

CHAPTER - 2  
THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN THE  
ŚĀMĀKARITE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA :

## THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN THE ŚĀMKARITE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

### I. Some Preliminary Observations about Advaita View of Māyā with special reference to Gaudapāda.

Gaudapāda, the teachers' teacher of Śāmkara recovered the creed of Advaita from the Vedas.<sup>1</sup> It is not needless to say that he revived the monistic tendencies of the Upaniṣads and exposed them in a very systematic manner. In his Māndukya Kārikā which is otherwise known as Āgama Śāstra or Gaudapāda Kārikā, he did not refer to any other writer of the monistic school. Śāmkara admits the credit of Gaudapāda, but not of Bādrāyana, in recovering the non-dualistic ( advaita ) creed from the Vedas. He expressed his regards to Gaudapāda at the conclusion of his commentary on Gaudapāda's Kārikā.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Gaudapāda was said to be the teacher of Govindapāda and Śāmkara was recognised as the direct disciple of Govindapāda. Śāmkara's student Suresvara also refers to Gaudapāda as the " revered Gauda " in Naiṣkarmyasiddhi by saying, " Evam Gaudair Drāvidair nah pujanīyair arthah prabhaṣitaḥ ." Śāmkara was influenced by Gaudapāda's great wisdom. Dr. S.N. Dasgupta thinks that 'in order to be able to teach Śāmkara, Gaudapāda must have been living till at least 800 A.D.'

One may see in this respect, A History of Indian Philosophy ( Motilal Banarsidass, 1975 ) , p. 423.

2. Śāmkarabhāṣya on Gaudapāda-Kārikā ( Tr. Durgācaran Sāmkhya-Vedānta-Tīrtha ; Calcutta Deb Sahitya Kutir , 1355 B.S. ) p. 296.

Naturally any philosophical enterprise of Śaṅkara's Advaitism would presuppose its historical inheritance of Gauḍapāda's Advaitic expositions of the Vedic-Upaniṣadic philosophical aspects. It is indeed true that the growing spirit of mankind expresses itself through voices of philosophers and thinkers of all ages. As a genius with austere intellectualism, logical sublimity and relative freedom from theological obsessions, Śaṅkara seizes the opportunity of the hour and gives voice to the inarticulate Advaitic yearnings of the Vedas and Upaniṣads that for the first time receives the nurshing aid of labour room in the hands of Gauḍapāda . It can not, however, be denied that Gauḍapāda inherits many things from his earlier Buddhist philosophical literature particularly of Nāgārjuna's twofold distinction of truth. Śaṅkara on the other hand, emphasises on one of the fundamental tenets of Gauḍapāda's philosophy that the exact relation between the Ātman and the world is inexplicable ( māyā) and develops his own interpretation of Advaitic literature with far reaching consequences to meet the challenges of the day he faces as a creative thinker. That is why, the following paragraphs will represent the fundamental tenets of Gauḍapāda's philosophy as an introductory to Śaṅkara's approach to the problem of māyā .

Gauḍapāda was a man of that time when Buddhism had been widely prevalent. Naturally his thoughts and ideas were enriched and nuri- shed by all the great Buddhist teachers like Aśvaghōṣa , Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu . His Kārikā refers to the Yogācāra views and mentions the name of Buddha more than once.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Ibid , 4.19.

Gaudapāda carries the non-relational teaching of Nāgārjuna. He was the first practical advocate of Idealism who stated that the awaking state and the dream state are in fact one. He denies that there is any creation at all. As an extreme non-dualist he admits only the reality of the non-dual and birthless Ātman. And in course of his philosophical scrutiny, Gaudapāda faces the problem of proper explanation of the exact relation between the Ātman ( Reality ) and jagat ( the world). And it is precisely here he brings the word 'māyā'. However it is also true that a thorough going careful study of Gaudapāda-Kārikā reveals that the author was not very strict in using the word māyā. He uses the word māyā at least in three senses - that is to indicate (a) the inexplicability of human understanding of the relation between the Ātman and the universe, (b) māyā as the power of God ( Īśvara ) and (c) the apparent dreamlike nature of the universe. In view of this for understanding Gaudapāda's application of māyā we must investigate the nature of his idealism.

In the first chapter of his Kārikā he explains three apparent manifestation of the self - (i) the self as experiencer of external world in its awaking state (ii) the self as the experiencer of dream state and (iii) the self as the experiencer in deep sleep. In other words, the unborn non-dual Absolute for Gaudapāda, manifests itself in the macrocosm and the microcosm, the awaker, the dreamer and the sleeper. They all meet and disappear in the Turiya or the Fourth with which Gaudapāda identifies the Ātman or Brahman.

Gaudapāda carries such kind of idealism that declares that both the dream state and the awaking state are unreal on account of this fact that both of them are but illusory creation of the self.

In the dream state the things are witnessed internally. Similarly when we are awake the things that we perceive are also equally false from the fact that they are within. The external objects like the dream or a mirage are unreal and imagined by our mind.

To refute the reality of the world Gauḍapāda agrees with the Vijñānavādins. He says that the world cannot exist independently and outside of consciousness which is the only Reality. The ordinary people accept world's existence, because worldly things are perceived and they have practical utility. But, Gauḍapāda argues, from the ultimate standpoint, perception and practical utilisation are invalid, because we perceive both a magical elephant and dream objects and enjoy their utility.

In Turiya there is neither sleep nor dream. In dream we know otherwise and in deep sleep the seed of ignorance is present, though the duality is absent. When both of these states sleep and the positive wrong knowledge are transcended, the Turiya is reached. When the individual self is awakened from the beginningless ignorance, the sleepless, the dreamless, the Unborn Non-dual Absolute will be realised.

The fundamental doctrine of Gauḍapāda's philosophy is the doctrine of Non-origination ( Ajativāda ) which means that the world being only an appearance is in fact never created ; it implies, on the otherhand, that the Absolute being self-existent is unborn (aja). Gauḍapāda refutes all the present theories regarding the creation of the universe in a dialectical form which reminds us Nāgārjuna and establishes the view that non-origination is the highest truth, all

that is real is the non-dual Brahman who has no-origination.<sup>4</sup> The Non-dual appears as dual only on account of illusion that takes place on account of ignorance. Our discursive intellect being essentially relational involves itself insoluble contradictions and thus cannot reveal the nature of reality.

In the third chapter of his kārikā Gauḍapāda describes the appearance as dreams and māyā ( magic ). All birth and death, origination and destruction, coming and going surrounding our lives are falsely imposed upon the truth which is immortal. The cause and effect are interdependent ; without one the other remains meaningless. Everything that appears as distinct and manifests outside is an imaginary production in association with the sense faculties. In dream the mind owing to illusion moves with the appearance of the subject and object. Similarly, in the awaking state owing to illusion or māyā the mind moves with the appearance of the two. This duality is perceived by the mind. There is no production at all. All production is falsely imposed upon consciousness. Duality is like a magical or illusory elephant ( māyāhasti ) . As the movement of burning charcoal is perceived as straight or curved, similarly the movement of

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4. In his kārikā he refutes all the theories of causation or creation. He rejects the theories of two classes of disputants who hold that it is the existent that originates and who says that which originates is the non-existent. He argues that which is already existent cannot originate and that which is non-existent does not come into being. He says disputing thus, the followers of advaya assert absolute non-being ( ajāti ) . - The Kārikā reads thus :

Bhūtaṁ na jāyate kiñcidabhūtaṁ naiva jāyate /  
Vivadantoḥdvayā hyevamajātiṁ khyāpayanti te //

consciousness appears as the subject and object. In reality the appearances are not real. They are produced from an imaginary relative point of view only, and therefore these things are after all not a real existence. They are all like shoots of magic coming out of seeds of magic. As in dreams or in magic men are born or die, so all are in appearances.

Gauḍapāda uses the word māyā in order to indicate the inexplicability of the relation between the Ātman and the world.<sup>5</sup> In his view the world is comparable to a dream or an illusion. The apparent dreamlike character of the world is essentially indescribable or unthinkable either as existent or an non-existent, they can be called neither real nor unreal, neither existent nor non-existent. In the second chapter of his Kārikā he uses the term ' māyā ' as the wonderful poser of God through which the Subject or Ātman imagines himself as objects.<sup>6</sup> It is the expression of God's

5. P. T. Raju argues that in denying the existence of the world is also denying māyā . He writes " Through the theory of māyā Vedānta establishes the non-dual Brahman as the sole Reality, but in Gauḍapāda this can be at least a provisional statement in order to explain the relationship between the relative and the Absolute, and since Gauḍapāda denies a relationship of any sort in the Absolute, he must therefore , from the standpoint of the highest truth deny māyā also ; for the highest truth for Gauḍapāda is that there is neither disappearance nor origination, neither difference nor non-difference, and in this view there can be no māyā " -

- Idealistic thought of India ( Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953 ) p. 154.

6. Kalpayatyātmanātmānamātmā devaḥ samāyayā /  
Sa eva vudhyate bhedāniti Vedāntāniścayah //  
- Gauḍapāda's Māṇḍukya Kārikā 2.41.12

power, the power of his māyā ( svamāyayā ). Gauḍapāda describes māyā as a beginningless cosmic principle which hides Reality from the vision of man. Māyā becomes the svabhāva , or the nature of Ātman " inseparable from the ever luminous who is hidden by it." <sup>7</sup>

For Gauḍapāda from the standpoint of Brahman the multiple world has no reality. He tries to prove non-relation between appearance and Reality and he declares there is no possibility of appearance being either real or existent. His theory of No-origination is obviously borrowed from the Mādhyaṃika Kārikā of Nāgārjuna and the Lankāvatāra-sūtra of Vijñānavādins. Unlike Nāgārjuna Gauḍapāda admits the absolutism which is the pivot of the Advaita philosophy. Later on this doctrine of Advaita was further developed in the hands of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara regards the world as only an appearance of Brahman from transcendental standpoint and when he faces the problem of explanation of the precise relation between the appearance and reality, he refers to māyā - that is inexplicable. Thus - Dr. Radhakrishnan, a noted interpreter of Indian philosophy, remarks :

" The Kārikā of Gauḍapāda is an attempt to combine in one whole the negative logic of the Mādhyaṃikas with the positive idealism of the Upaniṣads. In Gauḍapāda the negative tendency is more prominent than the positive. In Śaṅkara we have a more balanced outlook." <sup>8</sup>

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see : Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Gauḍapāda Kārikā ( Op. Cit. ) p. 85.

7. Ibid, II, 19.

8. Indian Philosophy Vol. II - ( Delhi, Oxford University, 1989 ) p. 465.

Śaṅkara explains the world phenomena as a case of super-imposition like the snake in the rope. Regarding this super-imposition there are different views in Indian philosophy. In Indian Philosophy there are six principal theories of the error of super-imposition known as Satkhyāti ( object of error real or as is ), Akhyāti ( no error in simple judgment ), Anyathākhyāti ( errors only of misplacement or mistiming ), Ātmakhyāti ( object of error is the self ), Asatkhyāti ( object of error is non-existent ). The first regards that no experience can ever be illusory. The second maintains that in erroneous experiences we fail to distinguish between consecutive presentations. According to the third , in error both the subject and the predicate are separately real, the presented identity between them is only unreal. The fourth holds that in error the internal object appears as external object. The fifth regards that error is the cognition of absolute non-existent. The last who maintains the anirvacanīya theory of error admits that error is neither real, nor unreal, nor both. In the erroneous perception ' It is silver ', Advaitins argue silver is not sat as it is bādhita ( contradicted ) by true knowledge attained subsequently ; nor as it asat or non-existent , as we perceive it in our illusory experiences.

However from another consideration, with the solitary exception of anirvacanīyavāda as propounded by the Advaitins and developed in different times, other five theories of illusory cognition may be classified under two broad heads. They may be described as satkhyātivāda and asatkhyātivāda . Under the first we may categorise the explanations of illusion by the followers of Rāmānuja, the Bhāttas and the Nyāya - Vaiśeṣikas. The second may include the Yogācāra and <sup>the</sup> Mādhyamika views. The basic datum of illusion for the first category is ' objectively real ' - 'the silver' of the erroneous cognition

is existent elsewhere. The second one, on the otherhand, denies the objectivity of the datum of illusion. It is precisely the sense in which the Mādhyamika's and the Vijñānavādins analysis of illusion may come under this class.

It is, therefore, interesting to have a bird's eye-view of different theories of illusory cognition as generally discussed in Indian Philosophy and to see how the Advaitins would criticise these views in order to make room for the anirvacanīyakhyātivāda. Here in doing so, we shall not enter into details of subtle politics of arguments and counter-arguments for the reason that our primary concern is not a critical exposition of the theories of illusion generally recognised in Indian Philosophy ; rather our's is the business of arriving at anirvacanīya khyātivāda as a preface for analysing the concept of māyā in Advaita Vedānta.

It is to be noted in this connection that the Advaitic approach that began with Gauḍapāda and matured in a tremendously technical form in the hands of Śaṅkara, was severely criticised by others' in later days. A thorough-going reading of the history of Indian philosophy would reveal that again and again the followers of Advaita Vedānta revisited the philosophical circle in order to meet the criticisms usually put forwarded by opponents and tried to re-establish the basic Advaitic position with scintillating brilliance in their dialectical argumentations. Rāmānuja who lived long after Śaṅkara had the opportunity to criticise Śaṅkara's advaitic philosophical position in a devastating way. Again, the followers of Śaṅkara namely Śriharṣa , Citsukha and a few others criticised Rāmānuja's explanation of illusion and with ruthless dialectical skill, they managed

to leave room for advaitic interpretation. Keeping this in mind, that is, the total advaitic interpretations' that continued from the Gauḍapāda-Śaṅkara approach, we shall discuss the different explanations of illusory cognitions and possible advaitic rejoinders to them. That is precisely the reason that our critical exposition of the theories of illusion begins with Rāmānuja's view on illusion despite the fact that he flourished as a glorious philosophical figure in Indian philosophy even after Śaṅkara.

(a) The Non-advaita Views on Illusion examined .

Rāmānuja says that if anything is a piece of knowledge, it is necessarily true, because ' knowledge proper ' ( pramā ) always corresponds to its objects . Then a question arises : why does there occur the erroneous or illusory cognition ? This amounts to ask how Rāmānuja would account for illusion. To such questions, Rāmānuja would reply by saying that knowledge - proper ( pramā ) should not only correspond to the external reality but should also satisfy our pragmatic needs. The aspect of knowledge also implies that it must be common to the experience of all men. In the case of illusory cognition of ' conch-shell', the memory of 'silver' cognised before is imposed on the ' this ' which is cognised at the time of illusory cognition and this is on account of the defects of the visual organs. This in turn shows that in illusion, there can be no cancellation of the elements perceived before but only implication and consequential activities are arrested. In other words, for Rāmānuja and his followers the error consists in the failure of the objects to satisfy our pragmatic needs.

But against this contention, the later advaitins argue that Rāmānuja's theory stands on a misunderstanding of the principle of quintuplication. The principle does not mean that the gross elements

or their evolutes were mixed up with one another. If the shell possesses the ingredients of silver, the shell can never be transformed into ashes and reduced to a liquidified state as ' silver '. ' Snake-hood ' can inhere only in snake, but not in its formative elements. The author of ' Advaitamodah ' thus asks Viśiṣṭādvaitins to explain why we see a piece of ' silver ' in the ' shell ' on the beach and why not we do see a piece of thing which is silvery-coloured, i.e. a piece of glass ?<sup>9</sup> The advaitins further argue that if the conch were really painted yellow by sun-rays coming from the jaundiced eyes, it should have been seen yellow by other persons also.

Next comes the Prabhākara's theory of illusory cognition for consideration. This theory is popularly known as ' akhyātivāda ', according to which the so-called error is due to non-discrimination of different cognitions and of different contents. When we say 'this is silver ' instead of ' shell ' we cannot apprehend the distinction between two truly separate cases of cognitions - perceptual and memory, but we tend to treat them as one unitary knowledge in our verbal actions, speech, behaviours etc. and this leads us to the phenomenon of unsuccessful inclination. Correction of the so-called illusory cognition denies neither the presentation of ' this ' nor ' the recollection of silver '. The contents of these cognition are not also rejected . For Prabhākara, if anything is a piece of knowledge, it is necessarily true. Only on account of a lapse of memory

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9. For details of the advaitins' arguments against the position of Rāmānuja and his followers one may see Vāsudeva Śāstri's Advaitamodah , ( H.N. Apte, ed. Anandasrama Sanskrit Series No. 84, Poona, 1940 ) p. 146.

( smṛti pramoṣa ) on its effect, non-discrimination ( vivekāgraha ), we cognise ' silver in case of shell '. Here the distinction between the perceived and the remembered objects is not apprehended or cognised.

Vācaspati objects that the Prabhākara's analysis of illusion leads to the undesirable position of some ludicrous extremity ( atīvyākhyāna ) or to coin a word from Prof. B.K. Matilal , we may say that it is ' guilty of overskill '.<sup>10</sup> It is too extreme to analyse illusion into two distinct cognitions like memory and perception instead of an unitary perceptual mode of awareness. The Nyāya critique would point out that the Prabhākara unnecessarily made the explanation of illusion more complex, the Prabhākara fails to see the fact that in illusory cognition our action is prompted by our lack of awareness of the distinction of the different cognitions. Again, this view also fails to account for the origin of human activity in order to achieve the object grasped in illusory cognition. Here an Advaita Vedāntist joins hand with the Nyāya-vaiśeṣika and argues that the Prabhākara's explanation contradicts our positive normal actions. Vācaspati thus urges that " a conscious being does not act out of lack of awareness, but out of awareness."<sup>11</sup> In the Bhāmati , Vācaspati argues in favour of the advaita view. He urges that if the non-apprehension of difference of contents and of cognitions is admitted as the cause of illusory cognition as held by the Prabhākara, then it would be equally possible to argue that it is on account of the non-apprehension of the ultimate ' non-difference ',

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10. Perception ( Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986 ) p. 196.

11. Tātparya-tīkā ( ed. R.S. Dravid, Varanasi, 1925 ) p. 163,

of the said two items. On this ground, Vācaspati prefers the advaita theory according to which error is due to the failure of realisation that everything is, in the last analysis, Brahman.<sup>12</sup> Pārthasārathi Miśra refutes Prabhākara's contention that non-cognition of difference between two kinds of awareness, that is perceptual and memory, as the cause of illusory cognition. He points out that we can be in error, though we may discriminate two objects of cognitions. For instance, we may know the difference of north, south, east and west, still we may mistake about which direction we are facing now. Vivaraṇa also argues that in memory only the object is remembered, its previous knownness is never remembered along with the object. In such a case, the non-apprehension of difference of cognitions, memory element cannot be lapsed as held by the Prabhākara.<sup>13</sup> The Advaita Vedānta thus suggests that instead of admitting the non-cognition of two different kinds of cognition's nature, it is better to admit that the failure to grasp the ultimate non-difference of apparent diversified contents of cognitions as the cause of error.

The Nyāya offers another alternative . The Nyāya theory of illusion is known by the name ' anyathākhyātivāda ', according to which an illusory cognition is presentational in nature and has some basis in facts. But it is erroneous because here the facts are ' misplaced ' and ' misrelated ' . When we cognise ' silver in shell ' the

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12. Prabhākara's view has been severely criticised by Pārthasārathi Miśra in his Śāstra-dīpikā ( Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. 89, Baroda, Oriental Institute, 1940 ) and by Nrsimhasrama in Advaitadīpikā ( Kasi , Lazarus & Co., N. Delhi )

13. Vivaraṇa : Vivaraṇam ( pañcapādikā-vyākhyānam ) of Prakāśātman with Tatparyadīpikā of Citsukha , ( Govt. Oriental series, No. 155, Madras, 1958 ) p. 24.

Nyāya observes, on account of similarity between ' silver ' and ' conch-shell ', the past experience or memory revives. The revived memory comes into contact with the visual organ ' non-physically ' which is technically known as ' Jñānalakṣaṇa pratyāsatti '. Sensory illusion is thus a complicated perception where the visual organ perceives ' this ' through ordinary contact ( laukika sannikarṣa ) and it perceives silver by means of extra-ordinary relation ( alaukika sannikarṣa ). That is how we perceive that the Yonder object is otherwise manifested as ' silver '. Hence " error lies not in the presentations concerned in the perception but in the determination of one presentation by another given through association and memory ( jātyasaṃskārāt ). And since this determination results in a judgment of the object as something other than what it is, the Nyāya theory of error is called anyathākhyāti or viparītakhyāti.<sup>14</sup>

Against the Nyāya theory of illusion the Advaitin would argue that it is not intelligible in the Nyāya contention how the silver which exists elsewhere can be in contact with the visual organ. But this contact ( sannikarṣa ) is necessary for the perception of silver as an actuality before us and not a case of memory alone. The Nyāya speaks of extra-ordinary contact of jñānalakṣaṇa in this respect. Here the Advaitins would at once object that such an interpretation will make the Nyāya contention of inference itself redundant or unnecessary.<sup>15</sup> In case of distant object, say silver, or its

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14. S.C. Chatterjee : The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge , (University of Calcutta , 2nd ed. 1965 ) p. 36.

15. For details one may see Bhāva-dīpikā in Vedāntadarśana ( Śārīraka-Bhāṣya ), ( Beng. tr. & annotation by Swami Visvarupananda, Udbodhan, Calcutta , 1993 ) p. 38.

universal 'silverness ' cannot be apprehended in the yonder object ' shell ', because our visual organ cannot have a contact with the remote object . It cannot be said to be yielded by jñāna-lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa , because in that case it would equally be objected that the purpose of inference would be served by it. But in the Nyāya inference plays a vital role as an independent source ( kāraṇa ) of valid cognition.

In view of this, the Advaitins say that in illusion an ' expressible silver ' is cognised. Here the content of cognition has reality for the time being . It is an object directly perceived by the senses and thus it cannot be said to have a non-entity. On the otherhand, it is not real for all time, because in that case it could not have been cancelled when the shell is known. The Advaitins would say here that the ' silver ' cognised in illusion , has no real existence anywhere but has an apparent reality. In other words, its exact status is unspeakable.

The Advaitins also criticise the Buddhist's analysis of illusory cognition. For the Yogācāra Buddhists who advocate Ātmakhyāti-vāda , our illusory cognition projects its own form as an external object. The Yogācāra holds that in illusion we cognise the internal object as external, the mental as extramental . According to this view, the illusory object is the creation of innate pre-disposition ( vāsanā ). The piece of silver that is mis-apprehended as nothing but a part of my awareness. In other words, cognition and its objects are never cognised distinctly. In illusion, the entire content is super-imposed on the unreal extra-mental object which is the product of beginningless avidyā ( ignorance ).

It is usually objected against the Yogācāra view that if in an illusory cognition of ' silver in shell ' , the silver also be a form of cognition, then there would be no logical bar to have cognition of the kind, not as ' this is silver ' but ' I am silver ' because the self is but a form of consciousness.

Again, for Yogācāras, the innate pre-disposition is said to be the cause of illusion. Here the Advaitins may raise a question : Is it done by defective cognition or some other cognition ? If it is said that the silver is caused by the non-defective cognition, then it is to be perceived by all, as a jar or a table etc., because they are common to everybody's perception. The revealing silver cannot be regarded erroneous, since being the cause of its cogniser, it possesses some practical efficacy ( arthakriyākāritva ) which, according to the Buddhist, is the mark of a real object. If the Yogācāras would further argue that the illusory cognition is caused not by silver but by something else, then the false silver cannot be apprehended at all, because in the cognition of an object the cognition is caused by that very object. Thus for Advaitins , Vijñānavādins cannot explain the revelation of the false silver.<sup>16</sup>

The Mādhyamika Buddhist advances another theory of illusion usually known as Asatkhyātivāda . It maintains that the erroneous cognition of silver is absolutely unreal ( asat ) and therefore illusion is a cognition of the non-existent. The causal factor of cognition that reveals the unreal silver is called ignorance ( avidyā ). Under the influence of it ( avidyā ), the form of previous

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16. A.K. Ray Choudhury has elaborated the arguments of the Advaitists in ' The Doctrine of Māyā ( Calcutta, Dasgupta & Co. 1952 ) p. 40.

impression ( samskāra ) becomes detached from the state of consciousness and places it in the grip of objectivity. Illusory cognition, for the Mādhyamika, points to ' pure nullity ' that is applicable in cases of subject-predicate relation as well as of the content of such relation.

There are many arguments that have been levelled against the Mādhyamika position with regard to the status of illusory cognition. Apart from these, from the Advaita view point , it may be argued that there is no adequate ground for maintaining the Mādhyamika contention that the very object of illusion is a sheer non-entity. The Advaitins have their own explanation. For them, the prātibhāsika object appears in illusion though it were functionally ( vyavahārika ) real. It is only functionally or phenomenally real because the subsequent sublating cognition conceals its apparent reality. Thus Madhusudan Saraswati argues that the illusory cognition cannot be justified until and unless we assume the objectivity of the content of the said cognition.<sup>17</sup> " A purely non-existent object cannot be perceived. The objectivity of the false however, does not vouch for its phenomenal reality. It has a different being of its own. Illusory cognition takes it to be phenomenally real. Correction proves that it is not a phenomenal object. The illusory content has a positive being which is not on a par with that of a phenomenal object. Error is due to the ignorance ( ajñāna ) of the substratum of illusion. Illusion ceases only when substratum is directly experienced. Thus with the cancellation of ajñāna, its evolutes, which appeared in illusion is also negated ", the Advaitins would observe.<sup>18</sup>

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17. Advaitasiddhi ( Bombay, Nirnarya Sagar Press, 1917 ) p. 648.

18. A.K. Ray Choudhury : The Doctrine of Māyā ( Op. Cit. ) p. 44.

(b) The Śāṃkrite view that 'anirvacanīya is the object of illusion ' explained :

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that, though the Advaitin is in agreement to the fact that what is revealed as the object of cognition is not asat ( non-existent ) but it does not mean that he is agreed with the Bhāttas and the Naiyāyikas in holding that the silver seen in illusion is sat ( existent ). The Advaitin suggests that in order to justify the appearance as well as the sublation of the illusory content, we have to admit that it should be uncategorizable or anīrvacanīya by the ordinary notion of the existence and non-existence ( bhāva and abhāva ). Let us now see what does the Advaitin really mean by anirvacanīya . The term 'anirvacanīya ' etymologically means not determinable. The word may be applied to an object which changes from time to time. The Advaitin would say that the ' silver ' is neither sat ( existent ) , as it is known as non-existent by the vādhaka jñāna ( correcting experience ) nor 'asat ' ( non-existent ) as it is apprehended as such before its sublation by the subsequent knowledge. Therefore, an object of empirical error is seriously present which is accepted as a concrete presence so long the illusion or brahma lasts. This theory presupposes the theory of sattā according to which the only absolute reality is the Brahman or Consciousness perse and that of the asat as is envisaged in the yoga theory of vikalpa .<sup>19</sup>The

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19. Śabdajñānānupātti vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ - Yogasūtra 1/9,  
- Yoga-sūtras of Patañjali with Bhāṣya tr. Purnacandra  
Vedāntacuncu ( Sanskrit Book Depository, Calcutta, 1907 )

Advaitin holds that the object which is cognised in space and time is the object of cognition and of negation as well. The real Brahman which is eternal and timeless and the purely non-existent unreal objects are totally devoid of spatio-temporal character. But the anīrvācya has the spatio-temporal character. Therefore, it can be cognised as well as rejected. As the illusory object is something other than absolute existence and absolute non-existence, it is relative existence and relative non-existence.<sup>20</sup> The absolutely non-existent objects are neither absolutely existent, nor relatively existent, nor relatively non-existent. The absolute non-existent ( atyantāsat ) is that which is capable of being negated for all time - past, present and future but is not identifiable with any existent. But an indeterminable is also capable of being negated for all time - past, present and future, though it can be identifiable with an existent something in some substratum at sometime.<sup>21</sup>

Śamkara, the illustrious protagonist of the Advaita school of Vedānta offers his own definition of adhyāsa , by " Smṛiti rūpa paratra purvadṛṣṭavabhāsaḥ ". That is , super-imposition is the

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20. Hemanta Kumar Ganguli : Radicalism in Advaita Vedānta ( Indian Publicity Society , Calcutta 1988 ) pp 9-10.

21. The post-Samkarites use the term bhāvarūpa instead of anirvacanīya . But modern scholars in order to distinguish the advaita view from the Śūnyavādin like to emphasis on the term bhāvarūpa as something positive. But as a matter of fact in Advaita literature it cannot mean anything positive. In Advaita it cannot be said to be positive , nor negative, nor both but neither. In other words, it means the exact nature of illusion ( adhyāsa ) cannot be categorised and thus indescribable.

apparent presentation to consciousness by way of remembrance of something which is observed in some other thing at past . And in accordance with this, we find in common experience that the shell appears as silver and a single moon appears as two. True knowledge ( pramā ), according to the Advaitin, is that which is never sublated ( avādhita ). He holds that the unreal can never be knowable and the real can never be negated. He differs from those who maintain that the real alone is cognised and the unreal alone is rejected. The Advaitin would say that we cannot support the revelation of the non-existent, for it does not explain why an unreal object is grasped at all in illusion. Again, the silver-form cannot be internal or mental , for a vivid perceptual experience proves its externality. Nor can we regard the silver-form as existent or real, for the corrective cognition falsifies that possibility. We cannot say that the silver-form is both real and unreal, for that would be a contradiction. Therefore, the Advaitin contents that we must conclude that the silver is an anirvacanīya object which is not only distinct from the real as well as from the unreal but also from the real and unreal. So the silver-form belongs to a different category which is called mithyā .

According to Advaita Vedānta, the indeterminable is that which is negatable for all time, tri-temporal negation of past, present and future ( traikālika-niṣedhasya ). The contradicting judgment ' this is not a silver' reveals that the object appeared in illusion did not, does not and will not exist anywhere at any time. However, the Advaitin admits that the indeterminable is also of some sort of existence. The Advaitin maintains that there is no empirical knowledge without an object and this point draws the line of demarcation of Advaita

view from the Vijñānavādin who advocates that knowledge has no objective bias ( viśayomuktatā ). So the critics may put the question that if the indeterminable also is of some sort of existence, then how it will be negatable for all time ? Or the critics of Advaitin may argue that the correcting awareness definitely and unmistakably shows that the content of illusion is absolutely non-existent and therefore the acceptance of anirvācya object is not right. But in Advaitin's analysis of illusion the apparent silver is caught in themselves of an identity - an identity between the apparent silver and the real silver, and the identity of the apparent silver with an ' it '. On account of some defects , the 'shellness' of shell has been suppressed and the shell appears only as glittering ' it ' which in turn the seeming silver for finding an identity. Now the man who is under the illusion does not perceive the seeming silver as seeming silver. For seemingness itself can not figure in the content of illusion. A seeming silver is that which seems to be a silver but really not. So if the man perceives the silver as seeming silver, then no illusion occurs. But this does not mean that the real silver appears itself. Here appearance means appearance as real, but not appearance of the real and the man who is under an illusion experiences the ' seeming silver' as ' real silver '. Therefore in contradicting the ' shell-silver ' illusion the object of negation is obviously, the prātibhāsika silver as vyavahārika , i.e. the illusory silver in identity with the phenomenal silver becomes the object of negation. Unless we admit the phenomenal silver as an aspect or character of the relation between the negation and the negatum the apparent silver cannot be said to be rejected for all time. In illusory cognition the phenomenality was also cognised and the apparent object was taken as real ; in

corrective judgment it is understood as not the real. Therefore, the illusory content as such is not the object of negation. That is why, Madhusūdana interpretes the confusing statement of the Prakāśātman by saying that the ' prātibhāsika silver identified with ' it ' also identifies with the Vyavahārika silver in the sense that it appears as real silver.<sup>22</sup>

In view of what has been said above, the Advaitin concludes that the negative judgment expresses the phenomenally non-existence of the seeming silver. The critic may at once point out that if it is so the question may arise : Why the prātibhāsika silver should not continue its appearance even after the correction ? In reply, the Advaitin would say that as the direct perceptual apprehension of the substratum of illusion ( adhiṣṭhāna sakṣātkāra ) cancels the avidyā which is the material cause of the anirvācya silver, it cannot shine in any form after correction. In super-imposition there are two parts - super-imposed object ( adhyasta ) and substratum of super-imposition ( adhiṣṭhāna ). When there is the direct apprehension of the locus i.e. shell, it is presumed that there is no more adhyāsa due to not having ignorance. Therefore, the objection that

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22. Prakāśātman and other earlier Advaitins in general admit the phenomenal silver as the negatum of negation. But Madhusudana sarasvati argues that the acceptance of the phenomenal silver as the negatum would lead to mutual ' hetero-locativity ' ( vaiyādhikarānya ) of ' bhrama ' and ' vādha ' and to the negation of the unpredicated. He, therefore interpretes the words of Prakāśātman by saying that the silver as cognised in illusory cognition as identical with the phenomenal silver is the negatum :-

Na ca tatra laukika paramārtha-rajatam eva svarūpeṇa niṣedha-pratīyogī iti vācyam, bhrama-bādhayoḥ vaiyādhika-rānyāpatteḥ,

the prātibhāsika silver should appear as anirvācya , cannot arise. Anandabodha , the famous Advaita teacher who is earlier to Citsukha, is of the opinion that the right knowledge removes the veil of avidyā that covers the real nature of an object and then reveals it.

In Advaita literature the term avidyā ( ignorance ) has been metaphorically used to indicate the world-superimposition on Brahman as its ground. Here the effect is put for the cause. The Advaitins would agree to the point that ignorance is not the negation of knowledge but for them it is a kind of knowledge which cancelled latter on by the cognition of things as they are. By knowledge here the Advaitins do not mean intellectual knowledge but actual realization ( aparoksānubhūti ). For Advaita Vedānta , on account of ignorance ( avidyā ) there is the super-imposition of the Self on the non-self and its properties. Swami Vireswarananda aptly summarises the Advaitic position in the following words :

" This super-imposition ( adhyāsa ) due to ignorance is the presumption on which are based the distinctions among the means of knowledge , objects of knowledge and knowing persons, in our career of daily activity, and so are also based all scriptural texts whether they refer to rituals ( karma ) or knowledge ( jñāna )."<sup>23</sup>

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aprasaktapratīṣedhāpattēśca . . . . Asya ācārya-vacasaḥ pāramārthika- laukika-rajata-tādātmyena pratītaṁ prātibhāsikaṁ eva rajataṁ pratīyogi ityarthah."

- Advaita-siddhi vol. II, Tr. by Sri R.N. Ghosh ( Samskrta Pustaka Bhandar, Calcutta , 1338, B.S. ) p. 482.

Madhusudan also holds that even the phenomenal silver may be the negatum when the negation will be of anyonyābhāva type, but not atyantābhāva type and in this case the phenomenal silver is to be presented to the mind through recollection.

23. Brahma-Sūtras ( English tr. and annotation, Swami Vireswarananda

The following table can show the different dominant views on ' Illusion ' generally discussed in Indian Philosophy at a glance.

Theorists	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Mādhyamika Buddhism	Yogācāra Buddhism	Prābhākara Mimamsa	Nyāya-Vai- śeṣika	Viśiṣṭa- dvaita of Rāmā- nuja	Śāṅkarite Advaita Vedānta
	Asatkhyā- tivāda	Ātmakhyā- tivāda	Akhyātivāda	Anyathākhy- ātivāda	Satkhyā- tivāda	Anirva- cāniya- khyāti- vāda
Theories	[ The con- tent of illusory cognition is non- existent ( <u>asat</u> ) ]	[ The con- tent of illusory cognition is the self ]	[ No illu- sory cog- nition in simple judgme- nts. -Non- discrimi- nation between perceived content and memory content in a unitary cognition makes a judgment erroneous ]	[ Illusory cognition consists of the object as something other than itself. It is due to misplaced and dis- placed facts. ]	[ The con- tent of illuso- ry cog- nition is real or "as is ". It lies in the failure to sat- isfy our practi- cal needs. ]	[ The con- tent of illu- sory cog- nition is false ( <u>mith- yā</u> ). Its Nature is in- deter- minab le ]

### III. Ajñāna as the material cause of illusion explained :

The Advaitin, therefore, admits the ignorance as the material cause of all illusionary cognitions. What is the psycho-physical process involved in such an illusory cognition ? If we consider a particular example of ' shell-silver ' it would be found that the defective organ, the eye has contact ( sannikarṣa ) with the presented thing ( idaṁ ). Then occurs the vṛtti which is the modification of antaḥkaraṇa as the form of ' idaṁ ' or ' this ' and ' brilliance ' . Next the consciousness delimited by the ' idaṁ ' ( this ) is reflected in the vṛtti ; and then the three grades of consciousness - first limited by ' this ', second, limited by vṛtti and third limited by mind-become one or non-different from one another . Now, the nescience in the ground of consciousness delimited by ' idaṁ ' by some defect and by the impression of past silver revived through the cognition of similarity is transformed into the ' apparant silver ' . At the sametime the nescience whose substratum is the consciousness delimited by the vṛtti becomes transformed into the vṛtti and takes the form of silver. These two transformations are revealed by the witness-consciousness and thus they are cognised. Thus the Prātibhāsika silver is the transformation of avidyā . The avidyā as the substratum of consciousness delimited by ' idaṁ ' projects the illusory silver with its potency called ' vikṣepa ' . Therefore, the illusory silver is not made of the stuff of ordinary silver, but of the stuff of avidyā . Avidyā as material cause exists in illusion. The author of Vivaraṇa assumes that ignorance is the material cause of the illusory content ( arthādhyāsa ) and illusion ( Jñānādhyāsa ).

But the critics may raise some objections against this view. It may be objected that whatever has a material cause, it must be real something. That which is not real cannot be an effect and cannot be said to arise from a material cause. The illusory silver being indeterminable cannot be real, therefore, it cannot be said to have a material cause.<sup>24</sup>

The Advaitins point out that they differ from those according to whom the real must be an effect. The Advaitins hold that only which appears as real but not actually real is to be regarded as an effect. The illusory silver is not real, but appears as real, and therefore, it is taken to be an effect of something. It is an admitted fact that something can be called an effect, if it has a beginning ( kāryyam prāgabhāvapratiyogī ). The ' silver ' in illusion is not of a prior existence earlier than that of the state of illusion. If it had already been there, the knowledge about it would have been veridical , but not illusory. Therefore, we must maintain that the silver has a beginning and is thus an effect. And if it is an effect, it must come out from some material cause.

The critics of Advaitin may further point out that avidyā cannot be taken as the material cause of the illusory object since whatever we say as a material cause we have an experience that the particular effect is a transformation of that particular cause. The ring or the pot which is made of gold or clay comes to be known as something golden or earthen pot. But about the silver which the Advaitin claims, as the transformation of ajñāna, we have no such

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24. For detailed analysis one may see Advaita theory of Illusion by Sukha Ranjan Saha ( Progressive Publishers 1982 ) pp. 86-90.

experience. Therefor, ignorance should not be regarded as the material cause of the illusory silver.

In reply to the critics the Advaitin would urge that it is not true that the effect always comes to our experience as a transformation of its material cause. Even when the Sāṃkhya holds that the pot is a transformation of mūlāprakṛti , he also does not experience it in that mode. Nor the Naiyāyika who regards the pot as the inherent cause ( samavāyī kāraṇa ) of its colour, can say that he has an experience of the colour of a pot.<sup>25</sup> Hence though the illusory silver is not cognised as a transformation of ignorance, yet the ignorance can be taken as its material cause ; since both the illusory silver and the ignorance have the common nature of being revealed and they have some other similar properties and also they themselves cannot account for their manifestness.<sup>26</sup>

There are differences among, the Advaitins themselves with regard to the function of ignorance ( avidyā ) as a material cause of super-imposition ( adhyāsa ).<sup>27</sup> But inspite of these, all of them

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25. . . . Yad Yadupādanakam̐ , tat tadanuviddhatayaiva Pratiyate itivyāptyasiddeḥ. Na hi ghaṭopādānakam̐ rūpam̐ ghaṭa iti pratiyate; Prakṛtidvyaṅukādyanuviddhatayā pratiteḥ parairapyabhyupagamāt, kenacit-dharmena tadanuvedhastu prakṛte pīṣṭaeva.

- Madhusudana Sarasvati - Advaitasiddhi with Laghucandrikā ( Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1917 ) p. 546.

26. . . . Katham̐cidanuvedhasya Jaḍatvādinātrāpi Sambhavāt .  
- Ibid , p. 649

27. Prakaśātman, the author of Vivarana is of opinion that the state of illusion ( jñānādhyāsa ) as well as the content of illusion ( viṣayādhyāsa ) are the products of ignorance in way of double transformation ( avidyāvṛtti ). He develops his argument in

are agreed to the point that the cognition of ' silver in shell ' is false ( mithyā ), though we have no experience of the form, " The illusion is false ". Śaṅkara deals with such a problem in his commentary on Brahma-sūtras. Śaṅkara mentions an analogy in this connection. " When rising from a dream a man feels that the objects and events like snake-bite, bathing in water etc. happened during the state of dream are false, he does not feel that his knowledge about them too is false."<sup>28</sup> In the like manner, according to the Advaitins, we shall have to admit that the illusion is false ( mithyā ), because it is sublated ( vādhita ) and if anything is sublated ( vādhita ) it is to be regarded as false ( mithyā ). However though the erroneous cognition in the form , " It is silver ", is possible with the assistance of self, antaḥkaraṇa and some defects, none of them can be accepted as the cause of illusion. They cannot be the cause of illusion, because the correcting cognition also needs

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Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa ( Madras, Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Lib., 1958, p. 89-90 ). But Nṛsimhāśarmā ( in the Bhāvaprakāśikā , Ibid ) shows that such a twofold transformation of ignorance in order to be the material cause of illusion is not relevant to Śaṅkara's view.

28. " Na hi svapnāt utthitaḥ svapnadr̥ṣṭam sarpadaṁsanodaka snānā-dikāryyaṁ mithyā iti manyamānaḥ tadavagatimapi mithyā iti manyate kaścit

- Brahma-Sūtra Śaṅkarabhāṣya , 2.1.14.

Also see, Visvarupananda : Vedānta Darśana ( Bengali Tr. ) vol.2, ( Udbodhan karyalaya, Calcutta , 2nd ed., 1989 ) p. 93.

the help of self and antahkarana. Though defects have no part to play in respect of that cognition, the defects can not be regarded as false ( mithyā ). Therefore, the ajñāna which shares the same nature like mithyā with its effects is to be regarded as the material cause of the illusion. The ajñāna is mithyā because like the content silver it is removed or cancelled at the presence of the correcting cognition. Therefore, the Advaitins conclude that an anirvacaniya content like silver is a product of ajñāna .

It is said by the Advaitins that avidyā is directly experienced by us in such perceptions as " I do not know ", " I do not know what you say " or " I had been sleeping so long happily and did not know anything ". All such perceptions point to some quasi-positive ajñāna which is distinct from the negation of knowledge. If ajñāna is the negation of knowledge and by negation it means a general negation, then even where there is a pot on the table, we should perceive the negation of the pot on the table as the general negation in relation to other things. On the other hand ajñāna cannot be taken to mean the negation of some particular object. Particular negation appears as a substantive with the object of negation. It is a qualifying factor which specifies the nature of the negation. The notion of a general negation of knowledge is opposed to each and every knowledge. One may know many individual objects though he experiences the nescience like ' I do not know '. Hence ' I do not know ' is not equivalent to ' I know the absence of knowledge '. Moreover, the Advaitins claim that a negation cannot be perceived.<sup>29</sup>

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29. According to the Advaitins negation is not a separate entity, but is only a peculiar mode of expression of the positive and a negation cannot be perceived. But the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas recognize it to be objective and claim that negation is to be

So what we are aware of, when we are aware about our ignorance, is not a negation or absence of awareness.

#### IV. Māyā as the ground of cosmic illusion explained :

In our previous section we find that Śaṅkara and his followers admit the shell-silver as anirvācya and mithyā . They say that this adhyāsa takes place on account of an indefinite positive ajñāna. In Advaita metaphysics this ajñāna occupies a pivotal position, because without it, the Advaitins cannot establish the non-dual nature of Reality ( Brahman ) and determine the status of the multiplicity of the world. According to them the ajñāna which is also known as māyā projects the phenomenal world, including the finite being ( Jīva ) and God ( Īśvara ) . The individual selves owing to this māyā imagine themselves as different from Brahman and mistake Brahman as the world of plurality as we mistake a rope as a snake or a silver in a shell.

The terms ' māyā ' and ' avidyā ' are used in Advaita philosophy very often interchangeably . However there are two schools among later Advaitins regarding the question whether ' māyā ' and ' avidyā '

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perceived. Though in the common sense view when there is no sense-object-contact there does not occur any perception. But the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas argue that sense object-contact is not of one sort only, it may differ as the objects of knowledge differ categorically. So in the case of the perception of an absence, the senses come into contact with absence which is related to its absence and the relation is objective. When we see the absence of a jar on the ground, the absence being the attributes of the ground, one may see the absence by his eyes which is related to the absence through the table. But the Prābhākaras maintain nothing but the bare locus of it. According to the Sāṅkhya philosophers, absence is a the then transformation of its so-called mere locus.

are identical or not, from the point of having two different aspects like concealment and the projection, but most of the Advaitins, even Śaṅkara used avidyā and māyā indiscriminately.<sup>30</sup> Vidyāraṇya in his work ' Vivaraṇa-prameya samgraha ' admits the non-difference of māyā and avidyā by quoting smṛti.<sup>31</sup>

Sadānanda quoted from Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad while describing ajñāna or māyā as " Sadasadbhyaṁ anirvacaniyaṁ trigunātmakaṁ jñāna-virodhī bhāvarūpam yat kiñcit iti."<sup>32</sup> Śaṅkara in his wonderful work ' Vivekacūḍāmaṇi ' with his great literary taste presents it as follows :-

Sannyāpyasananāpyubhayātmika no , bhinnāpyabhinnāpyubhayātmikā no /  
Sāṅgāpya naṅgahyubhayātmikā no, mahādbhutāhnirvacaniya rūpā //<sup>33</sup>

From these two treatises it is clear that māyā or ajñāna cannot be categorised as either real or unreal. We cannot call it real, for it is destroyed by knowledge. Whatever is real, it can never be sublated. Similarly it cannot be unreal, for an unreal object say ,

30. Some Advaitins are of opinion that mūlaprakṛti is māyā and its effect of concealment ( āvaraṇa ) and projection ( vikṣepa ) are avidyā . It is also said by some that mūlaprakṛti is māyā which is made of pure sattva and avidyā is made of sattva, rajas and tamas . In some works of Advaita, māyā is said the power of concealment and avidyā is said the power of projection.

31. Taratyavidyaṁ vitatāṁ hr̥di yasminnivesite /  
Yogi mayamneyāyā tasmai vidyātmane namah //  
- Iti smṛtau māyāḥavidyayomurkhataḥ avaiikatvanirddaśāt . . .  
- Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgrahaḥ ( Kasi, Acyutagrantaṁala , Samvat, 1896 ) p. 258.

32. Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda ( Tr. Swami Nikhilananda, Mayavati, Advaita Ashram, 1978 ) p.21.

33. Trans. by Swami Vedāntananda , R.K. Mission Assram, Patna, 1984 p. 67.

' the son of a barren woman ' cannot be the cause of her pleasure and pain , māyā being the material cause of the world of multiplicity cannot thus be unreal ( asat ) . We cannot regard it as sadāsat ; for contrary qualities like being and non being cannot exist simultaneously in the same locus . Therefore it is indeterminate or anirvacaniya . Māyā is the composite of three gunas - sattva, rajas and tamas which are causes of pleasure, pain or indifference of phenomenal objects that are evolved from ajñāna.-

Rajastmaḥ sttvamiti prasiddhā gunāstudīyāḥ prathitaiḥ svakāryaiḥ.<sup>34</sup>

Māyā is jñānavirodhī, for it is destroyed by the knowledge of Reality. The shell-silver illusion occurs when ajñāna residing in the locus of the shell covers its nature with its power of concealment. When knowledge of shell arises ajñāna is cancelled. Therefore, ajñāna or māyā has two properties of āvaraṇa or hiding the truth and vikṣepa or projection of the unreal . But we cannot call it as some of absence of apprehension but a positive aspect, that is, māyā is called as jñānavirodhī bhāvarūpaṁ .

In the philosophy of Śaṅkara this ' anirvācya jñānavirodhī bhāvarūpa māyā' is the logical pendent which brings forth the world of phenomena on the ground of Brahman without affecting and without undergoing any change of Brahman. In Advaita philosophy Caitanya which is all-pervasive is the sole reality. No phenomenal attributes or predications can be belonged to the Absolute Reality. From the empirical point of view we may say it as saccidānanda ; these are not its qualities, but it is existence as such , consciousness as such, bliss as such . Reality is Ātman . Reality is self-luminous

34. Vivekacūḍāmaniḥ , verse No. 110, ( Ibid ) p. 68.

(svaprakāśa ). An objection may be raised that there is no self-luminosity in dreamless sleep, for after awaking from deep sleep one may say that he did not know anything regarding the sleeping state - because in that time there is no manifestation of the self. But the Advaitin denies it, for when a man is awakened from sleep he may say that he slept happily. Such feelings show that happiness which is directly felt at sleeping and expression of the same in awakened state is nothing but a remembrance of the past . The experience of happiness felt in the sleeping state cannot be said to be manifested in the continuous cosmic state of self-consciousness. This example also shows that the self was directly aware of ajñāna in swoon, ( susupti ), because when the swoon is over one says that he was slept so happily that he did not know anything. Therefore we must admit that self is self-luminous without which all time revelation of Brahman or Ātman cannot be accounted for. Self-revealing ( Svaprakāśa ) Brahman cannot depend upon any other object for its revelation ; on the contrary the so-called objects depend on Ātman for their revelation, since the existence of objects other than Brahman have only dependent existence.

Brahman is ' sat cit ānandasvarūpa '-these three are not the dharmas or attributes of Brahman, for It is absolutely nirguna . These so-called aspects are used in order to make Brahman somehow intelligible to the finite minds. The author of the Vedānta-paribhāṣā regards that these words are all super-imposed. In fact, these aspects are used to indicate that Brahman is not non-being, non-conscious and non-blissfull.

Nirguna Brahman is regarded as the highest Truth, the only Reality. Everything other than Brahman is not real, for they are not permanent. Śaṅkara asserts that it is impossible to explain

through logical categories the relation of Being and becoming or seeming, what is real can never have any relation with the unreal ' Na hi sadasatoḥ sambandhaḥ '.<sup>35</sup> The different explanations of creation are unsatisfactory and, therefore, they are rejected. The analogy of the relation between a tree to its branches or clay to the vessels is inapplicable to the relation between the Absolute and the finite, since all these analogies indicate a relation between the whole and the part, substance-attribute. Brahman, for Śaṅkara is devoid of parts and attributes. Any attempt to bring Brahman into connection with the world of seeming ends in failure. The becoming is not evolved or produced from the Absolute but only appears as so or seems to be so on account of māyā. Śaṅkara explains the world of multiplicity with the notion of māyā without infringing the nature of Brahman. The projection of the world and the appearance of the jīva are owing to māyā which is regarded as a śakti of Brahman, and it is not different from Brahman just like the burning power of fire is not different from fire itself.

V. Rāmānuja's sevenfold objections against the Advaita view of māyā examined.

Like other philosophers Śaṅkara's view-point is not left uncriticised by the later thinkers. Among the thinkers who are considered as opponents to Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja (1017 - 1137<sup>A.D.</sup>) comes first. He has put forth some critical arguments in favour of not accepting māyā. A more vivid and distinct picture of the nature of māyā would be crystallised if we consider the major objections raised by Rāmānuja

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35. Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad - 2.7 in Radhakrishnan's Indian Philosophy, vol. II (Op. Cit.) p.566.

against Śāṅkarite view of māyā and the possible counter arguments given by the later *advaitins*. Rāmānuja who flourished after Śāṅkara and lived a long life devoting to vedāntic culture, attempted to present a harmonious conglomeration of absolutism with personal theism. For Rāmānuja, unlike Śāṅkara, māyā is the real power of Brahman. Brahman according to Rāmānuja though devoid of homogenous and heterogenous differences, is not partless, Brahman has two aṅgas ( parts ) , one is cit ( conscious ) and the other is acit ( non-conscious ). Reality for him is not purely indeterminate, not pure identity or pure unity but unity amidst diversity, identity as qualified by difference. Thus it is quite natural for a philosopher who differs from Śāṅkara in the very conception of Reality, to attack the foundations of Śāṅkara's philosophy of the world, or māyāvāda from all possible standpoints. As a pūrvapakṣa ( Thesis to be refuted ) of Rāmānuja's philosophy, we come across his criticism of Śāṅkara's doctrine of māyā .

Rāmānuja in his well know ' Śrībhāṣya ' has raised <sup>the</sup> following seven principal objections against Śāṅkara's concept of māyā . Let us consider these one by one.

(1) The Āśrayānopapatti: Rāmānuja observes that it is impossible to determine a locus for māyā. The jīva cannot be the locus of ajñāna or māyā , because it itself is the product of māyā and the cause cannot depend on its effect. Neither can it be said to be in Brahman, for Brahman is jñāna-svarūpa . Jñāna and ajñāna being contradictory cannot have the same locus. <sup>36</sup>

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36. Sā hi kimāśritya bhramam janayati. ? Iti vaktavyam . Na tāvajjī -  
vamāśrotya ; avidyāparikalpitatvājīvabhāvasya. Nāpi Brahmā-  
śritya , tasya svayam prakāśajñānarūpatvenāvidya virodhitvāt.

(2) The Tirodhānanupapatti : Māyā , according to Śaṅkara, conceals the nature of Brahman which is self-luminous . Ajñāna is about the thing which is an object of knowledge. But Rāmānuja points out that Brahman cannot be admitted as the object of knowledge , therefore ajñāna cannot be about Brahman. If māyā is said to conceal the self-luminous Brahman, then concealment means either obstruction of the appearance of manifestation or destruction of the manifestation itself. As the manifestation of Brahman is natural and not adventitious, the concealment does not mean the former. If we admit the last one then it means that the self revealing nature of Brahman is destroyed by māyā and he ceases to be.<sup>37</sup>

(3) The Svarūpānupapatti : Rāmānuja raises the objection that māyā has been said by the Advaitin as object-less ( aviṣayaka ) and owing to some defects impersonal self-luminous Consciousness becomes an infinite number of conscious subjects and apprehends an infinite number of objects . Now question comes : What is the real nature of the defect residing in consciousness ? We cannot call it real, for its reality is not admitted. Nor it is unreal too. For if it be unreal , it must be viewed as either the knower ( draṣṭā ) , or the known ( drśya ), or the knowledge ( drṣṭi ). These three is only conceivable in the world. The Advaitins cannot say it knowledge, because any distinction is altogether denied by them. It cannot be regarded as an object of knowledge existing within knowledge or

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- Śrībhāṣyam of Rāmānuja on Brahma-Sūtras . ( Bengali Tr. Sri Yatindra Rāmānujacāryya , Sribalarām Dharmasopān, Khardaha, 24 Pargonas, 2nd ed. 1385 B.S. ) p. 171.

37. Śrībhāṣyam - 1.1.97 , ( Ibid ) p. 174.

consciousness, because then consciousness of consciousness is to be admitted. Hence the locus cannot be cognised at all. Further there will be regressus ad infinitum to regard it the knower, the known or the knowledge ( conditioned by the knower and the known ) as unreal. For to explain their unreality there must be assumed another defect which again will require a third defect and so on, Therefore, regressus ad infinitum occurs. In view of this, Brahman must be regarded as the defect in order to avoid this difficulty, and then, Rāmānuja points out, it is absolutely futile to posit any separate existence of any real imperfection in the form of avidyā . If this is accepted , the falsity of world appearance cannot be maintained .<sup>38</sup>

(4) Anirvacanīyatvānupapatti : Rāmānuja criticises the anirvacanīya ajñāna , because every object should be determined accordingly by the dictates of our consciousness about them and such consciousness is in the form of either real or unreal. Now if it be claimed that by this consciousness of real or unreal an anirvacanīya object which is neither real nor unreal is testified, Rāmānuja argues, anything could be an object of any knowledge. Hence it is impossible to define ajñāna.<sup>39</sup>

(5) The Pramānānupapatti : Rāmānuja charges that the inference advanced by the Advaitins in support of ' bhāva rūpa ajñāna ', is fallacious on account of the contradictory middle ( viruddha - hetu ) and inconclusive ( anaikāntika ). It is viruddha in this

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38. Ibid - 1.1.98 , pp. 175-176.

39. Ibid - p. 176.

sense that the probans in the inference of the Advaitins proves something which is not intended by the Advaitins. The Advaitins put forward the inference that 'right knowledge ( pramā ) is preceded by something else ( vastavantorapūrvakam ) which is removed by it, for it ( pramā ) manifests a thing which was not manifested before. A pot in the state previous to its perception was unmanifested, that is, was covered by something ( ajñāna ) which is removed by knowledge when it manifests the pot; just as the first rays of a lighted lamp remove darkness in a room and manifest things which were covered by darkness. Thus the existence of ajñāna as something positive is proved.<sup>40</sup> Rāmānuja points out that the hetu ( aparakāśitārthaparakāśakatva ) of this inference will establish a second ajñāna which is not admitted by the Advaitins. Because the inference has for its object 'bhāvarūpa ajñāna' which should be admitted to the previously veiled by another ajñāna , and the proper knowledge ( pramā ) removes this second ajñāna . Therefore, the proposed hetu which establishes another ajñāna which is not intended by the Advaitins, is viruddha.

Moreover, the hetu is anaikānta or inconclusive, because it exists in both the sapakṣa as well as in the vipakṣa . The hetu certainly exists in the sapakṣa , but it equally exists in the jñānābhāva ajñāna , which according to the Advaitins is vipakṣa and therefore the probans becomes anaikāntika .

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40. Pramāṇajñānam svaprāgabhāva-vyatirikta-svaviṣayāvaraṇa-svanivarttya-svadeśagata - vastvantarapūrvakam , aprakāśitārthaparakāśakatvāt , andhakāre prathamotpannaprdīpaprabhāvaditi.  
- Ibid , 1.1.100 , p. 182.

Rāmānuja points out that the example ( light of a lamp removes darkness and manifests things which were covered by darkness ) given by the Advaitins is also fault. For the light of a lamp never manifests an object but it is a knowledge by which the un-manifested object is manifested. The object remains unknown to a blind man, even the existence of a lamp. It is knowledge only that manifests thing, so the hetu does not exist in the example.

The existence of ajñāna as a bhāvarūpa object cannot be proved by perception like ' I am ignorant ' I do not know myself ' etc. It is said by the Advaitins that in such experience ajñāna which is not jñānabhāva is proved, because jñānābhāva and jñāna ( pratiyoḡī or counter entity to ajñāna ) being contradictory cannot have the same locus. But Rāmānuja argues that this difficulty cannot be overcome even if ajñāna is taken to mean bhāvarūpa . If it is said by Śaṅkara that bhāvarūpa ajñāna is opposed to pure knowledge ( viśuddasvarūpa ) of the real nature of the self and not to any kind of knowledge, and is cancelled by the pure knowledge, Rāmānuja urges that then ajñāna as jñānabhāva is opposed to pure knowledge of the real nature of self and not to each and every kind of knowledge of it. Again , the bhāvarūpa ajñāna, being non-identical with jñāna is dependent on the knowledge of its pratiyoḡī as the jñānābhāva ajñāna is . Thus arises also the ' Bhāvarūpatvānupapatti of avidyā '.<sup>41</sup>

(6) The Nivarttakānupapatti : It is said by Śaṅkara that the cessation of avidyā takes place when the knowledge of unqualified Brahman arises. But Rāmānuja objects to this suggestion, because

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41. Ibid - pp. 177-178.

according to him it contradicts ~~some~~ Upaniṣadic texts where it is clearly pointed out that the qualified God who is free from any taint of blemish. The Upaniṣadic dictum ' tat tvam asi ' ( that thou art ) according to Rāmānuja distinctly points out the non-identity of forms between these two, because it is meaningless to assert any identity between exactly identical terms. Identity can be asserted between two forms of the same substance.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and jīva is absurd.

(7) The Nivṛtṭyānupapatti : The last objection advanced by Rāmānuja is that if the means for the removal of avidyā is not established, there can be no cessation of it.<sup>43</sup>

It is interesting to note that how the followers of Śāṅkara left no stone unturned to meet these objections from the Śāṅkarite standpoint.

(1) The Advaitins hold that the jīva can be regarded as the locus of avidyā . In the view of Acharya Maṇḍana jīva is the locus of avidyā and Brahman is the object of it. Vācaspati Miśra in the Bhāmati , a commentary on Śāṅkara-bhāṣya , admits the jīva as the locus of avidyā .<sup>44</sup> The objection that the jīva being posterior to avidyā cannot be the substratum of it, - does not arise at all. The Advaitins give the analogy of the tree and the seed

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42. Ibid - p. 226.

43. Ibid - p. 253.

44. Tasmājjivādhikaraṇāpi avidyā nimittayā viṣayatayā vesvaramāśrayata itīśvarāśrayetucyate, Na tu ādhāratayā vidyāsvabhāve brahmāni tadnupapatteḥ - Bhāmati on Śāṅkara-bhāṣya , Beng. ed. and Tr. Sri Mohan Bhattacharya ( Kuran Bhattacharya , Manomohan Park, Calcutta-8, 1973 )

in order to explain the interdependent aspect of the beginning-  
less-ness of ajñāna and the jīva . Petitio Principi may be con-  
ceived to exist between the tree in series and the seed in series,  
because the former is the cause of the later and vice versa . And  
both are beginningless. Thus there is no logical see-saw . Simi-  
larly, both māyā and jīvahood rest in the same portion of Caitanya  
and are determinant of the other. It may be noted that this analogy  
should not be stretched too far . The analogy does not mean that  
jīvahood and avidyā should be conceived as series.<sup>45</sup>

(2) When it is said that māyā conceals the real nature of  
Brahman, this does not mean that Brahma-prakāśa is ceased. Rāmānuja  
fails to understand the actual intention of Śaṅkara. Just as a  
patch of cloud conceals the sun by preventing a person from percei-  
ving the sun, similarly, māyā conceals Brahman from the individual  
who is under ignorance. So in admitting the māyā as a power of  
concealment the self-luminosity of Brahman is not destroyed at all.

(3) There is no regressus ad-infinitum in maintaining ajñāna  
residing in consciousness. The Advaitin admit that ajñāna is begin-  
ningless and established itself. It is an object ( dr̥ṣṭa ) to the  
Sākṣī .

(4) The Advaitin retorts that there is every justification  
for admitting ajñāna as an anirvācya object. In order to justify  
the prior perception and the subsequent cancellation of the ' shell-  
silver ' evidence, we must admit it as anirvācya , which is neither

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45. Amalānanda : Vedānta-Kalpataru ( Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press,  
1948 ) p. 420.

real nor unreal. In the Advaitāmōda it is noted that as the light and darkness being contradictory to each other, the darkness is not an object of light, but it is established by light ; so ajñāna is not an object of cognition either of the real or of the unreal, but is established as indefinite by the cognitions of the real and the unreal .<sup>46</sup>

(5) Rāmānuja is wrong in taking the subject of the Advaitin's inference viz ' right knowledge ' to mean any and every right knowledge ; but it was not the intention of the Advaitins. By ' right knowledge ' they mean immediate right knowledge and not inference and other mediate varieties. Further, the inference advanced by the Advaitins does not prove the existence of ajñāna , but only establishes bhāvarūpatva of it. The existence of ajñāna is directly intuited by the eternal sākṣīcaitanya . Therefore, there cannot be any other ajñāna about ajñāna.

It has been argued by Rāmānuja that the example used by the Advaitins is faulty. In reply to this objection it may be said that the manifesting power of light cannot be totally denied. The light is called the revealer in the sense that it removes darkness which obstructs the manifestation of an object. But the sense-organs do not destroy any such obstacle of manifestation ; they only effect a relation or connection between the mind and the thing.

Rāmānuja points out that the perception like ' I am ignorant ' does not prove the existence of any bhāvarūpa ajñāna but merely indicates absence of knowledge. But according to the Advaitins,

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46. Vasudeva Śāstri : Advaitamōda ( Op. Cit. ) p. 139.

ajñāna is bhāvarūpa because it can remain side by side with jñāna simultaneously, which the absence of knowledge being contradictory of knowledge cannot do. Moreover, it has already been noted earlier that ajñāna cannot be regarded as absence of knowledge.

(6) It is a fact that in Śruti, passages referring both to Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman are found. Śaṅkara says that knowledge of Nirguna Brahman arises as soon as there is cessation of avidyā or ajñāna and it leads to emancipation. But Rāmānuja, on the other hand, emphasises on bhakti and holds that uninterrupted meditation on Saguna Brahman brings salvation to a jīva. But Śaṅkara's interpretation seems to be a more plausible than Rāmānuja. Śaṅkara admits the importance of Saguna Brahman. Meditation and worship is necessary for mental purification. The knowledge of Saguna Brahman leads to the knowledge of Nirguna Brahman. As Swami Vivekananda thinks that the personal God is necessary for the spiritual aspirant only, the worship of personal God is but a support during the individual's spiritual childhood. Bhakti and karma purify the mind and thus they are the remote causes of emancipation.

Rāmānuja criticises that the upaniṣadic dictum " that thou art " does not point out the complete identity between Supreme Self and individual self. In his opinion it is unthinkable that man who is finite can be identical with God in every respect. But in the Advaitic thought the word ' thou ' is to be understood to imply pure Consciousness underlying man and ' That ' to imply also pure Consciousness which is the essence of God. There exists absolute identity between these two .

(7) The Advaitins point out that in Śruti and Smṛti it is clearly indicated that bondage is due to māyā and jñāna destroys karma , " Kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi tasmin dr̥ṣṭe parāvare " ( Mund. Upanisad 2.ii.9 ). In the Gītā it is said " jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā " ( iv. 3 ) . True vision of the self removes for ever the avidyā which is the cause of bondage.

In view of the above, it is clear that the world is not condemned to be absolutely unreal by Śāṅkara. In different occasions, Śāṅkara uses different metaphors in order to stress on the ultimate unreality of the jagat ( world ) . But metaphors are not to be taken beyond the sense of breaking point. But the appearance of the multiplicity of the world can not be ignored. So long as we are here in the world, we cannot say it as unreal. In other words the functional reality of the multiplicity of the world cannot be denied. As the later Advaitins developed a vast Vedānta literature in order to defend the Śāṅkarite Advaita, it would not be out of consideration to say that many critics have failed to grasp the real significance of māyā or avidyā and as a result of this they have charged Śāṅkara with explaining the world away. In reply to this one may share the view of . C. D. Sharma. Sharma very aptly remarks : " But this charge ( of explaining the world away ) is based on a shifting of the standpoints. Śāṅkara . . . . has granted some degree of reality even to dreams, illusions and errors. How can he, then take away the reality of this world ? The words, ' real ' and ' unreal ' are taken by Śāṅkara in their absolute sense. Real means real for all time and Brahman alone can be real in this sense. Similarly, unreal means absolutely unreal like the hare's horn, which this phenomenal world is not. Hence this world

is neither real nor unreal. This shows its self-contradictory and therefore incomprehensible nature. It is relative phenomenal finite. But it is not illusory. It is true for all practical purposes. What does it matter to us, worldly people if it is not absolutely true in the philosophical sense ? When the reality which is denied to this world means ' non-eternality '. Who can stand up and say that the world is not ' unreal ' if ' unreal ' means non-eternal ? Again, the world will be sublated only when knowledge dawns and not before. This should make us humbly strive after true knowledge rather than engage ourselves in futile quarrels . Śaṅkara's intention is perfectly clear - none can condemn this world as unreal , he who does it , is not qualified to do so and he who is qualified to do so will not do so, for he would have risen above language and finite thought ."<sup>47</sup>

VI. The status of Jīva ( individualised soul ) and Jagat ( the universe ) in the Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta considered : (a) Avacchedavāda and Vivartavāda explained :

From the fore-going sections, it appears that the prime concern of the Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta is to establish Brahman as the sole Reality. A question may arise here : what is the status of jīva and the world in Advaita philosophy ? How has the concept of māyā been applied to sort out this problem ?

In response of such queries it is to be noted that full and complete demonstration is not found in Śaṅkara's writings in a connected way. In later times this concept has been developed by his followers right up to the sixteenth century. They analysed

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47. A critical Survey of Indian Philosophy ,(Delhi , Motilal Banarsidass, 1978 ) p. 279.

and systematized it through their controversies with their rival schools with the addition of some new implications. And in doing this, they sometimes differ among themselves on many points.

In Śaṅkara's philosophy the jīva which passes through the diverse experiences of worldly life is merely the appearances of the Pure Consciousness. It attains jīva-bhāva owing to māyā. Even Īśvara is the production of māyā. The later Advaitins have drawn the distinction between māyā and avidyā to explain the phenomenal Īśvara and the phenomenal jīva. They hold that when Pure Cit is reflected in māyā, Īśvara is produced and when it is reflected in avidyā, jīva is produced. According to them, māyā is that aspect of ajñāna by which only the best attributes are projected whereas the function of the avidyā is to project the impure qualities. In its function of avidyā, āvaraṇa or the veiling characteristics are prominent and in the functions of māyā the projecting ( vikṣepa ) type become prominent.

In Bādrāyaṇa's ' Brahma-Sūtras ' thus the relation of Brahman and Jīva has been explained in two ways.<sup>48</sup> Basing on this twofold conception regarding the relation of Brahman and Jīva, the Śaṅkarite Advaitins developed two fullfledged theories. The first theory in this respect is usually known as ' Avacchedavāda ' while the second is called ' Vivartavāda '. The theorists who hold ' avacchedavāda ' very often give the analogy of ākāśa ( space ) with the ' ghaṭākāśa ' ( space limited by a jar ). According to them, ākāśa when limited by ghaṭaḥ ( a jar ), it as a matter of fact, does not suffer any

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48. "Amso nānāvya-padeśāt , anyathācāpi dāśkitabāditvamadhīyata eke."-  
Brahma-Sūtras - 2.3.43.

modification. The ākāśa limited by the ghaṭaḥ is conceived as something separate from the original ākāśa so long as the said ghaṭaḥ remains . When the ghaṭaḥ is destroyed , the ākāśa remains there as one cosmic ākāśa . Similarly the Pure Cit seems to be limited by mind-body complex but in fact remains unaffected by this apparent limitation. When the Absolute is conceived on the so-called conditions of mind-body limitations, Its real nature is hidden and It suffers a limitation and attains jīvabhāva ( individual beinghood ).

The theorists of vivarta or pratibimba ( reflection ) , also gives several analogies in order to explain their position. One of the common examples, they usually cite, is the cognition of the sun in different sheets of water. For them, our inner organ ( Antaḥkaraṇa ) is the condition ( Upādhi ) in which the Absolute is reflected. That is why the reflections of the Absolute in different inner organs are different and we have different individual beings ( Jīva ) , just like the reflections of the sun in different sheets of water are different. " Therefore just as the trembling of a particular reflection of the sun does not cause the other reflections to tremble so also the experiencing of happiness and misery by a particular Jīva or individualized soul is not shared by other souls. Hence there can be no confusion of the results of action ." <sup>49</sup>

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(One may also see Swami Vireswarananda's Tr. of Brahma-Sūtras, Mayavati , Advaita Ashram, 1982 , p. 238 and p. 242).

Again, the main tenet of vivartavāda may be traced to Bādrāyana when he says ' Ābhāsa eva ca ' - Brahma-sūtras - 2.3.50.

49. Ibid, p. 243.

However, it is to be noted in this connection that among the Pratibimbavādins, Sarvajñātmā Muni thinks that when Cit is reflected in ignorance ( ajñāna ), we have Īśvara; and when Cit is reflected in inner organs ( Antaḥkaraṇas ), which are products of ignorance ( ajñāna ), the individualized souls ( Jīvāḥ ) appear.

Those who support the relation as being of the pratibimba type regard that Śaṅkara himself suggests it. The author of Ratnaprabhā argues that the word ' eva ' in the sūtra ' Ābhāsa-eva ' clearly points out that the intention of Sūtrakāra is to support this theory of reflection. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan " Śaṅkara supports this view on account of its suggestive value, seeing that it brings out that the original reality remains untarnished by the impurities of the reflection."<sup>50</sup> The jīva is the reflection of the One Reality in avidyā and is not real. On the abolition of avidyā, the reflection ceases to exist and the Pure Cit only remains. There are some objections against this theory. For example we may cite the followings :

- (1) Only those substances which have a colour and form can be reflected.
- (2) If the individual is a reflection, then that which is reflected must be outside the reflector, and the Reality must exist beyond the cosmos or the sum-total of created objects. Therefore, the reflection being wholly different from the reflector, there will be no identity between these two, i.e. the Jīva and Brahman and this is also opposed to the immense view of the Brahman.

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50. Indian Philosophy, Vol. II ( Delhi, Oxford University Press 1989 ) p. 607.

Against these objections the Advaitins would reply that in their philosophy 'Cit' is not a substance since it is described as devoid of all qualities and a substance cannot be admitted as such. However, both the Bhāttas and the Advaitins accept sound which emanates from the throat as a substance. Phonetic sound which comes from the throat and the palate reflects in an obstructing medium through wave like motion and is known as the echo. It is nothing but the original sound superimposed on the reflecting medium, though appears to be distinct from the original. Therefore, the objection that a colourless substance cannot be reflected at all is not based on fact. That a thing devoid of form cannot cast any reflection is also untenable.

The author of Vivarana tries to find a way out of this difficulty in his theory of bimbapratibimbābheda-vāda ( non-difference of the original and the reflection ). He suggests that as the rays proceeding from the eyes being obstructed by a mirror turn back to the original face and make it perceptible, so is the case here that the reflection is the original itself. Moreover, when the actual ākāśa is reflected in water, the original exists in the water along with the reflected ākāśa. Ākāśa is ubiquitous (bibhu), therefore, it cannot be said to non-exist anywhere. Vivarana thinks that the reflection is real but according to Suresvara, one of the supporters of ābhāsa theory holds that reflection is unreal. He says that Brahman owing to māyā appears to be the jīva-bhāva and attains in bondage for getting its real nature, like that of a prince who was being brought up among the cowboys from early childhood forgot that he was a prince and behaved like the cowboys. When he realises his real status, he restores to his natural position. Suresvara

points out that Śaṅkara himself supported this theory when he said "Brahmaiva svāvidyayā saṁsarati svavidyayā mucyate."<sup>51</sup>

Against the theory of limitation it is argued by the other school that when a jīva goes to the other world on account of its potency of merit and demerit, the intelligence limited by it on the earth is not transferred there. The intelligence being different the jīva would enjoy fruits of action ( Karma ) not done by it and also would not ripe the result of the actions performed by him. This will lead to unsatisfactory moral effect such as kṛtanāśa ( destruction of the rewards of our karma ) and akṛtabhyāgama ( fruits of actions not performed by the agent ) . Again, Brahman which is infinite and unlimited cannot be limited by anything.

Because of the above difficulties in both the theories a group of post Śaṅkara Advaitins regards that both Īśvara and the soul are appearances ( ābhāsa ) of the Brahman on account of māyā which is inexplicable principle. This principle of inexplicability is beyond any explanation. Sureśvara asserts that this very inexplicability is the character of māyā or avidyā - " The unique distinguishing definition of avidyā is that it is unable to bear the impact of reason ."<sup>52</sup>

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51. Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad , ( Anandasram Sanskrit Series, Bombay, pp. 280-81) see also The Doctrine of Māyā , (Op. Cit. ) p. 122

52. avidyāyā avidyātva idameva tu lakṣaṇam /  
mānāghātāsahiṣṇutvam asādhāraṇamiṣyate //  
- Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya vārtika 1/181  
( Anandasram Sanskrit Series, Bombay )

(b) The world is the projection of māyā :

Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda considered :

In Advaita philosophy the world too is the projection of māyā, it is an appearance like ' shell-silver '. As the ' shell-silver ' is realised as false with the knowledge of the shell, so the world will be realised as such with the revelation of Brahman . Śāṅkara in his commentary on Gauḍapāda's Māṇḍukyakārikā states it as follows - " Jāgradr̥ṣyānām bhāvānām vaitathyaṁ iti pratijñā ,

Dr̥ṣyatvāditi hetuḥ , svapnadr̥ṣyabhāvaditi dr̥ṣṭāntaḥ /"<sup>53</sup>

whatever is knowable is unreal. The Brahman being Pure Consciousness is not an object of consciousness and being Self-luminous It is not manifested by consciousness. But the objects in waking state are knowable in dream. Therefore, the objects in waking state are unreal as the dream objects are.

A group of Advaitins does not agree even to give the world such a status of illusion which has some sort of indefinable existence. Prakāśānanda , the author of ' Vedānta siddhānta-muktāvali ' declares that the world is a total fiction just like a rabbit-horn. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī also holds the similar view and considers Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi as the highest and purest doctrine of the Advaita philosophy. According to the dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda, illusory perception of each individual occurs for him subjectively and it has no corresponding objective phenomena which exist behind it ; the phenomena have no objective basis, but are only subjectively imagined. This theory,

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53. Śāṅkarabhāṣya on Māṇḍukya-Kārikā , ( Op. Cit. ) 2.4., p.77

therefore claims that the subjective perceptions creates the objects and there is no objective phenomena apart from subjective perceptions. Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādī regards that the world, being, absolutely non-existent, is not even a false appearance of anything else; the Brahman is without any appearance other than itself. According to the vivartavādī the world is not the pariṇāma of māyā , but the vivarta of Brahman. The world, for them is granted a status higher than an object of illusion in a recognised hierarchy of existence. They also recognised some sort of objective status external to the empirical knowledge of an object of ordinary illusion like the ' rope-snake ' or ' shell-silver '. But the dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādī unequivocally declares everything but the Brahman, as pure nothing.

In this connection, the name of Maṇḍaṇa Mīśra, a post Śaṅkara Advaitin who propounded the theory of dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi may be referred. It is said that Maṇḍaṇa in his early life was Mimāṃsaka but came under the spell of Śaṅkara being defeated by him, after them he modified and changed his views. In the initial statutory verse of ' Brahmaśiddhi ' , while he explains the word ' akṣara ' , he unreservedly exposes the cause of śabdādvaita which has been propounded by the well-known scholar Bhartr̥hari ,. In his ' Vākyapadīya ' Bhartr̥hari elaborately explains that the world is a system of linguistic meaning-fictions imposed on the One Reality, the universal Logos-Consciousness .<sup>54</sup> It is called as ' akṣara ' . Maṇḍaṇa following this view remarks that every day many objects used in our pattern

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54. anādinidhanam bramha śabdatatvam yadaḥkṣaram /  
 vivartateḥarthabhāvena prakriyā jagato yataḥ //  
 - Vākyapadīya - Kārikā - 1 ( with Bengali tr. W.B. State Book Board , Calcutta , 1985 ) p.1

of behaviour such as positive and negative injunctions, the sentimental meaning, the fire brand circle, the rabbit horn and so on. Such objects have no other character other than linguistic fictitiousness. With the strength of these analogies Maṇḍana regards that the worldly objects should also be taken as linguistic fictions. But in evaluating the status of māyā he holds that māyā or avidyā is absolutely indescribable ( Anirvacanīya ) as it is neither real nor absolutely unreal ( atyāntasat ) like sky-lotus. If it were unreal, it can serve no practical purpose, but in fact it does so. Māyā is called mithyābhāsa or false appearance.<sup>55</sup> Maṇḍana accepts two kinds of avidyā - non-apprehension ( agrahana ) and mis-apprehension ( anyathāgrahaṇa ). These two are known as the power of concealment and that of projection. According to Maṇḍana, jīva is the locus of avidyā. Pure Consciousness cannot be the locus of avidyā. Each individual is responsible for his jīvabhāva on account of avidyā. Now a question may arise: how avidyā resides in the jīva? Because the jīva himself is the product of avidyā. Maṇḍana replies that both the jīva and avidyā are beginningless and both go on determining each other in a vicious circle like the seed and plant.<sup>56</sup>

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55. Nāvidyā brahmaṇḥ svabhāvaḥ nārthāntaram , nātyantamasatī , nāpi sati ; ebamebeyamavidyā māyā mithyāvabhāsa ityuchate . . . tasmādanirvacanīyā |

- Brahmasiddhi ( Ed. by Mm. Prof. S. Kuppaswami Shastri, Madras , 1937 ) p. 9

56. Anāditvādubhayorvidyā jīvayorvījāmkurasantānayorivanetaretarāśrayatva- prakāṣṭimāhatīti .

- Ibid . p. 10 .

Madhusūdana in his Advaitaratnaraksana vehemently denies any pragmatic reality of the world and suggests that pragmatic reality is nothing but fictionality. In support of the fictitious character of the world he refers to a half verse of Gauḍapāda and Śāṅkara's interpretation—there on as evidence. - " Prapañcho yadi vidyeta nivarteta na samsayah " <sup>57</sup> The difference between the phenomena and the illusory is that the former is negated by such a knowledge which negates all distinction , while the later is cancelled by some knowledge which is not such . In dreaming state somebody may experience a lucid dream such as a snake bites him, and may further dream that the snake was a dreaming object. Then when he wakes up he realises that all these are mere dream. Madhusūdana considers that a dream affirmation and a dream negation belongs to the same level of existence, negation of negation does not indicate the affirmation. As the inclusive dream longer than the included dream <sup>it</sup> cannot confer a higher grade of existence and reality, <sup>and</sup> so the pragmatic world does not claim a higher grade of reality.

The Ajāta vāda is illustrated by Gauḍapāda in his kārikā in the following way :

" There is neither dissolution, nor creation ; neither any bonded self, nor any practising saint, neither a person striving for salvation, nor an emancipated self - this is the essence of truth." <sup>58</sup> Śāṅkara in his commentary of this kārikā explains it as

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57. Śāṅkarabhāṣya on Māṇḍukya-kārikā , 1/17 ( Op. Cit. ) p. 53

58. Na nirodho na cotpattir na baddho na ca sādhaḥ /  
Na mumukṣur na vai mukta ityeṣā parmārthatā //2.61.32  
- Ibid. p. 103

" creation and dissolution can be spoken of only about something which exists . But the many do not exist at all, so the question of its creation does not arise . A rabbit horn is neither created nor destroyed." He proceeds " a rope-serpent is neither created nor dissolved ; just as the rope-serpent the world is only a mental construction."<sup>59</sup> Most probably this explanation of Samkara directly inspires the theory of 'dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi ' which straightly shows the fictitious nature of the phenomenal existence.

The dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādi asserts that in vivartavāda there is some experience at least of something other than Brahman, however false it be, but the Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādins do not ready to give such a status to the world.

The extreme subjectivist, Prakāśānanda ( sixteenth century philosopher ) asserts a total non-existence and pure fictitiousness of the world. Perhaps he is inspired by Śamkara's description " Jagat tucchametad samastam tadanyat " - ( Daśaślokī verse No. 9 )<sup>60</sup> He brings charges against the theory of vivarta that it cannot escape from dualism. Pure non-dual Brahman can have no false appearance, for then its purity could not have stood unaffected . Avidyā or māyā is nothing but pure fictions and absolutely non-existent.<sup>61</sup> The objects come into existence when it is perceived.

59. Ibid.

60. Daśaślokī verse No. 9 ; See: Radicalism in Advaita Vedānta , Hemanta Kumar Ganguli ( Indian Publicity Society, Calcutta, 1988 ) p. 93.

61. . . . tathā ca ātmano daitadr̥ṣṭiḥ kadacidapi Nastyeva (p.275)  
 . . . tadatiriktasya kathañcidapi sattve advaitavyāghātaprasa-  
 ṅgāt / tasmāt jagatastucchatvam śrutyanumatameva  
 - Vedānta-Siddhānta-Muktavali ( Ibid ) pp. 273-75. Also in  
Radicalism in Advaita Vedanta ( Op. Cit.) p. 142.

Cognition of objects results only when the willing power of māyā screens the Brahman and projects it out of the will by the projecting power and the objects last as long as the cognition lasts. Negation ( Vādha ) is not the ceassation of avidyā and the world, but it means the realisation of absolute negation of the world through a correct understanding of the scriptural texts such as " Thou art that " or " I am Brahman."

Prakāśānanda proceeds through a critical review of vivartavāda and arrives at the most cordinal point that they deny the assumption that the Brahman assumes a false appearance and by this they are maintaining the purest principle of Advaita and it<sup>is</sup> the only possible consistent conclusion emerged from the Oneness of Reality.

But a close examination of Śaṅkara's writings shows that Śaṅkara never maintained such a solipsistic view. In his commentary under the ' Brahma-Sūtras ' Śaṅkara severely criticises the viññānavādins view that there is no external object but the knowledge itself. Again in the commentary on ' Brahma-Sūtras ' (verse 2.2.31) he dismisses the Śūnyavāda of Nāgārjuna by saying that a philosophical doctrine which depicts the empirical world as a transitory show of non-substantial appearance ( Śūnya ) is not even worthy of criticism.<sup>62</sup> The cosmos according to Śaṅkara is the realm of cause

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62. It may be noted that perhaps, depending on the popular usage of the term ' Śūnya ' which means absolute unreality, void or zero, Śaṅkara criticises the view of Mādhyamika. But the Mādhyamika kārīkā and other texts composed by Nāgārjuna shows that he negates the reality of the empirical world as a stupendous zero. According to him the phenomenal existences, are ' Śūnya ' in the sense that they are mutually dependent and relative and having no self-essence of their own (niḥsvabhāva ).

and effect ( Kārya-Kāraṇa-Prapañca ), though it is rooted in the Brahman. Among the four levels of Being - tuccha or Alīka , prātibhāsika , vyavahārika and pāramārthika , the highest or the fourth is presupposed by the third. This presupposition is based upon the epistemological principle that every falsity presupposes truth. The illusory appearance of snake as a being is false, but this appearance is due to the fact that has the borrowed being of the rope. The world of names and forms though are self-contradictory and false appears as being, for the Being gleams through the world. Without being shining or gleaming through the form there cannot be any perception but only imagination like the rabbit-horn. Therefore, the Brahman is the root of world appearance.

(c) The Three-tier hierarchy of existence considered :

Śaṅkara admits a three-tier-hierarchy of existence . These three modes of existence are - the absolute and fundamental one which is credited to the Brahman alone, the second is pragmatic or phenomenal world and the third one is illusory, these three grades of existences are true at the same time in their own sphere without contradicting the other ; but except the absolute or Pāramārthika Sattā which is the only real, each of these modes of existence , the conceptual notion of the later one, is sublated when the true knowledge of the earlier one arises. The world, according to Śaṅkara, is not a fiction. Non-existence of the external world, Śaṅkara says, is a prima facie impossible. The apprehension of the external world in every act of perception cannot be denied. While explaining the Sūtra " Vaidharmyācca na svapnādivat " he endorses the view that the mundane level of reality cannot be linked to a

dream.<sup>63</sup> Here he is in the same platform with the realists and the pragmatists in admitting the existence of an external world, outside and independent of the subject mind and judges the validity of knowledge by practical results. The world then according to Śaṅkara " is pervaded by Truth, and it has Truth as its substratum ; as such every experience has an element of truth in it and is valid in its own sphere. We have the right to transcend particular experiences on a different plane in the light of higher and more general experience, but not to reject a valid experience in its own sphere."<sup>64</sup>

It is also interesting to note in this connection that the admission of two grades of reality has been shown in the Upaniṣads where it is said : " Now the designation for him is the truth of truth. Verily, the vital breath is truth and He is the truth of that."<sup>65</sup> The unreality of the world is revealed only from the transcendental level, as the dream world is false only when we justify it with our awaking state. The world is real within its frame-work . Śaṅkara's Philosophy never gives a suicidal advice by giving up the life, our values . Our morality, our aspiration

63. Brahma-Sūtras 2.2.29( Op. Cit.) p. 197

64. Swami Mukhyananda : Acharya Śaṅkara, an interpretation ( Sri Sri, Ramkrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Ernakulam, 1987 ) p. 122.

65. . . . atha nāma-dheyam satyasya stayaṁ iti. Prāṇā vai satyam, tesām eṣa satyam -  
 - Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad - verse 2.3.6. in <sup>The</sup> Principal Upaniṣads ( Op. Cit. ) p. 194.

and achievements - all have relative or phenomenal reality. This worldly reality is nothing but the phenomenal one. " Just as the physicist's view of matter and the nature of the physical universe gives, without affecting the ordinary life, a new-dimension to our understanding of the physical universe, by knowing the Highest Truth we understand the real nature of the entire phenomenal universe and of ourselves ." <sup>66</sup>

Moreover, Śaṅkara uses linguistic analysis in order to put-forward his own view as well as to refute others. He is actually emphatic in respect of the empirical Pramāṇas like Pratyakṣa , Anumāna etc. All are valid in its own aspect. Perception has its supreme validity in knowledge through its senses. All cognitive acts, the means of right knowledge and the scriptural texts have a relative value, for they are capable of producing empirical knowledge. Other than this, the conceptual designations etc. are the means through which one can achieve the Ultimate goal.

Śaṅkara says that the world is a super-imposition on Brahman as the snake is on the rope . But the illusory snake does not spring out of nothing. Appearance is mithyā , but it cannot be unreal or non-existent. The translation ' unreal ' for the term ' mithyā ' is not happy and right , because, such a popular translation creates some misunderstanding. Depending on this translation many philosophers of both East and West interpreted Śaṅkara's doctrine of māyā as a kind of world-negation theory. But here an Advaitin would argue that the doctrine of māyā as propounded by Śaṅkara never way out the world into the sphere of unreal. An

unreal cannot serve practical purpose. But a snake in the rope can cause fear etc. Again dream causes our pleasure or sadness. Some dream may be so harmful as to incapacitate the actual physical organs of a man. So also the world though mithyā may serve all practical purposes. The world is mithyā in the sense that it cannot be categorised either as sat or asat. The world continues to appear as long as its substratum Brahman is not directly apprehended. As after correction of illusion, the false silver vanishes into nothing, so the world turns into absolute naught .<sup>67</sup>

In this connection we may refer that Śaṅkara maintains a distinctive view from Gauḍapāda. In his Māṇḍūkya Kārikā Gauḍapāda vividly points out the similarities between the dream world and the awaking state. It has been previously shown that Gauḍapāda was highly influenced by Buddhism. As a result we find that he refutes the objectivity of worldly existence and unhesitatingly

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67. It may be noted that the absolute naughtness of the world from the transcendental point of view is very much like the śūnya of Nāgārjuna. It is true that Śaṅkara vehemently criticised Nāgārjuna's view but here he used the term śūnya of Nāgārjuna in its popular sense that leads him some misunderstanding of Nāgārjuna's philosophy. But a close study of the writings of both these philosophers reveals the fact that there is an enormous similarities between them. It has been seen in Mādhyamika-Kārikā that all dharmas or world experiences are svabhāva śūnya or devoid of any self-essence. They cannot be called either existent nor non-existent nor both and so they are called indescribable or māyā . But behind this phenomenal world there must be a Reality who is beyond all plurality. It is indescribable, for Nāgārjuna says that we cannot characterize it in empirical terms as being, non-being etc. This no doctrine attitude of Nāgārjuna should not be confused with

declares the identity of the dream-state and the awaking state.<sup>68</sup> But from the commentary of Śaṅkara on the Brahma-Sūtras (2.2.28 ), it is clear that Śaṅkara never admits the unreality of the world as Gauḍapāda suggests. In the opinion of Śaṅkara the world is false, because it has no independent essence apart from Brahman.<sup>69</sup> As the ' ghaṭa ' ( jar ) is nothing but a different form of the clay, similarly the world is nothing but the projection of Brahman. And from this standpoint any kind of effect has been given up in Advaita-Vedānta .

Though in the interpretation on Māṇḍukya Kārikā Śaṅkara has made his voice in support of ajāta vāda but his main interest lies in vivartavāda , where the world<sup>is</sup> considered as a super-imposed Reality. Now it seems that ajāta does not mean that the world appearance is unreal, but that it is not really originated. It

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'blank phenomenism ' as it is wrongly understood' by S.N. Dasgupta in his Indian Idealism ( Cambridge University Press, 1933 , p. 79 ). The difference between Nāgārjuna and Śaṅkara, in our opinion , is only the difference of emphasis. While Nagarjuna is interested to emphasize the ultimate unreality of all phenomena , Śaṅkara is more interested to prove the Ultimate Reality( Brahman).

68. " Saprayojanatā tesām svapne vipratipadyate /  
Tasmādādyantavattvena mithyaiva khalu te smṛtāḥ //2.7.  
- Māṇḍukya Kārikā ( Op. Cit. ) p. 79

and

Svapna-māye yathā dr̥ṣṭe gandharvvanagaram yathā /  
Tathā viśvamidaṁ dr̥ṣṭaṁ vedānteṣu vicaskanaiḥ // - 2/31.  
- Ibid p. 101.

69. Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Brahma-Sūtras in Vedānta Darśana vol.2  
( Bengali tr. by Viswarupananda , Udbodhan Karyalaya, 2nd ed.  
1989 ) pp. 408-434.

holds that there is no active creation or manifestation of the Absolute. The universe appears by the Brahman's imponderable power of māyā .

Like a Satkāryavādī Śaṅkara is of opinion that the mysterious and variegated world of our life and experience comes out from the Absolute Infinite, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss which is beyond space-time-causation. But unlike pariṇāmavādins , he maintains that this world is not evolved or produced, but seem to be so. And most probably in this sense Śaṅkara supports Gauḍapāda's theory of ajāti or non-origination. We can not say that Brahman is the cause of the world because, this would lead to distinguish Brahman from the world and Brahman would be also the subject to change. Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the whole universe but this is only from the empirical point of view where Brahman who is designated as Īśvara or Māyādhiśaḥ the possessor of the power of māyā . Māyā projects this world of plurality. But here a question arises : If Brahman is One Absolute and devoid of all differences how the world of plurality appears at all ? Śaṅkara answers this by introducing the concept of māyā which was hidden in the Vedic-Upaniṣadic literature. And here lies the importance of the doctrine of māyā .

The world which is due to māyā is beyond any categorisation like sat and asat and it is therefore named as indeterminable or anirvacānīya . On this ground Śaṅkara admits the theory of Sat-kāryavāda - that the effect must pre-exist in the cause, but ultimately the effect is not something different from the cause. That is why Śaṅkara rejects the doctrine of transformation ( parināmavāda ) and pleads for the doctrine of reflection ( vivartavāda ).

Māyā is otherwise known as prakṛti, Avyakta or Avidyā. The word ' Prakṛti ' is an adoption from the Sāṅkhya . It consists of three constituents, viz - sattva ( serenity ), rajas (activity ) and tamas ( inertia ). By the help of the tamas constituent, māyā possesses the veiling or concealing power which acts as a cover. The Real is not revealed to us because of this cover.<sup>70</sup> Reality remains concealed to us. And owing to the projecting power (vik-ṣepa śakti ) we do not only fail to categorise the Reality but we perceive the phenomena as Real. Māyā, therefore, is a ' primal matter ' from which all existence arises. This view is consistent with the Sāṅkhya cosmogonic idea. But the Sāṅkhya view of Prakṛti is distinguished from that of Advaita. In Sāṅkhya ' Prakṛti ' is called ' Pradhāna ' in the sense that unlike the prakṛti of Vedānta it is an independent category from which the real world is evolved. It is not conceived as the projecting power of any conscious entity. But in the philosophy of Śaṅkara the principle māyā is called prakṛti in the sense that it envelops the Reality and gives rise to the projection of something other than Reality. The world for the Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta , therefore, is an appearance, an effect of māyā or ajñāna.

From what has been discussed thus far in this chapter, it is clear that the main contention of Śaṅkarite Advaitic philosophy is to establish the Supremacy of Ātman and to emphasise on the Upaniṣadic principle of absolute identity of the individualised soul ( Jīva ) and Brahman or Ātman ( Transcendental self ). The allegation that Śaṅkarite Advaita philosophy represents a drastic denial

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70. Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi , Verse No. 139 ( Op. Cit .) p.95.

of mundane state altogether also seems to be an improper understanding of Śāṅkarite teaching. A close concentration on the Kārikā " Brahma satya jaganmithyā , jīva-bramhaiva nāparaḥ " - reveals the main intention of the Advaitins. According to Advaita Philosophy , only after the realisation of non-dual Ātman ( or Brahman ), the nature of the world cognised would be different. The jīva ( individual self ) is not real as jīva as such, but as Ātman or Brahman . When the veil of ignorance ( avidyā ) is destroyed after self-realisation, the jīva sees himself identical with the Transcendental Self or Brahman which includes everything ( Sarvaṁ khalvidam Brahma ). The world as conceived apart from Brahman is no longer real to an enlightened person ( jīvanmukta ). Śāṅkara differs from Gauḍapāda in this respect. For Gauḍapāda, the world is no more real than the dreaming state. Even the world appearance has no importance to him. That is why, he has no hesitation to say that ' There is neither any production, nor any destruction, there is no bondage, no one who is striving and no one who wants to be released.<sup>71</sup> That which neither exists in the beginning, nor in the end, can not be entitled to exist in the present , hence its appearance must be false. Śāṅkara on the contrary admits the dissimilarities of the world and the dream. The world in the Śāṅkarite Advaita Vedānta is not eliminated, but only transcended. The phenomenal world is only transcended by the realisation of the ātman-Brahman identity.<sup>72</sup> Śāṅkara philosophically thus advocates Vivartavāda , which admits the appearance of Reality. Appearance becomes mithyā when the Reality is realised.

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71. Māṇḍukya Kārikā ( Op. Cit. ) p. 103.

72. It may be noted that Śāṅkara does not ignore change. He admits

It is indeed true that the sole contention of Śaṅkara's philosophy is to establish the non-duality of Absolute and to bring a harmony between the apparent contradictions of different Upaniṣadic statements regarding Reality. With his subtle intellectual power Śaṅkara refutes all kinds of duality. He undoubtedly has laid more stress upon monistic view of Reality and is not primarily interested in the status of the world. This has been indicated in his commentary on Aitareya Upaniṣad . He remarks "by knowing the nature of the universe ( the stories of creation etc.) nothing is gained spiritually ; but by realizing the Unitary, that is, Absolute-nature of Ātman , which is the self of all, one attains Immortality, that is perfection and spiritual freedom (mukti)."<sup>73</sup> Śaṅkara thus prescribes Śrāvana, Manana and Nididhyāsana

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change in a particular sense. There is change in forms, but not in substance. The illustration given by Śaṅkara in Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya 2.1.18, is read thus " Indeed Devadatta, with folded hands and feet or with the same extended, does not become another entity only because an alternation of form is evidenced. He is recognised as the self-same man." The different forms of the substance are indifferent from the substance itself. As we may call it a jar, or a plate, the clay remains the same. Any kind of change in form does not mean change in substance. D.M. Datta in his article ' Some Realistic Aspects of the Philosophy of Śaṅkara ' has beautifully elaborated this point. The article is included in Recent Indian Philosophy ( ed. Kalidas Bhattacharyya, Progressive Publishers, 1963 , p. 347 ).

73. - " Na hi sṛṣṭi ākhyāyikādi pariññānānt kimcit phalaṁ iṣyate ; Aikātmya-svarūpa pariññānāt tu amṛtattvaṁ phalaṁ." One may see here Swami Mukhyananda's book ' Acharya Śaṅkara ' (Op.Cit.) Appendix III , p. lv.

for preparation of self-realization . He believes in the gradual spiritual upgradation of individual beings.

But for the enlightened person who has realised that Brahman is the only Reality and that Jīva ( individualised soul ) is identical with Brahman or Paramātman ( Absolute ), the world is false ( mithyā ) and the so-called scriptural advices, i.e. śravaṇa, manana etc. and injunctions are no more necessary for him . In Śaṅkara's Philosophy , these advices and injunctions are just like ladders which must be thrown away after the goal is reached. These are ordered devices ( upāya ) only to disclose the relative nature of the worldly existence. Being spiritually disciplined by these devices, an individual being may gradually be purified in thinking, feeling and willing. A spiritual seeker is advised thus to cultivate the qualities like tranquillity, self control and purity under the guidance of a spiritual teacher in a prescribed manner. This shows that although Śaṅkara's chief intention was to show the supremacy of Paramātman and Its non-difference with Jīvātman, he was quite aware of the good qualities for a balanced good life in society. There are several verses in the Vivekacūḍāmaṇiḥ where Śaṅkara highly speaks about the glory-ness of being human.<sup>74</sup> But he cannot grant this worldly life any final status. In order to achieve the goal of life, for Śaṅkara, we must proceed towards, we must know , the Ultimatum ; otherwise our human life would be meaningless. According to Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta , Brahman is the only Reality. The world is māyā , a false

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74. Vivekacūḍāmaṇiḥ : verses - 2,3,5. ( Op. Cit.) pp. 2-4.

appearance of the Reality. It is not non-existent, since it is the appearance of the Reality. It is false because it cannot be categorised as real or unreal. The world is a case of superimposition ( adhyāsa ) where Brahman is super-imposed ( adhyasta ). The cognition of world is just like the illusory cognition of ' silver in a piece of shell ' or ' a snake in a rope ' . In the concluding verse of ' Vivekacūḍāmaṇiḥ ' Śaṅkara very confidently offers great assurance that his teaching of 'Advaya-Brahma' would be a great source of inspiration and consolation for the worldly people suffering from the scorching sun-rays of threefold misery and are athirst for the saving waters of Truth leading to the eradication of all miseries and to Spiritual Liberation.<sup>75</sup>

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75. Ibid , p. 369.