

## CHAPTER I

### A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES OF THE PROMINENT ADVAITA VEDĀNTINS UPTO ĀNANDABODHA

#### 1.1 Significance of the term Vedānta

The term Vedānta is generally explained to mean the anta or concluding portion of the Veda, taking Veda, with the commentatores, to denote the Samhitās and Brahmanas<sup>1</sup> (including the Āranyakas and Upaniṣads of the different recensions of the Vedas). But all the Vedānta texts do not come at the end of the Brāhmanas. Some, like the Iśa or the Bāskala, form portions of the Samhitās themselves, while others, like the Aitareya and the Taittiriya, come in the middle of the Āranyakas and not at their very end, as it is the case with the Chāndogya or the Brhadāraṇyaka. As a consequence, another mode of interpreting the term Vedānta is at times resorted to whereby anta is taken to imply the final or ultimate teachings of the Veda. The major portion of the Vedic texts concern themselves with the details of the ritual, with the Karmakānda but the final teachings of the Veda i.e. Vedānta with salvation through knowledge. In this sense Vedānta is often styled the Uttara-mīmāṃsā, or the science of exegesis as applied to the latter

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1. Mantrabrāhmaṇayorvedanamadheyam; Apastamba, Yajñaparibhāṣāsūtra, I.34; Mantrabrāhmaṇayorvedaśabdah, Kauṣitaki, Grhyasūtra, III.12.23

portion of the Veda, to distinguish it from the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā which deals with the earlier or ritualistic part of the Veda. The name Vedānta does not signify one system only but it comprehends several systems differing from each other essentially in points of metaphysical doctrine, ranging from absolute idealism down to dualism, at the same time having some important features which are common and which may be the reason of their being designated by a common name, besides the fact of their professing to be based on the Vedānta or the Upaniṣads.

#### 1.2. The Chief periods of Advaita Vedānta

Advaita philosophy is philosophia Perennis in its meaning and scope, in its theory and practice, in its ideology and methodology. Its tradition is oldest in the history of philosophy coming as it has been from the pre-historic days of the Rgveda. Radhakrishnan, the doyen of modern Indian philosophy divides<sup>2</sup> Indian philosophy in general and Advaita philosophy in particular into four periods, viz., the Vedic period, the Epic period, the Sutra period and the Scholastic period. Sangamlal Pandey has classified<sup>3</sup> the same into five periods :-

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2. Radhakrishnan, S. Indian Philosophy, Vol.I, pp.56-59.
  3. Pandey, Sangamlal. Pre-Saṅkara Advaita Philosophy, p.1.

- I. The Vedic period (2000 B.C. - 500 B.C.)<sup>4</sup>
- II. The Upaniṣadic Period (700 B.C. - 600 B.C.)<sup>5</sup>
- III. The Epic Period (600 B.C. - 200 A.D.)<sup>6</sup>
- IV. The Aphoristic Period (200 A.D.<sup>7</sup> - 500 A.D.)
- V. The Commentatorial Period (200 A.D.<sup>8</sup> - 1400 A.D.)

The last period i.e. the Commentatorial period, has been classified into the following three periods :-

- I. The Pre-Śaṅkara Period (500 A.D.<sup>9</sup> - 700 A.D.)
- II. The period of Śaṅkara (788 A.D. - 820 A.D.)<sup>10</sup>
- III. The Post-Śaṅkara Period (800 A.D.<sup>11</sup> - 1400 A.D.)

### 1.3. The Vedic Period

The Vedānta philosophy begins with the R̥gveda which includes about a dozen esoteric hymns like R̥g.X.129, X.90, 1. 164, 46, 1.115.1, X.81-82, X.172, X.121, 11.12, and others. In these hymns, along with speculations on the universe and the creation, that great pantheistic idea of the Universal soul which is one with the universe, appears for the first time—an idea, which since that time has dominated

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4. Winternitz, M. A History of Indian Literature, p.310.
  5. Dasgupta, S.N. A History of Indian Philosophy Vol.I.p.28.
  6. Radhakrishnan, S. Op.cit. p.57.
  7. Ibid. p.58.
  8. Ibid. p.59.
  9. Mahadevan, T.N.P. Gauḍapāda; A study of Early Advaita, p.13.
  10. Dasgupta, S.N. A History of Indian Philosophy Vol.I, p.418
  11. Ibid. p.418.

the whole of Indian philosophy. In spite of the references to different deities like Indra, Varuna, Yama, Agni, Mātarisvan, the underlying monistic current is unmistakable. In these philosophical hymns the great idea of universal unity is foreshadowed, the idea that everything which we see in Nature and which the popular belief designates as 'god', in reality is only the emanation of the one and only one; that all plurality is only imaginary - an idea which is clearly expressed in the RV.1.164.46, (indram mitram Varunamagnimaharatho divyah sa suparno gurutman ekam sadviprā bahudhā Vadatyagnim Yamam mātariṣvānamāhu). There are other mantras advocating oneness of the reality, like, That One (tadekam) is not personal; it is neither male nor female; it is neuter. It is an impersonal principle. There was nothing other than it (RV., 10.129.1,2) "Thus already in certain hymns of the Rgveda, there emerges the thought with which philosophy begins, - the conception of the unity of the world, - which later rose up to Monism, perceiving through the veil of the manifold, the unity which underlies it."<sup>12</sup> In this connection may be particularly noticed the hymn X.121, where the Hiranyagarbha is described as existing in the beginning of the creation, the sole lord of beings, supporting heaven and earth and X.90 where the whole world is conceived as one being, the Virātapurusa who having pervaded the earth from all sides, still remains over and above the mundane universe.

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12. Ghate, V.S. The Vedanta, p.6.

#### 1.4. The Upaniṣadic Period

The monism adumbrated in the Rgveda is developed into idealistic monism in the Upaniṣads, which regard Brahman the infinite, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, and pure spirit as the ultimate reality. The temporal, spatial and causality bound world is the manifestation of this infinite and eternal spirit. Brahman is non-temporal, non-spatial, and non-causal. It is impersonal, transcendental, indefinable, incomprehensible and unknowable. Brahman is without before and after, and inside and outside. It is Ātman. It is the one, undifferentiated, homogeneous consciousness without inside and outside. The main idea of the oldest of the Upaniṣads i.e. the chāndogya, vi.2.1, the Brhadāranyaka, ii.4.14, IV.4.19, ii.5.13, the Muṇḍaka and the katha can be summed up in the equation, Brahman = Ātman = the world taken in the strictest and most literal sense from which it follows that the Ātman is the only reality. (Brh.Up.I.4.10, II.5.1, 2.5.14; chā.Up.III.4.1). It is the metaphysical unity which is manifested in all the empirical plurality; all plurality thus by implication reducing itself to Māyā, that it is the knowing subject within us and, as the knowing subject, is itself unknowable. Thus the doctrine of Māyā that the universe is illusory is found in some of the Upaniṣads like Svetāśvetara 9-10.

#### 1.5. The Epic Period

The Mahābhārata contains many and the varied developments of philosophy out of the Upaniṣads. It shows that the Upaniṣads gave rise, besides Vedānta, to several other schools of thought. Brahmavidyā, too, is not unknown to the Epic about which S.K. De has pertinently observed "Indeed, the idealistic Absolution of the Upaniṣads underlies most of the Epic teaching in its theoretic aspect".<sup>13</sup> But "the main contribution of the Epic to Advaita is the Bhagavadgītā".<sup>14</sup>

The Bhagavadgītā which forms part of the Bhishmaparva of the Mahābhārata (25-42) is the most popular religious poem of Sanskrit literature. It is a book conveying lessons of philosophy, religion and ethics.<sup>15</sup> The Bhagavadgītā transforms the metaphysical doctrine of the Upaniṣads into the philosophy of universal ethics and religion. It contributes, among others, the following main doctrines to Advaita.

In the spirit of the Upaniṣads, the Gītā identifies the two principles of the Ātman with the Brahman. Behind the fleeting senses and the physical body there is the Ātman;

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13. History of philosophy, Eastern and Western Vol.I ed. by Radhakrishnan and others, p.86.

14. Pande Sangamalal, Pre-Śaṅkara Advaita Philosophy, p.18.

15. Radhakrishnan, S. Indian Philosophy, V.I, p.519.

behind the fleeting objects of the world there is Brahman. The two are one, being of identical nature (XV.17, viii.22, viii.3).

The Bhagavadgītā removes the conflict of all pathways, i.e. jñānamārga, yogamārga, karmamārga and bhaktimārga and maintains that they are in reality one and the same. Dividing all these pathways into two classes, Sāṃkhymārga and Yogamārga, it establishes the Advaita view that "he who sees Sāṃkhya and Yoga as one, really sees" (BG, iv.2, vii, 21-23, ix.23, 5, 3). This unity of all pathways is explicitly maintained in the Bhagavadgītā.

The Gītā develops the doctrine of māyā (iv.6, vii.14, vii.15, 25) when it solves the problem of the transformations of the impersonal Absolute into a personal God by the supposition that it is due to māyā or cosmic illusion that such a transformation takes place. In other words, the Bhagavadgītā states that this transformation is a mystery and explains in the same way the relation of the Absolute to the world as the Upaniṣads do. Although Śrīkṛṣṇa comes as a personalised God, the monistic principle is constantly kept in view in His utterances. The Gītā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa lights the way of the Bhāgavata dharma which assures all, irrespective of caste, class or sex, that they can achieve liberation by continuing their daily works and activities in a spirit of devotion and renunciation.

There is an allegorical interpretation of the Gītā. The blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra represents ignorance, Arjuna is the Individual soul. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the charioteer represents the universal soul, the indweller of the heart. Our body is the chariot, the sense motor organs being the horses. Mind, egoism, senses, Samskāras, desires, cravings, anger, hatred, lust, jealous, greed, pride and hypocrisy are our enemies. These battles within are being fought continuously in life.

#### 1.6. The Aphoristic Period

The Brahmasūtra written by Bādarāyaṇa is the main text representing the aphoristic period in Indian philosophy. The Brahmasūtra, also called Vedānta sūtra is the exposition of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. It is an attempt to systematise the various strands of the Upaniṣads which form the background of the orthodox systems of thought. All the commentators on the Brahmasūtra agree that the Brahmasūtra was intended to be a summary of the teaching of the Upaniṣads.

Bādarāyaṇa declares that Brahman is the cause of the origin, subsistence and dissolution of the world (1.1.2), cause both material and instrumental (1.IV.23), the Brahman having created the world even though it exhibits qualities divergent from those of the cause from out of itself, unaided



by any extraneous means by the process of Parināma (progressive modification). The world so created is not a new object coming into existence out of an absolutely non-existent state. The sūtrakāra propounds that the individual soul is distinct from intellect, mind, sense-organs, and life-breaths (II.3.15, II.3.30, II.3.32, II.4.1, II.4.17, IV.2.10) as also from both the gross physical body and the subtle transmigrating body conceived as a totality. Individual soul is minute in size (II.3.1) has his abode in the heart (II.3.24, I.3.14) where he dwells along with the Lord, the creator from whom he is distinct entity but is nevertheless related to Him like the drop to the ocean or the sparks to the fire. As the soul's essence is identical with that of Brahman, there is not creation of the soul as such. The soul is immortal and liable to transmigrations from life to life (II.3.19, III.1.1, III.1.13) until he is able to win his salvation through proper knowledge and discipline.

## 1. 7. The Commentatorial Period

### A) The Pre-Śaṅkara Period

Gauḍapāda (520-620 A.D.)<sup>16</sup> occupies an important place in the history of Advaita Vedānta as he is its first systematic exponent. In the traditional salutation formula repeated daily

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16. Sastri, Kuppuswami. Brahmasiddhi of Maṇḍana Miśra, Intro. p.LViii.

by the followers of Śaṅkarācārya, Gauḍapāda stands as the grand preceptor (Paramagura) of Śaṅkara. "Gauḍapāda's teachings provides the firm foundation on which Śaṅkarācārya and his successors in the Advaita field, built their edifice of detailed, analytical exposition of the Advaita theory.<sup>17</sup> "In the history of Advaita his name will ever remain as that of a great pioneer who combined in himself a deep mysticism with a penetrating philosophy".

Gauḍapāda is known as the author of the following works.<sup>18</sup>

1. Gauḍapāda Kārikā or Maṇḍukyopaniṣad Kārikā
2. Bhāṣya on the Sāṃkhyakārikā of Iśvarakṛṣṇa
3. Uttaragītā
4. Subhagoḍaya stuti
5. Śrī Vidyāraṇya sūtra

The Ultimate Reality, according to Gauḍapāda, is Brahman. Following the way of the Upaniṣads, he teaches the nature of Brahman both affirmatively and negatively. As related to and inclusive of the world, Brahman is Iśvara who

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17. Karmarkar, R.D. Gauḍapādakārikā, Intro. p.XLVii.

18. Ibid. p.IX.

is also called the lower (apara) Brahman. As Iśvara, seated in the hearts of all; (G.K.I. 28) is the all-pervasive lord, impelling all beings to activity. It remains the same in the three states of experience, viz. Weaking, dream and sleep. The higher Brahman (parambrahma) i.e. Brahman per se, however, is not related to the world. It is devoid of sleep and dream; and transcends the three states of experience, and hence is called the fourth (turiya) (G.K.I.14) Gaudapāda expounds the doctrine of non-duality (G.K.I.10, I.16, I.14) of the supreme spirit through citing important scriptural passages, and through reasoning. The creation-texts, he says, should not be interpreted literally; they are to be understood in a figurative sense, and should be regarded as providing an introduction to the texts which teach non-duality. Gaudapāda gives an analysis of the three states of experience, and concludes as a result thereof that the real Self is not affected by the changing states, and that it is the constant unvarying non-dual reality. Gaudapāda sets forth the doctrine of ajāti (non-origination). The category of cause itself, which is the ground of the notion of origination, is unintelligible. Giving a critique of causality, "Gaudapāda says that nothing could come out of nothing; nor could anything issue out of anything else. Asatkāryavāda and Satkāryavāda perish through mutual conflict, and point to the truth of non-origination, the truth

that nothing what so ever is born".<sup>19</sup> Brahman, which is the eternal reality and is immutable, is neither an effect nor a cause. There is nothing other than it, either to produce it or to be produced by it. Gaudapāda holds the view that the world of plurality is an appearance (māyāmātra). The one self seems to be many through its own māyā (GK 2.12). The world with its things is an illusory projection of Ātma-māyā (GK III.10). Gaudapāda teaches the Vivartavāda or, to use his terminology, the Vaitathya of the world. Māyā which is the principle of illusion has not an independent ontological status. It is not an entity or reality having a substance of its own. As there are no real distinctions in ether and they are created by things like pot and pitches, similarly, according to Gaudapāda, Brahman or the self which is pure consciousness is undivided and indivisible. The truth is that no jīva is ever born. There is neither destruction nor origination, neither the bound souls nor those who seek the means for release, neither mumukṣu nor mukta (GK II.32). According to Gaudapāda, mokṣa is not what is not what is attained (sādhya). What is called mokṣa is really the attainment of what is already attained. The path thereto is jñāna. Gaudapāda defines it as ātmasatyānu-bodha (realisation of the truth of the self) (III.32). It is through the unborn knowledge that the unborn self is realised.

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19. Mahadevan, T.M.P. Op.cit, p.235.

B) Maṇḍana Miśra (680 - 750 A.D.)<sup>20</sup>

In ranking philosophical writers according to their contributions to the liberation of the human mind Maṇḍana Miśra, great authority on Mīmāṃsā and Advaita Vedānta, occupies a prominent place after Gaudapāda in the pre-Śaṅkara Advaita Vedānta. He is the author of six works,<sup>21</sup> viz. 1. Mīmāṃsānuk-  
ramanikā, 2. Bhāvanāviveka, 3. Vidhiviveka, 4. Sphoṭasiddhi,  
5. Vibhrama-Viveka 6. Brahmasiddhi. Of these works, Maṇḍana's  
Brahmasiddhi occupies a unique place among the works on  
Advaita Vedānta not only because of its comparative antiquity  
but also because of the comprehensive and elaborate treatment  
of the various aspects of the Advaita doctrine.

Maṇḍana maintains the Sphoṭavāda and Śabdādvaita of  
Bhartrhari. He holds the view that the Upaniṣadic texts "Aum iti  
Brahma, Aum iti idamsarvam" should be understood as establishing  
the identity of Pranava with Brahman and as supporting the  
Śabdādvaita doctrine.<sup>22</sup> Maṇḍana gives a prominent and honoured

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20. Potter, K.H. Op.cit. 19.

21. Sastri, S.K., Brahmasiddhi, Intro.

22. Sastri, S.K., Op.cit. p.XXVI.

place to the Bhāṭṭa theory of Viparitakhyāti or anyathākhyāti (BS. p.150, 143) which is the same as the Nyāya theory of anyathākhyāti with a slight variation. He maintains that the theory of anyathākhyāti is sound and when the nature of the object of erroneous cognition is examined, this theory reduces inevitably to a form in which it becomes hardly distinguishable from the anirvacanīyakhyāti (Error of an indefinable object). Further, Maṇḍana recognises two kinds of avidyā (nescience), - viz, non-apprehension (agrahaṇa) and misapprehension (anyathāgrahaṇa) (BS, p.149-50). Maṇḍana also utilises this distinction in explaining the purpose of meditation in his scheme of the attainment of the final liberating realisation of Brahman and considers meditation necessary for completely removing the second variety i.e. anyathāgrahaṇa of nescience and for converting the first indirect knowledge of Brahman (parokṣa jñāna) into the direct Brahman realisation (aporokṣa-brahma-sākṣātkara). Maṇḍana further avers that Jīva (the Individual soul) is the locus (āśraya) and Brahman as its object (viṣaya) (BS:p.50). According to Maṇḍana, the Upaniṣadic texts like 'Tattvamasi' (Chā.9.4, 10.2.3) reveal the identity of Brahman with Ātman and give rise to the true knowledge of the one Absolute Real. The knowledge which arises from such texts, however, is indirect (BS.p.99) and mediate (parokṣa) and necessarily involves relation in some manner (Samsrṣṭa viṣaya), like any other cognition arising from a valid verbal

testimony (śabda-pramāṇa). Maṇḍana advocates that the direct realisation which springs from meditation based upon the indirect knowledge arising from the Upaniṣadic texts, is capable of bringing about the mokṣa, (the final beatitude).

#### 7.ii The Period of Śaṅkara

Śaṅkārācārya (780 - 7820 A.D.)<sup>23</sup> is one of the greatest systematic thinkers that India has ever produced. His Advaitism is a system of great speculative daring and logical subtlety. From a purely philosophical point of view and apart from all theological considerations, Śaṅkara's doctrine is the most important and interesting one which has arisen on Indian soil. In him all lines of thought converge : Idealism and realism, Pragmatism and rationalism, naturalism and mysticism, agnosticism and faith-philosophy. His system is one of the most valuable products of the genius of mankind in its search for the eternal truth, and won him a place among the immortals. The works of Śaṅkara include eleven commentaries like on the Brahmasūtra, the Bhagavadgītā and the prominent Upaniṣads etc., as well as five Prakaraṇa granthas like Upadeśasāhāsrī, Aporokṣanubhūti, Ātmabodha etc., and eight stotras like Āandalaharī, Daśaśloki, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Ṣaṭpadī etc. making a net total of twenty four.<sup>24</sup>

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23. Dasgupta, S.N. A History of Indian Philosophy.

24. Belvalkar, S.K., Shree Gopal Basu Mallik Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy, p.230.

Śaṅkara's doctrine is usually known by the name of Kevalādvaita (absolute monism) according to which the Supreme Reality i.e. the Brahman is the only transcendental, absolute, emanent power and everything else including the individual soul being false gets merged with it after attaining the true knowledge. The Brahman, intelligence, without form, without qualities, without any limitations of time, space or causality and underlying the unity is according to Śaṅkara, the only absolute substratum of all ephemeral, and empirical plurality is itself without the slightest touch of plurality. Śaṅkara's doctrine has two aspects, esoteric and exoteric, be it with reference to theology, cosmology or psychology. Esoterically the Brahman (the supreme spirit) is knowledge or realisation itself, without qualification and without possibility of change; exoterically it is qualified possessed of an infinite number of auspicious attributes, capable of producing this world from itself and reabsorbing in itself, - it is Īśvara. The esoteric cosmology, however, says that all this is a mere appearance of truth. The manifold world is only an illusion, māyā, a dream; and the reality is to be attained not by reasoning (tarka), but by introspective realisation (anubhava). According to the esoteric psychology, the Jīva is Brahman itself in full and total possession of eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, etc., but these godly qualities lie concealed with it as the fire in the wood and will appear only after the final deliverance of self-realisation.



The philosophical part of Śaṅkara's doctrine may therefore be summed up as follows :-

- 1) All plurality is false or unreal and superimposed upon one pure and eternal Brahman which is all-pervading; it is the māyā which makes us see plurality where there is unity and which itself has not independent existence.  
(BSSB.I.3.5, I.3.5,16, II.2.2.IV.3.14, II.1.33, I.1.4., I.3.16. II.I.14.)
- 2) The Individual Soul is really nothing but Brahman.  
(BSSB.I.3.46, I.1.1, I.2.20, Brh.Up.SB.II.1.20).
- 3) Knowledge in the form of self-realisation of the identity of these two i.e. the Brahman and Jīvātman is the only means to mokṣa (BSSB I.1.4. III.2.5, III.4.1, Brh.Up.SB, IV.3.1, IV.4.7, BGŚB.XVIII.20).
- 4) The practical part of the doctrine amounts to this :-  
Actions must be performed only to purify the mind so as to make one fit to acquire the knowledge of this identity of Brahman and Jīva; but afterwards they must be all given up, since without complete abandonment (sannyāsa) of all actions, mokṣa is impossible; for, action (Karma) and knowledge (jñāna) are opposed to each other like darkness and light.

7.iii The Post - Śaṅkara Period Sureśvara (800 A.D.)<sup>25</sup>

In the history of Advaita Vedānta Sureśvara occupies an important place in as much as he has presented the Philosophy of Śaṅkara in clear and systematic way. This eminent Mīmāṃsaka is renowned as an immediate disciple of Śaṅkara after the latter defeated him in a debate and converted the former into an Advaitin.

The works<sup>26</sup> of Sureśvara :-

1. Naiṣkarmyasiddhi<sup>27</sup>
2. Bṛhadāraṇyaka - Upaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārtika<sup>28</sup>
3. Taittirīya-Upaniṣad bhāṣya vārtika
4. Manasollāsa
5. Pañcikaṛaṇa vārtika

Sureśvara propounds the theory of semblance (abhāsa-vāda) according to which Jīva (Individual self) is the semblance (abhāsa) of the Brahman (NSK II.51; BBV.I.II.157, I.IV.1328, II.IV.4.24, 25, III.IV.105). Sureśvara does not recognise any kind of differentiation between āśraya (locus) and viṣaya

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25. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.II.p.98.
  26. Raghavachar, S.S. Naiskarmyasiddhi of Sri Sureśvarācārya, Int. p.IV.
  27. edited , p.19 with the commentaries Candrikā and Vidyasurābhi, Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series, No.38/1925.
  28. ānandasrama, puna.

of avidyā. (N.Sl.3). According to Sureśvara the immutable Brahman is the material cause of the world while the māyā is its secondary or mediate cause. Sureśvara maintains that the vedic texts are capable of producing immediate cognition of the self as Brahman and repudiates the necessity of meditation (dhyānābhāsa) or repetition (prasaṅkhyāna) as a means of producing immediacy (aparokṣatva) (NSK III.89-93, III.123-126). This view of Sureśvara is called Śabdaparokṣavāda.

Sureśvara holds that mokṣa has nothing to do with the performance of action (Karma). Mokṣa is not acquired by a combination of knowledge and performance of duties. (BBV.18, 28, 38, 39, 40, 73, NSI.1.54-79) When self-knowledge dawns, the experience of ego (ahaṅkāra) vanishes. Duality is caused by the effects of antaḥkāraṇa, knowledge breaks the bond of objectivity and illusory appearance. Hence Jñāna (pure knowledge) is the only means for the attainment of self-realisation (N.S.K. 1.99).

#### Padmapāda (820 A.D.)<sup>29</sup>

Amongst the immediate disciples of Śaṅkara, Padmapāda is universally reputed for his substantial contribution to the development of Śaṅkara's Advaita doctrine. The only work which Padmapāda is reputed to have composed is a commentary on the

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29. Dasgupta, S.N. A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.II.p.100.

Bhāṣya of Śaṅkara called Pañcapādikā<sup>30</sup> as it relates to the first five pādas of the Brahmasūtra of Bādarāyaṇa and unfortunately that too is not available in a complete form but upto first four Sūtras. Paṇḍitapāda propounds that māyā, avyākṛta, prakṛti, agrahana, avyakta, tamaḥ, karana, laya, kaṣṭha, laya, śakti, mahāsupti, nidrā, kṣara and akāśa are the terms synonymous with avidyā (PP.p.98). It is this entity that obstructs the pure and independently self-revealing nature of Brahman, and thus, standing as the painted canvas (citra-bhitti) of ignorance (avidyā), deeds (karma) and past impressions of knowledge (pūrvaprajñā - samskāra) produce the individual selves (PP. p.98-99). Undergoing its peculiar transformations with Brahman as its support, it manifests itself as the two powers of knowledge and activity (viññāna - kriyā - śakti dvayāśraya) and functions as the doer of all actions and the enjoyer of all experiences (PP. p.98-99). In association with the pure unchangeable light of Brahman it is the complex of these transformations which appears as the immediate ego (ahaṅkāra) (PP. p.99). Through the association with this ego the pure self is falsely regarded as the enjoyer of experiences. This transformation is called antaḥkarana, manas, buddhi and the ego or the ego-feeler (aham-pratyayin)

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30. Pañcapādikā of Paṇḍitapāda edit by Chandrasekharan, T. Madras Government Oriental Series, Madras, 1958.

on the vibratory side of its activity, it is called Prāṇa (biomotor functions). The association of the ego with the pure Ātman, like the association of the redness of a japā flower with a crystal, is a complex (granthi) which manifests the dual characteristics of activity of the avidyā stuff and the consciousness of the pure self (sambhinnobhaya-rūpatvāt) (PP. pp.100-102). padmapāda avers that avidyā manifests itself in the individual person by obstructing the real nature of the Brahman as pure, self-luminosity and that the Brahman by its limitation (avaccheda) through beginningless avidyā is the cause of the appearance of infinite individual selves.

### Hastāmalaka 31

Hastāmalaka is one of the immediate disciples<sup>32</sup> of Śaṅkarācārya. He is known as the author of Dvādaśamañ-jarīvyākhyā and Hastāmalaka-śloka. Hastāmalaka expounds that the self is eternally pure and it goes through transmigration (samsṛṣṭi) which is only temporary (naimittika). The cause of this samsṛṣṭi is Avidyā (nescience) residing in Ātman, its object. Īśvara is the reflection of cidābhāsa in māyā consisting of the three qualities, viz., sattva, Rajas and Tamas while Jīva is a reflection of the Cidābhāsa of Sattvagūṇa pradhāna

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31. Raval, C.V., Srīmad Śaṅkarācāryanu Tattvajñāna, p.21-25.

32. Potter, K.H. Op.cit. p.19.

māyā Īśvara, the cause of this world is a reflection of the Highest Brahman called Kutasthacidābhāsa while the Jīva appears to be the further reflection of this Īśvara in Jīvamāyā (limited nescience) influenced by Rajas (action) and Tamas.

Totaka ( 800 A.D.)<sup>33</sup>

Totaka alias Ānandagiri is not a major author still he is recokned among the Śiṣyacatuṣṭayī (four pupils) of Śaṅkarācārya. He is credited with the authorship of two works, viz. Totaka śloka and Kālanirṇaya.<sup>34</sup> Totaka propounds that the highest Reality is dr̥śirūpa (comprising intelligence), ananta (infinite), rta (Highest Reality), Viguṇa (void of qualities) and hṛdayastha (residing in heart). The plurality in the world is like the several appearances of the sun due to the distinction by water or like the ether-in-jar.<sup>35</sup>

Vācaspati Miśra (841 - 900 A.D.)<sup>36</sup>

After the four immediate disciples of Śaṅkarācārya, Vācaspati Miśra, a great Advaitin of versatile genius and encyclopaedic learning rose to fame. He is reputed as the

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33. Nachne, S.A., A survey of post-Śaṅkara Advait, p.237.  
 34. Raval, C.V., Śrīmat Śaṅkarācāryanu Tattvajñāna, p.21-25.  
 35. Nachne, S.A., A Survey of Post-Śaṅkara Advaita, Unpublished ph.D. thesis, p.237.  
 36. Rao, V.N.S. Vācaspati's Contribution to Advaita. p.7.

propounder of a new sub-school of Advaita called "Bhāmatī school" by the name of his celebrated commentary Bhāmatī on the Brahma-sūtra Śāṅkara-bhāṣya, which is the first complete commentary in the entire history of post-Śāṅkara Advaita Vedānta.

The following are the works<sup>37</sup> of Vācaspati :

- (1) Nyāyakanikā, a commentary on the Vidhiviveka of Maṇḍana;
- (2) Tattvasamikṣā, a commentary on Maṇḍana's Brahmasiddhi
- (3) Tattvabindu, an independent treatise on Vākyārtha;
- (4) Nyāya-Vārtika-tātparyāṭīkā is a commentary on Uddyotakara's Nyāyavārtika. It is an epistemological work which discusses in detail the nature of the Pramānas; it reconstructs Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy on account of which Vācaspati became famous as Tātparyācārya. (5) Nyāyasuchī, the Nyāya work written as a supplement to Tātparya; (6) Sāṅkhya Tattva Kaumudī, a commentary on Iśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṅkhyakārikā; (7) Tattva-Vaiśārādī, a commentary on Vyasa's Yogabhāṣya; (8) Bhāmatī, a commentary on the Brahmasūtra Śāṅkarabhāṣya. Besides these works,

Vācaspati is supposed to have written other works like

- (1) Nyāya-Tattvāloka, (2) Nyāya-ratnatīkā (3) Brahmatattva Saṁhitoddīpinī, (4) Yuktidīpikā, a work on the Sāṅkhya,
- (5) Vedānta-Tattva-Kaumudī. The Bhāmatī<sup>38</sup> like the Brahma-sūtra-Śāṅkara bhāṣya is known for its profundity of spirit

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37. Rao, V.N.S. Vācaspati's Contribution to Advaita. p.1-4.

38. With Brahma-sūtra Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya, Kalpataru and Parimala by Anantakrishna Sastri, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1917.

and subtlety of thought. It gives a clear and precise account of the central ideas of Advaita, and expounds uncompromising non-dualism setting forth its basic principles in cogent terms. In spirit, his view of Advaita is marked by depth of insight. Vācaspati's other Vedāntic work, viz., Brahmatattva-Saṁkṣā, a commentary on Maṇḍana's Brahmasiddhi has not found the light of the day. Vācaspati propounds that the locus (āśraya) of avidyā is the Individual Soul (Jīva) and Brahman is its object (Viśaya) (Bhā.1.IV.3.i.e.4.i.ii. t to 8). Avidyā differs from individual to individual. It is positive (bhāvarūpa) and specific to each Jīva. In fact there are as many avidyās as there are Jīvas. Vācaspati thus believes in a plurality of even mūla-avidyās and accepts āvaraṇa-śakti (veiling power) alone as dominant in the case of avidyā. Further, Vācaspati recognises two kinds of avidyā (1) Mūlā - avidyā or Primal nescience (Kāraṇa-avidyā) and (ii) Tulā avidyā or derivative nescience (Kārya-avidyā).

Vācaspati propounds the theory of limitation (avacheda-avāda) according to which the Individual self (Jīva) is the limitation (avacheda) of the Brahman. (Bhā.II.iii.17; II.iii.28, II.iii.30).

Vācaspati holds the view that Śabda (verbal testimony) causes only mediate knowledge which is to be made direct and immediate through constant practice of rational contemplation



(manana) and meditation (nididhyāsana). This view is technically called 'Prasaṅkhyāna'. For Vācaspati, constant meditation becomes the primary means to mokṣa (salvation).

According to Vācaspati, what is veiled by nescience is the conditioned Brahman (sopādhika Brahman) in as much as the unconditioned Brahman is flawless; it cannot be veiled nor can it be revealed. What is revealed by final intuition must therefore, be conditioned Brahman (sopādhika Brahman).

Vācaspati advocates a distinct view as to the role of Karma in the scheme of Advaitic sādhana. Karma, says Vācaspati, only subserves the purpose of generating the desire to know Brahman (Vividiṣā sādhana), not as a means of the knowledge of Brahman (Bhā.III.4.6, III.4.34).

#### Vimuktātman (850-1050)<sup>39</sup>

Another great writer who flourished after Vācaspati Miśra is Vimuktātman. He is earlier than prakāśātman, the author of the Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa wherein his view is referred by the latter. His successors like Prakāśātman, Sarvajñātman, Ānandabodha and others profusely refer to his views in their distinguished works like Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa, Saṅkṣepaśārīraka

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39. Hiriyanna, M. Iṣṭasiddhi, intro, p.Xiii.

and Nyāyamakaranda respectively. Vimuktātman is known as the author of the two works,<sup>40</sup> viz., Iṣṭasiddhi<sup>41</sup> and Pramāṇavṛttinirṇaya. The first work is published, while the second is still in the manuscript form.

Vimuktātman holds the view that the Ultimate Reality is pure intuitive consciousness (anubhūti). Nothing can be beginningless and external, except pure consciousness (Iṣ.p.1). Māyā is indescribable (anirvacanīya) not different from both i.e. being and non-being (sat & asat), but as involving the characters of being and non-being (sat & asat). It is thus regarded as a power of ignorance (avidyā-śakti) which is the material cause of all objects of perception otherwise called matter (sarva-jaḍopādānabhūtā). (Iṣ. p.69). But, just as fire springing from bamboos may burn up the same bamboos even to their very roots, so Brahman-knowledge, which is itself a product of ignorance and its processes, destroys the self-same ignorance from which it is produced and at last itself subsides and leaves the Brahman to shine in its own radiance (Iṣ.p.69).

The functions of the pramāṇas, which are all mere processes of ignorance (ajñāna or avidyā), consist only in the removal of obstructions veiling the illumination of the self-luminous consciousness, just as the digging of a well means

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40. Dasgupta, S.N. HIP. Vol.II. p.198.

41. Iṣṭa-Siddhi of Vimuktātman, with Vivaraṇa, Cri.ed. by Hiriyanna, M. Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1933.

the removal of all earth that is obstructing the omnipresent ākāśa or space; the Pramāṇas have thus no function of manifesting the self-luminous consciousness and only remove the veiling ajñāna. So Brahma-knowledge also means the removal of the last remnants of ajñāna, after which Brahman-knowledge, as conceptual knowledge, being the last vestige of ajñāna, also ceases. This cessation of avidyā is as inspeakable as avidyā itself (IS. p.366-375). Vimuktātman does not consider avidyā to be merely subjective but regards it as being both subjective and objective, involving within it not only all phenomena, but all their mutual relations and also the relation with which it is supposed to be related to the pure consciousness, which is in reality beyond all relations.

Sarvajñātma Muni (900 A.D.)<sup>42</sup>

Sarvajñātma Muni alias Sarvajñātman, is the author of three works - Śaṅkṣepaśārīraka,<sup>43</sup> Pañcaprakriyā, and Pramāṇalakṣaṇa. Of these three works his Śaṅkṣepaśārīraka is very famous which contains the gist of the Brahma-sūtra-Śaṅkara-bhāṣya. In his text Sarvajñātman tries to describe the fundamental problems of the Vedānta philosophy as explained by Śaṅkara. He maintains that pure Brahman is the Ultimate cause of everything through the instrumentality of ajñāna (SS.I.2).

42. Dasgupta, S.N. HIP.Vol.II. p.III.

43. The Śaṅkṣepaśārīraka of Sarvajñātman, Cri.ed. with Intro. English translation by N.Veezhinathan, Madras University philosophical series, No.18, University of Madras, 1972.

The ajñāna, which rests on the pure Self operates on it as its object (Viṣaya), covers its real nature and creates delusory appearances (Vikṣipti), thereby producing the threefold appearances of God, Soul, and the World. (SŚ.I.20,319). The ajñāna has no independent existence and its effects are seen only through the pure self (cidātman) as its locus and object, (SŚ.III.8) and its creations are all false. The pure self is directly perceived in the state of dreamless sleep as being of the nature of pure bliss and happiness without the slightest touch of sorrow. (SŚ.I.23). The ajñāna is defined as being positive in its nature (bhāvarūpa) and, though it rests on the pure Brahman, yet it melts away like butter in contact with fire (SŚ.I.317). The positive character of ajñāna is felt in the world in its materiality and in ourselves as our ignorance. The real ground cause, however, is the pure Brahman, and the ajñāna is only the instrument or the means by which it can become the cause of all appearances; but it is not the material cause of the world. (SŚ.I.322,323). When with the dawn of right knowledge pure Brahman as one is realised, ajñāna disappears. It is only in the light of Brahman as underlying the individual souls that the ajñāna is perceived, as when one says, "I do not know what you say"; so it is neither the Individual soul nor the pure one which is Brahman, but the pure light as it reveals itself through each and every Individual soul. (SŚ.II.211).

Soul (SŚ.II.211). Sarvajñātman maintains that the supreme self itself undergoes transmigration and attains release. There is the transmigration of the self by having the subtle body as the operating condition. And the state of remaining in the pure consciousness constitutes its liberation. The transmigration is caused by its own avidyā, and liberation by the knowledge of its true nature (SŚ.III.7). The Individual soul is not accepted to be either a part of the supreme self or its transformation or different from it, for there would arise conflict with the group of Upaniṣadic statements conveying the identity of the supreme self and the Individual soul (SŚ.III.10). Sarvajñātman points out that Śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana along with Sama, dama, etc., when pursued by ascetics remove the impediments present in their minds, and the direct experience of Brahman-Ātman, effective in dispelling avidyā, arises in this life itself, provided there is no obstruction to its rise by a variety of Prārabdhakarma. If there is such obstruction, knowledge does arise to them in the next life irrespective of the stage of life which they lead then (SŚ, III, 361). Sarvajñātman speaks of asceticism as the necessary condition for attaining direct experience of Brahman.

Prakāśātman (1000 A.D.)<sup>44</sup>

Another great Advaitin of the post-Śaṅkara Vedānta is Prakāśātman who had brought Padmapāda's Pañcapādikā to very great prominence. He is more famous as Vivarāṇakāra by his work named Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa.<sup>45</sup> Besides the Vivarāṇa Prakāśātman is the author of another work entitled Nyāyanirṇaya. But his Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa is the nucleus for the development of Advaitic thought known as "Vivarāṇa Prasthāna".

According to the Vivarāṇa school of Prakāśātman, Brahman is both the locus (āśraya) and object (Viṣaya) of avidyā. He maintains that the Jīva (Individual Soul) cannot be the locus of avidyā in as much as the former is a modification of avidyā. To say that Jīva is the locus of avidyā is to commit the falacy of mutual dependence (anyonyāśrayadoṣa), that is, without avidyā, its effect, viz., Jīva cannot be explained and without the Jīva, avidyā cannot be explained. (PPV pp.210-219). Thus, the Vivarāṇa school does not admit any distinction between the locus (āśraya) and the object (Viṣaya) of avidyā.<sup>46</sup>

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44. Gode, P.K. Studies in Indian Literary History, Vol.p.228; Hiriyanna, M., Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p.340.

45. Pancapādikā Vivarāṇa with two commentaries ed. by S. Srirama Sastri and S.R.K. Sastri M.G.O.S. Madras, 1958.

46. Sengupta, B.K. A Critique on the Vivarāṇa School, p.249.

The Vivarāṇa school postulates only one avidyā, that is common to all Jīvas but has different modes or potencies (śakti) to bind the Jīvas. The Vivarāṇa school holds that in the case of avidyā, both āvaraṇa (veiling) and vikṣepa (projecting) powers (śaktis) are equally dominant. According to the Vivarāṇa school avidyā is one (eka-avidyā-vāda) (PPV.p.693).

The Vivarāṇa school advocates Pratibimbavāda (the theory of reflection) that is, Jīva (Individual self) is the reflection (pratibimba) of the Brahman. (PPV.p.287,288,289,294,760).

The Vivarāṇa school moves to reconcile the plurality of Jīva with the singleness of avidyā by postulating many śaktis, for the only one avidyā.

According to the Vivarāṇa-School śravaṇa (hearing) is the principal cause of the realisation of the Ātman and manana (contemplation) nididhyāsana (meditation) are subservient to it (phalopakāryāṅge). The manana and nididhyāsana, in other words, only effect the concentration of the mind (PPV.p.38).

The mind is not an instrument for the realisation of Brahman, and by mere instruction immediate knowledge is effected. The Vivarāṇa school holds that knowledge through verbal testimony (śabda pramāṇa) is only immediate (sākṣāt) (PPV. p.452) Prakāśātman in his Vivarāṇa asserts that though the Upaniṣadic texts impart immediate knowledge of Brahman, yet because of certain defects such as Viṣayabhogavāsanā, Pramāṇa-sambhāvanā

and Viparita-bhāvanā, it appears to be mediate. When these defects are overcome by the cultivation of virtues like the control of the intellect (buddhi) etc., and by Vedāntic study, it ceases to be mediate and then gradually becomes immediate. For the Vivarāṇa school śabda (verbal testimony) alone is the means to mokṣa (PPV. p.403-408).

The Vivarāṇa school maintains that pure Brahman unenveloped by any Upādhi (adjunct) is an object (Viṣaya) of manovṛtti. (PPV. p.211, 213, 224). The non-delimited Brahman is the object of akhandārtha Vṛtti. Self-realisation, according to the Vivarāṇa school, is possible only through the injunction (vidhi) 'Ātma vāre dṛṣṭavyaḥ (Brh. Up.II. iv.5). It is at the root of studying and understanding the Vedānta. Prakāśātman emphasises the realisation of the Self only through this injunction (vidhi) (PPV. pp.36-38).

In the text of Vivarāṇa Prakāśātman advocates that "ātmāvare śrotavyaḥ" is a distinct vidhi. And, on the vidhi (injunction), the Vivarāṇa school concludes that Śravaṇa is the principal one and manana and nidhidhyāsana are auxiliary to it. (PPV. p.32, 33, 352). Thus, the Vivarāṇa school is of the firm opinion that vidhi is plausible in the matter of self-realisation and only because it is an injunction (vidhi) the aspirant of mokṣa determines to move on the path of self-perfection. Further, the Vivarāṇa-school propounds a distinct



view as to the place of karma (action) in the scheme of Advaitic sādhana. Karma, according to the Vivaraṇa-school, is useful in generating the knowledge of Brahman (Vijñāna-Sādhana) and it is not conducive to the desire to know Brahman (vividisā) (PPV. p.37, 546, 554, 546).

A Tabular Profile of the Prominent  
Advaiting upto Vidyāranya

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Gaudapāda  
(c. 520-620)

Govindabhagavatpāda  
(c. 560-650 A.D.)

Mandana  
(c. 680-750 A.D.)

Śaṅkara  
(780-820 A.D.)

Sureśvara (c. 800 A.D.)	Padmapāda (c. 800 A.D.)	Totaka (c. 800 A.D.)	Hastāmalaka (c. 800 A.D.)
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Sarvajñātman (c. 900 A.D.)	Prakāśātman (c. 1000 A.D.)	Vācaspati (841-900 A.D.)
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Ānandabodha  
(c. 1150 A.D.)

Citsukha (1220 A.D.)	Vidyāranya (1400 A.D.)	Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1600 A.D.)	Appayya Dīkṣita (1600 A.D.)
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