iv) If one cognises the nature of the Self, after that there would not remain the distinctions such as the knower, the means of knowledge and the knowable etc.

So, here by one attribution we have shown the five points (including the first) of negations of misunderstandings.

Similarly it is taught that Brahman is beyond both mind and speech not only to negate the Vishayatva (विषयत्व) of It, but also to reveal that Ātman is known exclusively through *intuition* distinct from both mind and speech as may be seen from the texts like,

- i) “वेदान्तविज्ञान सुनिश्चितार्थः”—Those who have quite correctly ascertained the truth by means of *intuition* arising from Vedānta. (Mundaka—3/2/6)
- ii) “आनन्दं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् न विभेति कुतश्चन”—One who has *intuited* that Bliss of Brahman, is not afraid of anything. (Tai-2/9)
- iii) “तद् ह बिजज्ञौ—That Reality of the Self, he (Shvetaketu) *intuited* from Uddālaka. (Ch-6/16/3)
- iv) “स विजिज्ञासितव्यः”—One should know Him (Ātman) through one’s own *Intuition* (Ch-8/7/1)
- v) “प्रोक्ताऽन्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ”—Ka-1/2/9—It is easily *intuited* my dearest boy, when taught by a traditional Vedāntin.

Again, *attainability* is imputed to Brahman not merely to negate that it is attainable by some means other than knowledge, but also it implies that Brahman should not be regarded as something to be reached after travelling

towards it as is the case with regard to Lower Brahman (Hiranyagarbha) whose attainability is taught in Shrutis like "He attains Swārājyam" (Tai—1/6.)

Similarly Brahman alone is taken as a cause of the world, not only to negate its Kāryatva (कार्यत्व), but also to discard the idea that Paramānu (परमाणु), Pradhāna (प्रधान) or Jeeva (जीव) or Māyāskakti (मायाशक्ति) or Māyāvishishta Brahman or Māyā-pratibimba Brahman etc. is the cause of the world.

Hence it is proved that the methods which are used in Vedānta to teach the true nature of Brahman such as (i) Avasthātraya Viveka ii) Kārya-Kāraṇa Prakriyā, iii) Sāmānya-Vishesha (the universal & the particular) Prakriyā, iv) Pancha-Kōsha Viveka, v) Anvay-Vyatireka Prakriyā, vi) Dṛg-Dṛshya Viveka etc, are only parts of 'Adhyārōpa Apavāda' which is the only methodology of Vedānta.¹

If this secret is known, then one will get rid up of the idea that there is anything else apart from the Self. Because, due to natural ignorance one has misunderstood the non-dual Self as not-self, i.e, as the world, individuality etc. Strictly speaking there is no world or individuality. And the ordainership (*Ishvaratva*) of Brahman which is attributed from standpoint of these two is also a kind of Adhyārōpa. If one does not get to know the secret of this methodology he will mistake that 'as there is the Self, so also the not-self is also there". To remove this wrong idea the methodology of teaching the Brahman can be only through "Not this not this." This is the only method used for the purpose of teaching Brahman.

¹ i) In *Avasthātraya-viveka*, the existence of the three states are temporarily accepted belonging to the Self (this is Adhyārōpa of अवस्थात्रयवत्त्व).

ii) In *Kārya-Kāraṇa Prakriyā*, Brahman is taken to be the cause of the world (this is Adhyārōpa of जगत्कारणत्व).

This Adhyārōpa-Apavāda Nyāya can also be utilised in another way as shown by Swāmīji in his books, "Essays on Vedānta" That is the use of words expressing objects to indicate the Absolute by negating opposite significance. For instance in the sentences : सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म—Tai-2/1 'विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म'—Br—3/9/28/7. Here some empirical epithets are applied to the Absolute in the metaphysical sense. The words 'Reality', 'Consciousness' 'Infinity' and 'Bliss' suggest Brahman here by negating what is 'unreal', 'unconscious' 'finite' and 'sorrowful' respectively. Besides this, we can determine the following points on this attribution :

- i) Brahman is of the nature of "Infinite Reality, Consciousness & Bliss."
- ii) As it is the Ātman of the Self of each one of us, we can conclude that our real Self is Brahman of this nature.
- iii) Our finite individual self, which is sometimes consciousness, sometimes unconsciousness, is not meant here.

Thus Shāstra has denoted indirectly the definition of Brahman through denying the common meanings of these words *Satya*, *Jnāna*, etc. and turns one's attention towards one's own true nature of the Self, i. e. Brahman whose nature is beyond the words and concepts.

iii) In *Sāmānya-Visheshā Prakriyā*, Brahman is regarded as genus, i. e. the concept of the universal is applied to Brahman. (this is Adhyārōpa of सामान्यत्व).

iv) In *Panchkōsha Viveka*, the pervasiveness and the nature of being the inmost of all is temporarily ascribed to the Self (this is Adhyārōpa of सर्वव्यापित्व).

v) In *Anvaya-Vyatireka*, the continuity or persistence of Ātman as a residual factor is assumed (this is Adhyārōpa of अन्वयत्व).

vi) In *Dr̥g-Dr̥shya Viveka*, Ātman is presented as the knower of all (this is Adhyārōpa of द्रष्टृत्व वा ज्ञातृत्व).

- vii) A few references from the Bhashyas about the importance of the Adhyaropa-Apavada method :

Shaṅkara gives some illustrations regarding this methodology in his Br. Bh-4/4/25 "YATHAA EKA PRABHRITITATVOPASAMHARAHA KRITAH,"— "Just as, in order to explain the nature of numbers from one up to a hundred thousand billions, a man superimposes them on certain lines (digits), calling one of them, one another ten, another hundred' yet another thousand and so on and in so doing he only expounds the the nature of numbers but he never says that numbers are the lines¹.

Or, just as, in order to teach the alphabet, he has recourse to a combination of leaf (serving for paper), ink, lines etc. and through them explains the nature of the letters, but he never says that the letters are the leaf, ink, lines etc. Similarly in this exposition the one entity 'Brahman, has been inculcated through various means, such as the projection (of the universe). Again, to eliminate the differences created by those hypothetical

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- ¹. This shows that Shaṅkara definitely knew 'decimal notations.' Here he has explained the method arithmetically. But this can be explained algebraically also. Just as in algebra in the equation, $x^2+10x=11$, in order to evaluate the value of x, we have to add the figure 25 (twenty five) on both sides :

$$x^2+10x+25=11+25$$

$$\text{or, } (x+5)^2=36=6^2$$

$$\text{or, } x+5=6$$

$$\therefore x=6-5=1$$

Similarly in Vedānta-Shāstra also in order to realize the real nature of Ātman or Brahman, some characteristics of not-self are deliberately "added" to (i. e. superimposed on) It for the purpose of teaching. Had the algebraical method been prevalent at the time of Shaṅkara, then he definitely would have given this type of example.

means, the truth has been summed up as 'not this, not this.'

The same illustration is quoted in S. Bh—2/1/14, "TATHAA AKAARAADI.....AKSHARAPRATIPATTEHE"—i. e. from the false perception of the presence letters in some lines (drawn on paper) the true letters like 'a' etc. are 'grasped.

In Taittirīya Bhāshya also he declares this method in 2/8, "TASMAAT SATYAM JNAANAM ANANTHAM.....VIKALPA UPAPADYATE"—"Hence it is with a view to realising the Self, which has been defined above in the text 'Brahman is truth, knowledge, infinity' (Tai 2/1/1). that becoming many, entering into creation, acquisition of bliss, fearlessness, attainment etc. have been *attributed* to Brahman, conceived of as the basis of all empirical dealings, but with regard to the really transcendental Brahman, beyond all conditions, there can be *no such ascription.*"

Shaṅkara says that this (Adhyārōpa-Apavāda Nyāya) is the only method of Vedānta and no other method to remind the true nature of the seeker as Brahman which is devoid of all types of adjuncts. For this the reader is referred to Bṛha Bhāshya : 2/3/6 "ATO NA NIRDESHTUHUITI NIRDESHAHA.", meaning "Brahman cannot be described as 'It is such and such' as we can describe a cow by saying, 'there moves a white cow with horns.' Brahman is described by means of name, form and action *superimposed* on It in such positive terms as 'knowledge,' 'Bliss,' 'Pure consciousness,' 'Brahman,' 'Ātman' etc. When, however, we wish to describe Its true nature, free from all differences due to limiting adjuncts, then it is an utter impossibility. Then there is only one way left, viz. to describe It as 'not this, not this.' by *eliminating* all possible specifications of It that have been known."

Hence the usual procedure of Shruti in teaching the subtle Ātman, is to point out something grosser as the Ātman and then negating it to lead the seeker to the real

Ātman. This can be illustrated thus (see S. Bh-1/1/8): A man going to point out the tiny *Arundhutī* star first shows a big star very near to it indirectly as Arundhutī itself for the time being. And then he negates (discards) it and shows subsequently the real primary Arundhutī. The other stars are called by the name Arundhutī just to lead the seeker's eye towards the actual Arundhutī. Similarly the same method of deliberate imputation of a characteristic and its subsequent negation has been referred to in Vedānta, saying 'This is not the Self, this is not the Self.'

VIII) Misunderstandings regarding the methodology & conclusive remarks regarding the 3rd fundamental :

Unable to comprehend this methodology of Vedānta (—The. 3rd fundamental of Shaṅkara Vedānta) the modern Vedāntins like Rāmānuja, Mādhva etc. have missed the track of the teachings of Vedānta. And mainly they have no idea regarding the comprehensive vision of life and indispionate thinking.

In Advaita Vedānta also, after Sureshvarāchārya, when the sub-commentators twisted the sentences of Bhāshya according to their own respective ideas, they have also missed the track of tradition. Because in traditional way the word *Adhyārōpa* denotes that thing which is a false appearance concocted by natural (Naisargika) ignorance, i. e. *Adhyāsa*. When these people have started argueing that there is a material cause (called *Mūlāvidyā*) for this *Adhyāsa*, then this material cause is naturally not a concocted one by *Avidyā* (—metaphysical ignorance) and then it will be impossible to be removed by the knowledge.

But according to Shānkara the nature of knowledge is the capacity to remove *Avidyā* (=misconception regarding the real nature of the Self) and showing the falsehood of the attributed thing. By this, it illumines the truth as it is and it has no capacity to destroy something which is existing one and to produce newly something. Shaṅkara has said this clearly in his Bṛha Bh—1/4/10 :

“NA HI KASHCHIT VASTU

“A free translation of this portion would be as follows :

“This knowledge has never been observed whether directly to remove some characteristic of a thing or to create one, But everywhere it is seen to remove ignorance. Similarly here also let the idea of not being Brahman and not being all that is due to ignorance, be removed by the knowledge of Brahman, but it can neither create nor put a stop to a real entity.”

Thus it is clear that these people have missed the true track of Vedānta-Sampradāya. If we know the secret of this third fundamental of Vedānta (= Aḍhyārōpa-Apavāpa Nyāya), then we will never be out of track with the teachings of the Upanishad.

Hence this third secret of Shaṅkara Vedānta is to be known by the earnest students of Vedānta. One can easily recognize his own true nature of the Witnessing principle of life by following the process of discrimination which starts on the firm ground of universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life. To take a firm stand there this methodology of *superimposition* and *rescission* is the only way.

The superimpositions put forth from the empirical standpoint of view, which are prescribed by the Shāstra, are called as *Kalpita Samvṛti*. *Samvṛti* means *Vyavahāra*. Shāstra intends to push the seeker into the core of his life unto the Witnessing principle of life which is the ultimate truth. When the seeker remains as true Witnessing principle of life then he transcends all the empirical bondages which are in the realm of metaphysical ignorance. Though the Shāstra is in the realm of empirical dealings, as it is in the form of words, it takes the seeker unto end of the empirical dealings just as a boat takes the passengers to the other bank of the river. After crossing the river when he puts his leg on the bank then there is no problem of water. Similarly when the seeker remains as the Witnessing principle of life then he transcends all the

empirical dealings. This is the effect of the above said method. So, now we have to know the difference between the two standpoints, viz. the empirical viewpoint and the transcendental view point—the Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti and the Paramārtha Dṛṣhti, which we shall deal with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER—4

THE FOURTH FUNDAMENTAL :

Two Different Standpoints-Vyavahara Drishti (the Empirical standpoint) & Paramartha Drishti (the Transcendental standpoint.)

1. Basis for Dividing the two standpoints :

Some people raise the objection that Shaṅkara has made two different standpoints in his Bhāshya and what he wants to accept he says that it is from the transcendental standpoint and that is really real. And whatever he does not want to accept, he dismisses with the observation that it is said with the empirical viewpoint. (These are called as *Paramārtha Dṛṣhti* and *Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti* in Sanskrit). And it is very difficult to understand as to what exactly Āchārya says regarding the final truth.

This objection is raised due to non-apprehension regarding the comprehensive vision of life which is the very first fundamental principle. If we know the secret of the very first fundamental, then we can very easily grasp the teaching of the two standpoints,

(i)

According to the comprehensive vision of life, our life is divided into two parts—one is the dualistic appearance and the other, non-dual Absolute Being. This

is an universally accepted thing. The dualistic dealing which is divided into two parts such as subject and object appears whenever waking or dream occurs, —where there is this type of appearance there are dealings such as thinking, speaking and doing. These three—*thought, speech* and *deed* are called as Vyavahāra. Whenever we say Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti all types of thoughts, words and deeds come under the category of Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti, i. e. empirical viewpoint of dealings. He who has synchronized one's thought, word and deed, meaning he who speaks as he thinks and acts as he speaks, is called a bonafide man and this virtue is called as straight-forwardness. And the opposite manner is called as crooked one. So the word Vyavahāra comprises all types of thought, speech and deed. All our present life is based on this empirical viewpoint. The worldly dealings, religious dealings etc, all come under this category. The Vedānta Shāstra deals with this type of dealing as from the empirical viewpoint or Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti.

All these there (viz, thoughts, speech and deeds), according to Vedānta, are in the realm of ignorance or nescience only and hence do not pertain to the. transcendental reality, which is beyond the ken of these three. So then Vyāvahārika view is same as the view of of ignorance (*Avidyā-Dṛṣhti*) the Pāramārthika view is same is the view of knowledge (*Vidyā-Dṛṣhti*). According to Vedānta shāstra, our own being is there beyond this range of empirical dealings—where there are no thoughts, no speech, no deeds but our own being is there and it is on its own merit, self-established and beyond all the concepts and words.

(ii)

In common life whenever the word denotes something, the mind follows the word and gets the concept of that things, as for example, if we say an elephant, by hearing this word, immediately our mind gets the concept of an elephant, Sometimes the things which have not been

seen in this world, these types of things also can be imagined by the mind according to the direction of the words, as for example, when we say that *Airāvata* (God Indra's elephant) is there in the heaven, then one asks what is that *Airāvata* ? When this is explained that it is a kind of elephant whose colour is white and which has got seven trunks even though no one has seen such an animal in this world, our mind can imagine this 'Airavata' and if a man is an artist he can depict the same in a pictorial form. So the mind follows the words. In a tractor, there are two front wheels which are of small size and two big wheels at the back. The front wheels have the steering and they show the path and the big wheels follow. Similarly words show the path and the mind then follows it.

All the empirical dealings are fully covered by these two instruments—that is, the *words and concepts*. Hence our mind is simply a bundle of concepts which have been created through the words. All this range of words and concepts are called as empirical dealings—*Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti*.

But according to Vedānta our own being, which is beyond words and concepts, is there. Whenever the Shrutī wants to denote this transcendental reality it says : "YATO VĀCHO NIVARTANTE APRĀPYA MANASĀ SAHA" (—Tai-2/9), i. e. failing to reach which (Ātman), words turn back along with the mind. Hence our own being which transcends all types of dealings, i. e. thought, speech and deed, that very being is called as "Transcendental reality"—*Paramārha Satya* by comparing with the present empirical aspect of life.

(iii)

If we observe, according to universal acceptance, the deep sleep where there is no appearance of either waking or dream, our own being remains there which is beyond the concepts and words and that it is to be intuited by the

seeker with the help of the teachings of the Shāstra and the Guru. This Being which transcends all types of words and concepts is not to be confused as essenceless, void or nothingness meaning it is not Shūnya as declared by Nihilists. It is one's own true Being which is beyond the word and idea of Being. As this Being is the substratum for the appearance and disappearance of the empirical dealings, so this transcendental Being is a really real one and the empirical dealings are apparently real. For example, either in waking or in dream all types of dealings are seen as real until the state exists. When these two states disappear and mutually cancel the appearance of the other, then the Being, which is the transcendental reality, remains unaffected. So this Being is really real and these two states are apparently real in their realm of appearance.

Taking these two aspects of life Shankara has divided these two standpoints. Those who have no idea regarding these basic principles and who have relied only on the empirical view point, (only these people) raise such objections mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

(iv)

The distinction of the empirical and transcendental viewpoints are not an imagination of Shaṅkara but they are there as facts of life. We give here-in some examples :

a) In our daily life also there are two view points—one is transcendental and the other empirical. While playing the *chess-game*, they put the pawns and call them as king, minister, elephant, horse, camel, soldiers etc. There are certain rules and regulations regarding moving of these pawns. Both the parties must follow the rules while playing. After the game is over, when all the pawns are put into a box, then the transcendental view point of all these being wood or plastic automatically follows. And from this view point there is nothing like king, minister etc, but while playing the chess one should not rely on the standpoint that they are wood. One can move the pawns

as one likes, because when he is in the plane of the game he should follow the rules of the game, So the playing is with the empirical view and there are differentiations like king etc. Understanding that all these are mere pieces of wood (or plastic) is the transcendental viewpoint.

b) In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad—2/4/7, 8 & 9, the *Sāmānya-Viśeṣa Prakriyā* (the methodology of general and particular) is shown. According to this, the general principle is the transcendental reality and the particulars which are imagined on the reality, only belong to the empirical reality. For example, West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka etc. the States are there from the empirical viewpoint alone, but India (which includes all these States) is from the transcendent viewpoint.

c) In the previous chapter, while discussing the methodology of Vadānta we have cited the illustration. : 'The sun rises in the east in the morning, is overhead at noon and sets in the west in the evening, by taking the standpoint of the position of the earth.' This is "empirical view." However the truth of the matter is that the sun has really no such transaction i. e. it neither rises nor sets from the stand point of the position of the sun. This is the "transcendental view."

Hence in our daily life also we rely on these two standpoints in every aspect of life. Therefore these are the facts of life and not the imaginations,

(v)

Thus, it is only a matter of looking at the same thing from two different points of view—one from the *common-sense view* or the *Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti* and the other, from the *vedāntic view* or the *Paramārtha Dṛṣhti*. Śaṅkara has clearly stated that the Shāstra accepts *Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti* for teaching the truth. For example, "the different modifications of the sea such as the waves, the bubbles, the foam, the ripples etc. are accepted as different according

to empirical view as they do not lose their individuality in relation to one another, but they are non-different from sea-water, is the transcendental view. Just as the waves and bubbles etc. are not different from water, the world and the mind are not different from the Self. Although this distinction can well exist as observed in common experience, but in reality, this difference does not exist, since a non-difference between the Brahman and the universe including the "Me-notion" is recognized" (S. Bh—2/1/13).

The Shāstra and the teacher employ both these standpoints when they attempt to enlighten the seekers of Truth.

II SHANKARA RECOGNIZES THE TWO VIEWPOINTS OF REALITY :

(Some quotations from Bhashyas)

We have said that Pure Being is transcendental reality meaning really real and the dualistic world is empirically real, an apparent reality, just as the cinema and the arc lamp—the former apparently real and the latter, really real. Shaṅkara never mixes these two standpoints and he differentiates these two standpoints and gives proper place for all the empirical dealings. The readers are referred to following sentences of the Bhāshya :

(i)

**"YADĀ TU PARAMĀRTHA DRISHTYĀ . TENA NA
KASHCHIT V RODHAHA."** (Bṛha-Bh-3/5/1)

"But when name and form are tested from the standpoint of the highest truth in the light of the above Shruti texts, as to whether they are different from the supreme Self or not, they cease to be separate entities, like the foam of water or like the modifications (of clay), such as a jar. It is then that such passages as, 'one only without a second' and 'there is no difference whatsoever in It,' have

scope from the standpoint of the Supreme Self as referring to the highest realisation. But when, on account of our metaphysical ignorance, the reality of Brahman, although remaining as it is, naturally untouched by any thing—like the reality of the rope, the mother of pearl and the sky—is not discriminated from such limiting adjuncts as the body and organs, which are created by name and form and our natural vision of those adjuncts remains, then this phenomenal existence consisting of the things different from Brahman has full play. This unreal, phenomenal existence created by differentiation is indeed a fact for those who do not believe in the things as different from Brahman as well as for those who do believe. But the believers of the highest truth, while discussing, in accordance with the Shrutis, the actual existence or non-existence of things apart from Brahman, conclude that Brahman alone is the one without a second, beyond all finite relations. So there is no contradiction between the two *Vyavahāra & Parmārtha Views.*”

(ii)

In *Gītā-Bhāshya*—16/17, Āchārya says in the same way in reply to a question.

“NANU HATVĀPI...UBHAYAM UPAPADYATE EVA.”

“Objection : ‘Is it not contradictory to say—even by killing he does not kill ?’ You may say that this is eulogy of Jnāna. Even then it is quite contradictory.

Reply : This is not all a defect, for this becomes logical from the standpoint of *empirical view and transcendental view*. (Explanation ;) By adopting the empirical standpoint which consists in thinking ‘I am the body and I am a killer’ by identifying the body with the Self (i.e. relying on this *Laukika Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti*) it is said here HATVĀPI (—even by killing). And by taking the transcendental viewpoint of the true nature of the Self (i.e. relying on *Paramārtha Dṛṣhti*) it is said here NA HANTI NANI-BODHYATE (—that he does not kill any body nor he will be bound by that action). So both the statements are

congruous *from the standpoint of different views.*"

(iii)

Empirical view, Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti, Laukika Dṛṣhti, Avidyā Dṛṣhti i.e. natural viewpoint—all these are synonymous terms in Shaṅkara-Vedānta. Vaidika Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti also comes under the category of empirical view point. Similarly, transcendental view, Paramārtha Dṛṣhti Ācharya Dṛṣhti, Vidyā Dṛṣhti i.e. Vedāntic viewpoint—all these synonymous terms. For this we can study the following sentences of the Bhāshyas :

“EVAM AVIDYĀKRITA NĀMA RUPA UPĀDHI ..
SARVAJNATVĀDI VYAVAHĀRAHA UPAPADYATE”
S.Bh.-2/1/14

“Thus (Brahman) conditioned by the limiting adjuncts—name and form—created by nescience, becomes ishvara, just as space limited as it were, by jars, pots etc. And within the domain of the empirical existence (i.e. in the sphere of common sense view). He rules it over the selves which identify themselves with the individual intellects and are called Jīvas and which though identical with Himself, conform like the spaces in pots etc, to the aggregates of the bodies and senses created by name and form that are projected by nescience. Thus God’s rulership, omniscience and omnipotence are contingent on the limiting adjuncts conjured up by nescience, but from the standpoint of really real, however, there is no distinction of ‘the ruler, and ‘the ruled’ or ‘Omniscient’ and ‘limited knowledge’ at all with regard to the Self shining its own nature, after the removal of all limiting adjuncts through illumination.

(iv)

The same is said in Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya—2/1/22,
“API CHA YADĀ.. NA TU PARAMĀRTHATO ASTI ITI
ASAKRIT AVOHĀMA.”

“Moreover, when the idea of non-difference is

generated by such declaration of identity as 'That thou art' ; then the transmigratory nature of the individual Jeeva is removed as also the creatorship- of Brahman ; for all dualistic dealings brought about by ignorance, get sublated by right knowledge. Then in that state where can creation come from and from where the defects like non-accomplishment of beneficial result ? We have stated more than once that the mundane existence characterised by the non-accomplishment of beneficial results etc, is an error arising from the non-recognition of the difference (from the soul) of the limiting adjunct constituted by the assemblage of body and senses which are a creation of name and form conjured up by ignorance.

III Usage of this distinction of two standpoints :

Veda or Shāstra prescribes two types of Sādhanas, (i) rituals and meditations (Karma and Upāsanā), and (ii) cognising the real nature of the Self as nondual, absolute and falsification of the phenomenon of the universe. This is called as *Jnāna*. When Shāstra speaks regarding the first type of Sādhanas, it relies on the *empirical standpoint* and while teaching the second type, it takes the *transcendental view-point*. Even though when the Shāstra teaches the second type of Sādhanas, then also it deliberately attributes some qualities or forms (i. e *Upādhis*) on Brahman for the purpose of teaching. This type of attribution also comes under the category of empirical dealings, but it is called as *Kalpita Samvṛti*. When the Shāstra wants to denote the true nature of the Self, then there is no other way than the negation of the attributes. So the string of negations such as NĀNTAH PRAJNAM .. (Mā-7), NETI NETI (Br̥ha) etc. are the only way to teach the Brahman. The reader may refer the text regarding the secret of this technique in "Māndūkya Rahasya Vivṛtihi" (Commentary on 3/26 Kārikā).

For eminent students who are eligible to cognise the true nature of the Self and are able to take a stand there, the Shāstra teaches from the transcendental

stand-point. Before that, the Shāstra uses some attributes as a means to teach the transcendental reality. But for those who are unable to cognise the real nature of the Self the Shāstra relies on pure empirical stand-point and initiates the Sādhanas like Karma Yōga, Upāsānās, Jijnāsā Bhakti, complete surrendering to the Lord (Prapatti.) etc. The Āchāryas like Rāmānuja, Mādhyā, Shrī Kṛshna Chaitanya etc. hold that the whole range of the Shāstra is in empirical state only. That is to say doing something according to Shāstra and achieving something after sometime (Kālāntara) or in other worlds (Lōkāntara). Shaṅkara also accepts these ideas denoted by the Shāstra such as going to Brahma-Lōka and so on in his Bhāshyas. He does not condemn the Shāstra which teaches rituals, meditations and their results etc. But he says that all these are in the realm of ignorance, i. e. Vaidika Vyavahāra Dr̥shti. So strictly speaking Shaṅkara won't oppose or condemn the principles like surrendering to the Lord, practising meditations, performing rituals etc which have been accepted by other Āchāryas also. But other Āchāryas do not have vision of Shaṅkara which has specially shown—the transcendental Reality on the firm ground of universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life.

Some people think that Shaṅkara has recognized two types of Vedānta, from these two different stand-points. But one should not misunderstand that, there are really two types of Vedānta—one for *Vyavahāra* and the other for *Paramārtha*. Because Vyavahāra is natural for all. Finding out, the truth according to Vedānta, is quite separate from this Vyavahāra. Take the illustrations of diamond, graphite, coal (or coke). No one wants to sell or buy these things at the same rate. According to Vyavahāra, the value of diamond is too much comparing to coal and graphite. Again these substances cannot be used in our daily life for the same purposes. For example, diamond is used as gem and for cutting

glases, graphite is used as an electrode (as it is a good conductor of electric current) and coal or coke is used as fuel. But finding out the reality of these substances is quite different from ordinary dealings of business. If we find the truth of these three experimentally, carbon is only real. Diamond, graphite, coal (or coke), charcoal—all these are allotropic modifications (Rūpa-Bheda) of the same element carbon. So also in Vedānta, from the stand-point of empirical view, the Laukika Vyavahāra and Vaidika Vyavahāra and ethics, moral values etc. are all there in our daily life This is *Vyavahāra*. We should take it as it, when we want to deal with the world. But we should not apply the oneness of Brahman in these spheres (i. e. in these Vyavahāras). Since, according to Vedānta, all these Vyavahāras are in the realm of ignorance or nescience only and hence do not pertain to the Transcendental reality which is beyond thoughts, speech and deeds.

Another important point is to be remembered. The student of Shaṅkara Vedānta should not try to deliver lectures on Shaṅkara Vedānta by quoting some Upanishadic doctrines and Shaṅkara Bhāshyas and using mere logic etc., to prove Advaita doctrine. Instead of this, the seeker himself has to testify the utterances with his own intuitional experience if it is the teaching of the transcendental reality and if it is an empirical subject, then he has to use proper *pramānas*, i.e. means of right knowledge (S.Bh-2/2/28). So one must know both the standpoint of the "*empirical view point* and the *transcendental view point*" and he has to use the intuitional experience for the latter, while the means of right knowledge to the former,

Shaṅkara-Vedānta proves the superiority of the Advaita knowledge over other views as it does not contradict the scriptural statements regarding creation and ritualistic Karmas and Upāsanās. In fact, Shaṅkara's

Vedānta comprehends all other visions, assimilates, gives support and transcends. So, an aspirant must and should know these two standpoints if he wants to know the secrets of Shaṅkara-Vedānta. Then there will be no confusion regarding the teaching of the Shāstra.

The Sādhanas which have been prescribed from the *empirical stand-point* come under the category of Kartṛ Tantra and the teachings from the *transcendental view point* come under the category of Vastu Tantra. This will be dealt with as the fifth principle of Shaṅkara Vedānta in the next chapter.

CHAPTER—V
FIFTH FUNDAMENTAL
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KARTRUTANTRA AND
VASTUTANTRA SADHANAS

1 NATURE OF KARTRUTANTRA & VASTU TANTRA
JNĀNA

It is an important fundamental teaching of Shaṅkara Vedānta that Shri Shaṅkara divides Sādhanas prescribed in Vedas into two groups for two different types of aspirants. The first is *Kartṛtantra* Prakriyā and the second one, *Vastutantra* Prakriyā.

The term “Kartṛ” means the doer or an agent, and the term “Tantra” means that an action which depends on the will or wish of the doer. So Kartṛtantra means actions (or deeds,) feelings which are to be performed either physically or mentally and which depends on the will and effort of the doer or the agent. It is usually seen in our life in all types of actions. There are three alternatives before an agent of action viz, he may do, may not do or may perform the action in a different way altogether. Shaṅkara gives illustration for this kind of Sādhanas either in the empirical or under religious duties, which depend on the will or wish of the doer. For example,

—“Besides, an act to be performed depends entirely on the will of the person doing it worldly or Vedic activities may or may not be undertaken, or they may be dealt with otherwise ; as for instance, a man can walk, ride, proceed otherwise, or need not move at all. Similarly (there are passages): ‘In the sacrifice (with Sōma juice) called Atirātra, the vessel containing the Sōma juice called Shōdashī is taken up’ and ‘In the Atirātra sacrifice the Shōdashī is not taken up’. (Tai S. VI-VI-2.4). (In the Agnihōtra sacrifice) ‘the oblation is offered after sunrise and ‘the oblation is offered before sunrise.’ These injunctions and prohibitions are meaningful here (in a context of rites) as also are the alternatives, general rules and exceptions.”

[S.Bh—1/1/2]

Sō it is evident that Dharma Jijnāsā is Karṭṛ Tantra. In the case of religious duty, direct statement of the text and the like would be the only means of knowledge, because no experience is needed in support,

And in the continuation of the above portion of S.Bh—1/1/2, Shaṅkara explains the nature of *Vastu Tantra Jnāna*. Here "Vastu" means an ontological fact of existence and "Vastu Tantra" means the knowledge which arises according to the fact and which does not depend upon the will or wish of the knower. Always the knowledge is generated as per fact, as it depends solely on the nature of the object to be known and not on the will or wish of the knower. Hence it (the knowledge so generated) is called as Vastu Tantra. Hence the Vastu Tantra knowledge has no alternatives, i.e. knowledge is not something to be done, not done or done otherwise. For the realisation of Brahman no effort is needed other than the removal of ignorance. And this removal of ignorance is not an act, a *Karma*, but an ontological truth implied in the highest experience.

The purport of the Vedāntic teaching viz., the unity of Ātman is such a Vastutantra knowledge. When the Upanishads say that only by knowing Him one transcends the mortality, there is no other way"—Shve 3/8. etc., it is evident that through Jnāna only one gets salvation and there is no other means to get it. In our life and experience, Jnāna, knowledge is only Vastutantra. So this knowledge of the Self also must and should be of the same category.

Shaṅkara says, "Karma and Upāsanās (rituals and meditations) and the results or fruits of them are inevitably gained after a period of time either in this world or in the higher worlds. But the nature of enquiry into the Supreme Self is quite different, for it is dependent on *intuitive experience* (Anubhava) and the result accrues immediately at the end of the enquiry." (S. Bh—1/1/4) So it is evident that Brahmajijnāsā is Vastu Tantra Prakiyā.

II AN OBJECTION :

Samuchchaya of Jnana & Karma is necessary for a result, knowledge alone cannot yield a result :

Since Dharmajñānāsā is Kartr Tantra and Brahmajñānāsā is *Vastu Tantra*, so Shaṅkara won't accept the *Samuchchaya* of Jñāna—Karma or Jñāna—Upāsana etc, because he relied on the fact of life. Not knowing this secret all are objecting that this view of Shaṅkara i.e. only Jñāna is enough, is wrong. They hold the view that in our empirical dealings or in religious duties (rites) no knowledge of a thing alone is fruitful. When the knowledge issues forth into the action then only the fruit will be achieved. So the knowledge must be subordinate to the action, either physical or mental. There is no experience as such that by mere knowledge something is achieved. For example one has passed a medical examination such as M.B.B.S. By merely getting the graduation and having the knowledge of medicine and the nature of disease he cannot cure a disease and hence he does not get the money. He has to treat the patients professionally, i.e. he has to properly apply the medicine to the patients after correct diagnosis and has to show good results and only then he will be able to cure the disease and get the money. So also in the case of a lawyer, etc. In material science there are two categories—one is theory and the other, practical. Those who have got the practical knowledge in addition to the theoretical knowledge, are only fit persons. If there is no practical knowledge, but is only theoretical, that type of knowledge is futile. In the dealings such as rites, meditations etc, according to the Veda, or practising Yōgā Sādhana also have got these two types of theoretical and practical knowledges. When the practical is important thing, then the knowledge must be subordinate to the action.

Relying on this view point, all other Āchāryas like, Rāmānuja, Mādhva etc, have taken the stand that the *Jñāna must be subordinate to the action*, either physical or

mental, Then only the result may be achieved at some other time or in other worlds according to the utterance of the Vedas. Hence they recommend a combination of Knowledge and Action (*Jnāna-Karma Samuchchaya*) for liberation.

III Reply : Mere knowledge of a thing can produce a result :

The above objection seems very strong on the face of it. But Shaṅkara replies for this giving an illustration in his Sūtra Bhāshya—1/1/4, showing that even mere knowledge of a thing can produce a result-

“Although, it was argued that a reference to any object as such, without its being connected with an injunction about the work, will be useless like the statements—‘the earth has seven islands,’ etc. that argument is demolished on the evidence of the usefulness of such statements of facts as, ‘This is a rope and not a snake.’”

So, in our daily life also there is the utility of mere knowledge.

We can take here another experience to show that only knowledge can rescue from bondage. Suppose a man dreams. During the dream time he assumes that the dream-state is the real world. If he is attacked by a tiger or caught by robbers etc., he fears assuming that, that thing is actually taking place. When he awakens, he gets the correct knowledge that he was sleeping safely in his room. By the dawn of this knowledge alone he will be free from the fear that occurred during the dream. There is nothing to be done to destroy the cause of the fear except the right knowledge of the real position, i. e. only the awareness that he gets on waking up is sufficient to falsify that dream experience. So here also the knowledge of the reality alone has given the result of salvation or liberation. So, it is wrong to hold the view that the mere knowledge alone cannot yield the result. For this reason Shaṅkara says in S. Bh—1/1/4: —“The mere reminder of one’s being the non-migratory Self by saying that you are not this. Samsāri-Jīva, That thou art etc. would be fruitful by

wiping off the delusory notion that one is an individual Self suffering from the ills of mundane life.

IV. Difference between the knowledge regarding the outer things and the knowledge of the true nature of the self.

Commonly when we say that the knowledge, either regarding the outer things or regarding the real nature of the Self—both are same in one aspect—that both are Vastu Tantra and generate in the Antahkarana and in both cases the Antahkarana Vṛttis are pervaded by the pure consciousness, But there is a vast difference between the knowledge regarding the outer things of empirical life and that of rituals, meditations etc. according to the Shāstra and the knowledge of the true nature of the Self. Because, referring to the knowable objects, the Vṛttitva remains their and the aspirant takes his stand in his “Me-notion” (Ego-sense), but in the case of Self-knowledge the Vṛttitva will be falsified and the aspirant takes his stand in his true nature of the Self at the time of listening the meaning of the Vedānta texts and there remains nothing else to be done in deference to the injunction about seeing Ātman.

Without knowing this great difference between the two types of knowledge, all others are raising objections to the Shaṅkara's view point. But Shaṅkara himself has clarified this difference in his Bhāshya to Mundaka Upanishad in—1/1/5, i e, in his introduction to Mantra 1/1/6 thus :

‘In connection with the subject matter of injunctions are to be found certain acts which are like the Agnihōtra (sacrifice) to be performed subsequent to the understanding of the text. through a combination of numerous accessories, for example, the agent etc. Unlike this, nothing remains to be performed here within the domain of the higher knowledge, but all actions cease simultaneously with the comprehension of the meaning of the sentences in as much as nothing remains to be done apart from continuance in the mere knowledge revealed by the words.’

Here Shaṅkara declares that at the time of listening to the meaning of Vedāntic sentences, he takes his stand in his true nature.

According to these statements when the Self-Knowledge dawns simultaneously all types of dualistic appearance including Antahkarana will get falsified and the non-dual Self alone remains and nothing else apart from the Self. For this purpose we have told once before that the realization of the Self means realization of the falsification of the not-selves alone and not objectifying the Self. Not knowing this great difference all objections are raised on the Shaṅkara's statements. Falsifying all the dualistic appearance and remaining as the non-dual Brahman alone is called as Mōksha. This is said by Shaṅkara in B. S. Bh— 1/1/4, "BRAHMABHĀVASHCHA MOKSHA"

V. Some misconceptions due to not knowing this difference between Kartru Tantra & Vastu Tantra Prakriyas.

The knowledge of Brahman is Vastu Tantra and not Kartr Tantra. For it is the Self-luminous and Self-established Witness (Sākshi), the very Self of us all. Jnāna as Shaṅkara conceived it is not knowledge which has to be acquired by human effort, but an ontological fact of existence. From this standpoint this discrimination, i. e. Viveka which is taught at the time of Shravana and Manana or Nididhyāsana—all these types of direct means of Self-knowledge come under the category of Vastu Tantra Prakriyā ; while all types Ritualistic Karmas and Upāsānās, Karmayōga, Upāsānā with Jijnāsā Bhakti or practising the adjuvant means like Amānitva etc. (Gi-31/7-11), Buddhi Shuddhatva etc. (Gī-18/51-54) are all concerned with the category of Kartr Tantra Prakriyā. These two types of Sādhanas are dealt with in Shaṅkara's Bhāshyas. Persons unable to realize the discrimination of Vastu Tantra and

Kartr Tantra forms of knowledge imagine that the Vedāntic text only yields indirect knowledge and hence all misconceptions-like :

- (i) repetition of Ātma Jnāna or Mahāvākyas (*Prasankhyāna*),
- (ii) combination of Jnāna and Upāsanā, or Jnāna-Karma, i.e. Rituals (*Jnāna-Karma Samuchchaya*) for getting liberation,
- (iii) getting *Sākshātkāra* by a Kartr Tantra Bhāvanā (meditation on the qualityless Brahman)
- (iv) destruction of Vāsanās (*Vāsanākshaya*) even after the dawn of knowledge by repeated meditation.
- (v) dissolving the universe into Brahman by meditation (*Prapancha Pravilaya Vāda*).
- (vi) suppression of the modifications of mind by the practice of Pātanjala Yōga (*Chittanirōdha* or *Manōnāsa*), etc.

have arisen in their minds and they have propounded some of these theories in the garb of explanation to Shaṅkara Bhāshyas. They think that the practices of these functions are necessary to gain the confirmation of knowledge, because these people have understood that after knowing all these theories we have to practise some exercises to achieve concrete or tangible results in time. They naturally distinguish between the theory and the practice as is evident in our daily life. But we have reiterated previously that, that which is done and achieved afresh is non-eternal and is invariably time-bound. This is forgotten by these people and this in itself becomes a disqualification for them. That which is restricted by time, space and that which is not-self can be achieved by practice after having known it theoretically. But in the case of the Self, who is the very core of one's Being and whose nature is immediate and direct there is no possi-

bility whatsoever of distinctions like theory and practice. In his Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas Shaṅkara has referred all these types of arguments time and again. Brahman is Self-evident inmost Self and no description, definition or proof of its existence is needed. Here the only effort is needed is to cease one's natural tendency of identifying himself with not-selves from the ego to the body and nothing more for making it known. In this regard, Shaṅkara states in the Gītā Bhāshya—18/50 which is mentioned earlier by us.

VI. A Crucial Analysis :

Whether Jnāna is mental activity like Upāsāna or not : Some people assume that getting knowledge also is a type of mental action because it requires some efforts. So why should we not say that just as meditations and Upāsānas are mental activities so also the Jnāna is kind of mental activity? Shaṅkara has taken up this issue in Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya—1/1/4, and analyses the subtlety of the difference between "action" and "knowledge".

(Objection :) Is not knowledge a kind of mental action? (Reply ;) Not so, because there is a difference. An action is in evidence where the injunction about it occurs independently of the nature of the thing concerned and where it is subjected to the activities of the human mind, as for instance in such sentences as 'when the priest (called Hōtā,) is about to utter the Mantra 'Vaushat' he shall mediate mentally on the duty for whom the ablation is taken up by the Adhvaryu—Ai Br—2/8/1 ; 'one should mentally meditate on the duty identified with evening' (ibid). Though meditation, i.e. thinking, is a mental action, yet it can be done, not done, or done otherwise by a man, for it is a voluntary action depending on the will and effort of a man. But knowledge arises from its valid means (e.g, perception, inference etc) ; and the valid means apprehend the thing just as they are. Hence knowledge is not something to be done, not done or done otherwise, for it is

entirely determined by the nature of the things and neither by injunctions of Shāstras nor by the will of a man. Hence though knowledge is also a mental modification, (it has a difference.) For instance, the thinking of a man or a woman as fire in, 'O, Gautama, a man is surely a fire Ch-5/7/1), 'O, Gautama, a woman is surely a fire,' (Ch-5/8/1) is certainly an act, since it arises from injunction alone and it is dependent on man. But the idea of fire with regard to familiar fire is neither dependent on injunction nor on man. What is it then? Ans: Since it is determined by a thing coming within the range of perception, it is surely knowledge and no action. Thus also it is to be understood in the case of all objects coming within the range of valid means of knowledge. That being so the realization of the unity of Brahman and the Self (that can never be sublated) is also a kind of knowledge and it is not determined by injunction.'

—S. Bh—1/1/4

In the above paragraph Shaṅkara has shown that the knowledge is not a mental action, just as meditation. So it won't require any injunction. Awareness of an object or a fact cannot be ordered or changed by our will. This is the sum and substance of the above portion. Shaṅkara elsewhere clearly shows this thing in S. Bh—3/2/21 "As for expressions like 'The Self is to be seen (Br-2/4 5,) which are met with the context of the supreme knowledge they are meant mainly for attracting one's mind towards, the Reality, but do not aim mainly at enjoining any injunction about the knowledge of the Reality"

In the same Sūtra Bhāshya itself later he declares —"Knowledge arises, however, from its valid means (like perception etc.) and it conforms to its object, just as it is. It can neither be produced by a hundred injunctions nor debarred by a hundred prohibitions. For it is not a matter of personal option, it being dependent on the object itself."

In all these sentences Shaṅkara has shown that the knowledge of the Self comes under the category of

Vastutantra and not *Kartṛtantra* or *Purushatantra*. And also that it does not come under the category of *Upāsanās*. This is told in *Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya*—1/1/4.

In this context Shaṅkara says that there are four types of meditations or feelings prescribed by Shāstra:

- i) *Sampad Upāsanā* ii) *Adhyāsā Upāsanā* iii) *Vishishta Kriyā yōga* (also called as *Sambarga Upāsanā* iv) *Samskāra Upāsanā*.

These four categories belong to ritualistic Karmas and meditations & hence they are *Kartṛ Tantra Upāsānās*. But the knowledge of the Self which culminates in one's own intuitional experience and generates firm conviction regarding the true nature of the Self is *Vastutantra*. It means that, as the real nature of the Self is there, the knowledge regarding that real nature generates as it is, that is, according to the fact. Hence Shaṅkara has said in the last sentence of the above quoted paragraph that "Hence the knowledge of Brahman is not dependent on human action. Question: On what does it depend? Answer ; It is dependent on the thing Itself, as in the case of the knowledge of a thing got through such valid means as direct perception."

Hence the direct perception of Brahman is an ontological fact (*Vastutantra*) which is independent of human effort (*Purusha Tantra*). Self-awareness or awareness of Brahman dawns in our mind spontaneously and effortlessly at the very moment of our attentively listening to the teachings of the Shāstras and the Āchārya.

VII Benefit of knowing this difference

When the *Sādhanas* such as *Karma Yōga*, *Upāsanās* or observing the virtues like humility, modesty, non-violence etc. (*Amānitwadīgūnas*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, 13th Chapter verses 7 to 11) and Purification of mind etc. (*Buddhivishuddhatwādi Gunas*, *Bhagavad Gītā* 18th Chapter, Verses—52 to 54) etc. are taught, these are to be done with effort and are to be observed in daily life. So these are called Accessory means (परम्परा साधन) and Adjuvant means

(सहकारि साधन). But when the direct means of the Self-Knowledge such as *Shravana, Manana and Nididhyāsana* are taught, at that time the Sādhaka has to observe inwardly as to whether the facts told by the Shāstra and the Guru are according to his experience or not and he himself has to cognize according to the facts of life using intuitional experience. At this time gradually he loses his identification with the body, the senses, the mind or the intellect and automatically he ceases to be an “Ego-sense” and remains himself as the Witnessing principle of life. After this, he will not have any kind of duties to be performed because the very doership which is the ‘ego’ itself is falsified. So the Sādhana of Viveka or Vichāra is not a Karṭṛ-Tantra Sādhana but it is Vastu Tantra alone. To reach this standpoint i.e. the witnessing principle of life, all types of Karṭṛ Tantra Sādhanas are helpful from outside.

While performing these Karṭṛ Tantra Sādhanas one should take identification with his ego (Antahkarana). While when he starts to discriminate according to Vastu Tantra Sādhana, inevitably he loses the identification with Antahkarana. So one should know this secret of the *fifth fundamental of Shaṅkara Vedānta* to remove all types of misunderstandings regarding the nature and place of Sādhanas according to Shaṅkara.

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CONCLUSION

Now, here in this book “*Guidelines to Shaṅkara Vedānta*” the five fundamentals of Shaṅkara Vedānta are shown in brief. According to Shrī Shrī Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmiji these are very important to the secret of the teachings of Prasthāna Traya Bhāshya just as the Pancha-prānas or five vital forces are to the life. So an aspirant should know these five—i) Universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life, ii) Cognising the witnessing principle of life, iii) The methodology of Vedānta, i. e, superimposition and rescission, iv) Difference between transcen-

denial standpoint and Empirical standpoint and (v) The difference between the Kartṛ Tantra and the Vastu Tantra Sādhanas. Without knowing these *basic principles* most of the followers of Shaṅkara have confused the teachings of Shaṅkara.

Basically the seekers should remember that there is vast difference and contradiction between the Bhāshya and the commentators who came after Sureshvarāchārya. These sub,-commentators also use the words like Adhyārōpa & Apavāda, Vyavahāra Dṛṣhti & Paramārtha Dṛṣhti etc, but they have twisted the Bhāshya according to their own ideas which basically contradict the ideas which are expounded in the Shaṅkara Bhāshyas. For this reason these five fundamentals have been shown here according to the teachings of Bhāshyas that have referred to the universal acceptance and comprehensive vision of life. Remembering these principles if one studies the Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas with the help of a competent teacher, where ever it is possible, then the aspirant can clearly understand the genuine teachings of Shaṅkara and he will get the benefit of getting released from the bondage of Samsāra.

May Shrī Shaṅkara who is the Self of all, i. e. Brahman bless the seekers of Truth to go in the right path and achieve the goal.

AUM TAT SAT

ERRATA

1. Page 24, line 10, read 'bed-rock' instead of 'bed-book.'
2. Page 18, 1st line, read "Mūrta and Amūrta in S. Bh—3/2/22" instead of 'in Bṛha—2/3/1.