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BRAHMASŪTRA

ŚĀṆKARABHĀṢYAM CATUSSŪTRĪ

ब्रह्मसूत्रशाङ्करभाष्यम्- (चतुःसूत्री)

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TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

SWĀMĪ ŚUDDHABODHĀNANDA SARASWATĪ

स्वामी शुद्धबोधानन्द सरस्वती

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☎ : (022) 26105606
+91 9930902115
+91 9820114862

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PREFACE

Brahmanirūpaṇa (also called *ātmanirūpaṇa*) and *Brahmamīmāṃsā* are the two facets of Vedāntic teaching. *Brahmanirūpaṇa* unfolds and ascertains the true nature of Brahman (identical with *ātmā* – the true ‘I’), the means to know Brahman and the result thereof. *Brahmamīmāṃsā* analytically establishes the exact and authentic nature of Brahman, the means to gain *Brahmajñāna* and the result of such knowledge. It is worth noting that a *mumukṣu* (a spiritual aspirant) with steadfast *sādhana* *catuṣṭaya-sampatti* (the requisite fourfold qualities) can gain *Brahmajñāna* even without taking to *Brahmamīmāṃsā*. However, the *Brahmasūtra*, a book dealing with *Brahmamīmāṃsā*, is one of the three canonical texts of Vedānta, as it satisfies the doubting and questioning human mind.

In the entire gamut of English Vedāntic literature to date, topics of vital importance such as the exact nature of *aparokṣa ātmajñāna* / *Brahmajñāna*, *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, *mokṣa* (liberation), the source and the nature of the Veda as *svataḥ-pramāṇam*, the *modus operandi* of Vedānta *pramāṇa*, the defectless *sāmagrīs* (prerequisites) necessary for the Vedānta *pramāṇa* to function, an analysis of when a *pramāṇa* fails to function, the role and the criterion of correctness of Vedāntic *prakriyās* (modes of teaching) are rarely described comprehensively with scriptural authenticity and corroboration. On the contrary, several wrong notions about these are found freely floating around based on mere hearsay. This lacuna prompted me to write this commentary, which is an outcome of thorough research. Moreover, I deem this to be an opportunity for me to sharpen my own knowledge and resolve my doubts. To paraphrase the Vedāntic master Sureśvarācārya,

..... स्वबोधपरिशुद्ध्यर्थं ब्रह्मविन्निकषाऽमसु ।

‘(This work has been composed by me) for the purpose of purifying my knowledge by testing it on the touchstone of the knowers of Brahman’ (*Nai.Si.* 1-6).

This English commentary on the *Brahmasūtra-Catussūtrī* follows the gloss (*tīkā*) *Ratnaprabhā*, with *Pūrṇānandīyatīkā* very closely. At a few places, the *Nyāyanīrṇaya* and *Bhāmatī* glosses have also been incorporated. The word *Brahmasūtra* in the singular is used for the text *Brahmasūtra* as a whole except when referring to a specific *sūtra*.

The introduction provides a concise description of Vedānta and *Brahmamīmāṃsā* before the commentary commences with the text of the *Brahmasūtra*. The introduction gives a correct perspective on the authorship and date of the *Brahmasūtra* by pointing out fallacies in the views of certain academics. Other highlights of the introduction include: the significance of *prasthānatrayam*, the importance of *Catussūtrī*, the gamut of Vedānta with the role of *Brahmasūtra* as elaborated by Śrī Madhusūdana Saraswatī in his *Vedānta-kalpalatikā*, the methods of reasoning employed in the *Brahmasūtra*, and the appropriateness of *adhyāsa-bhāṣya*. The *adhyāsa-kramah* – the order of superimposition – and the varying degrees of love due to the different levels of *adhyāsa* are added features in the portion on *adhyāsa*. It is derived from *Siddhāntabindu* composed by Śrī Madhusūdana Saraswatī.

The *bhāṣya* with its translation and commentary has been classified under topicwise captions. This enables the subject matter to be grasped easily. It is especially helpful in places where the *bhāṣya* is too lengthy. By and large, books on the *Brahmasūtra* in various languages do not present the *bhāṣya* topicwise. I have followed this method throughout in my teaching of the entire *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* by incorporating about one thousand captions. The detailed table of contents and an exhaustive multiple index provide readers quick access to topics of their choice. Samskrit passages quoted are listed either in the text itself or as foot-notes.

The actual nature of *Brahmajñāna* is dealt with in greater detail primarily in the context of the *bhāṣya* portions, ‘*avagati-paryantam jñānam*’ (*sūtra* 1-1-1) and ‘*anubhavāvasānatvāt bhūtavastu-viśayatvāt ca Brahmajñānasya*’ (*sūtra* 1-1-2). The

epilogue (in the chapter 'Summing-up') highlights the essential constituent of *Brahmajñāna*. This elaboration is based extensively on the Upaniṣads, *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, *Bhagavadgītā*, *Prsthānatrayī-bhāṣya*, *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapādācārya, *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha* of Vidyāraṇya Muni and some other standard Vedāntic *prakaraṇa-granthas*. It can clear up a number of misconceptions about the exact nature of *Brahmajñāna*, the distinction between *parokṣajñāna* and *aparokṣajñāna*, the implication of the *anubhava-svarūpatva* of *ātmā* in the context of *ātmaññāna*, *jñānaniṣṭhā*, the varying degrees of intensity in *jñānaniṣṭhā*, *jīvanmukti* and its means, besides the relevance of *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-sampatti* in general and *vairāgya* in particular. The nature of the Vedānta *pramāṇa* and *prakriyā* are also extensively discussed. A correct understanding of these is indispensable in the pursuit of gaining *mokṣa*. Critical views on this commentary, based on scripture that can enhance its perspective, are welcome.

Unfortunately nowadays, there is a lot of confusion and lack of clarity in Vedāntic teaching and more so on the nature of *aparokṣa ātmaññāna*. Due to their ignorance, some people unknowingly advocate a *pūrvapakṣa* (contrary view) having its basis in *pūrvamīmāṃsā* as the Vedāntic doctrine and profess that the actual doctrine is wrong. As a result, we have two streams of thoughts in the modern Vedāntic teaching. Some claim that the experience of *ātmā* is indispensable in gaining self-knowledge without explaining its precise nature and the role, whereas others refute it outright.

Now who can give a verdict? If we conclude something based on the observations of our limited intellect, it is bound to be *pouruṣeya* – a product of human conjecture. The best way is to explore the *śāstra-pramāṇa* and find out if this controversy is conclusively discussed anywhere in Vedāntic lore. The *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapādācārya and the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha* of Vidyāraṇya Muni have specially addressed this dispute with a clear verdict. They point out that there is a clear-cut difference in the mode of gaining (or imparting) knowledge in *pūrvamīmāṃsā* (*karmakāṇḍa*) and *uttaramīmāṃsā* (*jñānakāṇḍa*/Vedānta) even though the same Veda

is the *pramāṇa* for both. As a result, the nature of knowledge differs drastically in the case of *pūrvamīmāṃsā* and in the case of Vedānta. This commentary has discussed this topic at length. I would like to quote in this context an exhortation by Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita, a famous Vedāntic Master and a great devotee. He says : अक्षराणि परीक्ष्यन्ताम् अम्बराडम्बरेण किम् । “Please examine the contents of the writings. What purpose can be served by a display of external pomp?”.

Repetition is a defect in literature. But not so in learning, where it is indispensable. A Latin saying goes – Repetition is the mother of study. Considering the subtle nature of Vedānta, I have resorted to repetition at a few places with a slightly different presentation in each case – especially in connection with the nature of *ātmajñāna* / *Brahmajñāna*.

A commentary in the English language, which does not have a suitable vocabulary for expressing the thought-content and technicalities of Vedānta that has evolved in the Samskrit language, has definite limitations. To understand the advanced Samskrit Vedāntic text of *Brahmasūtra* – highly analytical in nature – I seek the co-operation of readers in certain respects to ensure that they derive the maximum benefit from this commentary.

As in medicine or engineering, Vedānta has its own terminology. Many Samskrit terms used in Vedānta have no direct equivalent in English. Their meanings have been expounded elaborately in this commentary. This is not necessary for those who are already exposed to Vedānta and understand the full significance of such terms. Such readers are more at home if the original Samskrit terms are used in the commentary. For these readers, the English counterparts of these words – which are quite lengthy at times – prevent a lucid evolution of the full import of the sentences. However, the use of only Samskrit Vedāntic terminology – even if fully explained earlier – would become a major stumbling block for a beginner without familiarity with Samskrit.

To balance these opposing requirements and to ensure that no one is rendered incapable of vividly grasping the import of this

text lucidly and without hindrance, a *via media* is resorted to. At most places the original Samskrit terms are used along with their English equivalents or with explanations as in parentheses marked off either by brackets or dashes. This is done even at the risk of repetition or at the risk of lengthening the sentence. Where this practice is not followed, it is because the original word or its counterpart is used very often either in the immediately preceding textual portion or in close proximity to that sentence. The reader is requested to get accustomed to this style. Besides, familiarization with the key to transliteration is also necessary for ease in reading diacritical marks. The keys and the section on the pronunciation of Samskrit letters are provided separately after the abbreviations. A revision of difficult *adhyāsa* portion is desirable.

I bow down reverentially with immense gratitude to both my Gurus – Pūjya Śrī Swami Chinmayānanda Saraswatī and Pūjya Śrī Swami Dayānanda Saraswatī – at whose feet I underwent my studies of Vedānta. I also bow down with reverential gratitude to all Vedāntic masters of the past and present through whose books I have learnt Vedānta indirectly. Further, I offer my *praṇāms* to Bhagavān Śrī Sathya Sai Baba from whom I have received immense inspiration and guidance.

Many of my students have devotedly rendered their services in manifold ways to make the publication of this book in its final form possible. I pray to *Īśvara* for their liberation in this life itself.

I conclude by offering this book reverentially to the ONE from whom all knowledge ultimately originates and to whom it truly belongs.

त्वदीयं वस्तु गोविन्द तुभ्यमेव समर्पये ।

‘Oh Lord ! I truly offer unto you, what is yours.’

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	i
Abbreviations	xiii
Key to transliteration	xiv

Introduction

1. Salutations	1
2. Brahman	2
3. The ultimate goal of life	2
4. <i>Prasthāna-trayam</i>	4
5. <i>Śrutiprasthānam</i> – Upaniṣads – Vedānta	5
6. <i>Smṛtiprasthānam</i> – <i>Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā</i>	6
7. <i>Nyāyaprasthānam</i> – <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	6
8. Author and date of the <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	8
9. <i>Bhāṣya</i> – Commentaries on <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	9
10. Well-known glosses on <i>Sūtrabhāṣya</i> of Śaṅkara	10
11. <i>Vaiyāsikanyāyamālā</i> (A garland of topics composed by Vyāsa)	11
12. The contents of chapters and sections in <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	12
13. <i>Saṅgati</i> (relevance or connection) of <i>Sūtras</i>	15
14. Number of <i>Sūtras</i> and <i>Adhikaraṇas</i> in <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	16
15. Importance of <i>Catussūtrī</i> in <i>Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya</i>	16
16. The Gamut of Vedānta	18
(i) The nature of <i>mokṣa</i> – liberation	19
(ii) Means (<i>sādhana</i>) to gain <i>mokṣa</i>	19
(iii) Obstructions (<i>pratibandhas</i>) which hinder the direct cognition of <i>ātmā</i>	20
(iv) Remedial measures to remove the fourfold obstructions	20
(v) The purpose of the <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	21
(vi) Persons eligible for <i>Vedāntavicāra</i> , and the duration of <i>Vedāntavicāra</i>	21
(vii) The complete sequence (<i>krama</i>) of Vedāntic pursuit culminating in <i>Brahmasākṣātkāra</i>	22

(viii) The necessity of <i>Vedāntavicāra</i> even though <i>Śruti</i> is the valid means of knowledge	25
(ix) The role of the <i>Brahmasūtra</i> in Vedāntic pursuit ..	26
17. Modes of reasonings employed in <i>Brahmasūtra</i> ..	27
18. Introductory commentary (<i>Prastāvanā Bhāṣya</i>) on <i>Adhyāsa</i> (Superimposition).. ..	31
19. Appropriateness of <i>Adhyāsabhāṣya</i>	33

अध्यासभाष्यम् – *Adhyāsabhāṣyam*

(An exposition on superimposition)

20. Objection (<i>ākṣepabhāṣyam</i>) – <i>Adhyāsa</i> (superimposition) as a phenomenon with reference to <i>ātmā</i> and <i>anātmā</i> is unacceptable	38
21. <i>Adhyāsa</i> does exist even though it seems inappropriate to accept its existence	46
22. Definition (<i>lakṣaṇa</i>) of <i>adhyāsa</i>	54
23. The tenability of <i>ātmānātmādhīyāsa</i> (superimposition between <i>ātmā</i> and <i>anātmā</i>)	60
24. <i>Pramāṇa</i> (The means of knowledge) of <i>adhyāsa</i> ..	65
25. The order of superimposition (<i>adhyāsakramah</i>) ..	86
26. Varying degrees of love due to differential <i>adhyāsa</i>	89
27. The purpose of this text - <i>Śārīraka mīmāṃsā</i> (<i>Brahmasūtra</i>)	90

Inquiry into what is Brahman is a must

(जिज्ञासाधिकरणम्)

Brahmasūtra 1-1-1

28. The summary of <i>jijñāsādhīkaraṇam</i> – the topic of the first <i>sūtra</i>	92
29. Introduction to the first <i>sūtra</i>	93
30. <i>Atha</i> here means ‘thereafter’ and not ‘commencement’	94
31. ‘ <i>Atha</i> ’ as auspiciousness is untenable.. ..	95
32. ‘ <i>Atha</i> ’ as ‘different proposition’ is identical to ‘thereafter’	96

33. What is the prerequisite required by the word ‘thereafter’?	97
34. Study of the Veda and knowledge of <i>karma</i> not necessary for <i>Brahmavicāra</i>	98
35. <i>Atha</i> as ‘thereafter’ cannot mean a sequence (<i>krama</i>) to <i>dharmajijñāsā</i>	101
36. <i>Phalabheda</i> – The difference in the results of <i>dharmajijñāsā</i> and <i>Brahmajijñāsā</i>	105
37. <i>Jijñāsyabheda</i> – The difference between what is to be known through <i>dharmajijñāsā</i> and through <i>Brahmajijñāsā</i>	105
38. <i>Pramāṇabheda</i> – The difference in the <i>pramāṇas</i> employed in the pursuit of the two <i>jijñāsās</i> ..	106
39. ‘ <i>Atha</i> ’, here means after the acquisition of <i>sādhana catuṣṭaya-saṃpatti</i> (the fourfold qualifications) ..	108
40. The meaning of the word ‘ <i>ataḥ</i> ’	114
41. <i>Brahmajijñāsā</i> is a genitive determinative compound (<i>ṣaṣṭhī-tatpuruṣa samāsa</i>) with the genitive case in the sense of the accusative (<i>karmaṇī ṣaṣṭhī</i>) ..	116
42. <i>Brahmāvagatiḥ</i> (direct cognition) of Brahman ..	122
(a) Definition of <i>anubhava</i> (experience)	125
(b) Definition of <i>jñānam</i> (knowledge)	126
(c) <i>Pramā</i> (the correct knowledge)	126
(d) Six types of knowledge	127
(e) Modality of gaining direct perceptual knowledge (<i>pratyakṣam</i>)	128
(f) Modality of gaining <i>Brahmajñāna</i>	130
(g) The reason <i>Brahmasākṣātkāra</i> is a unique experience	133
(h) The nature of <i>Brahmasākṣātkāra</i>	134
(i) The <i>pramāṇa</i> of <i>akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti</i>	137
(j) Indispensability of <i>Brahmākāra-vṛtti</i>	138
(k) <i>Brahmākāra-vṛtti</i> is possible	139
(l) Only <i>Brahmānubhava</i> ends <i>adhyāsa</i>	143
(m) Why <i>ātmanubhava</i> is the culmination of <i>ātmajñāna</i> ..	144
(n) The <i>bhāṣyakāra</i> emphasizes termination of <i>ātmanātmadhyāsa</i>	151

(o) Termination of <i>ātmānātmādhyaśa</i> is possible ..	151
(p) Definition of <i>ātmānubhava</i>	154
43. The result (<i>phala</i>) of <i>Brahmāvagatiḥ</i>	154
44. Brahman is limitless (<i>Ananta</i>) happiness (<i>Ānanda</i>) ..	155
45. <i>Brahmavicāra</i> is valid	156

Definition of Brahman

(जन्माद्यधिकरणम्)

Brahmasūtra 1-1-2

46. Summary of <i>janmādyadhikaraṇam</i> – the topic of the second <i>sūtra</i>	164
47. The second <i>sūtra</i> is introduced	165
48. The meanings of the words ‘ <i>janmādyasya yataḥ</i> ’	167
49. The meaning of the <i>sūtra</i> – ‘ <i>janmādyasya yataḥ</i> ’	170
50. Brahman alone is the cause of the <i>jagat</i> ..	174
51. Inference is not the basis of the <i>sūtra</i> ‘ <i>janmādyasya yataḥ</i> ’	176
52. Reasoning in accordance with the <i>śruti</i> is necessary	177
53. Direct experience (<i>anubhava</i>) is indispensable for gaining <i>Brahmajñāna</i> , but not for the knowledge of <i>dharma</i>	179
54. <i>Anubhava</i> (experience) and reasoning are indispensable in gaining <i>Brahmajñāna</i> – Pañcapādikā ..	190
55. <i>Anubhava</i> and reasoning are indispensable for gaining <i>Brahmajñāna</i> – <i>Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha</i> ..	192
56. Abidance in the <i>aparokṣa-jñāna</i> (direct cognition) of <i>ātmā</i> is a state of <i>nirvikalpa</i> (non-dual) experience ..	195
57. The means prove that <i>Brahmajñāna</i> is a <i>nirvikalpa</i> state	197
58. The nature of Vedānta <i>pramāṇa</i>	201
59. Role of <i>Karmayoga</i> and <i>Bhagavad-bhakti</i> (intense love for <i>Īśvara</i>)	207
60. <i>Mokṣa</i> is <i>anubhavārūḍha</i> (absorption/steadfastness in <i>brahmānubhava</i>)	210
61. Brahman is not a sense object	211

62. The <i>Upaniṣadic</i> sentence which is the basis of <i>janmādi-sūtra</i>	213
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The omniscience of Brahman.

The Veda is the sole *pramāṇa* to know Brahman
(शास्त्रयोनित्वाधिकरणम्)

Brahmasūtra 1-1-3

63. Summary of <i>śāstrayonitvādhikaraṇa</i> – Topic of the third <i>sūtra</i>	217
64. The third <i>sūtra</i> is introduced	218
65. The first interpretation of the third <i>sūtra</i> ..	220
66. The second interpretation of the third <i>sūtra</i> ..	223

The applicability (*samanvaya*) of Vedānta (the Upaniṣads) in
Brahman (समन्वयाधिकरणम्)

Brahmasūtra 1-1-4

67. Summary of <i>samanvayādhikaraṇam</i> – The topic of the fourth <i>sūtra</i>	225
68. Introducing the fourth <i>sūtra</i>	227
69. The first interpretation of the fourth <i>sūtra</i> ..	234
70. The second interpretation of the fourth <i>sūtra</i> (Contrary proposition)	246
71. The second interpretation of the fourth <i>sūtra</i> (Vedāntic doctrine).. .. .	255
(a) The result of <i>Brahmajñāna</i> is distinct from that of <i>karma</i>	256
(b) The teaching regarding Brahman cannot be auxiliary to a <i>vidhi</i>	263
(c) Nothing remains to be done after gaining <i>Brahmajñāna</i>	268
(d) <i>Brahmajñāna</i> terminates the obstruction of ignorance that hinders <i>mokṣa</i>	270

(e) <i>Brahmajñāna</i> depends on the nature of Brahman and not on human action	274
(f) Brahman has no connection whatsoever with action	281
(g) <i>Mokṣa</i> cannot be approached through <i>karma</i> because it is distinct from <i>utpādyā</i> , <i>vikāryā</i> , <i>āpyā</i> and <i>saṃskāryā</i>	285
(h) Knowledge is not an action enjoined by injunction (<i>vidhi</i>)	295
(i) The purpose of <i>Upaniṣadic</i> statements which bear a semblance to <i>vidhi</i>	301
(j) All duties end with <i>ātmañāna</i>	304
(k) Vedic passages do describe existing entities as well	306
(l) The Vedas reveal not just <i>karma</i> , but useful entities unknown through other <i>pramāṇas</i>	312
(m) Knowledge of the ever-existent Brahman does bring an end to <i>saṃsāra</i>	321
(n) <i>Ātmā</i> is ever-free from embodiment and doership	324
(o) Identification of <i>ātma</i> with the embodiment is not secondary but erroneous	327
(p) Annihilation of <i>saṃsāra</i> by <i>Brahmajñāna</i> stands proved	330
(q) <i>Manana</i> and <i>nididhyāsana</i> not necessary after gaining <i>Brahmajñāna</i>	333
(r) Only if Brahman is not a <i>vidhiśeṣa</i> can it be justified that <i>Brahmajñāna</i> is distinct from <i>dharmajñāna</i>	335
(s) All <i>pramāṇas</i> , including scriptural injunctions, cease to function on gaining <i>Brahmasākṣātkāra</i>	337

Summing-up

72. (a) Introduction	342
(b) <i>Adhyāsabhāṣyam</i>	343
(c) The first <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	346
(d) The second <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	351

(e) The third <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	355
(f) The fourth <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	356

Epilogue

73. (a) Scriptural excerpts which prove the experiential nature of <i>Brahmajñāna</i>	359
(b) English translation of the word <i>anubhava</i> used in Vedāntic texts	363
(c) Fifth to seventh <i>jñānabhūmikās</i> prove the experiential nature of <i>Brahmajñāna</i>	367
(d) <i>Pramāṇa</i> of <i>saptajñānabhūmikās</i>	370
(e) Authenticity of the alleged 'minor' Upaniṣads	371
(f) Allegiance to ancestral well (<i>tātasya-kūpaḥ</i>)	373
(g) The role and relevance of Vedāntic <i>prakriyās</i> (Modes of teaching)	374
(h) <i>Mūlāvidyā</i>	380
(i) <i>Āśīrvacanam</i> (Benediction)	382

Bibliography	383
-----------------------------	-----

Appendix	387
-------------------------	-----

Index	390
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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ai.Brā.</i>	<i>Aitareya Brāhmaṇa</i>
<i>Ai.U.</i>	<i>Aitareyopaniṣat</i>
<i>Bṛ.U.</i>	<i>Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣat</i>
<i>B.G.</i>	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
<i>Bh.</i>	<i>Bhāṣyam</i>
<i>Bh.Tr.</i>	Translation of <i>Bhāṣya</i>
<i>Br.sū.</i>	<i>Brahmasūtra</i>
<i>Br.Sū.Bh.</i>	<i>Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya</i>
<i>Ch.U.</i>	<i>Chāndogyopaniṣat</i>
<i>Ī.U.</i>	<i>Īśāvāsyopaniṣat</i>
<i>Jai.sū.</i>	<i>Jaiminisūtra</i>
<i>Kai.U.</i>	<i>Kaivalyopaniṣat</i>
<i>Kṭ.U.</i>	<i>Kāṭhopaniṣat</i>
<i>Ke.U.</i>	<i>Kenopaniṣat</i>
<i>Mu.U.</i>	<i>Muṇḍakopaniṣat</i>
<i>Nai.Si.</i>	<i>Naiṣkarmya Siddhi</i>
<i>Ni.Pu.</i>	<i>Nirvāṇa-purvārdha</i>
<i>Ni.U.</i>	<i>Nirvāṇa-uttarārdha</i>
<i>P.</i>	<i>Pañcadaśī</i>
<i>Pā.sū</i>	<i>Pāṇinīya Sūtra</i>
<i>Pr.U.</i>	<i>Praśnopaniṣat</i>
<i>Śv.U.</i>	<i>Śvetāśvataropaniṣat</i>
<i>S.R.U.</i>	<i>Sarasvatīrahasyopaniṣat</i>
<i>S.V.S.S.S.</i>	<i>Sarvavedāntasidhāntasārasaṅgrah</i>
<i>St.</i>	<i>Sthiti-prakaraṇa</i>
<i>Tai.U.</i>	<i>Taittirīyopaniṣat</i>
<i>Ut.</i>	<i>Utpatti-prakaraṇa</i>
<i>Ve.P.B.</i>	<i>Vedānta-paribhaṣā</i>
<i>Ve.S.</i>	<i>Vedāntasāra</i>
<i>Yo.Vā</i>	<i>Yoga-vāsiṣṭha</i>

Key to Transliteration & Pronunciation of Sanskrit Letters.

अ a (<u>but</u>)	ट ṭa (<u>st</u> art)*	} tongue on } upper palate
आ ā (<u>ma</u> ster)	ठ ṭha (<u>an</u> thill)*	
इ i (<u>it</u>)	ड ḍa (<u>d</u> art)*	
ई ī (<u>bee</u> t)	ढ ḍha (<u>god</u> head)*	
उ u (<u>put</u>)	ण ṇa (<u>un</u> der)*	
ऊ ū (<u>pool</u>)		
ऋ ṛ (<u>rhythm</u>)*	त ta (<u>th</u> irst)*	} tongue on } teeth
ए e (<u>play</u>)	थ tha (<u>th</u> umb)	
ऐ ai (<u>high</u>)	द da (<u>fath</u> er)*	
ओ o (<u>toe</u>)	ध dha (<u>breathe</u> here)*	
औ au (<u>loud</u>)	न na (<u>n</u> umb)*	
◌̣ ṁ - Anusvāra (nasalization of preceding vowel) written like the dot above अ in अंशः	प pa (<u>sp</u> in)	
: ḥ - Visarga (aspiration of preceding vowel) written like the two dots after श in अंशः	फ pha (<u>looph</u> ole)*	
क ka (<u>s</u> kate)	ब ba (<u>b</u> in)	
ख kha (<u>block</u> head)*	भ bha (<u>ab</u> hor)*	
ग ga (<u>g</u> ate)	म ma (<u>m</u> uch)	
घ gha (<u>log</u> hut)*	य ya (<u>y</u> oung)	
ङ ṅa (<u>s</u> ing)	र ra (<u>d</u> rama)	
च ca (<u>ch</u> unk)	ल la (<u>l</u> uck)	
छ cha (<u>catch</u> him)*	व va (in-between <u>w</u> ile and <u>y</u> ile)	
ज ja (<u>J</u> ohn)	श śa (<u>sh</u> oe)	
झ jha (<u>hedg</u> ehog)*	ष ṣa (<u>bush</u> el)	
ञ ña (<u>bun</u> ch)	स sa (<u>s</u> o)	
	ह ha (<u>h</u> um)	
	क्ष kṣa	
	ज्ञ jña	

* There are no exact English equivalents for the letters listed with an asterisk.

ब्रह्मसूत्रशाङ्करभाष्यम् (चतुःसूत्री)

INTRODUCTION

SALUTATIONS

ॐ नमो ब्रह्मादिभ्यो ब्रह्मविद्यासम्प्रदायकर्तृभ्यो वंशत्रृषिभ्यो
नमो गुरुभ्यः ।

Om, salutations to *Hiraṇyagarbha* and other deities, to the sages – the propounders of the tradition of *Brahmavidyā*, and to the revered Gurus.

सदाशिवसमारम्भां शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमाम् ।
अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम् ॥

I salute the lineage of Gurus from Lord Śiva to Bhagavatpūjyapāda Ādi Śaṅkarācārya through to our preceptor.

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपराशरं च
व्यासं शुकं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ।
श्री शङ्कराचार्यमथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम्
तं तोटकं वार्तिककारमन्यान् अस्मद्गुरुन् संततमानतोऽस्मि ॥

Forever do I reverentially salute Lord Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā, the venerable sages – Vasiṣṭha, Śakti, his son Parāśara, Vyāsa, Śuka, Gauḍapādācārya, Govindapādācārya and his disciple Śri Śaṅkarācārya and his disciples Padmapādācārya, Hastāmalakācārya, Toṭakācārya, Sureśvarācārya (the author of the Vārtikas), and our Gurus.

BRAHMAN

All Upaniṣads unequivocally declare that everything is Brahman. They also emphasize there is nothing other than Brahman. This is in direct contradiction with the universal experience of the world of multiplicity. The Vedas – the source of all the Upaniṣads – are the final *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge). The Vedas cannot be wrong. Both common experience and the pluralistic view of the world are therefore erroneous. This has to be set right. The *Brahmasūtras* provide the basis and means for rectifying the misapprehension (*bhrama*) regarding our universal experience of multiplicity.

What is Brahman? The following verse succinctly describes Brahman.

अशुभानि निराचष्टे तनोति शुभसन्ततिम् ।
स्मृतिमात्रेण यत्पुंसां ब्रह्म तन्मंगलं परम् ॥

Brahman is that, the direct knowledge of which frees us totally from all sorrows. It reveals the eternal limitless happiness (which is one's nature). It is the supreme good absolutely free from the limitations of time, space and objects.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE

Brahman is the independent self-existent, self-revealing, limitless happiness. It is free from all trace of sorrow. Without exception, all living beings seek only happiness (*sukhaprāpti*) and freedom from sorrows (*duḥkhanivṛtti*) in life. Given this fact, the direct cognition of Brahman becomes the *paramapuruṣārtha* – the ultimate goal in life.

An ignorant person may not appreciate the necessity of the pursuit of *Brahmajñāna* (the direct cognition of Brahman) since life offers a variety of avenues both to obtain enjoyment as well as freedom from sorrows - however fleeting. A mature person, however, realizes on closer scrutiny that there is neither permanent joy (*sukhaprāpti*) nor a total freedom from sorrows (*duḥkhanivṛtti*)

through the known methods of *sādhanaśādhya* – achievement through action.

In the *Kāthopaniṣat*, Naciketa (नचिकेत) declares an infallible fact of life. Addressing Lord Yama, he states that no amount of worldly gain can ever lead to satiation in human beings.¹ While it is true that the fulfilment of desires leads to immediate joy, the joy soon turns into sorrow because of factors such as the loss of the thing acquired, an incapacity to enjoy sense objects, the diminishing returns of happiness from the same objects or beings, an unfavourable mental disposition, and so on. The infallible law governing associations, namely, 'Any association or union is inevitably subject to separation', holds.

A discerning person can well appreciate that even the best and most fascinating worldly accomplishments have an underbelly of sorrow. The Damoclean sword of death that hangs over the individual even in the midst of affluence and comfort inspires fear. This is generally called *saṃsāra*. *Saṃsāra* comprises of our limited existence between the stages of birth and death, an existence beset with problems, tensions, confusions and sorrows. The reason for such existence is ignorance of our true nature (*swarūpa*) viz. absolute bliss (*paramānanda*), and pure awareness (*caitanya*), totally free from all sorrows – सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तैकचैतन्यात्मकोऽहम्। (*Br. Sū. Bh.* 4-1-2). Any accomplishment short of the direct knowledge of Brahman is no solution to the problem of *saṃsāra*. Directly knowing Brahman, identical with our true nature, called *aparokṣajñāna* is *mokṣa* (liberation), where *saṃsāra* gets totally terminated along with its root cause. Synonyms for *aparokṣajñāna* are *aparokṣānubhūti*, *ātmānubhava*, *Brahmānubhava*, *Brahmāvagati*, *Brahmajñāna*, *Brahmasākṣātkāra*.

Kaivalyopaniṣat advises mankind that absolute perfection, also called liberation (*mokṣa*), can be gained only by giving up attachment to the worldly objects that are so widely considered to

1. न वित्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्यः । (*Kṛ U.* 1-1-27)

provide security. *Mokṣa* cannot be attained by action, progeny, or wealth.² As a matter of fact, everyone clings to relatives like spouse or children, wealth, learned persons, saviours, fields of different experiences (called *lokās*), deities and other living beings not for the sake of those beings or things but for one's self alone. There are no exceptions. Every desired object or being other than myself becomes the means of my gratification. The love towards them is only for 'I' (*ātmā*) – the locus of primary and limitless love. The locus of intense love is necessarily the repository of happiness in abundance. The true 'I' (*ātmā*) which is the locus of limitless love is therefore the limitless bliss.

The true 'I' (*ātmā*) is worthy of being known directly. The means to do so are *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. *Śravaṇa* involves an inquiry into the nature of *ātmā* with the help of the Upaniṣads and a competent Guru. Next, doubts have to be resolved through reasoning (*manana*). Finally incessant contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) needs to be practised to get the mind absorbed in *ātmā* – in its true nature – free from all superimposed things (*adhyasta*). These means must be taken to concurrently. This was the advice given by Sage Yājñavalkya to his wife Maitreyī.³

PRASTHĀNA-TRAYAM

Prasthāna-trayam stands for the three basic texts, canons (holy scriptures), or canonical texts. It also provides the path, procedure or a method for reaching the ultimate goal of human life and the means to attain it. *Prasthāna-trayam* has its basis directly or indirectly in *Sanātana Dharma* – the prescribed course of conduct that is eternal. It is revealed in the Vedas. *Sanātana Dharma* is universal in nature. According to it, things worthy of accomplishments in life are twofold. The first are the pleasures born of interaction with the sense objects, including heavenly

2. न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः । (*Kai. U.* 1-2)

3. आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति । आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यः मन्तव्यः निदिध्यासितव्यः । (*Bṛ. U.* 2-4-5)

enjoyments. This is *abhyudaya* – the relative good. The second is what is called *niḥśreyasam* (निःश्रेयसम्) – the absolute or highest good called *mokṣa* (liberation). *Niḥśreyasam* is the manifestation of limitless happiness (*niratiśaya-sukhāvīrbhāvaḥ*), to the total exclusion of all sorrows (*niḥśeṣānarthocchittih*). *Niḥśreyasam* (liberation) is the subject matter of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads reveal the nature of *niḥśreyasam* as well as the means to it. Two more texts having their roots in the Upaniṣads have evolved subsequently. These also provide the basic foundation for self-inquiry in accordance with the Upaniṣads, thereby gaining their distinct status. The trilogy is called *Prasthāna-trayam* or *Prasthāna-trayī* – the triple canon – dealing with the subject of liberation (*mokṣa*). The three *Prasthānas* of Vedānta are the Upaniṣads (*śruti-prasthānam*), *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* (*smṛti-prasthānam*) and *Brahmasūtra* (*nyāya-prasthānam*).

ŚRUTIPRASTHĀNAM – UPANIṢADS – VEDĀNTA

Śruti means the Vedas. The Vedas are four: *R̥k*, *Yajus*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*. Broadly speaking they can be classified into three parts, depending on the topic dealt with, viz. *karma* (actions), *upāsana* (meditation) *ātma-jñāna* (self-knowledge). The *Samhitā*, *Brahmaṇa* and *Āraṇyaka* portions of the Vedas mainly unfold *karma* and *upāsana*. They are included in the *karma* and *upāsana* sections (*kāṇḍas*). The Upaniṣads deal primarily with self-knowledge. They thus form the *Jñānakāṇḍa* (the section on self-knowledge). The *Śrutiprasthānam* or Upaniṣad-*prasthānam* is the first among the *prasthāna-trayam*.

The Upaniṣads are considered the head of the Vedas. The ignoramus who studies the Vedas sans the Upaniṣads can be equated to a fool who having chopped off the head, renders headless the trunk of the Veda.⁴

4. ऋचां मूर्धानं, यजुषामुत्तमंगं, साम्नां शिरः, अथर्वणां मुण्डं, मुण्डं नाधीते, अधीते वेदं, आहुस्तं अज्ञं शिरश्छित्वा कुरुते कबन्धम् ।

Self-inquiry (*ātma-vicāra*) is conducted in accordance with the guidelines in the Upaniṣads which are contained in the Vedas. The word Upaniṣad means *Brahmavidyā* – the knowledge of the ultimate reality – Brahman. The term Upaniṣad also stands for the text that unfolds *Brahmavidyā*. The Upaniṣads are also known as Vedānta. *Anta* can mean finale or the purport (*tātparyā*), the final ascertainment. Thus the word Vedānta signifies the final portion of the Vedas. It is distinct from the earlier sections on *karma* and *upāsanā*. This final portion ascertains the purport of the Vedas culminating in Brahman. In using the words Vedānta, *Vedāntaśāstra* and *śāstra*, in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*, the *bhāṣyakāra* Ādi Śaṅkarācārya refers them as Upaniṣads.

There are more than 108 Upaniṣads known presently, of which ten are studied extensively. These are *Īśa*, *Kaṭha*, *Kena*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Praśna*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya*, *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. The Upaniṣads are the original source of *Brahmavidyā*.

SMṚTIPRASTHĀNAM – ŚRĪMAD BHAGAVADGĪTĀ

Secondary texts based on the Vedas are called *smṛti-grantha*. The Mahābhārata which contains the *Bhagavadgītā* falls under the category of *smṛti*. The knowledge imparted by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna is enshrined in the *Bhagavadgītā*, the gist of all Vedic knowledge.⁵

Figuratively, the Upaniṣads are described as cows with Lord Kṛṣṇa as the milkman, Arjuna as the calf and wise men as men partaking of the nectarine milk of *Bhagavadgītā*.

NYĀYAPRASTHĀNAM – BRAHMASŪTRA

Nyāya is the science of logic. The *Brahmasūtra* gives a logical structure to *Upaniṣadic* teaching. It is a text of *mīmāṃsā* or *pūjita-vicārah* – an adored inquiry or investigation. It is not a book

⁵ समस्तवेदार्थसारसंग्रहभूतम् – गीता. भा. उपोद्घातः ।

of advice but a text of analytical inquiry.

A *sūtra* is a short rule or precept, an aphorism, a formula. It is a short or concise technical sentence framed as a rule that can be easily remembered. A *sūtra* is brief in its composition, has a clear and unambiguous meaning, contains the essence or main points, and at times yields more than one meaning. It is flawless and free of superfluous words.⁶ A work or manual containing such aphoristic rules is also called *sūtra*.

Literally, the word *sūtra* means a string, or a thread. Figuratively speaking, a *Brahmasūtra* strings the flowers of different Vedāntic sentences or statements together into a garland demonstrating their harmonization or applicability (*samanvaya*) in ascertaining Brahman.⁷

Upaniṣads deal with a variety of subjects from a variety of perspectives. Unless thoroughly investigated and ascertained, these appear to have many contradictions. The *Brahmasūtras* were composed to resolve such seeming contradictions and highlight the harmony (*samanvaya*) of all the Upaniṣads focussed on the one, non-dual Brahman.

The other names of the *Brahmasūtra* are: *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Śārīraka-sūtra*, *Bhikṣu-sūtra*, *Bādarāyaṇa-sūtra*, *Vaiyāsika-sūtra*, *Uttaramīmāṃsā-sūtra*, *Vedāntamīmāṃsā-sūtra*, *Brahma-mīmāṃsā*.

The *Brahmasūtra* deals with the following topics:

- i) The nature of Brahman.
- ii) The accomplishment of the ultimate goal of life by gaining *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (also called *Brahmajñāna*), the direct knowledge of Brahman identical with one's own true nature.

6. स्वल्पाक्षरं असंदिग्धं सारवद् विश्वतोमुखं अस्तोभं अनवद्यं च सूत्रं सूत्रविदो विदुः।

7. वेदान्तवाक्यकुसुमग्रथनार्थत्वात् सूत्राणाम् (*Br. Sū. Bh.* 1-1-2)

- iii) How *Brahmasākṣātkāra* alone, and not anything else, is the ultimate goal of life.
- iv) The means to be pursued to gain *Brahmajñāna*.
- v) The result of *Brahmajñāna*.

AUTHOR AND DATE OF THE *BRAHMASŪTRA*

Traditionally, Bādarāyaṇa, also known as Vyāsa of *Dwāparayuga* is considered to be the author of the *Brahmasūtra*. Some academics or professional scholars challenge the authorship of Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa). According to them, the different systems of philosophy refuted in *Tarkapāda* (*Br.Sū.Ch 2, pāda 2*) belong to relatively modern authors. They credit authorship to a number of individuals such as Īśwarakṛṣṇa, the author of *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* (about 200 CE), Vasubandhu (4th to 5th century) belonging to the Buddhist school of thought and other relatively modern authors of the *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Bouddha*, *Jaina* etc. systems of thought. Based on the authorship of these philosophical systems of thought, they conclude that the date of the *Brahmasūtra* is no earlier than the fourth century. However, nowhere do the *Brahmasūtras* mention the name of these relatively modern individuals. Instead, references to ancient Ṛṣis are found at places.

Professional scholars clearly overlook the fact that the different schools of thought refuted in the *tarkapāda* of the *Brahmasūtra* were widespread even during the *Upaniṣadic* period. However, they were not so elaborate and did not have the same names then as they do today. For example, the *Brahmasūtra* (3-2-30) refutes *Bhedavāda – caitanya* as distinct from *paramātmā*. The *Ārya-samāja* (19th century) speaks of *Bhedavāda*. In view of this, it would be absurd to say that the *Brahmasūtra* refutes the stand taken by the *Ārya-samāja* which was founded in April, 1875, and must therefore have been written after the 19th century.

Many modern schools of thought were certainly existent in ancient times. For instance, consider the *Bouddha Jātaka* Tales

– stories woven around Buddha's previous birth. Actually, these stories were popular in ancient India and were only subsequently interwoven into the Buddha's biography.

It is true that some modern scholars have enriched these ancient schools of thought and elaborated on them; however, the schools of thought refuted in the *Brahmasūtra* are not those of the present day.

A *Pāṇinīya sūtra* (4-3-110) on grammar proves the authorship of the *Brahmasūtra* beyond any trace of doubt. While defining the usage of the suffix 'ṇini', Pāṇini clearly refers to the *Bhikṣusūtra* composed by Pārāśarya, the son of sage Parāśara. Pārāśarya is none other than Vyāsa. *Bhikṣusūtra* is one of the names of the *Brahmasūtra*. Pāṇini's Guru was Upavarṣa who lived in or around 500 BCE. Upavarṣa has written a *vṛtti* (gloss) on both the *Jaiminī-sūtra* and the *Brahmasūtra*. The *bhāṣyakāra* refers to Upavarṣa as *vṛttikāra* in the *Sūtrabhāṣya* on 3-3-53. It is well-known that prior to Pāṇini, the only Pārāśarya or Vyāsa of repute was the celebrated author of the Mahābhārata and the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

Interestingly there is a section of twelve chapters called *Brahmasūtra-māhātmyam* (the glory of the *Brahmasūtra*) in *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. This section states that the reading and study of the *Brahmasūtra* results in the annihilation of sins.⁸ This is further proof that Vyāsa composed the *Brahmasūtra* before writing the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

BHĀṢYA – COMMENTARIES ON BRAHMASŪTRA

Bhāṣyas are commentaries that explain *sūtras* (aphorisms) word by word coupled with the author's comments.⁹ The *Brahmasūtra* has as many as eleven commentaries. Among them,

8. ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्यम् - उपोद्घातः, Pg. 21, published by कामकोटिकोशस्थानम् ।

9. सूत्रार्थो वर्णयते यत्र वाक्यैः सूत्रानुसारिभिः । स्वपदानि च वर्णयन्ते भाष्यं भाष्यविदो विदुः ।

scholars from both the East and the West have awarded the distinction of excellence to the *Śāṅkarabhāṣya*. These commentaries are as follows:

Author	Name of commentary	Name of Doctrine
१) शंकर	शारीरकभाष्य	अद्वैत
२) भास्कर	भास्करभाष्य	भेदाभेद
३) रामानुज	श्रीभाष्य	विशिष्टाद्वैत
४) मध्व	पूर्णप्रज्ञभाष्य	द्वैत
५) निम्बार्क	वेदान्तपारिजात	द्वैताद्वैत
६) श्रीकण्ठ	शैवभाष्य	शैवविशिष्टाद्वैत
७) श्रीपति	श्रीकरभाष्य	वीरशैवविशिष्टाद्वैत
८) वल्लभ	अणुभाष्य	शुद्धाद्वैत
९) विज्ञानभिक्षु	विज्ञानामृत	अविभागाद्वैत
१०) बलदेव	गोविन्दभाष्य	अचिन्त्यभेदाभेद
११) अभिनवशुकाचार्य	-	श्रीमद्भागवतमत

WELL-KNOWN GLOSSES ON *SŪTRABHĀṢYA* OF ŚĀṅKARA

There are more than 150 glosses (*vyākhyā*) and umpteen further expositions on the *Sūtrabhāṣya* of *Śāṅkara*. Many of them have not been printed. The following are some well-known glosses with the names of their authors.

Name of gloss	Author
१) पञ्चपादिका	पद्मपादाचार्यः
२) भामती	वाचस्पतिमिश्रः
३) संक्षेपशारीरकम्	सर्वज्ञात्ममुनिः
४) भाष्यभावप्रकाशिका	चित्सुखाचार्यः
५) न्यायनिर्णयः	आनन्दगिरिः
६) न्यायरक्षामणिः	अप्पय्यदीक्षितः

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| ७) रत्नप्रभा | रामानन्दः (though he has attributed its authorship to his Guru Govindānanda) |
| ८) ब्रह्मविद्याभरणम् | अद्वैतानन्दः |
| ९) भाष्यवार्तिकम् | नारायणसरस्वती |

VAIYĀSIKANYĀYAMĀLĀ

(A garland of topics composed by Vyāsa)

The *Brahmasūtra* lays down various topics related to *Upaniṣadic* sentences. These *sūtras* are divided into *adhikaraṇas* based on the subject-matter discussed in them. An *adhikaraṇa* means a topic, a section or a complete argument pertaining to a topic. Each *adhikaraṇa* is described in five steps:

- i) *Viśaya* – The subject matter of the *Upaniṣadic* sentence to be explained.
- ii) *Viśaya* or *Samśaya* – The doubt / question with respect to the *Upaniṣadic* sentence in question.
- iii) *Saṅgati* – The pertinence / relevance / connection between the specific *Upaniṣadic* sentence under consideration, the chapters and the *pāda* (section) of the *Brahmasūtra*.
- iv) *Pūrvapakṣa* – The prima facie argument, or a contra view / contrary proposition on the topic.
- v) *Uttarapakṣa* or *siddhānta* – The answer or demonstrated conclusion on the topic.¹⁰

The contents of the *adhikaraṇas* are extensive indeed . It is difficult to grasp their purport. Considering this difficulty, Śrī Bhāratīrtha Muni, the co-author of Vedānta Pañcadaśī wrote the text *Vaiyāsikanyāyamālā* – a garland (*mālā*) of ascertained

¹⁰. विषयः सन्देहः संगतिः पूर्वपक्षः सिद्धान्तः इत्येकैकमधिकरणं पञ्चावयवं ज्ञेयम् ॥

Upaniṣadic topics (*nyāya*) composed by Vyāsa. It gives a topicwise summary of the entire *Brahmasūtra* based on the *Śāṅkarabhāṣya*.

In the *Vaiyāsikanyāyamālā*, each *adhikaraṇa* (topic) is summarised in two verses. The first half of the first verse describes the subject (*viśaya*) and the doubt (*saṃśaya*). The second half of the first verse presents the contrary proposition (*pūrvapakṣa*). The second verse proves the doctrine (*siddhānta*). The connection or the relevance (*saṅgati*) is not given in the *Vaiyāsikanyāyamālā* as a discerning person can grasp it easily. The two verses on each *adhikaraṇa* are followed by a simpler exposition in prose.

THE CONTENTS OF CHAPTERS AND SECTIONS IN BRAHMASŪTRA

The *Brahmasūtra* is a scriptural text. It is an inquiry into Brahman – *Brahmavicāra*. The *Brahmasūtra* has four chapters (*adhyāya*). Each chapter has four sections (*pāda*). Each section analyses a specific topic.

Chapter One: *Samanvayādhyāya* – the chapter on the harmonization or reconciliation (*samanvaya*) of all *Upaniṣads*. *Samanvaya* is the ascertainment of the purport (*tātparyanirṇaya*) of the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. This chapter establishes that the purport (*tātparya*) of all *Vedāntic* (*Upaniṣadic*) sentences is directly or indirectly the non-dual Brahman – identical with *ātmā*. Thus, all the *Upaniṣads* directly or indirectly unfold nothing but the non-dual Brahman which itself is one with *ātmā*.

The first section (*pāda*) of chapter one (ch. 1-1) inquires into *Upaniṣadic* sentences called *spaṣṭabrahmalīṅgayukta-vākyas* which define a clear characteristic of Brahman.

The second section (ch. 1-2) analyses *Upaniṣadic* sentences called *aspaṣṭabrahmalīṅgayukta-vākyas* which do not define a clear characteristic of Brahman but refer to the meditation (*upāsana*) of *Upāsyabrahma* – the Brahman to be meditated upon.

The third section (ch. 1-3) analyses *Upaniṣadic* sentences that do not define a clear characteristic of Brahman, but deal with *Jñeyabrahma* – the Brahman that needs to be known.

The fourth section (ch. 1-4) inquires into non-specific terms like ‘*avyakta*’, ‘*ajā*’ etc. in the *Upaniṣads*. It ascertains their exact significance lest they are mistaken to mean something else.

Chapter Two: *Avirodhādhyāya* – the chapter on consistency or compatibility (*avirodha*) in *Upaniṣadic* teaching. This chapter dispels the contradictions raised by other schools of thought regarding the harmonization (*samanvaya*) of *Upaniṣadic* sentences that imply the non-dual Brahman.

The first section (ch. 2-1) of this chapter nullifies the contradictions (*virodha*) and the basis of these contradictions as pointed out in *smṛtis* like *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Kaṇāda* through the help of Vedāntic harmonization (*Vedāntasamanvaya*).

The second section (ch. 2-2) points out the defects in other schools of thought like *Sāṅkhya* etc.

The first part of section three (ch. 2-3) clears the seeming mutual contradictions between *Upaniṣadic* sentences describing the five great elements (*pañcamahābhūtas*). The second part of the section clarifies the seeming contradictions between *Upaniṣadic* sentences that describe the *Jīva* – the individual entity.

Section four (ch. 2-4) resolves seeming contradictions among *Upaniṣadic* portions describing the subtle body (*liṅgaśarīra*).

Chapter Three: *Sādhanādhyāya* – the chapter on *Sādhanā* – the means to inquire into the nature of Brahman.

The first section (ch. 3-1) discusses the *jīva*’s travel to and return from other *lokas* (fields of experiences). It also includes a description of *vairāgya* – dispassion.

The second section (ch. 3-2) ascertains the *mahāvākya* 'tat tvam asi' in two parts – the word 'tvam' in its first part and the word 'tat' in the second part.

The third section (ch. 3-3) deals with *Saguṇabrahmavidyā* and *Nirguṇabrahmavidyā*. The *Saguṇabrahmavidyā* (meditation on Brahman with attributes) is the means to achieve *cittaikāgrya* – single-pointedness of mind. *Cittaikāgrya* serves as the means to gain the direct knowledge of *Nirguṇabrahman* – the attributeless Brahman – as revealed in the Upaniṣads.

The fourth section (ch. 3-4) describes the direct (*antaraṅgasādhanā*) and indirect means (*bahiraṅgasādhanā*) of *Brahmavidyā*. Acts like sacrifice, charity, ascetic practices etc. are indirect means. The direct means include *śama* (mastery over the mind), *dama* (sense-control), *nididhyāsana* (contemplation) etc.

Chapter four : *Phalādhyāya* – the chapter on the results of *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* *Brahmavidyā*.

The first section (ch. 4-1) describes *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (the direct cognition of Brahman) and the state of *Jīvanmukti* (liberation while living). It discusses the means consisting of repeated *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (contemplation). It describes the result of *Saguṇabrahmopāsana* as well.

The second section (ch. 4-2) discusses the mode of departure of the *prāṇa* (the vital airs) of the *jīva* who is on the verge of death.

The third section (ch. 4-3) recommends the northern path (*uttarāyaṇamārga*) for the *Saguṇabrahmopāsaka* after death.

The fourth section (ch. 4-4) describes the results. The *Nirguṇabrahmavit* (knower of attributeless Brahman) attains *Videhakaivalya* (liberation totally free from the embodiment). The *Saguṇabrahmopāsaka* gains *Brahmaloka*.

SAṄGATI (RELEVANCE OR CONNECTION) OF SŪTRAS

A student studying the *Brahmasūtra* text should be able to understand the relevance of any Vedāntic sentence (*Vedāntavākya*), under discussion and its connection with *Brahmavidyā* as a whole, as also with the chapter, section and *adhikaraṇa* in which the sentence appears.

The principal connections are as follows:

- i) *Śāstrasāṅgati* – the connection between the *Vedāntavākya*, chapter etc. and the *Brahmasūtra*, where the *Brahmavicāra* is conducted, as a whole.
- ii) *Adhyāyasaṅgati* – the connection of the *Vedāntavākya*, section, *adhikaraṇa* etc. with the chapter having a given *sūtra*.
- iii) *Pādasaṅgati* – the connection of the *Vedāntavākya*, *adhikaraṇa* etc. with the section in which a given *sūtra* appears.

There can be secondary (*avāntara*) connections such as *ākṣepasaṅgati* (connection in relation to objection) or *dr̥ṣṭāntasaṅgati* (connection in relation to illustration), *pratyudāharaṇasaṅgati* (connection in relation to counter-illustration or counter-argument) or *prāsaṅgikasaṅgati* (incidental connection) (connection between the *sūtra*, section or chapter and their previous counterparts).

Let us take the topic *Īkṣatyadhikaraṇam* (*Br.sū.* 1-1-5 to 11) to understand the concept of *saṅgati*. This topic inquires into the *Upaniṣadic* sentence ‘*Tadaikṣata*’ (*Ch.U.* 6-2-3). The sentence states ‘*tat*’ (viz. *sat* Brahman) saw (i.e. considered, thought). The question arises: does this sentence refer to the inert *Pradhāna* of *Sāṅkhya* or to Brahman. Since this is an inquiry that pertains to Brahman, there is a connection with the subject of the *Brahmasūtra śāstra*, which undertakes *Brahmavicāra* as a whole. This is the *śāstrasāṅgati* of this *Upaniṣadic* sentence. The purport (*tātparyā*) or

final ascertainment of the sentence is Brahman. As the subject is harmonization (*samanvaya*) in Brahman, it is entirely appropriate that the sentence is discussed in the first chapter – *samanvayādhyāya*. This is the *adhyāyasaṅgati* of the sentence ‘*tadaikṣata*’. As *īkṣaṇa* (seeing, thinking) is a unique characteristic of Brahman which is *caitanya* (pure awareness principle), this sentence has got a *spaṣṭabrahmalīṅga* (a clear characteristic of Brahman). Like other *Upaniṣadic* sentences with a *spaṣṭabrahmalīṅga*, ‘*tadaikṣata*’ is also discussed in the first section (*pāda*) of the first chapter. This is its *pādasaṅgati*.

The appreciation of such connections clarifies the subject in a cohesive manner, making it easy to grasp. The great *Yogī Sadāśiva Brahmendra* has described the connections very vividly in his *Brahmasūtravṛttiḥ* – a brief gloss on *Brahmasūtras*.

NUMBER OF SŪTRAS AND ADHIKARAṆAS IN BRAHMASŪTRA

As already seen, the text *Brahmasūtra* has four chapters, each having four sections for a total of sixteen sections. According to the *Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, there are 555 *sūtras* and 191 topics (*adhikaraṇas*). These numbers vary with different commentators. The variation is due to the fact that authors either club or split *sūtras* and arrive at a list of topics based on their own individual interpretation.

IMPORTANCE OF CATUSSŪTRĪ IN BRAHMASŪTRA -BHĀṢYA

The *Catussūtrī* – the first four *sūtras* and the commentary on them – lays the foundation for the main subject matter of the *Brahmasūtra*.

The basic propositions in the *Catussūtrī* are as follows. The introductory commentary demonstrates that ‘*adhyāsa*’ – wrong knowledge or superimposition – is the basis of all dealings

(*vyavahāra*) in the world. Coming to the first *sūtra*, the commentary, discussing the word '*atha*' of the first *sūtra* – *Athātobrahmajijñāsā* – describes the qualifications for success in the pursuit of Vedānta. The commentary draws a clear distinction between action (*karma*) and *ātma jñāna* (self-knowledge). It also points out that the culmination of *Brahmajñāna* is *avagati* – *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. The commentary on the first *sūtra* concludes by showing Brahman to be the independent self-existing, self-revealing entity.

The second *sūtra* – *Janmādyasya yataḥ* – defines Brahman. It shows, on the basis of *śruti*, that Brahman is the undifferentiated (*abhinna*), efficient (*nimitta*) and material (*upādāna*) cause of Creation (*śṛṣṭi*). The *bhāṣya* of this *sūtra* shows that a direct experience (*aparokṣānubhava*) in conformity with the nature of Brahman is the basic ingredient of *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna*. Such an experience is free from *tripuṭī* – the triple entity of experiencer, experience and the experienced etc. This stands in contrast to *parokṣa jñāna* which does not require such an experience.

The third *sūtra* – *Śāstrayonitvāt* – proves that Brahman is the cause of scriptures like the Veda, and that Brahman can be known only through the Veda.

The fourth *sūtra* – *Tat tu samanvayāt* – and its commentary prove that Vedāntic sentences that unfold Brahman are not auxiliary to scriptural injunctions on *karma* and *upāsana*. Topics such as *mokṣa* (liberation), *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living in this world), *videhamukti* (liberation totally free from the embodiment), *mahāvākya*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are also discussed.

The *catuṣṣūtrī* thoroughly examines topics such as Creation, Brahman, *mokṣa*, the means to *mokṣa*, the means of knowledge and the nature of *Brahmajñāna*. The rest of the *Brahmasūtra* elaborates on these very same topics. Where necessary, it also includes ancillary topics. Thus the *catuṣṣūtrī* takes on great importance in the analysis of the subjects covered in the *Brahmasūtra*.

THE GAMUT OF VEDĀNTA

The role of the *Brahmasūtra* in Vedānta is best understood by understanding the scope of Vedānta. Vedānta throws light on the following questions:

- i) What is *mokṣa* (liberation)?
- ii) What are the means to gain *mokṣa*?
- iii) What obstructs the means to *mokṣa*?
- iv) What are the remedial measures to remove these obstructions (*pratibandhas*)?
- v) Why the *Brahmasūtra*?
- vi) For whom is the Vedāntic inquiry (*Vedāntavicāra*) recommended, why and how long?
- vii) What is the complete order (*krama*) of Vedāntic pursuit culminating in the *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct cognition of Brahman?
- viii) Why is Vedāntic inquiry essential if the Veda is the *śabdapramāṇa* – the valid means of knowledge in the form of words?
- ix) What is the role of the *Brahmasūtra* in Vedāntic pursuit?

The answers to these questions form the gist or essence of Vedāntic pursuit. For authentic answers to these questions, we turn to Śrī Madhusūdana Saraswatī. Śrī Madhusūdana Saraswatī is a classical exponent of Advaita Vedānta. He is famous for his treatise *Advaitasiddhi*. Another of his texts, the *Vedānta-kalpalatikā* – a brief exposition on the nature of liberation and its means according to Advaita Vedānta – gives precise answers to the above questions. To gain insight into these profound questions, the mind should be attuned to and open to clear and unbiased thinking to enable a specific and unambiguous grasp of the meaning to the individual's complete satisfaction.

i) THE NATURE OF *MOKṢA* – LIBERATION

The following is a concise definition of liberation.

औपनिषदाः, तु भगवता नीलाचलनायकेन नारायणेनानुगृहीताः,
निरतिशयानन्दबोधरूप आत्मा, एव, अनाद्यविद्यानिवृत्त्युपलक्षितो मोक्षः,
इति, आचक्षते । अविद्यायाश्च सर्वदुःखोपादानत्वात्, तन्निवृत्त्या,
आत्यन्तिकदुःखनिवृत्तिरप्युपपद्यते ।

(वेदान्तकल्पलतिका – श्री मधुसूदन सरस्वती)

Tr. 'The followers of Upaniṣads blessed by Lord Nārāyaṇa declare *mokṣa* as *ātmanā* – the limitless happiness (*ānanda*) being the self-evident knowledge-principle – itself known directly without a trace of self-ignorance (*avidyā*). The beginningless self-ignorance (*avidyā*) of one's true nature is the root cause of all the sorrows of *saṃsāra*. Its termination therefore duly results in the total cessation of all sorrows'.

Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has defined *mokṣa* as follows.

- a) *Svātmani avasthānam* – abidance in one's true nature
(*Taittirīya, Kena. Bh.*);
- b) *Brahmabhāvaḥ mokṣaḥ* – *Brahmasvarūpa* is *mokṣa*
(*Br. Sū. Bh.* 1-1-4);
- c) *Brahma eva muktyavasthā* – Brahman itself is the state of *mukti* (*Br. Sū. Bh.* 3-4-52).

Vārtikakāra Śrī Sureśvarācārya, an eminent disciple of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, describes *mokṣa* as the state of perfect absorption (*sthānam*) in the true nature of *ātmanā* (*Br. U. Saṃbandha-vārtika* - 109).¹¹

ii) MEANS (*SĀDHANĀ*) TO GAIN *MOKṢA*

Here is a description of *mokṣasādhana* and its status.

तस्य च स्वरूपे साधनानपेक्षत्वेऽपि व्यञ्जकतया महावाक्यकरणकः,
तत्स्वरूपसाक्षात्कारः, एव प्रतिबन्धचतुष्टयरहितः, मोक्षसाधनम्,
इत्युपचर्यते । (वेदान्तकल्पलतिका)

¹¹. स्वरूप आत्मनः स्थानमाहुर्निःश्रेयसं बुधाः । (बृ.उ.सं.वा. १०९)

Tr. 'Ātmā – the true 'I' – is self-existent (*svataḥśiddha*) and self-evident (*svayamprakāśa*). It does not require any means to manifest itself. But the ignorant person is unaware of his true nature. He is in need of means that can reveal *ātmā*. Such a means of *mokṣa* is direct cognition of one's true nature (*tatsvarūpa-sākṣātkāra*), free from the four inhibitions or hindrances (*pratibandhas*). The direct cognition of *ātmā* is effected through the *Upaniṣadic* sentences known as *mahāvākyas* that reveal the identity of the individual *ātmā* and Brahman. It must be understood that *ātmā* is ever-liberated (*nityamukta*) in nature and does not need any means (*sādhana*) for *mokṣa*. Even so, given our present state of ignorance, these means (*sādhana*) are accepted secondarily as being useful'.

iii) OBSTRUCTIONS (*PRATIBANDHAS*) WHICH HINDER THE DIRECT COGNITION OF *ĀTMĀ*

- a) 'Viśayabhogavāsanā – The desires for the enjoyment of sense objects or worldly pleasure'.
- b) 'Pramāṇagatāsaṃbhāvanā – The notion that Vedānta as the means of knowledge is incapable of imparting *ātmajñāna*'.
- c) 'Prameyagatāsaṃbhāvanā – The notion that the nature of *ātmā* is not the same as that unfolded in the Upaniṣads'.
- d) 'Viparītabhāvanā – The thorough erroneous notion that either the body, *prāṇa* or mind is me, the true 'I', and not the pure awareness (*caitanya*)'.¹²

iv) REMEDIAL MEASURES TO REMOVE THE FOURFOLD OBSTRUCTIONS

- a) 'Śama (mastery over the mind), dama (restraint of senses) etc. also called *sādhana-catustaya-saṃpatti* eliminate the hankering for sense objects. They are pre-requisites for

¹². प्रतिबन्धचतुष्टयं च विषयभोगवासना, प्रमाणगतासंभावना, प्रमेयगतासंभावना, विपरीतभावना च, इति - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

śravaṇa (self-inquiry)'.¹³

- b) 'Śravaṇa (self-inquiry) dispels the *pramāṇagatāsaṃbhāvanā*'.¹⁴
 c) 'Manana – reflection – eliminates the *prameyagatāsaṃbhāvanā*'.¹⁵
 d) 'Nididhyāsana – constant and consistent contemplation on one's true nature – ends the *viparītabhāvanā*'.¹⁶

v) THE PURPOSE OF THE *BRAHMASŪTRA*

'Bhagavān Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa) composed the *Brahmasūtra* (*Śārīrakamīmāṃsā*) comprising of four chapters for the elimination of the fourfold obstructions like *asaṃbhāvanā* etc. through the means of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*'.¹⁷

vi) PERSONS ELIGIBLE FOR *VEDĀNTAVICĀRA*, AND THE DURATION OF *VEDĀNTAVICĀRA*

'A person having an intense yearning for *mokṣa* is eligible to take to Vedāntic inquiry as guided by Vedānta. The very first *Brahmasūtra* bears testimony to this. This *sūtra* discusses the qualifications recommended for such a *mumukṣu* (seeker of liberation) in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat*. The related passage is : '(The *mumukṣu*) having become *śāntaḥ* (one who has withdrawn from sense-pursuits), *dāntaḥ* (one who ceases to hanker for the enjoyment of sense objects), *uparataḥ* (one who has freed oneself from all desires), *titikṣuḥ* (one who endures the pairs of opposites without demur), *śraddhāvittaḥ* / *samāhitaḥ* (one for whom *śraddhā* is the wealth / means, or one who has single-pointedness of mind as a result of withdrawal from the usual activities of the senses and the mind) directly knows *ātmā* in this very embodiment

13. तत्र विषयासक्तेः श्रवणाङ्गभूताः शमदमादयो निवर्तकाः - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

14. प्रमाणगतासंभावनायाः श्रवणं निवर्तकम् - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

15. प्रमेयगतासंभावनायाः मननं निवर्तकम् - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

16. विपरीतभावनायाश्च निदिध्यासनं निवर्तकम् - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

17. अतः श्रवणादिसंपादनेनासंभावनादिप्रतिबन्धपरिक्षयाय चतुर्लक्षणी शारीरकमीमांसा समारम्भि भगवता बादरायणेन - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

(Br.U. 4-4-23). The word 'atha' in the first sūtra verily refers to such a *mumukṣu* endowed with *śama, dama* etc.'.¹⁸

The gist is as follows. The *mumukṣu* endowed with qualifications such as *śama, dama* having duly approached a competent Guru should repeatedly take to Vedāntic inquiry with the help of the *Brahmasūtra (caturlakṣaṇa-mīmāṃsā)* to bring an end to the four *pratibandhas* like *asaṃbhāvanā* that obstruct *mokṣasādhana* (the means to *mokṣa*) viz. *Brahmātmaikya-sākṣātkāra* – the direct cognition of self (*ātmā*) identical with Brahman. This inquiry needs to be continued till all obstructions are eliminated'.¹⁹

vii) THE COMPLETE SEQUENCE (*KRAMA*) OF VEDĀNTIC PURSUIT CULMINATING IN *BRAHMASĀKṢĀTKĀRA*

Here, the Vedāntic pursuit and its entire *modus operandi* are depicted in the form of a sequence that builds up to a *crescendo*.

- a) 'The mental limitation (*cittadoṣa*) that obstructs *nityānityaviveka* – discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral – is removed through the performance (*anuṣṭhāna*) of enjoined sacrifices etc. undertaken with the intention of acquiring the knowledge of Brahman culminating in *mokṣa*'.²⁰ (This is also referred to as *Karmayoga* in the scripture.)

18. मोक्षकामः, च अस्यामधिकारी,
'शान्तो दान्त उपरतस्तिक्षुः श्रद्धावित्तो भूत्वात्मन्येवात्मानं पश्येत् ।' (बृ.उ.काण्व ४-४-२३, माध्यन्दिन ४-२-२८) इत्यादिश्रुत्युक्तशमाद्युपबृंहितविचारविधिमूलके 'अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा' (ब्र.सू. १-१-१) इति सूत्रे, अथशब्देन शमादिविशिष्टस्य मुमुक्षोरेव सूत्रणात् - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

19. तदयं निर्गलितार्थः - शमादिसहितेन मुमुक्षुणा गुरुमुपसृत्य मोक्षसाधनब्रह्मात्मैक्य-साक्षात्कारप्रतिबन्धासंभावनादिनिवृत्तये चतुर्लक्षणमीमांसया वेदान्तवाक्यविचारः प्रतिबन्धनिवृत्तिपर्यन्तं, आवर्तनीयः इति - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

20. फलपर्यन्तब्रह्मविद्योद्देशेन विहितयज्ञानुष्ठानात्, नित्यानित्य-विवेकप्रतिबन्धकश्चित्तदोषः प्रतिहन्यते - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

- b) 'Next, *nityānityaviveka* dispels the mental limitation (viz. hankering for sense objects) which obstructs *viśaya-vaitṛṣṇya* – indifference or freedom from desires for sense objects here and hereafter'.²¹
- c) 'Thereupon, *viśaya-vaitṛṣṇya* destroys the mental limitation that hampers *śama, dama* (mastery over the senses and the mind) etc.'²²
- d) 'Consequently, the mental limitation which prompts one to take to activities opposed to the pursuit of gaining self-knowledge gets destroyed by *sāadhanacatuṣṭaya-sampatti* comprising *śama, dama* etc.'²³
- e) 'Thereupon, reasoning in the form of *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry) which ascertains the identity of Brahman and *ātmā* by implication destroys the mental limitation which questions the status of Vedānta as the valid means of knowledge revealing the identity of non-dual Brahman and *ātmā*. Such a mental limitation is conjectured by fallacious reasoning such as "the Vedas reveal only *kriyā* (action) and not knowledge" etc.'²⁴
- f) 'Moreover, the *cittaikāgryapratibandha* – the inability of the mind to get absorbed in Brahman with single-pointedness – which is but the outcome of the wrong concept that Vedānta cannot be a *pramāṇa* is terminated by the reasoning in the form of *manana* (reflection) which produces

21. ततो नित्यानित्यविवेकेन, ऐहिकामुष्मिक-वैतृष्यप्रतिबन्धकश्चित्तदोषोऽपसार्यते
- वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

22. ततो विषयवैतृष्णेन शमदमादिप्रतिबन्धकश्चित्तदोषः (अपसार्यते) । - वे.क. ।

23. ततः शमदमादिभिर्विपरीतप्रवृत्तिहेतुकश्चित्तदोषः (अपसार्यते) । - वे.कल्पलतिका ।

24. ततोऽद्वितीयब्रह्मैक्यविषयवेदान्तशक्तितात्पर्यानिश्चयफलकेन श्रवणाख्यतर्केण क्रियार्थत्वादिभिर्हेत्वाभासैर्वा, अद्वितीयब्रह्मात्मैक्ये वेदान्तानां प्रामाण्यासंभवरूपश्चित्तदोषः (अपसार्यते) । - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

prameyasambhāvanā – the proper perspective of Brahman to be known'.²⁵

- g) 'Thereafter, the mental limitation of the wrong notion that the body is I, which is deep-rooted from beginningless time, is eliminated by repeated *nididhyāsana* involving efforts to produce the *jñānavṛtti* (also called *akhaṇḍākāravṛtti*) – the unique thought which conforms to the nature of Brahman identical with *ātmā* – and which is totally free from all that is falsely superimposed'.²⁶

- h) The finale of *Brahmasākṣātkāra* is:

ततोऽशेषदोषशून्ये स्वभावस्वच्छचित्तदर्पणे पूर्ववदेव वेदान्तवाक्येन
जनिता, अखण्डवाक्यार्थविषया वृत्तिः सर्वदोषरहितत्वात्, अप्रतिबद्धात्
स्वतःप्रामाण्यादेव कृत्स्नम् अज्ञानतत्कार्यं निवर्तयति, ततः परं न
शङ्का, न चोत्तरम् ।

- वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

- Tr. 'At this stage the mind is freed from all limitations (due to the fourfold obstructions) and regains its original clear nature like a mirror, capable of reflecting *Brahmātmāswarūpa*, as a replica. The *akhaṇḍākāravṛtti* born in such a mind is uninterrupted and is free from all limitations. Such a *vṛtti* totally destroys self-ignorance (*ajñāna*) and all its effects (*ajñānakārya*). This is possible because that *vṛtti* is itself the correct knowledge (*pramā*) because of being valid by itself (i.e. *svataḥprāmāṇyāt*) without the need for any other means. Thereafter there can be neither doubts nor the need for any answers'.

25. एवं वेदान्तानां प्रामाण्यासंभावनाप्रचयहेतुभूतचित्तैकाग्र्यप्रतिबन्धकश्चित्तदोषः
प्रमेयसंभावनाफलकेन मननाख्येन तर्केण (अपसार्यते) । - वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

26. ततोऽन्यानुपरक्तब्रह्मात्मैक्य-विषयसंस्कारप्रचयेन हेतुज्ञानवृत्तिफलकेन प्रयत्नेन
निदिध्यासनाख्येन, अनादिप्रवृत्तदेहात्मज्ञानजनितसंस्कारप्रचयः चित्तदोषोऽपसार्यते।

- वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

viii) THE NECESSITY OF *VEDĀNTAVICĀRA* EVENTHOUGH *ŚRUTI* IS THE VALID MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

Justifying the rationale for the text, the role of the inquiry (*vicāra*) seen so far is corroborated by Śrī Sarvajñātmamuni in his work *Samkṣepaśārīrakam* (1-14 to 16).

- 1-14. 'Just as perception though born of the normally functioning eyes does not result in the actual cognition that this person is Mr. Bharcchu due to preconceived wrong notions, the knowledge of *ātmā*, though born of *śruti* (the Veda), is unable to reveal the exact nature of the *ātmā* that results in liberation'.²⁷

[A certain king was very fond of his minister named Bharcchu (also called Bhartsu at places). This was strongly disliked by other courtiers. They hatched a plot against Bharcchu when he was sent by the king to a distant region on an official mission. They told the king that Bharcchu had been killed and had become a ghost. They also ensured that he (Bharcchu) could not return to the capital. Learning about what had transpired, Bharcchu developed dispassion and became a monk. He wandered around with his body smeared with holy ashes.

One day the king caught sight of Bharcchu in the garb of a monk in a forest, but mistook him to be a ghost. Obviously, the king could not recognise Bharcchu in spite of seeing him with his own two eyes because of the preconceived wrong notions 'Bharcchu is no longer alive' (an instance of *asaṃbhāvanā* – improbability), and 'Bharcchu has become a ghost' (a *viparītabhāvanā* – a wrong notion).

27. तदुक्तम् -

पुरुषापराधमलिना धिषणा निरवद्यचक्षुरुदयापि यथा ।

न फलाय भर्त्सुविषया भवति श्रुतिसंभवापि तु तथात्मनि धीः ॥

(सं.शारीरक १.१४)

- वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

So is the case with us. In spite of the *śruti* being the valid means of knowledge, the seeker (*pramātā*) is unable to know *Brahmātmā* directly and gain *mokṣa* on account of the fourfold obstructions.]

1-15. 'Further, once the individual's limitations cease, (the knowledge born of the very same *śruti*) becomes fruitful due to the removal of obstructions, just as a column of smoke emerges from fire when the jewel (*maṇi*) or charm (*mantra*) that obstructs its burning ceases to exist'.²⁸

1-16. 'All inquiries (whether *dharmamīmāṃsā* or *Brahmamīmāṃsā*) come to fruition when the limitations of the individual (knower – *pramātā*) are overcome without rejecting the status of the Veda as the self-proved or self-evident means of knowledge (*svataḥ-prāmāṇyam*) valid in and of itself having no need of any other *pramāṇa* (to corroborate it); so say the experts in the Veda. Therefore this text (*Samkṣepaśārīraka*, conducting an inquiry into Brahman based on the *Brahmasūtra*) bears fruit'.²⁹

ix) THE ROLE OF THE *BRAHMASŪTRA* IN VEDĀNTIC PURSUIT

'In view of what is established thus far, a *sannyāsī mumukṣu* endowed with *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-sampatti* namely *śama, dama* etc. having resorted to the mentorship of a competent Guru, should conduct the inquiry with the help of the *śārīrakamīmāṃsā (Brahmasūtra)* consisting of four chapters

28. पुरुषापराधविगमे तु पुनः प्रतिबन्धकव्युदसनात्सफला ।
मणिमन्त्रयोरपगमे तु यथा सति पावकाद्भवति धूमलता ॥ (सं.शा.१.१५)
- वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

29. पुरुषापराधनिवृत्तिफलः सकलो विचार इति वेदविदः ।
अनपेक्षतामनुपरुध्य गिरः फलवद्भवेत्प्रकरणं तदतः ॥ (सं.शा.१.१६)
- वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

till *mokṣa* is gained'.³⁰

The discussion on the nature of *mokṣa* and the means to gain it as ascertained thus far is now being concluded:

तत्सिद्धम्, आत्मैव, अविद्यानिवृत्त्युपलक्षितो मोक्षः । तत्साधनं च वेदान्तवाक्यकरणकः, अन्यानुपरक्त ब्रह्मात्मैक्यसाक्षात्कार एव श्रवणाद्यपनीतप्रतिबन्धः सन्, इति सर्वं समञ्जसम् ।

- वेदान्तकल्पलतिका ।

Tr. 'Therefore it is proved that *ātmā* itself, known directly without *avidyā* (self-ignorance), is *mokṣa*. The means (*sādhana*) to *mokṣa* is *sākṣātkāra* – the direct cognition – of the identity of Brahman and *ātmā* totally free from all *anātmā* – superimposed things (i.e. *anyānuparakta*). This direct cognition is produced by the Vedānta *mahāvākya*. The obstruction to such *sākṣātkāra* is eliminated by *śravaṇa*, *manana* etc.'

MODES OF REASONINGS EMPLOYED IN *BRAHMASŪTRA*

Modes of reasoning (*tarka*) conducive (*anukūla*) to Vedāntic pursuit have also been used in the *Brahmasūtra*. Four types of reasoning are primarily employed, as well as others derived from these. They are all based on the method of *anvaya* and *vyatireka*. *Anvaya* stands for continuance (*anuvṛtti*) or relation (*saṃbandha*), while *vyatireka* stands for discontinuance or absence (*abhāva*). Both these are invaluable assets in the system of reasoning. The *kārya-kāraṇa saṃbandha* – the cause-effect relationship – can be established on their basis. These modes of reasoning lead to the ascertainment of the *sāhacarya niyama* called *vyāpti* – invariable concomitance or co-existence – which is indispensable for inference (*anumāna*). The identity (*aikya*) or distinction (*bheda*) of two things is verily known through them.

30. तस्मात्, शमादिसंपन्नेन परिव्राजकेन मुमुक्षुणा गुरुमुपाश्रित्य चतुर्लक्षणमीमांसया विचार एवानुष्ठेयः फलपर्यन्तम् ।

The following are the four kinds of reasoning.³¹

- i) *Dṛgdṛśyānvaya-vyatirekaḥ* – The mode of reasoning where there is *anvaya* (continuance, relation) of *dṛk*, and *vyatireka* (absence) of *dṛśya*.

Dṛk is the cognitive principle, the knowledge-principle in general. *Dṛśya* stands for all known things. *Dṛk* exists independent of *dṛśya*. *Dṛk* is the cognitive principle by its very nature, but the *dṛśyas* like pot, cloth etc., are by nature made of five elements or their causes. They are not *dṛśyas* by nature since they have no independent existence as *dṛśya* without being related to *dṛk*. They get the status of being *dṛśya* by virtue of their relation with *dṛk* and not otherwise. Therefore *dṛk* exists at all times and has continuance (*anvaya*) in *dṛśya*, (or has relation with *dṛśya*) whereas *dṛśya* has absence (*vyatireka*) because it is transient and is subject to discontinuance. *Dṛśya* does not have the status of being *dṛśya* all the time because its status is only in relation to *dṛk*. A thing that appears to exist at certain times and not at others is false (*mithyā*) in nature. Thus *dṛśya* is false. The same logic applies to the other modes of *anvaya-vyatireka*.

- ii) *Sākṣisākṣyānvaya-vyatirekaḥ* – The mode of reasoning where there is *anvaya* (continuance) of *sākṣī* and *vyatireka* (absence) of *sākṣya*.

Sākṣī is the cognitive illuminating principle in each and every one of us. It is the principle that makes things known in particular. *Sākṣya* is the illumined, the thing made known by

31. तस्य चतुर्विधान्वयव्यतिरेकादितर्करूपत्वात् । दृग्दृश्यान्वयव्यतिरेकः साक्षिसाक्ष्यान्वयव्यतिरेकः, आगमापायितदवध्यन्वयव्यतिरेकः, दुःखिपरमप्रेमास्पदान्वयव्यतिरेक इति समन्वयाध्यायाविरोधाध्यायसाधनाध्यायफलाध्यायाः । अनुवृत्तव्यावृत्तान्वयव्यतिरेकः पञ्चमः । एतच्च सर्वेषां वेदान्तानुकूलतर्काणां चतुर्लक्षणीमीमांसाप्रतिपादितानामुपलक्षणमित्यभियुक्ताः ।

sākṣī. The status of *sākṣya* is possible only in relation to *sākṣī*. *Sākṣya* is false (*mithyā*) since it does not have the status of being *sākṣya* all the time. But *sākṣī* is real because of always being the very *dṛk* – the cognitive principle. It is invariably related to *sākṣya*. Thus *sākṣī* has *anvaya* whereas *sākṣya* has *vyatireka*.

- iii) *Āgamāpāyī-tadavadhyanvaya-vyatirekaḥ* – The mode of reasoning where there is the *anvaya-vyatireka* connection between the transitory (*āgamāpāyī*) thing having birth (beginning) and destruction (end), and its outermost limit or basis (*tadavadhi*).

Take for instance the mud pot and mud. The mud pot is made of mud and is subject to destruction. It is called *āgamāpāyī*. The mud is the outermost limit (*tadavadhi*) or basis of the mud pot. The mud pot is false (*mithyā*) because it is transitory (*āgamāpāyī*) whereas its basis, mud, always exists in the relative sense. This reasoning helps to ascertain the false nature of inert Creation in contrast to the ever existing nature of Brahman.

- iv) *Duḥkhi-paramapremāspadānvaya-vyatirekaḥ* – The mode of reasoning where there is an *anvaya-vyatireka* connection between *duḥkhitvam* – the state of being sorrowful – and one's true nature, the locus of limitless love. *Ātma* is limitless happiness. Therefore, it is the locus of limitless love. This nature of *ātmā* continues even in the state of sorrow. However, sorrow is totally absent in the direct cognition of *paramapremāspada* or *paramānandarūpa ātmā*. Therefore the state of sorrow is false. If this were not so, sorrow would be experienced even in the direct knowledge of *ātmā*, in which case *mokṣa* would be impossible.

The above four (and other similar) methods of reasoning are based on *anuvṛtta-vyāvṛttānvaya-vyatirekaḥ* – a mode

of reasoning where there is the *anvaya* of *anuvṛtta* (uninterrupted presence) and *vyatireka* of *vyāvṛtta* (non-existence in something). *Dṛk* continues to be in *dṛśya* whereas *dṛśya* is absent in *dṛk*. *Sākṣī* is present in *sākṣya*, but *sākṣya* is not in *sākṣī*. The basis (*tadavadhī*) of a transitory (*āgamāpāyī*) thing continues to be in that transitory thing whereas the transitory thing ceases to be in its basis. The locus of limitless love (*paramapremāspada ātmā*) is ever present in the sorrowful person (*duḥkhī*), but the *duḥkhī* is not present in *paramapremāspada*.

These modes of reasoning are in accordance with the truth enunciated in the Upaniṣads. Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa) employed them while composing the *Brahmasūtra* to ascertain the import of *Upaniṣadic* sentences. We can verify for ourselves the usage of these four modes of reasoning in the four chapters of the *Brahmasūtra*.

The non-dual Brahman is the purport (*tātparya*) of all *Upaniṣadic* sentences. This is ascertained in the first chapter (*Samanvayādhyāya*) of the *Brahmasūtra* mainly by taking recourse to the *dṛgdṛśyānvaya-vyatireka* method of reasoning. The *pradhāna* (of *Sāṅkhya*) is *dṛśya* and therefore false (*mithyā*), according to this mode of reasoning. Hence, *Upaniṣadic* statements do not conclude that *pradhāna* is the cause of the world.

Schools of thought professing duality are refuted in the second chapter (*Avirodhādhyāya*) based on the *sākṣisākṣyānvaya-vyatireka* method of reasoning. Duality (*bheda* – division) is not self-evident but needs to be made known by *sākṣī* – the cognitive principle. Thus duality becomes *sākṣya* (the illumined) and therefore false (*mithyā*). Such a thing cannot be the ultimate reality.

The third chapter (*Sādhanādhyāya*) takes to inquiry into the means (*sādhanā*) leading to *mokṣa* on the basis of *āgamāpāyī-tadavadhyanvaya-vyatireka*. The means (*sādhanā*) whether primary

(*antaraṅgasādhanā*) or indirect (*bahiraṅgasādhanā*) become effective only if there is steadfast *vairāgya* (dispassion). *Vairāgya* becomes steady by repeatedly discerning the fleeting nature of sense objects. Prominent among these limitations is the false (*mithyā*) nature of sense objects. All sense objects – *śabda*, *sparsa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha* (sound, touch, form, taste and smell) – are *āgamāpāyī* – are born and destructible. The *anvaya-vyatireka* of transitory sense objects and their final basis Brahman ascertains the false (*mithyā*) nature of all sense objects. Once the false nature of sense objects is understood, the attachment and hankering for them wane. Means (*sādhana*) such as *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (contemplation) then become effective.

The fourth chapter (*Phalādhyāya*) ascertains the result *mokṣa* where the *sat-cit-ānanda* Brahma is directly known. This is possible only if the state of sorrow is false. The reasoning *duḥkhi-paramapremāspadānvaya-vyatireka* ascertains *duḥkhitva* (the state of being sorrowful) to be false.

In keeping with the observation of many learned personages, Śrī Madhusūdana Saraswatī mentions in his *Siddhāntabindu* – a commentary on *Daśaśloki* of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya – that these four kinds of reasoning, along with others derived from them, have been employed in the *Brahmasūtra*.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY (PRASTĀVANĀ BHĀṢYA) ON ADHYĀSA (SUPERIMPOSITION)

To prove its utility and practicability, a scriptural text must vindicate itself by demonstrating that it addresses four indispensable subject-matter related aspects or factors, called *anubandhacatuṣṭaya* described below. Absent these factors, the text has no relevance or meaning. The four aspects are:

- i) *Adhikārī* – the person eligible to take to specified pursuit.

- ii) *Viśaya* – the valid subject to which the text is dedicated in its entirety.
- iii) *Sambandha* – the practical relation between the subject and the text.
- iv) *Prayojanam* – the utility of the text, in terms of the worthwhile result that can be achieved.

Though *Upaniṣadic* statements speak in general about persons eligible to take to *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry) etc., they do not categorically define the characteristics of such individuals. There is a need for a clear definition. To fulfil this requirement, Sage Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa) has composed the first *sūtra* '*Athāto Brahmañijñāsā*'. This *sūtra* shows that these four prerequisites are in conformity with *śrutī*. It employs appropriate reasoning to prompt the *mumukṣu* to take to *śravaṇa* – self-inquiry. This also establishes the necessity of the remaining *sūtras*.

Though not expressly stated, the following four topics are implied in the first *sūtra* :

- a. The exact nature of bondage that operates in the form of the knower (*pramātā*), the doer (*kartā*) and the experiencer (*bhoktā*) is *adhyāsa* (superimposition) – an error.
- b. *Brahmamīmāṃsā* – the analysis into the nature of Brahman – is not the topic of *dharmamīmāṃsā* comprising of the *Jaiminīsūtra*. The latter analyses only the *karmakāṇḍa* portion of the Vedas and not the Upaniṣads.
- c. The specific eligible person (*adhikārī*) who can take to this inquiry.
- d. The subject (*viśaya*), the result (*prayojanam*) etc.

Ādi Śaṅkarācārya throws light on these four topics in his commentary. The exact nature of bondage is thoroughly ascertained

to begin with. If bondage is real, liberation becomes impossible to attain, and such an inquiry would be futile. There is a valid reason for this antithetical predicament.

The first *Brahmasūtra* implies that the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and *jīva* confers liberation by severing bondage. This presents a prima facie problem. Brahman is limitless and ever free (*nityamukta*). The individual *jīva* is bound and hence cannot be identical with Brahman. If doership (*kartṛtva*) and the resultant bondage are real, they cannot be eliminated since no knowledge can eliminate something real. Fortunately, bondage is not real. The *Brahmajñāna* that destroys bondage is the truth. This truth is verified by the three cardinal tests of *śruti* (Veda), *yukti* (reasoning) and *anubhava* (the direct experience – i.e. without any *tripuṭī* – of *ātmā* identical with Brahman). It can never be vitiated. Bondage (*bandha*) must necessarily be due to an error, a delusion – an *adhyāsa* (superimposition). If a rope (*rajju*) is mistaken for a snake (*sarpa*), the knowledge that the rope is the basis of the false snake dispels fear and its consequences. Similarly, *Brahmajñāna* ends bondage.

That bondage is an *adhyāsa* (error) is an inevitable corollary of the first *Brahmasūtra*. The *bhāṣyakāra* establishes the nature of *adhyāsa* in his introductory commentary called *Adhyāsabhāṣya* (commentary on the fundamental error). *Adhyāsa* is proved by showing its presence (*astitva*), definition (*lakṣaṇa*), possibility (*sambhāvanā*) and the means of knowledge that proves its existence (*pramāṇa*). It is necessary to understand first the context of *adhyāsabhāṣya* in greater detail, along with its relevance to the first *sūtra*.

APPROPRIATENESS OF *ADHYĀSABHĀṢYA*

An understanding of the topic (*adhikaraṇam*) of the first *sūtra* will bring out the appropriateness of *adhyāsabhāṣya* clearly.

The topic can be formulated as follows.

Brahmamīmāṃsā (*Vedānta-mīmāṃsā*) – the inquiry into the nature of Brahman – has its basis in the *Upaniṣadic* exhortation, ‘*Ātmā* should be inquired into etc.’ (*Br.U.2-4-5*). Such an inquiry can be meaningful provided it has a valid subject with a useful result. These are the two aspects that determine whether *Brahmamīmāṃsā* should be conducted. However, there is prima facie evidence against both the subject of *jīva* *brahmaikya* – the identity between *jīva* and Brahman – and the accomplishment of the result – liberation (*mokṣa*) – through the means of knowledge pronounced by Vedānta. This leads to doubts regarding the inquiry.

The feeling of being a limited entity subject to *saṃsāra* as an individual (*jīva*) is a universal experience. The everyday experience of the *jīva* is not one of the limitless or absolute bliss that is Brahman. The nature of *jīva* and Brahman too are opposite. The individual is the doer (*kartā*), the experienter of results of actions (*bhoktā*) and the *saṃsārī*. Brahman is the *akartā* (non-doer), the *abhoktā* (not an experienter of results of actions) and an *asaṃsārī*. These features are opposed to each other like light and darkness. Hence the two cannot be identical. On the basis of such direct perception and inference, the identity between *jīva* and Brahman appears to be impossible. Again, the claim that self-knowledge destroys the bondage of limitedness and liberates the individual *saṃsārī* is called into question. A charge is made against Vedānta, by way of contrary proposition (*pūrvapakṣa*) that real bondage cannot be destroyed by knowledge. The *pūrvapakṣin* concludes, therefore, that *Brahmamīmāṃsā* is futile in the absence of a valid subject and a useful result. Such a contrary proposition (*pūrvapakṣa*) is refuted by Vedāntic doctrine (*siddhānta*) in the first *Brahmasūtra* ‘*Athāto Brahmajijñāsā*’. The *sūtra* proves the identity between the *jīva* and Brahman. It further shows that self-knowledge can certainly destroy the bondage of *saṃsāra* because *saṃsāra* is false. How this is possible is established later.

The first *sūtra* is at par with the *Upaniṣadic* statement 'Ātmā should be inquired into' (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5). The word *kartavyā* (should be done or taken to) needs to be added to this *sūtra* to complete the sentence. The *bhāṣyakāra* does so accordingly. The word *jijñāsā* meaning the 'desire to know' comprises of the verbal root 'jñā' (to know) and a desiderative suffix 'san' transformed into 'sā'. Both the verb and the suffix cannot have a syntactical connection with the supplementary word '*kartavyā*' which can be accomplished only through action. To elaborate, the phrases such as 'to know should be done' or 'desire should be done' are not correct. In this context, the verb '*jñā*' implies self-knowledge and the suffix '*san*' signifies the inquiry accomplished through the desire to know *atmā* /Brahman. At par with the *Upaniṣadic* statement referred to (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5), the first *sūtra* means 'the inquiry should be taken to for gaining *Brahmajñāna*'.

Usually knowledge becomes useful by being the means to either gain happiness through acquisition of its means or to avert sorrow. *Brahmajñāna* bears fruit through the total termination of the calamitous bondage which is in the form of *ātmā* – identical with Brahman – considered a doer, experiencer etc. If bondage is real, it can never be destroyed by self-knowledge. As stated earlier, it is an irrevocable fact that *Brahmajñāna* destroys bondage, established on the basis of *śruti*, *yukti* and the *anubhava* of *Brahmajñānis*. This being the case, the only possible conclusion is that the calamitous bondage is untrue – it is false. It is an error called *adhyāsa* (superimposition). The *adhyasta* (false, erroneous) nature of bondage proves the validity of both the subject and the result of the scripture – *Brahmamīmāṃsā*. Hence the inquiry into the nature of Brahman should be conducted, as it has both a useful topic and a direct result, like eating food.

This scriptural inquiry is useful. It produces the knowledge that terminates bondage. As the knowledge, 'this is a rope' dispels the erroneous concept of the snake for which the rope is mistaken and allays the concomitant fear, *Brahmajñāna* destroys the error

of the false (i.e. *adhyasta*) bondage of *saṃsāra*. The *adhyāsa* (error) proves the utility of *Brahmamīmāṃsā*.

By suggesting that the erroneous concept regarding *jīva* is destroyed, the first *sūtra* refers to the identity of *jīva* and Brahman by implication. Otherwise, the knowledge of a given entity cannot end the erroneous concept of anything but that entity. *Jīva* and Brahman are not two distinct entities. Brahman is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the erroneous concept – ‘I am *jīva*’. Brahman mistaken as *saṃsārī* is *jīva*. *Jīva* itself is the product of *adhyāsa* – error – which gets destroyed by the knowledge of Brahman. The *saṃsārī jīva* is discovered to be *asaṃsārī* Brahman – in reality – on gaining *Brahmajñāna*. Therefore the *jīva* in reality is identical with Brahman. All that is necessary is to dispel the delusion (*bhrama* – *adhyāsa*). The locus of any delusion (*adhyāsa*) is necessarily the thing by whose knowledge the delusion – error – vanishes. For example, when a sea-shell is mistaken to be silver, the knowledge ‘this is a shell’ ends the error of mistaking it to be silver. In this example the perception, ‘this is shell’ is knowledge whereas ‘this is silver’ is an erroneous concept. But the locus ‘this’ – the existence aspect – in the mistaken silver is actually that of the shell. There is no silver in reality. In this instance, the locus of delusion and locus of the real thing are identical. All that is necessary is the elimination of the erroneous perception of silver by directly knowing it to be a shell. Similarly the erroneous (*adhyasta*) concept of *jīva* is dispelled by gaining the direct knowledge of Brahman. Its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) – Brahman – continues. This shows the identity between *jīva* and Brahman. Thus the said *adhyāsa* proves that *Brahmamīmāṃsā* has a valid subject with a worthwhile result. Therefore the commencement of this inquiry yields results. Here it must be noted that the contrary proposition (*pūrvapakṣa*) postulates that knowledge cannot terminate bondage because the bondage is real and that some means other than knowledge is required to gain liberation; but the Vedāntic doctrine (*siddhānta*) asserts and proves that knowledge alone can liberate the *jīva* from *saṃsāra*.

The *bhāṣyakāra* intending to comment on the *Brahmasūtra* takes into consideration these counter propositions and the doctrine with respect to the first *sūtra* – ‘*Athāto Brahmajijñāsā*’. The meaning of the word ‘*jijñāsā*’, conforming to the *Upaniṣadic* sentence, ‘*ātmā* should be inquired into’ (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5) does not hold good unless the subject and the result of inquiry are known. These two are implied in the first *sūtra* in the form of an introduction (*upodghāta*). They can be proved only by *adhyāsa* (error) wherein Brahman is mistaken as *saṃsārī jīva*. The *bhāṣyakāra* accomplishes this in two steps. The first is *ākṣepabhāṣya* – a doubt regarding *adhyāsa* or an objection to the appropriateness of *adhyāsa*. The second is *samādhānabhāṣya* – an answer to the objection by demonstrating the possibility of *adhyāsa*. Since the *adhyāsa* which proves the subject and the result of *Brahmamīmāṃsā* has been implied in the very first *sūtra* itself, the wrong notion some people have that the *adhyāsa* portion is not a part of the *sūtrabhāṣya* is also dispelled.

Some opponents are of the view that the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* begins without *maṅgalācaraṇa* – an auspicious introduction in the form of prayer. In writing the phrase ‘*sutarām itaretarabhāvānupapattiḥ*’ – the reciprocal superimposition of the attributes of *ātmā* and *anātmā* is impossible by any means – the *bhāṣyakāra* has performed the *maṅgalācaraṇa* indirectly by remembering the true nature of *ātmā* free from all sorrows.

अध्यासभाष्यम् – *ADHYĀSABHĀṢYAM* (AN EXPOSITION ON SUPERIMPOSITION)

OBJECTION (*ĀKṢEPABHĀṢYAM*) – *ADHYĀSA* (SUPER- IMPOSITION) AS A PHENOMENON WITH REFERENCE TO *ĀTMĀ* AND *ANĀTMĀ* IS UNACCEPTABLE

Let us first understand what *adhyāsa* is. To understand *adhyāsa*, a distinction must be made between true knowledge and erroneous knowledge. Take an object such as silver. True knowledge of silver arises when a piece of silver is known as silver. Now take an attribute of silver, such as shining. A sea-shell on a beach shining in bright sunlight can be mistaken as silver and therefore be taken to be silver. This phenomenon where a given thing is mistaken for something else is erroneous knowledge or superimposition – *adhyāsa*. A person commits the error of mistaking a sea-shell for silver because of an earlier impression that silver shines. Such *adhyāsa* is possible only due to the common attribute of both silver and the sea-shell, namely shining. Taking a closer look at the process, there are two aspects to the conclusion ‘this is silver’, namely, ‘this’ and ‘silver’. ‘This’ (*idam*) is the existence aspect which serves as the common basis of all perceived objects. When a true piece of shining silver is perceived as ‘this is silver’, the specific characteristic of ‘silver’, namely shining, is attributed to the basis ‘this’ referring to silver. This is an instance of true knowledge. In the case of the shining shell mistaken as silver, the ‘this’ (*idam*) aspect actually belongs to the shell, and the shining, which is a specific characteristic of silver, is attributed to the shell, the basis of ‘this’. If the specific characteristic of ‘silver’ is attributed to the ‘this’ aspect of a sea-shell, the resultant perception ‘this is silver’ is clearly erroneous knowledge. In actuality, the silver is nonexistent in the shell. This erroneous knowledge is *adhyāsa* (superimposition), where silver is superimposed on the sea-shell.

As seen above, there is no actual identity between the object itself and the object it is mistaken for through *adhyāsa* – delusion. *Adhyāsa* presupposes a true knowledge of the superimposed entity. The impression or memory of the prior true knowledge furnishes the similarity between the thing superimposed and its actual basis. In the case of silver and the shell, the true knowledge of the silver furnishes the similarity, namely the common attribute of shining. When this common attribute (shining) is perceived in a different basis (sea-shell), the previous impression (or true knowledge of silver) leads to the mistaken identity (of sea-shell as silver).

Similarly, a consideration of the mutual *adhyāsa* between the *ātmā* (self) and *anātmā* (not self) such as *ahaṅkāra* ('I' notion) etc. presupposes a point of similarity or identity between the two. A true knowledge of *ātmā* is imperative to appreciate this similarity. However, there is no point of similarity or identity between *ātmā* and *anātmā*. They are opposed in nature like light and darkness. This is referred to as the opposition (*virodha*) between the two. The *bhāṣyakāra* emphasizes the opposition between *ātmā* and *anātmā* at this point to demonstrate that due to the lack of any similarity or identity whatsoever between the two, the *adhyāsa* of one on the other is impossible. This opposition is pointed out from the standpoint of their nature (*vastusvabhāva*), their cognition (*pratīti*), and their expression (*vyavahāra*).

भा. युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरयोः विषयविषयिणोः तमःप्रकाशवत्
 विरुद्धस्वभावयोः इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ सिद्धायां तद्धर्माणां अपि
 सुतरां इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तिः । इति अतः अस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरे
 विषयिणि चिदात्मके युष्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरस्य विषयस्य तद्धर्माणां
 च अध्यासः तद्विपर्ययेण विषयिणः तद्धर्माणां च विषये अध्यासः
 मिथ्या इति भवितुं युक्तम् ।

Bh.Tr. When it is established that there cannot be any identity (in the sense of one becoming the other) between the subject (*ātmā*) and the object (*anātmā*) – having natures

that are contrary like light and darkness – and which are fit to be cognised as we (in the sense of I – *ātmā*) and you (in the sense of ‘this’ – *anātmā*) respectively, it follows that a mutual relationship between their attributes is not possible either. In the absence of any cause for superimposition such as identity or similarity, it is fitting that the superimposition of the object cognised as you (i.e. as this – *anātmā*) and its attributes on the subject of the nature of pure awareness (*cit*) and cognised as ‘I’, is false (i.e. not real), as also the converse, namely, the superimposition of the subject (‘I’) and its attributes on the object (*anātmā*, is equally not real).

The word ‘*asmad*’ connotes *ātmā* and refers to myself. The word ‘*yuṣmad*’ refers to all others, i.e. not me / myself. Myself is usually referred to as ‘I’, individually, and ‘we’ collectively. When the true nature of that which is presently considered to be ‘I’ is ascertained, it resolves into the *ātmā* which is *cit* (the pure awareness principle). The *bhāṣyakāra* points out later that the *cidātmā* is not beyond the reach of words. The word *gocara* is used in the sense of ‘suitable’. *Asmat pratyaya-gocara* means the *ātmā* that is available, for cognition through the word ‘I’. Though *ahaṅkāra* (the erroneous I notion), *buddhi* (intellect) and others appear to be ‘I’, they are inert in actuality and belong to the category of *yuṣmad* – you – in the sense of ‘this’. This shows that the nature of *ahaṅkāra*, *buddhi* etc. is totally different from that of *ātmā*. The words *yuṣmad* and *asmad* are used here in the plural. While the *anātmā* consisting of *ahaṅkāra*, body (*deha*), senses (*indriyas*), and intellect (*buddhi*) etc. is obviously plural in number, the pure awareness principle *ātmā*, is singular but manifests as many in different individuals with varied embodiments. This is similar to space which is one but appears to be manifold within the pot, the room, etc.

Some are of the opinion that the correct phrase in the *bhāṣya* should have been *asmad-yuṣmad* in place of *yuṣmad-asmad*, with

asmad mentioned first since it stands for the *ātmā* whose nature is auspicious. Though such usage is in keeping with the rules of grammar in specific cases, the use of *yuṣmad-asmad* is grammatically more correct in the present context because both constituent words are in the plural. The gloss *nyāyanīṛṇaya* provides another reason for using the word *yuṣmad* first. The *anātmā* aspect in you (*yuṣmad*) has to be eliminated first to gain the direct cognition of *citswarūpa-ātmā* through the method of *adhyāropāpavāda* – superimposition of Creation and its termination. *Yuṣmad* precedes *asmad* to signify that the elimination comes first.

The phrase *yuṣmad-asmad* (you and we) is deliberately used to show that *ātmā* is totally different from *anātmā*. Actually, the language – both spoken and Vedic – does not permit the use together of pronouns such as *yuṣmad-asmad* ('you' and 'I') belonging to the first (I) and second persons (you). The words used should have been *īdam-asmad* (this and we/I) since the language does permit the co-ordinated use of pronouns of the first (I) and third persons (this), such as *īdam-asmad* ('this' and 'I'), as seen in phrases such as 'these are we who are sitting', 'this is me, (name), speaking'. In the Vedas too, we find statements like 'This is the Kingdom of Videha at your disposal and this is me offered to you as a servant' made by King Janaka to sage Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat*. However the combination *īdam-asmad* was not used in the *bhāṣya* and *yuṣmad-asmad* was deliberately used to highlight the contrast between *ātmā* and *anātmā*.

Now we proceed to examine the differences between *ātmā* and *anātmā*. A contrast can be drawn between two things by highlighting those of their attributes that are opposed to each other. A contrast can also be drawn by describing them through the use of contrasting words. *Citswarūpa-ātmā* viz. the pure awareness principle is termed *viśayī* – the knowing subject or the illuminator of the intellect etc. – whereas the intellect, senses, inert body, sense objects etc. are termed as *viśaya* – the object. *Ātmā* is *pratyak* (proximate – *sarvāntara*) in contrast to *anātmā* that is *parāk* (external).

Their very nature reveals the contrast between the two.

Viśaya (object) called *anātmā* comprising of the body, senses, mind and intellect etc. is described as *yuṣmatpratyayagocara* – the thing available for cognition as you (*yuṣmad* in the sense of ‘this’, distinct from ‘I’). By contrast, the *viśayī* (the pure awareness principle *ātmā* – ‘I’ described as ‘we’) is said to be *asmadpratyayagocara* – the thing available for cognition as *asmad* (‘I’ – *ātmā*) which is the very knowledge-principle (cognitive principle). The contrast between *viśaya* and *viśayī* (i.e. *anātmā* and *ātmā*) is clearly brought out through the constituent words in the first phrase viz. *yuṣmad-asmad*, *pratyaya* and *gocara*.

To sum up there is a threefold difference between *ātmā* and *anātmā* in terms of their nature, cognition and interaction:

- i) The word *yuṣmad* signifying *anātmā* is *parāk* – external – whereas *asmad* ‘I’ which itself is *ātmā* is *pratyak* – the innermost (*sarvāntara*). Thus both are divergent principles in their very nature.
- ii) The word *pratyaya* describes the difference between the two in terms of cognition. The *anātmā* such as *ahaṅkāra*, body etc. is perceived (*pratīyate*) as inert *dṛśya* (known things). In contrast to this *ātmā* itself is *pratīti* – the self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*) knowledge-principle.
- iii) The word *gocara* as *yogyatā* (suitability) shows their distinction by way of expression. *Yuṣmad* (*anātmā*) conceals the true nature of *ātmā* from our vision and makes it appear as *kartā* (doer), *bhoktā* (experiencer) etc. By negating all that is *anātmā*, *ātmā* reveals itself in its true nature – ‘I am Brahman’.

This threefold difference between *ātmā* and *anātmā* rules out any identity between them. Now even if there can be no identity between *ātmā* and *anātmā*, the question arises: why can’t there be

a combination or unity of the two just as a pot painted white is considered to be a white pot? The answer is implied in the next phrase, *viṣayaviṣayiṇoḥ* – of inert *viṣaya* (object) and *viṣayī* (the subject) pure awareness (*cit*). *Anātmā* is the object (*viṣaya*) because it is inert (*jaḍa*) whereas *ātmā* is the subject (*viṣayī*) because it is itself the pure awareness principle. The pure awareness principle (*cit*) and inert objects have a subject-object relationship akin to a lamp (as the illuminator subject) that illuminates objects. Hence unity between them is impossible.

The word *pratyaya* (cognition) and *gocara* (i.e. that which is fit to be) in the earlier phrase provide the rationale for the contrasting nature of *ātmā* (*asmad*) and *anātmā* (*yuṣmad*). *Ātmā* (*asmad*) is *pratyak* (the innermost – proximate) because it is *cit* (*caitanya*) in nature. *Anātmā* (*yuṣmad*) happens to be *parāk* (the external) because its nature is *acit* (*jaḍa*). It is a matter of universal experience that 'I' is sentient in nature in contrast to inert entities. This accounts for the difference between *ātmā* and *anātmā*.

Now the phrase *viṣayaviṣayiṇoḥ* points out why *ātmā* is sentient (*cit*) and *anātmā* inert (*acit*). *Anātmā* (*viṣaya*) is the known (*grāhya*); so it is inert. *Ātmā* (*viṣayī*) is the principle of sentience (*cittva*), the very basis of the sentient *grāhaka* (the knower). Sentience is seen to be the cause of being *pratyak* (the inner – proximate). It gains the status of knower (*grāhaka*). It is well-known that sentience (*cittva*) is clearly displayed by the knower (*grāhaka*). In contrast, inertness (*acittva*) is the cause of being external (*parāk*), and since it is an object, gains the status of inertness (*acittva*).

Further investigation in the case of *ātmā* shows that each of the three, *pratyaktva* (innerness), *cittva* (sentience), and *viṣayītvā* (the status of knower), is the cause of the other two, because each is invariably accompanied by the others. Similarly, in the case of *anātmā*, each of the three factors, *parāktva* (being external), *acittva* (inertness) or *viṣayatva* (the status of an object), individually is the cause of the other two.

The illustration *tamaḥprakāśavat* – like light and darkness – is supplied to emphasize the contrary nature of *ātmā* and *anātmā* in order to rule out any identity or similarity between the two.

A doubt may arise at this juncture. Even if we accept that *ātmā* and *anātmā* cannot be identical, why should the attributes of *ātmā* such as sentience, happiness and everlastingness not be united with *anātmā* and the attributes of *anātmā* such as the inertness, sorrow, transience etc. be imposed on *ātmā* ?

The *bhāṣyakāra* says this is not possible. Attributes of an entity can be associated with another entity if there is a union between the two. A crystal takes on the colour of a red flower only when both are in contact with each other. The heat of the fire gets transmitted to a spherical iron ball and the fire assumes the form of the ball only when there is mutual contact between the two. In the absence of any contact between the two entities, there cannot be any mutual transmission of their attributes. *Ātmā* and *anātmā* are contrary in nature, like light and darkness. There cannot be mutual contact between them. As a result, neither a mutual identity between *ātmā* and *anātmā* nor a reciprocal exchange of attributes is possible. Therefore there cannot be any impressions (*saṃskāras*) of identity or similarity between the two either, which are required to produce *adhyāsa* (superimposition) between the two. The *ākṣepabhāṣya* therefore concludes with the observation: *adhyāsaḥ mithyā iti bhavitum yuktam* – it is fitting that superimposition does not take place. The word *mithyā* has two meanings, viz., i) *apahnavā* – negation, is not; ii) *anirvacanīya* – inexplicable. The meaning ‘it does not exist’ in the sense of negation is applicable here.

The rest of the *ākṣepabhāṣya* from ‘*asmatpratyayagocare*’ to ‘*adhyāsaḥ mithyā iti bhavitum yuktam*’ refutes the mutual superimposition of *anātmā* and its attributes on *ātmā* and of *ātmā* and its attributes on *anātmā*. *Ātmā* is specified here as *asmatpratyayagocara* – that which is fit to be known through the cognition ‘I’. The intellect (*buddhi*), ‘I notion’ (*ahaṅkāra*) etc. are

also commonly experienced as 'I'. Therefore to distinguish *ātmā* from intellect, *ahaṅkāra* etc., the word *viṣayī* (the *sākṣī* of *buddhi* etc.) is used. The following word *cidātmakaḥ* – the nature of pure awareness which is evident as 'I' – shows why *ātmā* is the direct illuminator of intellect etc. The superimposition of *anātmā* and their attributes on *cidātmaka ātmā* is not possible. The *anātmā* is described as *yuṣmatpratyayagocara* – that which is comprehended as 'you' (*tvam*) in the sense of 'this' (*idam*). The question of how the 'I notion' (*ahaṅkāra*), intellect (*buddhi*) etc., experienced as 'I', can be cognized as an object or 'this', is resolved by terming *anātmā* as *viṣaya*. *Ahaṅkāra*, intellect etc. are directly illumined (made known) by *sākṣī* (*caitanya* – pure awareness). Though the intellect and similar entities are not perceived through the sense-organs, like objects such as a pot, they are in fact the 'object' (*viṣaya*) directly known by *sākṣī*.

Etymologically, *viṣaya* means that which binds (*viṣinoti*, *badhnāti*). Because objects like the intellect, senses etc. appear to mould *ātmā* to their form, along with their limitations, the word *viṣaya* suggests that *anātmā* is something that deserves to be discarded.

While the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of *anātmā* and its attributes on *ātmā* is not possible, why should the superimposition of *ātmā* and its attributes on *anātmā* not take place? Experiences such as 'I know', 'I am happy' certainly substantiate this claim. The possibility of such superimposition is refuted. The superimposition of *viṣayī* (*ātmā*) which is *caitanya* (pure awareness principle) and its attributes on *viṣaya* (*anātmā*) is not possible since the basic prerequisites (*sāmagrīs*) for *adhyāsa* are absent.

In order for there to be mutual *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and *anātmā*, the indispensable requirements are impressions accruing from prior knowledge of either identity between the two (*ātmā* and *anātmā*) or similarity between the two or ignorance of either of the two. The limitless or partless (*niravayava*), attributeless (*nirguṇa*) and self-evident (*svaprakāśa*) *ātmā* cannot have any similarity of

components (*avayavas*) or attributes (*guṇas*) or any relation with ignorance. If *ātmā* is attributeless, some may question why the *bhāṣyakāra* himself has refuted the superimposition of attributes such as *sat*, *cit* *ānanda* belonging to *ātmā* on *anātmā* in his *bhāṣya* by using the word *taddharmāṇām* (of attributes belonging to *ātmā*). In this context, one has to understand that the three aspects referred to as existence (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*) and happiness (*ānanda*) are the very nature of *ātmā*. They appear to be distinct features of *ātmā* because each word depicts a specific aspect of *ātmā* and generates distinct corresponding *antaḥkaraṇavṛttis* (thought patterns) in the mind.

Here is a contrary proposition. *Ātmā* is identical to the attributeless (*nirguṇa*) and actionless (*niṣkriya*) Brahman. Therefore the *adhyāsa* of *anātmā* on *ātmā* is impossible. In such event, experiences or – cognitions such as ‘I do’, ‘I enjoy’, ‘I suffer’ and the objects experienced in them cannot be *adhyasta* (superimposed) things. They should necessarily be real in nature and not false because they do not belong to the category of superimposed things. As a result, experiences such as ‘I am the doer, experiencer, sufferer’, must also be real. This means that bondage is real. The knowledge of *ātmā* can destroy only its ignorance but not real bondage. Therefore *Brahmāmīmāṃsā* (the inquiry into Brahman) cannot have as its subject the identity between the truly bound *jīva* and ever liberated Brahman, both being contrary in nature. This being the case, this scriptural inquiry becomes unproductive. Such is the conclusion of those who espouse the inappropriateness of *ātmānātmādhyāsa* (the *adhyāsa* of *ātmā* and *anātmā*).

ADHYĀSA DOES EXIST EVEN THOUGH IT SEEMS INAPPROPRIATE TO ACCEPT ITS EXISTENCE

The view that it is inappropriate to posit the existence of *adhyāsa* with reference to *ātmā* and *anātmā* requires further scrutiny. Some questions emerge. Is there any reason why *adhyāsa* should not exist? Is it because to consider its existence is inappropriate? Is it not experienced at all as a phenomenon? Is there no cause for

it to come into being? In answer, it can be said that while it is clearly inappropriate to consider the *adhyāsa* of the *anātmā* on the self-evident *ātmā* and even highly desirable to consider the non-existence of such *adhyāsa*, such a superimposition does in fact take place as it is a phenomenon that is universally experienced. There does exist a valid cause for it to arise, viz., the inexplicable ignorance of *ātmā*. The following *parihārabhāṣya*—the commentary in reply to the objection—justifies the existence of mutual *adhyāsa*.

भा. तथापि अन्योन्यस्मिन् अन्योन्यात्मकतां अन्योन्यधर्मान् च अध्यस्य इतरेतराविवेकेन अत्यन्तविविक्तयोः धर्मधर्मिणोः मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य अहं इदं मम इदं इति नैसर्गिकः अयं लोकव्यवहारः ।

Bh.Tr. (Though the superimposition between *ātmā* and *anātmā* is seemingly unacceptable) even so, having mutually superimposed the two entities and their attributes on each other due to a lack of awareness of the distinction between the *ātmā* and *anātmā* and their attributes, which are totally different, (and thus) having united the real (*ātmā*) and the false (*anātmā*) through inexplicable ignorance, people have natural misconceptions such as ‘I am this body’ and ‘this is mine’.

The phrase ‘even so’ (*tathāpi*) in the *bhāṣya* indicates the *bhāṣyakāra*’s agreement with the assertion that the *ātmānātmādhyāsa* described so far is seemingly unacceptable. Therefore in order to arrive at the full meaning of the present statement by the *bhāṣyakāra*, the word ‘although’ (*yadyapi*) needs to be added before the phrase ‘*yuṣmadasmatpratyayaagocarayoḥ*’ at the very beginning of the *adhyāsabhāṣya*.

It is universally observed that the word *ayam* (this) is used naturally by people in the context of one’s body, such as ‘I am this body and this is mine’ (*aham idam mama idam iti naisargikaḥ ayam*

lokavyavahārah). This aptly proves that *adhyāsa* is experienced by everyone. Spontaneous and direct experiences such as ‘I am a man’, ‘I am ignorant’, ‘I am the doer’ negate the contention that the *adhyāsa* of *ātmā* and *anātmā* is not experienced. Such a direct experience of *ātmā* as the doer (*kartā*), experiencer (*bhoktā*) etc. cannot be the knowledge (*pramā*) of *ātmā*. The *śruti* is the highest *pramāṇa* (the means of knowledge). It is flawless.

The purport of the *śruti* is also to point out that *akartā* (non-doer), *abhoktā* (non-experiencer) *ātmā* is identical with Brahman. This is established through reasoning in the form of the six valid proofs (*liṅgas*) such as *upakramopasaṃhāra* (beginning and the conclusion of the topic), *abhyāsa* (repetition) etc. Based on the *śruti*, the notion of *ātmā* as doer etc. is clearly erroneous knowledge. Even though *pratyakṣa* – direct perception – as a means of knowledge serves as the basis for all other means of knowledge, it cannot negate the knowledge imparted by the *śruti*. Direct perception is not flawless, as evidenced by the perceptual knowledge of silver seen in the sea-shell, which is a delusion. The *śruti* asserts that *ātmā* does not have a body (*athāyamaśarīrah*), in direct contradiction to the common perception ‘I am a man’. However, the ever changing, destructible body is inert in itself and can never be the changeless indestructible pure awareness principle *ātmā*. Therefore direct perception cannot refute the nature of *ātmā* as revealed by the ultimate *pramāṇa*, the *śruti*.

The word ‘*lokavyavahārah*’ illustrates *adhyāsa* in two ways. *Loka* is that which is experienced or perceived. Here it refers to the false notion, ‘I am a human being’ – man or woman etc. This is *arthādhyāsa* whereby a given entity (*artha*) is mistaken in its entirety to be some other entity. This type of *adhyāsa* is effected by a superimposed misconception called *vyavahāra*. It is a mistaken thought (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*) ‘I am a human being’ – in the place of the correct knowledge – ‘I am *ātmā*’. The superimposition of such a wrong notion on correct knowledge is called *jñānādhyāsa* where the word *jñāna* refers to erroneous knowledge and not correct knowledge.

The characteristics of *arthādhyāsa* and *jñānādhyāsa* are described in the phrase – *atyantaviviktayoḥ dharmadharminoḥ itaretarāvivekena anyonyasmin anyonyātmakatām anyonyadharmān ca adhyasya*. The two *dharmis* (entities having specific attributes) referred to are *ātmā* and *anātmā*. The former is the self-existent knowledge-principle. The latter comprises of *ahaṅkāra* (I notion), the body and all entities in Creation. Sentience, bliss and ever-existence etc. are considered to be the *dharmas* (attributes) of *ātmā*. On the other hand, inertness, change, sorrow, destructibility etc. are the *dharmas* of *anātmā*. *Ātmā* and *anātmā* and their attributes are completely different (*atyanta-vivikta*) from each other. In reality *ātmā* can never be identical with *anātmā* or vice versa. The mutual intermingling of their attributes is also impossible. Nevertheless the distinction between their nature and their attributes is not clearly appreciated (*itaretarāviveka*). This results in the superimposition of the two entities *ātmā* and *anātmā* and their attributes on each other, giving rise to *lokavyavahāra* – the universal misconception that ‘I am a human being’.

The *bhāṣya* specifies that the attributes (*dharmas*) and entities (*dharmis*) pertaining to *adhyāsa* (superimposition) are completely (*atyanta*) distinct (*vivikta*). The identity between two apparently distinct entities that are not totally contrary in nature cannot be called error or superimposition (*adhyāsa*). Thus for example phrases such as ‘This is that Mr. Devadatta’ shows that the apparent distinction between Mr. Devadatta at one location and time and Mr. Devadatta at another location and time is not real since the entity (Mr. Devadatta in this case) is one and the same, and the difference is not complete but relative to time and space. This cannot be a case of superimposition.

Besides the superimposition of the two *dharmis* viz. *ātmā* and *anātmā* (in *anyonyātmakatām adhyasya*), the *bhāṣya* also speaks of a separate superimposition of the mutual attributes of these two *dharmis* (in *anyonya dharmān ca adhyasya*). It would be incorrect to consider this separate reference to these two *adhyāsas* superfluous.

Though the common assumption is that superimposition of the bases – the entities (*dharmis*) – automatically leads to a superimposition of their attributes (*dharmas*), such is not always the case. At times, attributes may be superimposed without a superimposition of their bases. For instance, an *adhyāsa* such as ‘I am the eye’ does not take place, yet we do find the attributes of blindness of the eye superimposed on *ātmā* in the statement ‘I am blind’. A crystal in the vicinity of a red flower does not resemble the flower but the red colour of the flower certainly gets superimposed on the crystal. To bring out this point, the *bhāṣya* makes a distinction between the superimposition of the attributes of two entities and the superimposition of the two respective entities themselves.

In a superimposition (*adhyāsa*), only the superimposed (*adhyasta*) entity which invariably turns out to be false (*mithyā*) in nature, is perceived, not its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna* – the entity on which it is superimposed). Now since *ātmā* and *anātmā* are both verily known at the same time, there must be a reciprocal *adhyāsa* between them i.e. each one concurrently becoming the *adhiṣṭhāna* and the *adhyasta* of each other. In that case the *ātmā* which is superimposed on the *anātmā* must necessarily be false, since it is something superimposed (*adhyasta*). This leads to *śūnyavāda* – the doctrine of the non-existence of everything – which is highly unacceptable. To refute this claim, the *bhāṣya* uses the words *satyānṛte mithunīkṛtya* – having united *satya* (the ever-existent principle) and *anṛta* (the false). *Satya*, the ever-existent entity is *caitanya* the pure awareness principle *ātmā* which always manifests as ‘I’ but never as ‘this’ or as false. The reality of *satya* refutes *śūnyavāda*. ‘*Ātmā*’ being *asaṅga* (unattached) by nature, its *adhyāsa* on *anātmā* cannot be direct. It can only be through a relation (*saṃsarga*) or proximity in terms of *cidābhāsa* – the reflection of *cit* (pure awareness) in the *antaḥkaraṇa*. *Anṛta* is *anātmā* (called *yuṣmad*) which is false in nature. On the other hand, the superimposition of *anātmā* on *ātmā* is direct. *Anātmā* gets superimposed on *ātmā* by its very nature as it is. This *mithunīkaraṇa* – the uniting of *ātmā* and *anātmā* – is superimposition. To sum up, the doctrine of non-existence has no basis, since *ātmā*

does not get superimposed directly on *anātmā* due to which *ātmā* can be false. An erroneous union between *satya ātmā* and false *anātmā* cannot lead to *śūnyavāda*.

The three phrases employed in the *bhāṣya* viz., ‘*adhyasya* – having superimposed’, ‘*mīthunīkṛtya* – having united’, and ‘*lokavyavahāra* – the misconception that I am a human being’, are actually synonymous. All the three mean one and the same *adhyāsa*. The question arises, why are past participles indicating past action such as ‘having superimposed’ and ‘having united’ used in these phrases? The syntactic use of the past tense in the phrases ‘having superimposed’, and ‘having united’, indicates that each *adhyāsa* is preceded by another similar *adhyāsa* which happens to be the cause of the subsequent *adhyāsa* through its impressions (*saṃskāras*). Thus we get a series or a flow of prior *adhyāsas* in succession with respect to a specific *adhyāsa*. This is expressed through the use of the adjective *naisargikaḥ* – natural, innate (inborn) – which qualifies the word *lokavyavahāraḥ*. *Naisargikaḥ* in this context means the flow – unbroken succession – of *adhyāsa* of *anātmā* on *ātmā* is beginningless (*anādī*) in terms of *hetu-hetumadbhāva* – the relation between cause and effect. Now, a flow is an abstraction – not something concrete – whereas an *adhyāsa* is born and thus has a beginning (*ādī*). How then can the *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and *anātmā* be natural (*naisargikaḥ*) in the sense of being beginningless (*anādī*)? The answer lies in the beginninglessness (*anādītva*) of time (*kāla*). It is an accepted fact that time is beginningless. In Creation, time is something that is superimposed on *ātmā*. If time – the product of *adhyāsa* – is beginningless, its cause, *adhyāsa*, must also necessarily be so. Thus the word *naisargikaḥ* (natural) asserts that there is a cause for *adhyāsa* in the form of the *saṃskāras* of the sequence of prior *adhyāsas*. This refutes the contrary proposition that for want of a cause, it is inappropriate to say that *adhyāsa* exists.

The phrase *mīthyājñāna-nimittaḥ* denotes the material and instrumental cause of *adhyāsa*. The phrase defines the inexplicable (*anirvacanīya* / *mīthyā* – false) ignorance (*ajñāna*) as both the

material and instrumental cause (*nimitta*) of *adhyāsa*. A cause (*kāraṇa*) that is inseparable from its effect (*kārya*) is its material (*upādāna*) cause. *Ajñāna* is said to be inexplicable because it cannot be defined either as existent, since it gets negated by knowledge, or non-existent because it is clearly experienced in the form of its effects. Thus *mithyā* (inexplicable) also means false in nature.

To indicate that *ajñāna* (ignorance) is also the instrumental cause of *adhyāsa*, the *bhāṣya* uses the phrase *mithyājñāna-nimittaḥ* instead of *mithyājñānopādānaḥ* (having ignorance as the material cause) to describe *adhyāsa*. While *ajñāna* is the material cause of *adhyāsa*, it is also the instrumental cause for the following three reasons:

- i) *Ajñāna* veils the self-luminous *ātmā* and is therefore detrimental in its effect. This veiling functions as the cause that denies the knowledge of *ātmā*, resulting in the dreaded *saṃsāra*.
- ii) *Ajñāna* serves as the *upādhi* (adjunct) of *Īśvara* (the Creator) in bringing about the *adhyāsa* of *ahaṅkāra* (I notion) on *ātmā*.
- iii) *Ajñāna* is endowed with secondary causes of *saṃsāra* like *saṃskāras* (impressions), *kāla* (time factor), *karma* (actions with their results etc.).

Ātmā is self-evident (*svaparakāśa*) and unattached (*asaṅga*). In the absence of any essential elements (*sāmagrīs*) – *saṃskāras* (impressions) etc. – it should not have any association (*saṅga*) with ignorance. In spite of this, the ignorance of *ātmā* is verily experienced. The universal experience – I am ignorant – is proof of this fact. It is like the darkness experienced by an owl during the day even in the presence of a blazing sun. The word *mithyā* (inexplicable) suggests the false and dubious nature of ignorance (*ajñāna*). As a rule, a false entity cannot affect its basis in which it appears to exist. Ignorance too cannot negate its basis *ātmā*, the ever-existent knowledge-principle.

There is a second reason why *ajñāna* is described as *mithyā*. The word *mithyā* (inexplicable – false) rules out the possibility of *ajñāna* being taken to be the absence of knowledge (*jñāna*). *Ajñāna* is false in nature. It gets destroyed by *jñāna* (knowledge). This particular characteristic of ignorance is also indicated by the word *mithyā*.

The statements ‘*aham idam iti*’ (I am this i.e. a human being etc.), and ‘*mama idam iti*’ (this is my body etc.) corroborate the existence of *adhyāsa*. The word ‘*idam*’ (this) in ‘*aham idam*’ refers to *ahaṅkāra* (I notion), body, mind, senses etc. The other word ‘*iti*’ (i.e. and of this nature) in ‘*aham idam iti*’, suggests the acquisition and rejection of things favourable or unfavourable to one’s body etc. after their perception through the appropriate *pramāṇa* – the means of knowledge. ‘*Mama*’ (my) signifies factors such as old age, death, progeny, wealth, ownership etc. The word ‘*iti*’ in the case of ‘*mama idam iti*’ refers to activity / inactivity in connection with things that belong to oneself.

The first of the superimpositions of the *anātmā* at the body level is ‘I’ (*aham*) with respect to the body. Now, even though it appears that there can be no superimposition in the case of such ‘I’ as there is no basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and something else that can be superimposed (*āropya*) to produce *adhyāsa*, such is not the case. The ‘I’ thought consists of both *cit* and *acit*. In the statement ‘I experience’ there are two aspects, *cit* (sentiency principle called *dṛk*) and *acit* (inert thought called *dṛśya*) aspects. It is like the superimposition between iron and fire in the statement ‘iron burns’. Actually it is fire in contact with iron that burns. ‘I am this’ (*aham idam*) reveals *tādātmyādhyāsa* – the superimposition of identity between I and this as ‘I am a human being’. The word ‘this’ (*idam*) in this context means the body and senses etc. which are the experienced (*bhogyā*). ‘This is my body’ (*mama idam śarīram*) is an instance of *saṃsargādhyāsa* – the superimposition of this and mine in terms of relation. Though the identity (*tādātmyā*) of body and *ātmā* is itself a relation (*saṃsarga*), there is a subtle distinction

between *tādātmyādhyāsa* and *saṃsargādhyāsa*. Two distinct entities having a mistaken identity of their co-existence is an instance of *tādātmyādhyāsa*. In *tādātmyādhyāsa*, the cognition of identity (*aikyāmsā*) takes place, as in the statement ‘I am a man’. On the other hand, *saṃsargādhyāsa* is characterized by the cognition of distinction – *bhedāmsā*, the aspect of distinction – as in the case of ‘this is mine’. Here, I take myself to be different from what belongs to me.

The above arguments show that there is a reciprocal superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of *ātmā* and *anātmā* because the essential prerequisites of *adhyāsa* are present. Such a superimposition is certainly experienced. We can infer that bondage is false since it is brought about by the false *adhyāsa*. *Ātmaññāna* destroys self-ignorance and its resultant false bondage by revealing the identity between the true nature of *jīva* and Brahman. Since there is no incongruity in such identity, this scripture – *Brahmamīmāṃsā* – has a valid subject and result, viz. the liberation (*mokṣa*). The study of *Brahmamīmāṃsā* proves to be highly fruitful.

Having expounded on the subject and the result of this text implied in the first *sūtra*, the *bhāṣyakāra* now proceeds to establish the definition or characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of *adhyāsa*, its tenability (*saṃbhāvanā*) and the *pramāṇa* – the means of knowledge – of *adhyāsa*.

DEFINITION (LAKṢAṆA) OF ADHYĀSA

Since *Brahmamīmāṃsā* is an analytical text to ascertain the ultimate truth, the subject matter is presented in the form of a healthy discussion. Supporters of contrary propositions (*pūrvapakṣas*) regarding *adhyāsa* demand an accurate definition of *adhyāsa*.

भा. आह – कः अयं अध्यासः नाम इति ।

Bh.Tr. Question: What is this phenomenon that goes by the name superimposition?

भा. उच्यते – स्मृतिरूपः परत्र पूर्वदृष्टावभासः ।

Bh.Tr. Reply: Superimposition is the mistaken appearance of an entity on a basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) that is different (*bhinna*) from its own. It is experienced as a result of such an earlier perception and is similar to the (actual) entity when remembered.

The main part of the definition of *adhyāsa* is ‘*paratra avabhāsaḥ*’, meaning the mistaken appearance of an entity on a basis different from its own. Take for instance *śuktirajata* – the silver (*rajata*) seen (mistaken) instead of the actual (shining) sea-shell. The locus of the mistakenly seen silver is the shell whose basis is different from that of silver. The remaining two words viz. *smṛtirūpaḥ* and *pūrvadṛṣṭaḥ*, round out the definition. *Smṛtiḥ* (memory) here signifies the remembrance of the actual entity, which leads to its role in the present superimposition. The actual object was perceived earlier and is remembered now. Thus *smṛtirūpaḥ* means ‘similar to the (actual) object remembered’. In the case of ‘shell mistaken for silver’, the form of the mistaken silver is similar to the form seen earlier which is now remembered. The impressions (*saṃskāras*) of the earlier perception – as implied by *pūrvadṛṣṭaḥ* (seen earlier) – give rise to the mistaken appearance of the entity or *adhyāsa* (superimposition). Both the memory (*smṛti*) of the remembered object and the superimposed entity (*āropya*) are products of past impressions. This justifies the use of the word *smṛtirūpaḥ* in the definition of *adhyāsa*. The word *avabhāsaḥ* from the above definition of *adhyāsa* means the falsely seen thing (*avabhāsyate iti avabhāsaḥ*) if it is *arthādhyāsa*. As for *jñānādhyāsa* the word *avabhāsaḥ* signifies the actual appearance (*avabhāsanam*).

The above definition of *adhyāsa* is based on the doctrine of Vedānta. The definitions of *adhyāsa* propounded by other schools of thought vary in certain respects. *Bhāṣya* enumerates five definitions, including the one in Vedānta. Though the views of these proponents differ as regards the nature of the two – the *adhiṣṭhāna* (basis) and *āropya* (the entity being superimposed) – there is

unanimity regarding the basic definition of *adhyāsa*. All agree that *adhyāsa* is '*paratra parāvabhāsaḥ*' – the mistaken appearance of an entity on a basis different from its own. In the present context, the *bhāṣyakāra* emphasizes the conformance of these definitions with the Vedāntic definition already presented, and does not deem it necessary to point out the shortcomings in the other definitions.

The *bhāṣya* elaborates five views on *adhyāsa*. They are:

- i) *Anyathākhyāti*
- ii) *Ātmakhyāti*
- iii) *Akhyāti*
- iv) *Asatkhyāti*
- v) *Anirvacanīyakhyāti*

Collectively they are known as *pañcakhyāti*. *Khyāti* means cognition (*pratīti*), knowledge (*jñāna*), or erroneous cognition (*bhramajñāna*), depending on the context.

Anirvacanīyakhyāti has been described earlier in the definition '*smṛtirūpaḥ paratra pūrvadṛṣṭāvabhāsaḥ*'. This definition is based on Vedānta – *advaitasiddhānta* (the doctrine of non-duality). *Bhrama* (delusion) or *adhyāsa* cannot be defined as *sat* (ever-existent principle) because it gets negated later. It is not *asat* (totally non-existent) either since it is experiential. Being distinct from both *sat* and *asat*, it defies definition. Therefore it is called *anirvacanīyakhyāti* – an inexplicable, erroneous cognition.

Next *anyathākhyāti* and *ātmakhyāti* are jointly described below:

भा. तं केचित् अन्यत्र अन्यधर्माध्यासः इति वदन्ति ।

Br.Tr. Some define *adhyāsa* as the superimposition of the attributes of one entity on another entity.

This is the definition of *adhyāsa* according to both *anyathākhyāti* and *ātmakhyāti*. The first three definitions can be

easily understood through the illustration of *śukti-rajat* (sea-shell and silver).

Anyathākhyāti is propounded by *Naiyāyika* and *Vaiśeṣika* (also called *Tārkika*) schools of thought. The word *anyathā* here means ‘in a form different from one’s own’ or ‘in a different way’. According to them an entity cannot be superimposed on another entity (*anyatra*), but an attribute of an entity (*anyadharmā*) can be superimposed on another entity. For example, they say that silver cannot be superimposed on a sea-shell, but an attribute of silver can be superimposed on the shell.

Ātmakhyāti belongs to a Buddhistic school of thought called *Vijñānavādi* or *Yogācāra*. According to *ātmakhyāti*, the *anyadharmā* – the attribute of another entity such as silver – that is superimposed on the entity indicated by the word *anyatra* (elsewhere), for example on the shell located externally, is not the superimposition of an attribute of the actual silver or a similar entity in the external world but is in fact the attribute of the internal *buddhi* (intellect), called *ātmā* in this *khyāti*, with the appearance of silver. It should be noted that the word *ātmā* in *ātmakhyāti* does not refer to *caitanya* (the pure awareness principle) but to *buddhi* (the intellect).

The next definition is *akhyāti* given by *Gurumata* also known as *Prābhākaraḥ* belonging to *pūrvamīmāṃsā*. *Akhyāti* literally means ignorance (*ajñāna*).

भा. केचित् तु यत्र यदध्यासः तद्विवेकाग्रहनिबन्धनः भ्रमः इति ।

Bh.Tr. Some, on the other hand, say that the superimposition of one entity on another is a delusion (*bhramah*) produced due to a lack of awareness of the distinction between the nature of the entities and the knowledge thereof.

Ignorance of the difference between the nature and knowledge of shell and silver gives rise to the misconception that

'this is silver' instead of a shell. *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* accepts this as a case of delusion where one entity is mistaken for another.

The last definition of *adhyāsa* given by the *bhāṣyakāra* in this series is *asatkhyāti*. This definition belongs to the *mādhyamika* or *śūnyatāvādī* Buddhistic school of thought – *nihilists*.

भा. अन्ये तु यत्र यदध्यासः तस्यैव विपरीतधर्मत्वकल्पनां आचक्षते इति ।

Bh.Tr. And others declare that the superimposition of one entity on another is the cognition of a totally inconsistent or non-existent attribute on the *adhiṣṭhāna* – the basis of the superimposed entity.

Mādhyamikas hold that the cognition of silver in place of the shell is neither an experience nor a memory. It is something which does not exist in reality.

Though these definitions differ in certain aspects, they agree unanimously on '*paratra parāvabhāsaḥ*' – the mistaken appearance of an entity on a basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) other than itself.

भा. सर्वथा अपि तु अन्यस्य अन्यधर्मावभासतां न व्यभिचरति ।

Bh.Tr. All definitions agree on the false appearance of an entity having the attributes of another.

The false nature of an *adhyasta* (superimposed) entity can be verified easily. For example, the silver directly perceived instead of the shell cannot be perceived either in some other thing or be present internally within the perceiver's intellect (*buddhi*). If it were totally non-existent its perception would be impossible. On the other hand, if the superimposed silver is actually present in the shell, it would not get negated upon closer examination and would continue to exist. This does not happen. Therefore the only possible conclusion is that the silver perceived in place of the shell is false

(*mithyā*) in nature. As a matter of fact, reasoning is not required to establish the falsity of superimposed entities. The very experience proves this fact.

भा. तथा च लोके अनुभवः – शुक्तिका हि रजतवत् अवभासते,
एकः चन्द्रः सद्वितीयवत् इति ।

Bh.Tr. Similar is our experience in the world. It is well-known that the sea-shell appears to be silver, one moon appears to be two.

To appreciate that the shell with the appearance of silver is merely an experience, one must discover that what one saw as silver is nothing but the shell. Till such discovery, the erroneous perception of silver hinders the knowledge that it is a shell and not silver. The suffix *vat* (like) in the word *rajatavat* (like silver) is used to point out that direct perception negates the superimposed silver and reveals its false nature. The *ahañkāra* (I notion) and the *antaḥkaraṇa* (the mind, intellect etc.) are superimposed on *ātmā* just as silver is superimposed on the shell. This *adhyāsa*, which is caused by *avidyā* – ignorance – produces the identity between *ātmā* and *anātmā*. Since *avidyā* brings about in this case the identity between *adhiṣṭhāna* (*ātmā*) and *adhyasta* (*ahañkāra* etc.) without creating any division between them, this *adhyāsa* is called *nirupādhika adhyāsa* – a superimposition without *upādhi* (adjunct).

An *upādhi* (adjunct) is generally defined as a thing which imparts (as it were) its attributes to a proximate thing. It also means a peculiar thing that leads to ‘the semblance of a reason (*hetvābhāsa*)’, or what is called the fallacious middle term in logic. Some masters consider any cause of separation or division as *upādhi*. Under this definition, the *avidyā* which produces the identity between *ātmā* and *anātmā* in the form of *ahañkāra* is only the cause of the erroneous oneness and not an *upādhi*.

The same *avidyā* also produces an apparent division between Brahman and the *jīva* (the individual) and causes them to

appear as two distinct entities. This is an instance of *sopādhika adhyāsa* (*adhyāsa* with an *upādhi*) with *avidyā* as the *upādhi*. The example of 'silver on the shell' illustrated the *nirupādhika adhyāsa* of *ahaṅkāra*. The *bhāṣya* now cites the example of one moon appearing as two to illustrate the *sopādhika adhyāsa* of *avāntarabheda* (secondary division) between Brahman and the *jīva*.

If a finger is held erect in front of your eyes as you gaze at the moon, two moons seem to appear. The gaze should be directed at the finger, with the moon in the background. Any object can be used to experience this phenomenon.

The last word 'īti' in the *bhāṣya* indicates that the discussion on the definition (*lakṣaṇa*) of *adhyāsa* concludes here.

THE TENABILITY OF *ĀTMĀNĀTMĀDHYĀSA* (SUPERIMPOSITION BETWEEN *ĀTMĀ* AND *ANĀTMĀ*)

A contrary proposition refuting the tenability of *ātmānātmādhyāsa* is now presented. The contrary proposition suggests that superimposition is possible on the shell etc. because the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of superimposition is directly perceptible. Perhaps a rule can be enunciated that the basis of the superimposition should be perceptible by the sense-organs and must be an object (*viśaya*) of cognition. These two requirements are not met in the case of *ātmā*. This contrary proposition (*pūrvapakṣa*) is now presented.

भा. कथं पुनः प्रत्यगात्मनि अविषये अध्यासः विषयतद्धर्माणाम् ।
सर्वः हि पुरः अवस्थिते विषये विषयान्तरं अध्यस्यति,
युष्मत्प्रत्ययापेतस्य च प्रत्यगात्मनः अविषयत्वं ब्रवीषि ।

Bh.Tr. But how can the *adhyāsa* of *anātmā* (i.e. *viśaya*) and its attributes take place on the innermost *ātmā* which is not an object (*viśaya*) of cognition because all people superimpose an object on another object that is

available for perception and you (the Vedāntist) say that the *ātmā* which is devoid of *anātmā* is not an object (*viśaya*).

Ātmā is innermost (*pratyak*) in the sense that it is the most proximate, subtle, durable, pervasive and independent. It is *aviśaya* because a knower (*pramātā*) cannot know it as an object (*viśaya*) that can be specified by 'this'. According to the rule envisaged in the contrary proposition, the basis of superimposition must necessarily be an object perceived by the sense-organs on which another object can be superimposed. *Ātmā* does not fulfil this condition. It is totally free from *anātmā*. Vedānta also declares that *ātmā* whose nature is *cit* (pure awareness principle) is itself *aviśaya* – not an object. If *ātmā* were to be an object (*viśaya*) of cognition, it would necessarily have to have a subject (*viśayī*) to objectify it. In turn, that subject would have to be the pure awareness principle (*cit*) *ātmā* and the previous *ātmā* would become its object (*viśaya*) and thus belong to *anātmā* (*yuṣmad*) category. This subsequent *ātmā* would also be an object (*viśaya*) based on the present assumption and would need yet another subject (*viśayī*). This line of reasoning would lead to *anavasthā-doṣa* – the defect of *regress ad infinitum* or absence of any finality. This would mean that *ātmā* (I) is non-existent, which is absurd. Therefore, it has to be accepted that *ātmā* is *aviśaya* (not an object). However, this leads to the conclusion that for want of a perceptible basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), superimposition on *ātmā* is not tenable.

The above objection is now refuted. A superimposition on *ātmā* is possible because there is no rule that requires the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of superimposition to necessarily be perceived by the sense-organs. A general knowledge of the existence of the basis can serve as a suitable prerequisite for a superimposition on that basis. What is necessary for *adhyāsa* to take place is the identity between the *adhiṣṭhāna* (basis) and the *āropya* (the entity superimposed) in a single cognition.

भा. उच्यते - न तावत् अयं एकान्तेन अविषयः, अस्मत्प्रत्ययविषयत्वात्, अपरोक्षत्वात् च प्रत्यगात्मप्रसिद्धेः । न च अयं अस्ति नियमः पुरः अवस्थिते एव विषये विषयान्तरं अध्यसितव्यं इति । अप्रत्यक्षे अपि हि आकाशे बालाः तलमलिनताद्यध्यस्यन्ति। एवं अविरोद्धः प्रत्यगात्मनि अपि अनात्माध्यासः ।

Bh.Tr. We Vedāntists, submit – *Ātmā* indeed is not completely unknown (*aviśayaḥ* – not an object), because it is the object of ‘I cognition’, self-evident (*aparokṣa*) in nature and universally experienced as ‘I’. There is no rule that an object can get superimposed only on another object directly perceived by the sense-organs. Ignorant people superimpose surface, impurity etc. on the imperceptible space as well. It is therefore proper to speak of the superimposition of *anātmā* on *ātmā*.

In general *ātmā* is not totally unknown to even ignorant people though they do not have the correct knowledge of its true nature. It is true that since the *ātmā* is the very principle of knowledge, it is not an object (*viśaya*) that can be known as ‘this’. In reality, *ātmā* is indivisible, a non-doer (*akartā*), a non-experiencer (*abhoktā*), not an object (*aviśayaḥ*) and *aparicchinnah* (free from all limitations). Yet it is conditioned by the *upādhis* of the gross and subtle bodies projected by the inexplicable *avidyā* (ignorance). As a result, *ātmā* appears to be limited, divisible, a doer (*kartā*), an experiencer (*bhoktā*) and an object (*viśaya*) of ‘I notion’.

Asmad means *ātmā* – pure awareness (*cit*) principle. *Asmatpratyaya* is the superimposed ‘I notion’ in which *ātmā* is cognized. That in which the *asmad* is cognized as a reflection is *asmatpratyaya* viz. *ahaṅkāra* (I notion). Thus it is in the form of *ahaṅkāra* that *ātmā* is experienced as an object. Here, it is not a case of interdependence where *ātmā* is known only if there is an *adhyāsa* of *ahaṅkāra* and there can be an *adhyāsa* only if *ātmā* is known as an object. *Adhyāsa* has been already described as

naisargikaḥ (natural) and so *anādi* (the beginningless). Every *adhyāsa* has for its *adhiṣṭhāna* (basis) a similar prior *adhyāsa*.

Ātmā is *aparokṣaḥ* which also means it is *svaprakāśaḥ* – self-luminous or self-evident. The self-evident nature of *ātmā* is shown by the word *pratyagātmaprasiddheḥ* – because of being universally experienced as ‘I’. *Ātmā* is spontaneously experienced as ‘I’ by one and all – lay or learned. The self-evident *ātmā* serves as the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for superimposition (*adhyāsa*).

The contrary proposition had earlier suggested strongly that the locus of superimposition should necessarily be perceived by the sense-organs. This standpoint is refuted in the sentence ‘*na cāyam.....*’ by pointing out that no such rigid rule exists for *adhyāsa*. For example, ignorant folks superimpose attributes such as surface, blue colour, canopy, cauldron, impurities of yellow colour etc. on imperceptible space (*ākāśa*). It is well-known that space cannot be perceived as an object but serves as a basis for superimposition nonetheless. There is no similarity between space and the blueness seen in the sky. Yet the colour blue is superimposed on space (*ākāśa*). This refutes the argument rejecting the superimposition between *ātmā* and *anātmā* simply because there is no similarity between the two. The reasons given so far, prove that the *adhyāsa* of *anātmā* on *pratyagātma* is proper (*aviruddha*).

It was shown earlier that the first *Brahmasūtra* recommends *Brahmamīmāṃsā* – the inquiry into the nature of Brahman – to gain *Brahmajñāna* by destroying *avidyā* (self-ignorance). The question now arises: Why has the discussion of *avidyā* been put aside and *adhyāsa* described so elaborately? Here is the clarification:

भा. तं एतं एवं लक्षणं अध्यासं पण्डिताः अविद्या इति मन्यन्ते ।
तद्विवेकेन च वस्तुस्वरूपावधारणं विद्यां आहुः । तत्र एवं सति
यत्र यदध्यासः तत्कृतेन दोषेण गुणेन वा अणुमात्रेण अपि सः
न संबध्यते ।

Bh.Tr. Learned men consider the *adhyāsa* which was described and defined above to be *avidyā* (ignorance). Knowledge (*vidyā*) means ascertaining the true nature of the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) by distinguishing it from its superimposed entity (*āropya*). When *adhyāsa* is proved to be the product of *avidyā*, the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) – on which some other entity is superimposed – is not associated in the least with the positive and negative attributes of the superimposed entity.

The *ākṣepabhāṣya* started out by stating that to consider *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and *anātmā* was inappropriate in the absence of factors that are essential for *adhyāsa*. But the appropriateness of *adhyāsa* was subsequently established based on universal experience and the existence of the cause. Next, having defined *adhyāsa*, it was pointed out that all schools of thought agree unanimously on the basic nature of *adhyāsa*. The tenability of *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and *anātmā* was also proved. The same *adhyāsa* is called *avidyā* by learned masters since *adhyāsa* is the effect (*kārya*) of *avidyā*. The ascertainment of its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) viz. *ātmāsvarūpa* (the true nature of *ātmā*), in which the whole of the superimposed *anātmā* gets negated, is called *vidyā* (self-knowledge). *Vidyā* reveals that superimposed things do not really exist at any point in time. This is another reason why *adhyāsa* is called *avidyā* (ignorance).

One may wonder why so much significance is attached to a description of *adhyāsa* and not to the root cause of *adhyāsa*, *avidyā* or ignorance, when *adhyāsa* is only an *avidyākārya* (a product of *avidyā*). In response it can be said that though *avidyā* is the root cause of disastrous *saṃsāra*, its harmful effects in terms of sorrow etc. are manifest only when *adhyāsa* operates in full strength in the waking and the dream states. We do not experience any sorrow in sleep. Thus it is *adhyāsa* that brings out the calamitous effects of *avidyā*, serving as an impetus for us to destroy *avidyā* by any means whatsoever.

When it is proved that *adhyāsa* is the product of ignorance and ignorance is false, the effect, or *adhyāsa*, must be equally unreal. A false entity can never have a true association with a real entity. The basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) is untouched by what is superimposed on it. A mirage of flowing water in a desert, no matter how extensive, cannot make the desert wet. The positive and negative attributes of superimposed entities do not interact with the basis. The attributes of *anātmā*, such as the defects of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, birth, death, hunger, thirst etc. cannot afflict their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) *ātmā*.

PRAMĀṆA (THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE) OF ADHYĀSA

Thus far, *adhyāsa* has been defined and its tenability with reference to *ātmā* has been established. In fact, all actions and dealings (*vyavahāra*), be it worldly (*loukika*) or scriptural (*vaidika*), and their means of knowledge have their basis in *adhyāsa* alone. Now the *pramāṇa*, the means of knowledge that proves the occurrence of *adhyāsa*, is being described.

भा. तं एतं अविद्याख्यं आत्मानात्मनोः इतरेतराध्यासं पुरस्कृत्य सर्वे प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहाराः लौकिकाः वैदिकाः च प्रवृत्ताः । सर्वाणि च शास्त्राणि विधिप्रतिषेधमोक्षपराणि ।

Bh.Tr. All actions based on the valid means of knowledge and their objects of knowledge, worldly (*loukika*) or Vedic (*vaidika*) originate due to the mutual superimposition (*adhyāsa*) between *ātmā* and the *anātmā*, (also) called *avidyā* (ignorance), which has been described earlier. The scriptures dealing with injunctions (*vidhī*), prohibitions (*pratiśedha*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) are also based on *adhyāsa*.

The word *tam* (that) refers to the mutual *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and *anātmā* while *etam* (this) refers to the very same *adhyāsa* defined as *sākṣipratyakṣa* – that which is perceived directly without the agency of the sense-organs. The phrase *pramāṇa-prameya-vyavahāra* will be used frequently in the following discussion, and

needs to be understood thoroughly. *Pramāṇa* is *jñāna-sādhanam* – the means of knowledge. *Prameya* is the thing to be known. It includes all sense objects (*viśayas*). The word *vyavahārah* here refers to all actions based on the operation of *pramāṇas*. The *pramāṇas* are operated by the *pramātā* – the knower – without exception. The word *pramātā* also implies the doer (*kartā*), the experiencer (*bhoktā*), the seer (*draṣṭā*), the hearer (*śrotā*), the inferer (*anumātā*) etc. – in short, the individual responsible for action (*vyavahāra*) such as knowing, doing and experiencing. Action is of three types: *lokika* (worldly), *karmaśāstrīya* (pertaining to the ritualistic portion of the Vedas), and *mokṣaśāstrīya* (pertaining to Vedānta dealing with the topic of liberation). The *karma-śāstra* or *karmakāṇḍa* portions of the Veda describe the do's and don'ts (*vidhipraṭiṣedha*) while the *mokṣa-śāstra* sections of the Veda or Vedānta (Upaniṣads), are dedicated to Brahman free from *vidhiniṣedha* (do's and don'ts). Depending on the context, the words *pramāṇa* and *prameya* also imply the *pramātā* in the form of *kartā*, *bhoktā*, *draṣṭā*, *śrotā*, *anumātā*, *mantā* (thinker) etc. as the case may be. *Ātmā* is actionless (*niṣkriya*) since it is totally free from all *upādhis* (the embodiment). The *anātmā* is inert in nature and hence cannot act. Therefore, it is the mutual *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and *anātmā* alone that enables all action (*vyavahāra*), without any exception, to be performed.

Now *adhyāsa* (superimposition), the basis of all action, is *sākṣipratyakṣa* – directly experienced by all without the agency of the sense-organs. In spite of this, opponents claim that *adhyāsa* cannot be the basis of all action and additional *pramāṇas* are required to prove its existence. Simultaneously, they also indirectly question the validity of all *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge), claiming that since the knower (*pramātā*) is a product of erroneous *adhyāsa*, the *pramātā* cannot be tenable and therefore *pramāṇas* operated by an erroneous entity are equally invalid.

भा. कथं पुनः अविद्यावद्विषयाणि प्रत्यक्षादीनि प्रमाणानि शास्त्राणि च इति ।

Bh.Tr. i) Through which *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) can it be ascertained that *pramāṇas* such as direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) etc. and the scriptures are based on *avidyāvān* – the *pramātā* (knower), namely *ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa*?

OR

ii) How can *pramāṇas* such as direct perception etc. and the scriptures, which are based on *ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa* (referred to as the *pramātā*) be valid?

The above statements makes a distinction between the scriptural *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇas* such as direct perception (*pratyakṣa* etc.). This is because the scriptures (*śāstras*) are *apouruṣeya*, of divine origin, not produced by human authorship, and distinct from worldly *pramaṇas* such as direct perception (*pratyakṣa*).

The etymology of the adjective *avidyāvadvīṣayāṇi* needs to be examined. The word *avidyā* (ignorance) is synonymous with the word *adhyāsa* (superimposition) because the latter is the effect of *avidyā* and gets destroyed by *vidyā* (the knowledge). Accordingly *avidyāvān* means *adhyāsavān* called *pramātā* – the *ātmā* with the erroneous ‘I’ notion superimposed on it. The word *viṣaya* in the phrase *avidyāvadvīṣayāṇi* stands for the receptacle. The nouns that the adjective *avidyāvadvīṣayāṇi* qualifies are *pramāṇāni* and *śāstrāṇi*. The said adjective shows the *pramātā* as the subject who operates all *pramāṇas*. *Avidyāvadvīṣayāṇi* thus signifies that the knower (the *pramātā* – *ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa*) is the basis of all means of knowledge, including the scriptures.

All action (*vyavahāra*), whether *loukika* (worldly), or *karmaśāstrīya* (pertaining to the ritualistic portion of the Vedas), or *mokṣaśāstrīya* (pertaining to Vedānta – the *Upaniṣadic* portion of the Vedas) is based on knowledge (*pramā*) of the action. The knowledge (*pramā*) is contained in the knower (*pramātā*), who also plays the role of doer (*kartā*), experiencer (*bhoktā*) etc. Neither

ātmā which is inactive and without embodiment, nor the *anātmā* which is inert, can take to *vyavahāra* (action) on their own. Therefore the authors of these three types of action viz. the knower (*pramātā*), doer (*kartā*), experiencer (*bhoktā*) etc. are born of mutual superimposition or identification between *ātmā* and the *anātmā* along with their attributes. Thus *adhyāsa* is evidently experienced through its effect manifesting as *pramātā* etc., which serves as a receptacle for all *pramāṇas*. In spite of this, the existence of *adhyāsa* – the basis of all *pramāṇas* – is again questioned in the sentence 'katham.....' (what is the *pramāṇa*) inquiring about the means of knowledge to establish *adhyāsa*. Alternatively, the question can also be viewed as an objection to the very validity of all *pramāṇas* claiming that they are rooted in *adhyāsa*, which itself is false.

In reply to the first question, inference, presumption and the Vedas are presented as the *pramāṇas* that prove the occurrence of *adhyāsa*. In reply to the objection regarding the validity of all *pramāṇas*, it is shown that the validity of the various means of knowledge cannot be negated even though their basis is *pramātā* born of *adhyāsa* and thus false in nature.

भा. उच्यते - देहेन्द्रियादिषु अहंममाभिमानरहितस्य प्रमातृत्वानुपपत्तौ प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यनुपपत्तेः ।

Bh.Tr. When *ātmā* cannot have the status of *pramātā* (knower) in the absence of the notion of 'I' and 'mine' with respect to the body, senses etc. (as in the sleep or swoon), no *pramāṇa* can operate either.

An inference – which is one of the *pramāṇas* – involves a *vyāpti* – a postulate. It is defined as *sāhacarya-niyamaḥ* – the invariable concomitance of two entities. Take for example a mud-pot. A mud-pot shows how inference is a means of knowledge for proving the occurrence of *adhyāsa*. The mud-pot exists in the presence (*anvaya*) of mud; it does not exist in the absence (*vyatireka*) of mud. There is an invariable concomitance of mud and the mud-pot. This invariable concomitance furnishes the reason (*hetu*) for

the inference “the mud is the cause of mud-pot”. In general, any specific entity to which the rule of presence/absence (*anvaya-vyatireka*) is applicable with reference to another entity – as seen in the case of mud and the mud-pot – is the cause of that entity.

This rule is now applied to *adhyāsa* and action (*vyavahāra*) by an individual. The cause of all action by an individual is identification with the body, senses etc. expressed as ‘I’ and ‘mine’, which is born of *adhyāsa*. No one can act without such identification. Action by an individual takes place in the presence (*anvaya*) of *adhyāsa*. Action ceases in the absence (*vyatireka*) of *adhyāsa*, such as in sleep. Therefore, *adhyāsa* is the cause of all action (*vyavahāra*).

The *bhāṣyakāra* has not explicitly invoked the rule of the presence (*anvaya-vyāpti*) of *adhyāsa* during the waking and dream states in his commentary. This is because the invariable presence of the *pramātā* and its action in both the waking and dream states is very evident, and this presupposes the presence of their cause – *adhyāsa*. Instead, he straightaway invokes the rule of the absence (*vyatireka-vyāpti*) of *adhyāsa* in conditions such as sleep or swoon. *Adhyāsa* is thus inferred by dint of the invariable concomitance between it and the action (*vyavahāra*) of the *pramāṇas*.

Another *pramāṇa*, *arthāpatti* (presumption), also proves the existence of *adhyāsa*. *Arthāpatti* is the ‘assumption’ of something not directly perceived but necessarily implied by the presence of something else which is seen, heard or proved. It is an inference used in specific cases to account for an apparent inconsistency. As in the familiar example, ‘Fat Mr. Devadatta does not eat during the day’, the apparent inconsistency between ‘fatness’ (or not losing weight) and ‘does not eat by day’ is accounted for by the presumption that he ‘eats by night’. Both *ātmā* and the embodiment, the *anātmā*, cannot act on their own, as has already been noted. Yet, all types of action are observed. This apparent inconsistency can be resolved by necessarily presuming the existence of *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and the *anātmā*. The effect (*kārya*), namely action (*vyavahāra*), is impossible in the absence of its cause (*kāraṇa*), *adhyāsa*.

Adhyāsa effects *vyavahāra* (action) in a sequence of steps, which is now being presented. It has already been established that *adhyāsa*, in terms of the notions 'I' and 'mine' in the body, senses etc., is a prerequisite for the *pramātā* (the knower), *kartā* (the doer) etc. to undertake action. Here, an objection is raised. While identification with the body in general as a species viz. 'I am a man', 'I am a woman' etc. is accepted as necessary for action, some argue that the notion of 'mineness' in the sense-organs, organs of action etc. is redundant. In reply, it is stated:

भा. न हि इन्द्रियाणि अनुपादाय प्रत्यक्षादिव्यवहारः संभवति ।

Bh.Tr. Action (*vyavahāra*) involving direct perception etc. is not possible without employing the senses etc. (*indriyādi*).

The word *ādi* (etc.) in *pratyakṣādi* (direct perception etc.) includes other *pramāṇas* such as inference (*anumāna*), presumption (*arthāpatti*) etc. Correspondingly, the word *indriyāṇi* (senses) includes other relevant essential factors (*kaṛaṇas*) – types of knowledge – required for these means of knowledge to operate. These comprise the knowledge of invariable concomitance (*vyāptijñāna*), the knowledge of similarity (*sādṛśyajñāna*) etc. The different roles that *ātmā* assumes, as evinced in statements such as 'I am the seer (*draṣṭā*)', 'hearer (*śrotā*)', 'inferer (*anumātā*)' etc. and the action during these roles due to the operation of means of knowledge such as direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) etc. are not possible without employing the sense-organs and other such means. For instance, a blind or deaf person who has no notion of "mineness" in the eyes or ears for want of those faculties cannot make statements such as 'I am a seer' or 'I am a hearer' and assume the role of seer or hearer. The notion of 'mineness' in the sense-organs etc. is a prerequisite for undertaking any action associated with a particular sense-organ.

Others are of the view that the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the senses (*indriyas*) on *ātmā* and vice versa alone can account

for all action and there is no need to postulate the superimposition of the body on *ātmā* and vice versa, or in other words, the notion of 'I ness' in the body. In reply, it is stated:

भा. न च अधिष्ठानं अन्तरेण इन्द्रियाणां व्यवहारः संभवति ।

Bh.Tr. The senses cannot function in the absence of a receptacle, namely, the body.

Adhiṣṭhānam in this context stands for receptacle (*āśraya*). The senses abide in the body. It is well-known that the senses cannot function independently of the body.

Still others consider that a superimposition resulting in the notion of 'I ness' in the body does not need to be postulated since it is the connection between the body and *ātmā* that can serve as the required receptacle for the senses. This is incorrect for the following reason.

भा. न च अनध्यस्तात्मभावेन देहेन कश्चित् व्याप्रियते ।

Bh.Tr. No bodily action is possible without the notion of 'I ness' superimposed on the body.

Limited things having parts (*sāvayava*) alone can be interrelated. *Ātmā* is *niravayava* (devoid of any parts) and free from the limitations of space, time and objects. The Upaniṣads also declare that *ātmā* is totally unattached (*asaṅga*). Therefore the relationship between the body and *ātmā* can come about only due to *adhyāsa* and not otherwise.

Thus far, it has been shown that *ātmā* can operate *pramāṇas* in its role as the *pramātā* only in the presence of superimposition or identification between *ātmā* and the body, senses etc. Some claim that *ātmā* can become a *pramātā* even without *adhyāsa* because it is *caitanya* (pure awareness), the knowledge-principle. In that case, *ātmā* must necessarily be a *pramātā* even in deep sleep, which is

clearly not a matter of observation or experience. In reply, they argue that *ātmā* ceases to be the *pramātā* in sleep because the senses cease to function during sleep. The fallacy of this argument is now pointed out.

भा. न च एतस्मिन् सर्वस्मिन् असति असंगस्य आत्मनः प्रमातृत्वं उपपद्यते ।

Bh.Tr. *Ātmā* cannot become a *pramātā* in the absence of all these (superimpositions) since it is detached (*asaṅga*) in nature .

What is *pramā*? *Pramā* is the knowledge true to the nature of a thing (*yathārthajñānam*). And what is a *pramātā*? A *pramātā* (knower) is a receptacle (*āśraya*) for *pramā*. Without *adhyāsa*, there would be no receptacle for *pramā*. Without *adhyāsa*, only if the ever-existent non-dual *cit* (the knowledge-principle) were itself *pramā* then it would not depend on a *pramātā* for *pramā*. The senses would also be redundant in that case. On the other hand, in the absence of *adhyāsa*, if the *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* (the thought conforming to a specific object) were the *pramā* (correct knowledge), the specific knowledge of various names and forms would never be possible since thoughts are inert and cannot reveal themselves on their own. As a result, there would be complete non-cognition of the world of names and forms. The true position therefore is that *pramā* is pure awareness (*caitanya*) manifest (i.e. reflected) in the *viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛtti* – the thought conforming to a specific object. The receptacle of such *pramā*, viz. the *pramātā*, cannot come into existence without the mutual superimposition between *asaṅga ātmā* and the body along with their attributes, giving rise to the notion of identity such as ‘I’ ness in the body. ‘All these’ (*etasmin sarvasmin*) in the *bhāṣya* refers to the different aspects of superimposition. Thus far, it has been proved that these different aspects of superimposition are indispensable for the manifestation of the *pramātā* (the knower) etc. and for action involving the *pramāṇas*.

Why then, if *adhyāsa* is indispensable, should *ātmā* become a *pramātā* at all? Let not *ātmā* become a *pramātā*. Here is a reply to those who question the need for *ātmā* to operate as the *pramātā*.

भा. न च प्रमातृत्वं अन्तरेण प्रमाणप्रवृत्तिः अस्ति ।

Bh.Tr. There can be no operation of the means of knowledge without a knower (*pramātā*).

Neither *ātmā* nor the inert embodiment can independently be the *pramātā*. *Pramāṇa-vyavahāra* (action involving the *pramāṇas*) cannot take place without a *pramātā*. And, if *pramāṇa-vyavahāra* does take place, *adhyāsa* has to exist.

Adhyāsa is *sākṣipratyakṣa* – directly experienced. Nevertheless, a further *pramāṇa* was sought to prove its existence. The justification of *adhyāsa* based on inference and presumption is now being concluded.

भा. तस्मात् अविद्यावद्विषयाणि एव प्रत्यक्षादीनि प्रमाणानि शास्त्राणि च इति ।

Bh.Tr. i) Therefore, means of knowledge such as direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) etc. and the scriptures have their basis in *ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa* alone i.e. in the *pramātā* – the knower.

OR

ii) Therefore, means of knowledge such as direct perception etc. and the scriptures stand validated even though their basis is *ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa*.

As stated earlier, when the *pramāṇa* to prove *adhyāsa* as the basis of all *pramāṇa-vyavahāra* was sought, there was also an implied objection to the validity of *pramāṇas* like *pratyakṣa* and the scriptures (*śāstrāṇi*). The reply in the *bhāṣya* at this point addresses both the question and the objection. Coming to the principal

objection, the word 'tasmāt' (therefore) in the *bhāṣya* refers to inference and presumption as the means of knowledge to prove the occurrence of *adhyāsa*. The occurrence of *adhyāsa* was inferred by observing the invariable concomitance between it and the action of the *pramāṇas*. It was also pointed out that this action is seen in spite of the fact that independent action on the part of *ātmā* or the inert embodiment is impossible. This apparent inconsistency necessarily leads to the presumption that *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and *anātmā* does in fact exist. Now all action depends on the existence of the *pramātā* (knower) which also signifies the seer (*draṣṭā*), hearer (*śrotā*), inferer (*anumātā*), doer (*kartā*) etc. The status of being the *pramātā* etc. can be attributed to *ātmā* only if the notions of 'I' and 'mine' are born with reference to the body, senses etc. as an effect of *adhyāsa*. In short, the *pramātā* who takes to action (*vyavahāra*) is an invariable effect of *adhyāsa*. Therefore *adhyāsa* is a prerequisite for the existence of the *pramātā* (knower). Thus the foregoing *bhāṣya* furnishes a complete answer to the question regarding the means of knowledge to prove the existence of *adhyāsa*.

Now to address the objection to the validity of *pramāṇas* like *pratyakṣa* and the scriptures (*śāstrāṇi*), the word 'tasmāt' (therefore) in the *bhāṣya* brings out through reasoning that there is no defect in postulating the *pramātā* (the knower). It should be clear from the arguments adduced thus far that *adhyāsa*, in the form of, 'I' notion with respect to the body etc., is the intrinsic or inherent nature of the *pramātā*. The inherent nature of any given entity cannot be considered a defect since the entity cannot exist in the absence of the so-called defect. Though born of erroneous *adhyāsa*, the *pramātā* is without defect because that is its nature. The *bhāṣya* has also proved that the *pramātā*, the receptacle of *pramā*, is indispensable for the operation of all *pramāṇas*. An innate feature without which the *pramātā* cannot exist is not a defect and therefore the validity of *pramāṇas* dependent on a (so-called defective) *pramātā* remains empirically unopposed.

Any unfavourable factor that gets added to the original *pramātā* (the knower) after the *pramātā* comes into existence would be considered a defect. For instance, cataract is a defect that gets added to the seer, as a result of which the seer's sight gets impaired. Thus *adhyāsa* is not a defect insofar as the functioning of the *pramātā* as a knower is concerned. We can therefore conclude that the means of knowledge such as *pratyakṣa* etc. and the scriptures are not invalid in the empirical realm.

That *adhyāsa* is the cause of all the action (*vyavahāra*) has been proved thus far on the basis of the invariable concomitance between *adhyāsa* and action. Now a cursory observation is cited in an attempt to refute the same. It is contended that a person of knowledge (*jñānī*) is seen to perform action even in the absence of *adhyāsa*. What is the cause of such action? Does it not imply that *adhyāsa* is not the cause of all action? The answer depends on the nature of the knowledge (*ātma-jñāna*) in such person of knowledge:

- a) Is that knowledge (*ātma-jñāna*) direct cognition (*ātma-sākṣātkāra*) in the form of 'I am Brahman'?

Or

- b) Is it indirect knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*) of the distinction between *ātmā* and the *anātmā* gained through reasoning (*youktika*)?

In the first instance, the action of the *jñānī* who has the direct cognition of Brahman is due to *adhyāsa* that is now nullified. This will be discussed in the *bhāṣya* of *sūtra* 'Tat tu samanvayāt' (1-1-4). As far as action by the *parokṣa jñānī* having indirect knowledge (*parokṣajñāna*) is concerned, it is clearly based on *adhyāsa*. This is now described through an illustration.

भा. पशु आदिभिः च अविशेषात् ।

Bh.Tr. And (the action of a person having the indirect knowledge of *ātmā*) is similar to that of cattle etc.

Cattle, animals, birds and all living creatures act on account of *adhyāsa*. Indirect knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*) cannot eliminate the directly experienced misconception about oneself (*parokṣajñānasya aparokṣa-bhrāntyanivartakatvāt*). Therefore persons having indirect knowledge are subject to *adhyāsa* and their action is similar to that of cattle and other creatures. The illustration of how animals act provides grounds for the following inference: persons with indirect knowledge are endowed with *adhyāsa* because they take to action just as animals etc. who act on account of *adhyāsa*. This brief statement in the *bhāṣya* is now elaborated by drawing parallels between the illustration (*dṛṣṭānta*), namely animals, and the illustrated (*dārṣṭānta*), namely persons of indirect knowledge, to justify the averment that the action of persons of indirect knowledge too is the product of *adhyāsa*.

भा. यथा हि पश्चादयः शब्दादिभिः श्रोत्रादीनां संबन्धे सति शब्दादिविज्ञाने प्रतिकूले जाते ततः निवर्तन्ते अनुकूले च प्रवर्तन्ते । यथा दण्डोद्यतकरं पुरुषं अभिमुखं उपलभ्य मां हन्तुं अयं इच्छति इति पलायितुं आरभन्ते, हरिततृणपूर्णपाणिं उपलभ्य तं प्रति अभिमुखी भवन्ति । एवं पुरुषाः अपि व्युत्पन्नचित्ताः क्रूरदृष्टीन् आक्रोशतः खड्गोद्यतकरान् बलवतः उपलभ्य ततः निवर्तन्ते, तद्विपरीतान् प्रति प्रवर्तन्ते, अतः समानः पश्चादिभिः पुरुषाणां प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारः । पश्चादीनां च प्रसिद्धः अविवेकपुरःसरः प्रत्यक्षादि व्यवहारः । तत्सामान्यदर्शनात् व्युत्पत्तिमतां अपि पुरुषाणां प्रत्यक्षादि व्यवहारः तत्कालः समानः इति निश्चीयते।

Bh.Tr. Just as cattle etc. move away at the sight or sound of factors that are hostile, and move towards factors that are agreeable, just as cattle move away from a man who approaches them with a raised stick, thinking 'this person wants to beat me', but approach a person holding a handful of green grass; similarly, men of indirect knowledge (*parokṣajñānis*) retreat when they see fierce-looking strong men brandishing swords, and

approach men who are favourably disposed. Therefore, all human action based on means of knowledge and objects of knowledge (*puruṣāṅām pramāṇaprameya-vyavahārah*) is similar to that of cattle etc. It is also well-known that action (*vyavahāra*) such as direct perception etc. by animals and other living creatures is caused by *aviveka* – a failure to distinguish between *ātmā* and the *anātmā*. Based on this similarity to animals, it is established that the *vyavahāra* of direct perception etc. of persons of indirect knowledge (*parokṣajñānīs*) undertaken in the presence of *adhyāsa* is similar to that of animals etc. (both being effects of *adhyāsa*).

The original, brief statement (*paśu ādibhiḥ ca aviśeṣāt*) has thus been elaborated to draw parallels between the conduct of animals and *parokṣajñānīs* – persons of indirect knowledge. Objects perceived are considered favourable if they show promise of fulfilling desired objectives and hostile if they threaten to damage a person's interests. On seeing a raised stick, a cow immediately concludes it is undesirable because of its similarity to the one used to beat it in the past. So it moves away. By contrast, the cow approaches a person beckoning it with a fistful of green tender grass, confident of the favourableness of the situation based on its earlier memory of eating grass. The conduct of persons of indirect knowledge is no different from that of animals. Persons of indirect knowledge turn away from harmful factors and turn towards favourable factors. Based on such observations, it can be deduced that the action (*pramāṇa-prameya-vyavahāra*) of persons of indirect knowledge is similar to that of animals, birds etc. because action is caused by *adhyāsa* in both cases.

Here a doubt may arise: since animals are mute, they cannot give voice and say that their action is due to *adhyāsa*. Nor is their action directly perceived to be due to *adhyāsa*. Can their action then be in fact due to *adhyāsa*? In reply, it is clear that *aviveka* or

the absence of discrimination between *ātma* and the *anātma* is an essential prerequisite for *adhyāsa*. This *aviveka* is found in animals as well. It is well-known that animals lack discrimination (*viveka*) between *ātma* and the *anātma*. The understanding of animals is limited to 'me' and 'mine'. This is due to their lack of both the type of intelligence required for gaining discriminative knowledge as well as the means to gain discriminative knowledge. In the absence of such knowledge, *adhyāsa* and the consequent identification with the embodiment is inevitable in animals as well.

To recapitulate, the action of persons of indirect knowledge (*parokṣajñānīs*) is like that of animals. Based on the invariable concomitance between action and *adhyāsa*, it was proved earlier that all the action is born of *adhyāsa*. The *bhāṣyakāra* reminds us of this by qualifying the word action (*vyavahārah*) by the word *tatkālah*, indicating action undertaken in the presence of *adhyāsa*. Thus action such as direct perception etc. undertaken by persons of indirect knowledge (*parokṣajñānīs*) proves that persons of indirect knowledge too have the *adhyāsa* of the 'I and mine' notion just like animals.

Another pertinent doubt arises at this juncture. It is understandable that *adhyāsa* is a prerequisite for worldly action which leads to the attainment of desired objectives and the prevention of undesired outcomes in this very body. But the present body perishes at the time of death and cannot enjoy the heavens etc., which are the results of Vedic action (*vyavahāra*) such as the performance of rituals and sacrifices performed in this body. Is therefore *adhyāsa* also a prerequisite for Vedic *vyavahāra*? Such action is necessarily performed with the knowledge that the performer is distinct from the body. The entity that gains heaven is distinct from the body presently taken to be 'I'. Can Vedic action then be born of *adhyāsa*? There is some validity to this argument. What must be noted is that the knowledge with which Vedic action is undertaken is restricted to the understanding 'I', the individual entity (*jīva*) who survives death, am different from the gross body'.

Neither does such knowledge of distinction extend to showing the absence in each birth of the *adhyāsa* that produces the 'I' notion with respect to the body. The knowledge of me as an individual *jīva* distinct from the physical body does not destroy the *adhyāsa* that is a prerequisite for the performance of Vedic action. It is self-knowledge (*ātmajñāna*) alone that can negate *adhyāsa*. The objection to the necessity of *adhyāsa* for scriptural action is now met by citing this requirement of *adhyāsa*.

भा. शास्त्रीये तु व्यवहारे यद्यपि बुद्धिपूर्वकारी न अविदित्वा आत्मनः परलोकसंबन्धं अधिक्रियते तथापि न वेदान्तवेद्यं अशनायाद्यतीतं अपेतब्रह्मक्षत्रादिभेदं असंसारी आत्मतत्त्वं अधिकारे अपेक्ष्यते, अनुपयोगात् अधिकारविरोधात् च । प्राक् च तथाभूतात्मविज्ञानात् प्रवर्तमानं शास्त्रं अविद्यावद्विषयत्वं न अतिवर्तते ।

Bh.Tr. Where the performance (*anuṣṭhāna*) of scriptural action (*vyavahāra*) is concerned, although awareness of the relationship between oneself (as distinct from the physical body) and the life hereafter is required before a farsighted individual can become eligible (for scriptural action), the *ātmātattva* (i.e. the knowledge of *ātmā* in its true nature) which can be known through Vedānta and is devoid of hunger, thirst etc., free from distinctions such as Brahmin, Kṣatriya etc., and totally free from *samsāra*, being useless, is not in any manner a prerequisite for such eligibility and is in fact opposed to it. Moreover, the scripture (the Veda) that finds applicability before the direct cognition (*sākṣātkāra*) of *ātmā* – described already – is aimed at the ignorant person (in the form of a receptacle, namely *ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa* or in other words, *ātmā* operating as *pramātā*, *kartā*, *bhoktā* etc.) and not any further.

As seen earlier, *ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa* and operating as the knower (*pramātā*), doer (*kartā*) etc. is the author of all action,

worldly or scriptural. The knowledge 'I am an entity different from the physical body and a *saṃsārī* subject to transmigration' suffices for the performance of scriptural *vyavahara* (action). The direct knowledge of *ātmā* is not only not essential for scriptural *vyavahara* but is also opposed to it since the unembodied action-less *ātmā* cannot undertake any action unless it dons the statuses of *pramātā*, *kartā*, *bhoktā* etc. that are born of *adhyāsa*. Therefore *adhyāsa* is a prerequisite for scriptural action as well.

The scriptures – the Vedas – be it *karmakāṇḍa* or Vedānta – operate and have validity as a means of knowledge only before the direct cognition (*sākṣātkāra*) of *ātmā* by an individual. The applicability of the Vedas depends for its function on the *pramātā* and the dualistic world. The latter are the product of *avidya-adhyāsa*. As a means of knowledge, the scripture too ceases to be a *pramāṇa* upon gaining *ātmāsākṣātkāra* (the direct cognition of *ātmā*). The *pramātā* that operates the *pramāṇa* of the scriptures ceases to exist once its basis *avidyā*, the cause of *adhyāsa*, ceases to exist. The *bhāṣyakāra* points this out in the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* where he says:

न हि आत्मस्वरूपाधिगमे सति पुनः प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारः सम्भवति । प्रमातृत्वं हि आत्मनः निवर्तयति अन्त्यं प्रमाणम् । निवर्तयदेव च अप्रमाणीभवति स्वप्नकालप्रमाणं इव प्रबोधे (भगवद्गीताभाष्यम् 2-69)।

Tr. After *ātmā* has been directly cognized, *pramāṇa-prameya-vyavahāra* is not possible. Vedānta, the highest *pramāṇa*, terminates the status of *ātmā* as a *pramātā* and itself ceases to be a *pramāṇa*, just as the *pramāṇas* during the state of dream cease to be *pramāṇas* upon waking (*B.G.Bh.Ch.2-69*).

Thus the operation of *adhyāsa* has been proved by means of direct perception, inference and presumption. Now it is shown that the Vedas as a means of knowledge also substantiate the phenomenon of *adhyāsa*.

भा. तथा हि – 'ब्राह्मणः यजेत' इत्यादीनि शास्त्राणि आत्मनि वर्णाश्रमवयोऽवस्थादिविशेषाध्यासं आश्रित्य प्रवर्तन्ते ।

Bh.Tr. As for instance scriptural injunctions such as ‘A Brahmin should perform sacrifice’ and so on operate by taking recourse to the specific superimposition of caste (*varṇa*), stage of life (*āśrama*), period of life (*avasthā*), or other factors on *ātmā*.

To establish the eligibility for the performance of specific scriptural action, a few Vedic injunctions affirm the superimposition of caste etc. on *ātmā*. The precept ‘A Brahmin should perform a sacrifice’ superimposes caste (*varṇa*) on *ātmā*. The injunction ‘Having entered the householder’s order after a ceremonial concluding bath, a *brahmacārī* (Vedic student) should not ask for alms (*bhikṣā*)’ superimposes a stage of life (*āśrama*) on *ātmā*. The sacred command, ‘The eight year old Brahmin boy should undergo the sacred-thread ceremony’ is an instance of the superimposition of age on *ātmā*. The scriptural injunction, ‘After the birth of a son, the sacred fires should be consecrated until old age’ superimposes *avasthā*, a specific period of life, on *ātmā*. Thus the Veda affirms the superimposition of caste etc. on *ātmā* when it specifies the eligibility of persons using terms such as Brahmin and so on. These are all instances of *adhyāsa*, and thus the Veda corroborates the phenomenon of *adhyāsa*.

In this manner, *adhyāsa* has been established by means of valid *pramāṇas*. Nonetheless, in reply to the question ‘what is superimposed where?’, the *bhāṣyakāra* reminds us of the definition of *adhyāsa* already furnished. For the sake of clarity, he provides further illustrations at different layers within an individual.

भा. अध्यासः नाम अतस्मिन् तद्बुद्धिः इति अवोचाम । तद्यथा पुत्रभार्यादिषु विकलेषु सकलेषु वा अहं एव विकलः सकलः वा इति बाह्यधर्मान् आत्मनि अध्यस्यति तथा देहधर्मान् स्थूलः अहं , कृशः अहं, गौरः अहं , तिष्ठामि, गच्छामि, लङ्घयामि च इति । तथा इन्द्रियधर्मान् सूक्ष्मः काणः क्लीबः, बधिरः, अन्यः अहं इति । तथा अन्तःकरणधर्मान्

कामसंकल्पविचिकित्साध्यवसायादीन् । एवं अहंप्रत्ययिनं
अशेषस्वप्रचारसाक्षिणि प्रत्यगात्मनि अध्यस्य तं च प्रत्यगात्मानं
सर्वसाक्षिणं तद्विपर्ययेण अन्तःकरणादिषु अध्यस्यति । एवं
अयं अनादिः अनन्तः नैसर्गिकः अध्यासः मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः
कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तकः सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः ।

Bh.Tr. We have already stated that *adhyāsa* is the mistaken cognition of a thing on a basis other than its own. (Its nature is made clear by the following illustrations). People (*lokaḥ*) superimpose external attributes on the embodied self (*dehaviśiṣṭātmanī*) in statements such as ‘I am deficient (*vikalaḥ*)’, or ‘I am perfect (*sakalaḥ*)’ when it is the son, wife and other near and dear ones who are deficient or perfect; so also the attributes of the physical body in ‘I am fat’, ‘I am lean’, ‘I am fair’, ‘I stand’, ‘I walk’ and ‘I leap’; likewise the features of the senses (*indriyas*) ‘I am dumb’, ‘I am one-eyed’, ‘I am a eunuch’, ‘I am deaf’, ‘I am blind’; and again, attributes of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) such as desire (*kāma*), thinking (*saṅkalpa*), doubt (*vicikitsā*), decision (*adhyavasāya*) (in ‘I desire’, ‘I think’, ‘I doubt’, ‘I decide’). In the same way, having superimposed the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) endowed with the ‘I notion’ (*ahaṅkāra*) on pure awareness – ‘I’ – (*pratyagātmā*), the illuminator (*sākṣī*) of all thoughts (*antaḥkaraṇavṛttis*), conversely (*viparyayeṇa*) everyone superimposes the *pratyagātmā* on *antaḥkaraṇa* etc. Thus this mutual superimposition which is beginningless, endless, natural, of the nature of mistaken cognition, and the producer of doership (*karṭṛtva*) and experiencership (*bhokṭṛtva*) in *ātmā*, is directly experienced by one and all.

Children, wife, husband and other near and dear ones are considered to be external (*bāhya*) since they are directly perceived

to be different from one's own body. They can never be identical with oneself, however dear they may be. Yet their superimposition is seen to occur. We feel happy and at ease when our kith and kin are happy, accomplished and complete. On the contrary, failure, disease and incompleteness associated with them disturb and distress us. Even though the actual attributes of near and dear ones can never be superimposed on oneself, superimposition is in fact seen to occur through the attribution of corresponding features. It must be noted that the superimposition on oneself of such external attributes of near and dear ones takes place after the 'I' notion has already been superimposed and the notion of oneself as a distinct entity is firmly established in the body.

The attributes of the physical body and the senses are superimposed on *ātmā* after the superimposition of the *antaḥkaraṇa* plus *ahaṅkāra* (I notion) has already taken place. Here, the superimposition is one involving actual attributes since the identification with the body and the senses as 'I and mine' is already in place.

Similarly the attributes and functions of the *antaḥkaraṇa* are superimposed on *ātmā* after the superimposition of the *antaḥkaraṇa* has already taken place. The *antaḥkaraṇa* is described in the *bhāṣya* as *ahaṃpratyayī* – that which is possessed of the 'I notion' (*ahaṅkāra* – *ahaṃ pratyaya*). *Svapracāra* – the manifestation (*pracāra*) of *antaḥkaraṇa* (referred to as *sva*) – stands for all *antaḥkaraṇavṛttis* (thoughts in the mind).

Having described the superimposition of the body, the *antaḥkaraṇa* and other entities that make up the *anātmā* (not self) along with their attributes on *ātmā*, the reciprocal or inverse superimposition of *ātmā* on the *anātmā* is now described. This *adhyāsa* is through co-existence or intimate relation (*saṃsarga*), however, and not direct. It is through *cidābhāsa* – the reflection of *ātmā* in the *antaḥkaraṇa*. The *anātmā* in the form of an embodiment with an *antaḥkaraṇa* is intimately associated with the *cidābhāsa* at

different levels. It is because of this *saṃsarga-adhyāsa* that the inert embodiment is experienced as sentient.

Pratyagātmā (the pure awareness – I) is the illuminator (*sākṣī*), the one who makes known all *antaḥkaraṇavṛttis*, which are of themselves inert. In the superimposed (*adhyasta*) ‘I notion’ (*ahaṅkāra*) there is an inert thought (*antaḥkaraṇavṛttī*) of ‘I’ ness associated with the cognitive aspect of *ātmā* whose nature is *cit* – pure awareness. Otherwise there would be no cognition of an inert thought of ‘I’ ness because *ātmā* is the only knowledge-principle in the entire Creation. In any superimposition, the rule is that the entity not superimposed (viz. the entity or basis on which something else is superimposed) is not perceived in the superimposition. For example, when silver is seen instead of the shell expressed as ‘this is silver’, the ‘this (*īdam*)’ aspect belongs to the shell which is actually existent but unperceived, and not to the superimposed silver. However we do cognize the presence of *ātmā* in and through *anātmā* beginning from body onwards up to the ‘I’ notion, *ahaṅkāra*. Going by the basic rule of superimposition, the superimposition of *ātmā* on the *anātmā* must therefore also be postulated. Now anything that is superimposed is necessarily false. The ever-existent *ātmā* can never be false or unreal. The superimposition of *ātmā* on the *anātmā* is a must since the cognitive faculty of *ātmā* would not be available in the *anātmā* without such superimposition. The only possibility therefore is that *ātmā* gets indirectly superimposed on the *anātmā* by *saṃsarga* – co-existence or the intimate relationship between the two. This relationship is in terms of *cidābhāsa* (reflected *caitanya* – pure awareness). An association with the unattached (*asaṅga*) *ātmā* is not possible in any other manner.

It is *ātmā* alone – without any other *upādhis* (adjuncts) – that gets superimposed on ignorance (of *ātmā*). The superimposition of *ātmā* on other layers of the *anātmā* is accompanied by intermediate *upādhis*. There are varying and distinct degrees of superimposition at different layers of the *anātmā*. The superimposition of *ātmā* (as

cidābhāsa) on the mind (i.e. *antaḥkaraṇa*) is through the adjunct (*upādhi*) of ignorance. In other words, what gets superimposed on the *antaḥkaraṇa* is the *ātmā* that has already been superimposed on ignorance. *Ātmā* with the adjuncts (*upādhis*) of ignorance and the *antaḥkaraṇa* get further superimposed on the physical body and the senses.

Adhyāsa results in *ātmā* appearing as the doer (*kartā*), experiencer (*bhoktā*) etc. due to the superimposition on itself (i.e. on *ātmā*) of the *antaḥkaraṇa* and other aspect of the *anātmā*. The *antaḥkaraṇa*, body etc. in turn acquire sentiency through the *adhyāsa* of *ātmā* on them.

Adhyāsa is now summarized. The beginningless (*anādi*) ignorance (*avidyā*) is the cause and its effect, *adhyāsa*, is equally *anādi*. This beginningless *adhyāsa* produces impressions (*saṃskāras*) which in turn produce *adhyāsa*. Such an uninterrupted natural flow of *adhyāsa* is described by the adjective *naisargikaḥ*. Ignorance (*avidyā*) is both the material and instrumental cause of *adhyāsa* as pointed out earlier in the context of *mithyājñāna-nimittaḥ*. *Adhyāsa* is endless (*ananta*) in the sense it is not destroyed until self-knowledge is gained. This is also explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā*: The form of the tree of *saṃsāra* is not available for perception as described (in the preceding two verses). It has neither end, nor beginning, nor continuance (*B.G.15-3*). The adjective *mithyāpratyayarūpaḥ* describes the nature of *adhyāsa* in the form of the entire Creation with its experience (*pratyaya*) projected by the unreal *māyā* (Creative power) called *mithyā*. *Adhyāsa* is verily the producer of doership (*kartṛtva*) and experiencership (*bhokṛtva*).

Having described *adhyāsa* in detail, the topic of its *pramāṇa* (the means of knowledge) is concluded with the word *sarvaloka-pratyakṣaḥ*. Without exception, all experience *adhyāsa* directly without the agency of the senses (*indriyas*). It is also called

sākṣipratyakṣa. *Sākṣipratyakṣa* is the principal means of knowledge for knowing the nature of *adhyāsa*. Inference and presumption only point to the possibility of its occurrence.

THE ORDER OF SUPERIMPOSITION (*ADHYĀSAKRAMAḤ*)

The order of superimposition throws further light on the phenomenon of *adhyāsa*. Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī brings this out in his composition *Siddhāntabindu*, describing the varying degrees of love corresponding to the various levels of *adhyāsa*.

- i) Self-ignorance (*ajñāna*) which is unreal in nature is itself the cause of the superimposition of itself (ignorance) and its effects such as *antaḥkaraṇa*, *ahaṅkāra* and so on³², on the pure awareness principle (*caitanyarūpa-ātmā*).
- ii) The 'I notion' (*ahaṅkāra*), along with the *antaḥkaraṇa* as a whole, is superimposed on *caitanya* (*ātmā*) endowed with the *adhyāsa* of *ajñāna*. As a result, one experiences 'I am ignorant' (*aham ajñāḥ*). This experience is based on mutual superimposition (*anyonyādhyāsa*). The effect (*kārya*) of ignorance, viz. *ahaṅkāra* and the *antaḥkaraṇa*, is superimposed on *caitanya* endowed with the superimposition of *ajñāna*. *Caitanya* in turn endowed with the superimposition of *ajñāna* is superimposed on *ahaṅkāra*. It is like the erroneous cognition, 'this is silver'. The silver is superimposed on the sea-shell, and the 'this' aspect of the actual shell is in turn superimposed on the mistaken silver.³³

32. अज्ञानं एव (आत्मनि) स्वपराध्यासे कारणम् – सिद्धान्तबिन्दुः - प्रथमश्लोकः ।

33. अज्ञानाध्यासविशिष्टचैतन्ये (i.e. अज्ञानप्रतिबिम्बितत्वविशिष्टे चैतन्ये) अहंकाराध्यासः। (e.g. अहं अज्ञः wherein अन्योन्याध्यास is there, viz. अज्ञानाध्यासविशिष्टे चैतन्ये अज्ञानपरिणामभूतस्य अहंकारस्य अध्यासः । तस्मिन् अध्यस्ते अहंकारे अज्ञानाध्यासविशिष्टचैतन्यस्य अध्यासः।) – सिद्धान्तबिन्दुः - प्रथमश्लोकः ।

- iii) Attributes of the *antaḥkaraṇa* such as desires, thought, decision and features of the senses such as blindness, deafness etc. are superimposed on *caitanya* with *ajñāna* along with the *ahaṅkāra* plus *antaḥkaraṇa* already superimposed. Experiences like 'I desire', 'I think', 'I am blind' are possible only when *ahaṅkāra* is superimposed on *ātmā* (*caitanya*) endowed with the superimposition of ignorance. *Caitanya* (*ātmā*) cannot be the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for the superimposition of the attributes of the *antaḥkaraṇa* and the senses without the superimposition of *ahaṅkāra* on *caitanya* first.³⁴

It must be noted that the senses do not themselves get superimposed on *ātmā* endowed with *ahaṅkāradhyāsa*, either in general, as 'I am senses' (*indriyāṇi aham*) or in particular, as for example 'I am eye' (*caḡṣuḥ aham*). The senses get superimposed on *ātmā* endowed with *ahaṅkāradhyāsa* through relation (*saṃsarga*). This is observed in statements such as 'I have senses' (*indriyavān aham*) or 'I have eyes' (*caḡṣuṣmān aham*) etc. However, the senses do get superimposed directly on *caitanya* on which ignorance but not *ahaṅkāra* has been superimposed. In fact, the entire Creation is superimposed on *caitanya* endowed with the *adhyāsa* of *ajñāna* which is its *adhiṣṭhāna*.

- iv) The gross body now gets superimposed on *caitanya* endowed with the superimposition of *ajñāna* onwards upto the attributes of the *antaḥkaraṇa* and the senses. This superimposition is only in terms of the attributes of the gross body as in 'I am a man' or 'I am a woman' etc. The physical body itself is not directly superimposed on *caitanya* as in 'I am the body' (*aham dehaḥ*). Such a

34. तद्विशिष्टे च (i.e. अज्ञानाहंकाराध्यासविशिष्टे चैतन्ये च) कामसंकल्पादीनां अहंकारधर्माणां, इन्द्रियधर्माणां च (viz. काणत्वबधिरत्वादीनां) अध्यासः – सिद्धान्तबिन्दुः - प्रथमश्लोकः।

superimposition is not observed. The body however gets indirectly superimposed on *caitanya* through relationship, as in 'I have a body' (*ahaṃ dehī*).³⁵

- v) Attributes of the physical body such as fatness or height are superimposed on *caitanya* with the earlier superimpositions already in place. This superimposition is characterised by statements such as 'I am tall'. The acceptance of *adhyāsa* must be based on experience and appropriateness.³⁶
- vi) Attributes such as perfection or imperfection belonging to progeny, wife, husband and other near and dear ones external to oneself (with reference to the physical body) are superimposed on *caitanya* (*ātmā*) endowed with the superimposition of the earlier factors up to and including bodily attributes.³⁷
- vii) The manner in which the *adhyāsa* of the different layers of the *anātmā* takes place in succession – from *ajñāna*, *ahaṅkāra* through to the gross body with its attributes and the attributes of near and dear ones – on *caitanya*, has been discussed. In turn, *caitanya* gets superimposed indirectly on *ahaṅkāra* through to the physical body through intimate association (*saṃsarga*) by way of *cidābhāsa* (reflected *caitanya*).³⁸

35. तद्विशिष्टे च (i.e. अज्ञानाहंकाराध्यासाहंकारधर्माणां इन्द्रियधर्माणां च अध्यासविशिष्टे चैतन्ये च) स्थूलदेहाध्यासः धर्मपुरस्कारेण एव अहं मनुष्यः इत्याकारः। न च स्वरूपतः “अहं देहः” इत्यध्यासः । तथा प्रतीत्यभावात् – सिद्धान्तबिन्दुः- प्रथमश्लोकः ।

36. तद्विशिष्टे च (i.e. मनुष्यादिविशेषस्वरूपेण देहाध्यासविशिष्टे चैतन्ये च) स्थौल्यादीनां देहधर्माणां अध्यासः (अध्यासः हि प्रतीत्यानुरोधेन योग्यबलात् च स्वीकार्यः ।) – सिद्धान्तबिन्दुः - प्रथमश्लोकः ।

37. तद्विशिष्टे (i.e. स्थौल्यादि देहधर्माध्यासविशिष्टे चैतन्ये) च बाह्यानां पुत्रभार्यादीनां साकल्यवैकल्यादिधर्माध्यासः – सिद्धान्तबिन्दुः - प्रथमश्लोकः ।

38. एवं चैतन्यस्य अपि अहंकारादिषु देहपर्यन्तेषु अध्यासः संसर्गतः – सि.बिं.प्र.श्लो.।

VARYING DEGREES OF LOVE DUE TO DIFFERENTIAL ADHYĀSA

viii) 'I' the *caitanyarūpa ātmā* is universally the most dear. Therefore all that is superimposed on *ātmā* and hence mistaken as 'I' must be as dear as *ātmā*. But it is seen that varying degrees of love (*prema-tāratamya*) towards the *anātmā* are superimposed on *ātmā*. This is due to the differential nature of *adhyāsa*, or in other words the different degrees of separation of superimposed entities (i.e. the *anātmā*) from *ātmā*. The great Vedāntic master Sureśwarācārya outlines the varying degrees of love in his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika* :

'The son is dearer than wealth. One's physical body is dearer than the son. The senses are dearer than any general part of the physical body. The *antaḥkaraṇa* (mind) is still dearer than the senses. *Ātmā* is the dearest of all' (*Bṛ.U.Vārtika*, 1-4-8-1031).³⁹ The word *prāṇaḥ* in the *Vārtika* quoted stands for *antaḥkaraṇam* – the mind.

In general, it is seen that parents are ready to spend any amount of money to protect their progeny (though there may be rare exceptions). Again, faced with no option, the senses are protected at the cost of other parts of the physical body. Though not expressly stated in the above description of the varying degrees of love, the superimposition of the ownership of wealth on *caitanya* on which the possession of the son has been superimposed is taken for granted.

³⁹ अध्यासव्यवधानतारतम्याच्च प्रेमतारतम्यम् । तदुक्तं वार्तिकामृते –
वित्तात्पुत्रः प्रियः पुत्रात्पिण्डः पिण्डात्तथेन्द्रियम् ।
इन्द्रियेभ्यः प्रियः प्राणः प्राणादात्मा परः प्रियः ॥

(बृ.उ. वार्तिक. १-४-८-१०३१) – सि.बिं.प्र.श्लो.।

THE PURPOSE OF THIS TEXT – ŚĀRĪRAKA-MĪMĀMSĀ (BRAHMASŪTRA)

Thus far, superimposition (*adhyāsa*) has been described in complete detail. Both the *jīva* (individual) and its bondage are equally unreal, being the outcome of unreal superimposition. This substantiates the identity of *jīva* and Brahman (*jīvabrahmaikya*) as well as liberation. The two form the subject and the result of self-knowledge respectively. Now the role and usefulness of Vedānta are highlighted to prove the purpose of *Brahmamīmāṃsā*.

भा. अस्य अनर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय आत्मैकत्वविद्याप्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ताः आरभ्यन्ते । यथा च अयं अर्थः सर्वेषां वेदान्तानां तथा वयं अस्यां शारीरकमीमांसायां प्रदर्शयिष्यामः ।

Bh.Tr. The study of all Vedāntic (i.e. *Upaniṣadic*) sentences or statements along with an inquiry into these statements is (now) commenced in order to gain knowledge of the identity between *jīva* and Brahman so that *adhyāsa* can be given up along with its root, *ajñāna* – the cause of calamitous *saṃsāra*. In this text called *Śārīraka-mīmāṃsā*, we shall show how all *Upaniṣadic* sentences reveal the identity of the *jīva* (individual) and Brahman.

As noted earlier, *adhyāsa* brings about the sorrowful state called *saṃsāra* through its effects, doership and experiencership. Liberation is the complete termination of *adhyāsa* with its root cause, self-ignorance. This is accomplished through *ātmaikatvavidyā* – the direct cognition of *ātmā* which is identical with Brahman. *Śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are means which when adopted with a prepared frame of mind reveal *ātmā* by removing the obstructions that hinder the direct cognition of *ātmā*. The role of Vedānta (*Upaniṣadic* sentences) is to ascertain the knowledge of the identity of *ātmā* and Brahman. The study of Vedānta is therefore in the

form of a thorough inquiry. The question arises, how can the Upaniṣads be said to propound *jīvabrahmaikya* (the identity of *jīva* and Brahman) when they also describe the *upāsanā* on *Hiraṇyagarbha* and other *upāsanās* that clearly involve duality? The *bhāṣyakāra* avers that he will now demonstrate that all Upaniṣads invariably propound *jīvabrahmaikya*. This is the purpose of the present inquiry called *Śārīraka-mīmāṃsā* (a synonym for *Brahmasūtra*). The physical body is called *śarīra* since it is subject to decay. Its despicable and dirty nature is emphasized by adding the suffix 'ka' (क) to *śarīra*, converting the word into *śarīraka*. The *jīva* (the individual entity) residing within the *śarīraka* is called the *śārīrakaḥ*. The inquiry and ascertainment which reveal that the true nature of *jīva* is Brahman is termed *śārīraka-mīmāṃsā*. *Upāsanās* are the means to accomplish *cittaikāgrya* (single pointedness of mind), which is indispensable for gaining this knowledge. That is why *upāsanās* are also described and recommended in the Upaniṣads.

**INQUIRY INTO WHAT IS BRAHMAN
IS A MUST
(जिज्ञासाधिकरणम्)
BRAHMASŪTRA 1-1-1**

**THE SUMMARY OF *JIJÑĀSĀDHĪKARAṆAM* –
THE TOPIC OF THE FIRST *SŪTRA***

The Vaiyāsika-nyāyamālā, which summarises every *adhikaraṇa* (topic) in the *Brahmasūtra*, presents the first topic as follows:

Subject: The text (*śāstra*) that deals with *Brahmavicāra* – an inquiry into the nature of Brahman.

Doubt: Is it worth commencing with this text on *Brahmavicāra*?

Contrary Proposition (*Pūrvapakṣa*):

There cannot be any mutual *adhyāsa* between an inert body and sentient *ātmā*, which are as opposed to each other as light is to darkness. The ‘I’ – called *ātmā* – is itself Brahman. No one ever doubts oneself or doubts one’s own existence by asking ‘do I exist?’. Everyone is certain about one’s own existence – the existence of ‘I’. No result in the form of liberation (*muktī*) is observed. In the absence of any doubt regarding the existence of the self and with no question of any result, this text need not be commenced with.

Doctrine (*Siddhānta*):

The Upaniṣads contain statements such as ‘*Ātmā* is unattached (*asaṅgaḥ*)’, ‘This *ātmā* is Brahman’, declaring that Brahman is totally unconnected to anything and is itself *ātmā*, the ‘I’. But the ‘I notion’ is universally experienced

with respect to the body, *prāṇa*, mind etc. Therefore the question arises, is it the *asaṅga* Brahman that is *ātmā*, or is it the body-mind complex. Besides these *Upaniṣadic* statements, the direct experience of *ātmajñānīs* (men of self-knowledge) also bears testimony to the existence of *mukṭi* (liberation). Thus both the fact that there is room for doubt and that the result (viz. liberation) is seen in the form of the direct experience of *ātmajñānīs* call for an inquiry into *Upaniṣadic* statements that directly reveal *ātmā* which is identical to Brahman.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST *SŪTRA*

Some people interpret the entire Vedas as consisting of *vidhis* – injunctions made up of various do's and don'ts. The *vidhi* aspect is thoroughly discussed and established in the *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, whose first *sūtra* is '*athāto dharmajijñāsā*'. Based on the above, opponents conclude that there is no scope for *Brahmamīmāṃsā*.

If injunctions (*vidhis*) alone were the sum and substance of the Vedas, the omniscient sage Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa) would not have embarked on *Brahmamīmāṃsā* (inquiry into the nature of Brahman). The very fact that an investigation into Brahman is undertaken with great thoroughness by the *sūtrakāra*, Vyāsa, shows that Brahman can be known through Vedānta alone and not any other scripture. The Vedas, including Vedānta, are the sole means of knowledge for all that the human intellect cannot comprehend on its own. This proves the indispensability of such an inquiry to ascertain without ambiguity the true nature of Brahman as set forth methodically in Vedānta. The first *sūtra* is therefore now being introduced.

भा. वेदान्तमीमांसाशास्त्रस्य व्याचिख्यासितस्य इदं आदिमं सूत्रम् ।

Bh.Tr. This first *sūtra* of the scripture called *Vedāntamīmāṃsā* (*Brahmasūtra*) will now be explained.

अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा ॥१॥

[पदच्छेदः – अथ (thereafter), अतः (therefore), ब्रह्मणः जिज्ञासा (inquiry into the nature of Brahman) (मोक्षकामेन कर्तव्या – should be undertaken by a *mumukṣu*).

पदार्थोक्तिः – अथ – साधनचतुष्टयसम्पत्त्यनन्तरम् , अतः – कर्मफलस्य अनित्यत्वात् ज्ञानफलस्य मोक्षस्य च नित्यत्वात् मोक्षकामेन ब्रह्मज्ञानाय वेदान्तवाक्यानां विचारः (तात्पर्यनिश्चयः कर्तव्यः।)]

Tr. In order to gain *Brahmajñāna*, a *mumukṣu* (a person desirous of liberation) must inquire into the *Upaniṣadic* (Vedāntic) sentences and ascertain their purport after acquiring the fourfold qualifications such as *viveka*, *vairāgya* etc., because the results of actions (*karma*) are impermanent whereas liberation, the end result of knowledge (*Brahmajñāna*), is eternal.

ATHA HERE MEANS ‘THEREAFTER’ AND NOT ‘COMMENCEMENT’

भा. तत्र अथ शब्दः आनन्तर्यार्थः परिगृह्यते न अधिकारार्थः, ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायाः अनधिकार्यत्वात् ।

Bh.Tr. The word *atha* in this *sūtra* is taken to mean ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*) and not ‘commencement’ because the desire to know Brahman cannot be begun (by anyone).

The word ‘*atha*’ can mean auspiciousness (*maṅgalam*), thereafter (*ānantaryam*), commencement (*adhikāra* or *ārambha*), different view or proposition (*pakṣāntara* or *vikalpa*), question (*praśna*), entirety (*kārtsnyam*), doubt (*saṃśaya*) and synthesis (*samuccaya*), depending on the context. However, the meanings most commonly used are the first four. In the context of this *sūtra*, the meaning ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*) is the most appropriate

because it indicates that a person eligible to take to *Brahmavicāra* should commence with this inquiry. The three other commonly used meanings of ‘*atha*’ are now thoroughly refuted one by one.

The meaning ‘commencement’ as used in the *Pātañjala Yogasūtra*, ‘*atha yogānuśasanam*’ (now begins the teaching of Yoga) is not appropriate in this context. The word *jijñāsā* can mean either the desire to gain knowledge (*jñānecchā*), or inquiry (*vicāra*). In the first case, the *sūtra* yields the meaning ‘the desire to gain *Brahmajijñāna* is being commenced’. This is incongruous with reason, since no desire can be initiated through deliberate efforts. Desires surface spontaneously when contact with something perceived to be beneficial takes place. The general expectation is that the accomplishment of a desire leads to the result sought. In the second case, the word ‘*kartavyā*’ (should be taken to) must be added to the *sūtra* before the word *jijñāsā* can be taken to mean inquiry (*vicāra*). However, the addition of this word ‘*kartavyā*’ automatically implies ‘the beginning of an inquiry’. In that case, the use of *atha* to indicate the commencement of *Brahmajijñāsā* would be rendered superfluous in this *sūtra*.

‘*ATHA*’ AS AUSPICIOUSNESS IS UNTENABLE

भा. मंगलस्य च वाक्यार्थे समन्वयाभावात् । अर्थान्तरप्रयुक्तः एव हि अथशब्दः श्रुत्या मङ्गलप्रयोजनः भवति ।

Bh.Tr. From the point of view of syntax too, ‘auspiciousness’ (as the meaning of *atha*) does not convey the purport of the *sūtra*. Even if used in another sense (viz. ‘thereafter’ – *ānantaryam*), the word ‘*atha*’ surely serves to communicate auspiciousness merely through its utterance.

The purport of the entire first *sūtra* is that an inquiry should be conducted into the nature of Brahman. Auspiciousness (*maṅgalam*), either in the context of something to be undertaken or

in any other context, cannot be of relevance to the meaning of this *sūtra*. If one insists that the purpose of the sage Vyāsa, the author of these *sūtras*, in using the word *atha* when commencing the sacred text, was to invoke auspiciousness, while this is true, the word fails to connote auspiciousness here. ‘*Atha*’ can confer auspiciousness through its mere utterance or when it simultaneously indicates ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*). The sound of the word *atha* is akin to the sound of a conch or *vīṇā* – (Indian) lute – the symbol of auspiciousness. It is declared in the *smṛti*: The Creator *Brahmā* uttered the words *Om* and *atha* at the beginning of Creation. Both words, therefore, imply auspiciousness (even when they convey their direct meaning in a given context).

‘*ATHA*’ AS ‘DIFFERENT PROPOSITION’ IS IDENTICAL TO ‘THEREAFTER’

भा. पूर्वप्रकृतापेक्षायाम् फलतः आनन्तर्याव्यतिरेकात् ।

Bh.Tr. Any connection between an effect (*phala* viz. *Brahmavicāra*) and its cause, in the form of a previous submission, can also be described as *atha* in the sense of ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*).

‘*Atha*’ can also be used to present a different viewpoint or proposition in two scenarios: in the sense of ‘but’ or ‘on the other hand’, or in the presence of a cause-effect relationship. For example, let us assume the topic “the world is false” is under active consideration. To show that it is unacceptable to consider the world real, a different view may be proposed using the word *atha*, where it signifies ‘even if the world were considered to be real ...’. Then, why can the word *atha* in this *sūtra* not be interpreted as a different proposition called *pakṣāntara* (a different concept) or *arthāntara* (different entity) or something distinct from the *purvaprakṛta* (previous submission)? Because there is no *sūtra* prior to this first *sūtra* whose topic is *Brahmajijñāsā*, leaving no scope for a different proposition. The presentation of a different proposition would be irrelevant and an exercise in futility.

The other instance in which ‘*atha*’ can be used to present an alternate viewpoint or proposition is in the presence of a cause-effect relationship. If *Brahmavicāra*, implied by the word *Brahmajijñāsā*, is considered an effect (*phala*) of something which is its cause or the means to it, the latter must be described first (*pūrva-prakṛta*). Then the effect (*phala*) can take the place of or supersede the cause described earlier. Here a different proposition can indeed be introduced by the word ‘*atha*’. Even so, the assumption must be made that the ‘different proposition’ represented by *atha* suggests a cause-effect relationship. Since the effect follows its cause, this is better conveyed by interpreting ‘*atha*’ as ‘thereafter’. It must be noted that a different concept (*pakṣāntara*) does not by itself establish a cause-effect relationship.

WHAT IS THE PREREQUISITE REQUIRED BY THE WORD ‘THEREAFTER’?

भा. सति च आनन्तर्यार्थत्वे यथा धर्मजिज्ञासा पूर्ववृत्तं वेदाध्ययनं नियमेन अपेक्षते एवं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा अपि यत्पूर्ववृत्तं नियमेन अपेक्षते, तद्वक्तव्यम् ।

Bh.Tr. Once ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*), is established as the meaning of the word ‘*atha*’, the indispensable prerequisite for *Brahmajijñāsā* (the inquiry into the nature of Brahman) must be specified, just as the indispensable prerequisite for *dharmajijñāsā* (the inquiry into the nature of *karma*) is the prior study of the Vedas as an invariable precondition.

The word ‘thereafter’ implies something that must necessarily precede. In the present context, the word suggests the means required to undertake *Brahmavicāra*. To show that this basic requirement and no other is indeed the prerequisite, other alternatives that the word ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*) may connote and conditions that are unnecessary will be described and then ruled out.

Brahmajijñāsā or *Brahmavicāra* is the subject matter of this text. A thorough explanation of this subject matter is found in the *bhāṣya*. Since the word *dharmajijñāsā*, also termed *dharmamīmāṃsā* or *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, is used frequently in the *bhāṣya*, a greater understanding of *dharmamīmāṃsā* is desirable. The word *jijñāsā* in *dharmajijñāsā*, as in *Brahmajijñāsā*, implies an inquiry into the nature of *dharma* – *karma* as enjoined by the do's and don'ts in the Vedas. *Dharma* in this context stands for the transitory good indicated by the first three *puruṣārthas* (worthwhile accomplishments). These three *puruṣārthas* are *dharma* (*puṇya*), *artha* (wealth and assets) and *kāma* (the fulfilment of righteous desires). The fourth and ultimate *puruṣārtha* is *mokṣa* (liberation), the means to which is *Brahmajijñāsā*. In *Jaiminīsūtra* (1-1-2), *dharma* is defined as *codanālakṣaṇaḥ arthaḥ*⁴⁰ – that which confers the relative good revealed by *codanā*, where the word *codanā* as used in *pūrvamīmāṃsā* stands for the injunctions in the Vedas that prompt an individual to take to specific actions that lead to well-being or to desist from prohibited actions which result in harm in the long run.

STUDY OF THE VEDA AND KNOWLEDGE OF *KARMA* NOT NECESSARY FOR *BRAHMAVICĀRA*

भा. स्वाध्यायानन्तर्यं तु समानम् । ननु इह कर्मावबोधानन्तर्यं विशेषः । न, धर्मजिज्ञासायाः प्राक् अपि अधीतवेदान्तस्य ब्रह्मजिज्ञासोपपत्तेः ।

Bh.Tr. (Contrary proposition – *pūrvapakṣa*): The study of one's own branch of the Vedas cannot be considered the specific prerequisite for *Brahmavicāra* (because) the study of the Vedas is a prerequisite common to both (*dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā*). Where *Brahmajijñāsā* is concerned, the knowledge of *karma* gained through *dharmajijñāsā* is a specific means (to *Brahmajijñāsā*).

40. चोदनालक्षणः अर्थः धर्मः (जै. सू. 1-1-2)

Doctrine (*siddhānta*): No, a person who has studied Vedānta can undertake *Brahmajijñāsā* even before the knowledge of *karma* is gained through *dharmajijñāsā*.

The contrary view states that the study of the Vedas is a means common to both *dharmavicāra* (*dharmajijñāsā*) and *Brahmavicāra* (*Brahmajijñāsā*) and not therefore specific to *Brahmajijñāsā*. However, it should be noted that Vedānta does not accept Vedic studies to be even a means to *Brahmajijñāsā*, let alone a specific one.

The contrary proposition further states that the knowledge of *karma* gained through *dharmajijñāsā* is the specific (*viśeṣaḥ*) means to *Brahmajijñāsā*. This conclusion is based on an improper understanding of an *Upaniṣadic* statement. Subscribers to this view quote the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat*, which states, “Brahmins (i.e. *mumukṣus*) aspire to know the Brahman described in the Upaniṣads through the study of the Vedas, the performance of sacrifices and charities, and ascetic practices that do not destroy the body” (*Bṛ.U.* 4-4-22)⁴¹. They also justify their stand on the following grounds:

- i) A rule in the *dharmajijñāsā* states that one particular sacrificial offering (*dravya*) is associated (*saṃyoga*) with two types of rituals (*karma*) in order to gain two different (*prthak*) sets of results (*Jai.Sū.* 4-3-5)⁴². Taking recourse to this rule from *dharmajijñāsā*, they opine that likewise, the same set of sacrifices, ascetic practices etc. are means to gain both the heavens and *Brahmajñāna*.
- ii) The *bhāṣyakāra* points out in *Sarvāpekṣādhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 3-4-26 and 27) that the above statement in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat* (4-4-22) shows that sacrifices etc. are the means to *Brahmavidyā*.

41. तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणाः विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसा अनाशकेन ।

(*Bṛ.U.* 4-4-22)

42. एकस्य तु उभयार्थे संयोगपृथक्त्वम् । (जै. सू. 4-3-5)

The import of the *Upaniṣadic* statement quoted above will be established later; but the claim that the knowledge of *karma* obtained through *dharmajijñāsā* is an indispensable means for undertaking *Brahmajijñāsā* is rejected outright by the *bhāṣya*. The *bhāṣya* cites individuals who, upon studying Vedānta, take to *Brahmajijñāsā* effectively without prior *dharmajijñāsā*. It should be clearly understood that the large number of rules contained in the *dharmajijñāsā* (*Jaiminisūtras*) are not indispensable means to gain *Brahmajñāna* or to take to an inquiry into *Brahmajñāna*. The rules of *dharmajijñāsā* are meant to establish the nature of *karmas* alone. The knowledge of *karma* obtained through *dharmajijñāsā* is specifically intended for the performance of *karmas* and not to gain *Brahmajñāna*. Unlike the rule of invariable concomitance between smoke and fire, no such rule exists between Brahman and *dharma* based on which *Brahmajñāna* can be produced by *dharmajñāna*.

Then why does the Upaniṣad (*Br.U.* 4-4-22) describe sacrifices, ascetic practices and others as means to gain *Brahmajñāna*, which is also confirmed by the *bhāṣyakāra* in *Sarvāpekṣādihikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 3-4-26 and 27)? The answer: it is a basic tenet of Vedānta. Though enjoined actions (*karmas*) cannot be a direct means to gain *Brahmajñāna*, they do serve as indirect means by bringing about *duritakṣaya* (the destruction of past sins) and conferring purity of mind (*cittaśuddhi*), discrimination (*viveka*), dispassion (*vairāgya*) etc. Such *karmas* need not necessarily be performed in the present life to gain eligibility for *Brahmajijñāsā*. *Karmas* of past lives can also confer the required disposition without being performed in this birth. The word ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*) necessarily connotes a specific, easily identifiable feature as a qualification to pursue *Brahmajijñāsā*. *Brahmajijñāsā* therefore is not a pursuit to be undertaken only after *dharmajijñāsā*. The ascertainment of *karmas* and their knowledge cannot be the sum and substance of ‘thereafter’. It is worth noting that prayers, *navavidhā bhakti* (the nine modes of devotion), *nāmajapa* (repetition of the name of *Īśvara*, the Creator principle), worship of *Īśvara* in

any desired form, service of the needy and other means of this nature can be a substitute for Vedic rituals and sacrifices in acquiring a suitable frame of mind in the present Kaliyuga, since they are easier to practice.

ATHA AS ‘THEREAFTER’ CANNOT MEAN A SEQUENCE (KRAMA) TO DHARMAJIJÑĀSĀ

If a cause-effect relationship cannot exist between *dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā*, as has been shown, why should a sequential order between them be ruled out? The answer, after considering three different possibilities, is: such a sequence (*krama*) is, quite simply, not possible.

भा. यथा च हृदयाद्यवदानानां आनन्तर्यनियमः, क्रमस्य विवक्षितत्वात् न तथा इह क्रमः विवक्षितः शेषशेषित्वे अधिकृताधिकारे वा प्रमाणाभावात् धर्मब्रह्मजिज्ञासयोः फलजिज्ञास्यभेदात् च ।

Bh.Tr. The rule of direct sequence (*ānantaryaniyamah*) for *avadāna* (sacrificial items for oblations) such as the heart and other things is intended to specify the order in which these items are offered. However no such sequence (*krama*) is implied between *dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā*, since there exists no means of knowledge to indicate that the two have a relation of either *śeṣaśeṣitva* (i.e. relation of principal versus subsidiary) or *adhikṛtādhikāra* (i.e. eligibility to perform *karma* conferred by the performance of some other *karma*). Another reason why such a sequence (*krama*) cannot exist is that the results (*phala*) of the two and the subject matter to be known (*jijñāsya*) through the two are different.

The word *avadāna* stands for the sacrificial object used in an oblation. Some also take the word to connote ‘cutting’ or ‘taking up’.

The word ‘*atha*’ in the *mantra* of the ‘*agniṣomīya yāga*’, which involves an animal sacrifice, indicates the order in which different limbs are to be cut. A sequence of steps needs to be specified if one and the same individual (*ekakartā*) is supposed to do several things as part of any ritual or sacrifice etc. Such a context arises in the following cases:

- (i) *Karmas* in which one or more subsidiaries (*śeṣa*) are connected to a principal (*śeṣī*). This relation is termed *śeṣaśeṣitva*.
- (ii) The performance of one *karma* confers on the doer (*kartā*) the eligibility to perform another. This is technically called *adhikṛtādhikārah*.

Now there is no Vedic statement – *pramāṇa* – that recommends such an order between *Brahmajijñāsā* and *dharmajijñāsā*.

The purport of the Vedas is not to exhort people to take to animal sacrifices (*paśuyāgas*). The Vedas clearly condemn *hiṃsā* – killing or harming anyone. A small number of animal sacrifices described at places in the Vedas are meant to cater to immature individuals under the grip of certain desires. It is akin to a mother temporarily consenting to the unworthy demands of an unruly child. In the ultimate analysis, the *śruti* dismisses the pursuit of the heavens as petty and paltry in the face of *Brahmajñāna*, which confers liberation. Animal sacrifices also symbolize the sacrifice of animal tendencies in one’s bosom.

Some contest the contention that no order (*krama*) can be established between *dharmajijñāsā* for want of *pramāṇas*. They say that the *śruti* and *smṛti* state that only those who have pursued *dharmajijñāsā* are qualified to take to *Brahmajijñāsā*. They base their arguments on the following scriptural passages.

- a) One should become a householder after living life as a *Brahmacārī*. And *sannyāsa* (renunciation) should be taken up after becoming a ‘*vānaprastha*’ – anchorite – which pertains to the third stage of religious life (*Jābālopaniṣat-4*).
- b) According to scriptural injunctions, the first stage should be the study of the Vedas. This should be followed by procreation based on right conduct and the performance of sacrifices based on one’s capacity. Thereafter, the mind should be focussed on gaining liberation (*mokṣa*). In the above scriptural passages, the stage of *sannyāsa* implies *Brahmajijñāsā* while the stages of householder and *vānaprastha* imply *dharmajijñāsā*.

These statements are directed only at individuals who do not have a pure mind (*śuddhacitta*). They do not constitute a general rule, which the following injunctions of the *śruti* and *smṛti* very clearly bring out.

- (i) One should take to *sannyāsa* from the stage of *brahmacarya*. (*Jābālopaniṣat-4*).
- (ii) A person of pure mind (*śuddhātma*) acquires liberation in the first stage of life itself, i.e. in *brahmacarya*.

The above statements clearly indicate that in order to attain liberation, *Brahmajijñāsā* can be undertaken directly in the stage of *brahmacarya* without taking to *dharmajijñāsā*.

The gist of *Jābālopaniṣat-4* is given below to establish the ‘when’ of *sannyāsa* with reference to *Brahmajijñāsā* :

‘After gaining purity of mind through the performance of *karmas* in past lives, a *mumuṣu* should initiate the inquiry into Brahman at the *brahmacarya* stage itself, after due renunciation. Purity of mind can be ascertained from the intensity of dispassion

(*vairāgya*), the absence of hankering after sense objects. If the yearning for sense-pleasures lingers, an individual should live the life of a householder (*gṛhastha*). If the mind continues to be impure and meanders constantly among sense-pleasures in this second stage of life, the third stage of *vānaprastha* should be adopted. The person should continue in this third stage if the mind remains impure in spite of living the life of a *vānaprastha*. It is only after the mind becomes pure in the *vānaprastha* stage that such seekers should enter the order of *sannyāsa*, which signifies *Brahmajjñāsā*.¹ This passage clearly demonstrates that *Brahmajjñāsā* can be undertaken without taking to *dharmajjñāsā*.

Some acknowledge that there cannot be a sequence between the two *jñāsās* as there is no relation like *śeṣaśeṣitva* (principal and subsidiary) or *adhikṛtādhikāra* (performance of one thing conferring the eligibility to perform some other) between the two. However, they contend that the result of both *mīmāṃsās* (sacred inquiries) undertaken jointly is one and the same, liberation. Therefore the same aspirant has to undertake both *jñāsās*. This necessitates a sequence in which an individual performs two different actions to achieve a common goal. They are called the *samuccayavādī*, those who advocate the combined practice of *karma* and *jñāna* (self-knowledge) to gain liberation. According to them, liberation is possible only by combining knowledge and *karma* because either cannot lead to liberation on its own. They conclude that the knowledge to be gained through both *mīmāṃsās* is one and the same *Vedārtha* (the import of the Vedas) – by an aspirant who undertakes both. This requires a sequence (*krama*) between the two *mīmāṃsās*. This is not true, however, since the result of *dharmajjñāsā* is completely different from that of *Brahmajjñāsā*, as is the knowledge to be gained through the two. In addition, the modes of imparting knowledge by the two *pramāṇas* also differ. The *bhāṣya* brings out these fine distinctions one after another, proving that no sequence (*krama*) can be assumed between the two *jñāsās*.

PHALABHEDA – THE DIFFERENCE IN THE RESULTS OF DHARMAJIJÑĀSĀ AND BRAHMAJIJÑĀSĀ

भा. अभ्युदयफलं धर्मज्ञानं तत् च अनुष्ठानापेक्षं । निःश्रेयसफलं तु ब्रह्मविज्ञानं न च अनुष्ठानांतरापेक्षम् ।

Bh.Tr. Sense-pleasures and heavenly pleasures are the result of *dharmajijñāsā* and depend on *karmānuṣṭhāna* – the performance of *karmas*. By contrast, liberation is the result of *Brahmajijñāsā* and is independent of *karmānuṣṭhāna*.

Pleasures born of sense objects are termed *abhyudaya* – that which is achieved through *dharmajijñāsā*. They include heavenly pleasures. The results of *dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā* differ not only in their nature but also in their means of production.

The result of *dharmajijñāsā* depends invariably on *karmānuṣṭhāna* – the performance of requisite rituals, sacrifices and the like. By contrast, the result of *Brahmajijñāsā* is liberation (*mokṣa*), called *niḥśreyasam*. This result is everlasting (*nityam*), completely independent of everything (i.e. *nirapekṣam*) and the highest good in life (*śreyas*). *Brahmajñāna* and its result – liberation – are independent of *karmānuṣṭhāna*. Given such a complete difference between the results and the means to gain the results, the *samuccaya* (joint practice) of the two is not possible.

JIJÑĀSYABHEDA – THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT IS TO BE KNOWN THROUGH DHARMAJIJÑĀSĀ AND THROUGH BRAHMAJIJÑĀSĀ

भा. भव्यः च धर्मः जिज्ञास्यः न ज्ञानकाले अस्ति, पुरुषव्यापार-तन्त्रत्वात्। इह तु भूतं ब्रह्म जिज्ञास्यं नित्यत्वात् न पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रम् ।

Bh.Tr. The relative good (*dharma*) to be known through

***dharmajijñāsā* is something produced by *karma*. It does not exist at the time its knowledge is being gained, since *dharma* depends on the performance of *karman* by an individual. In the case of *Brahmajijñāsā* (inquiry into Brahman), Brahman exists when *Brahmajijñāsā* is being undertaken, since Brahman is ever-existent. It does not depend on the performance of any actions by the individual.**

Bhavyaḥ (भव्यः) signifies *kṛtisādhyah* (कृतिसाध्यः) – something produced by actions. *Dharma* (the relative good) is not manifest when its knowledge is being gained. This does not mean it is totally non-existent in nature. It comes into being only through appropriate and adequate actions. Unlike *dharma*, however, Brahman is an ever-existent, indestructible principle. Hence there is no question of producing it through action. The above discussion shows that in addition to the means to their accomplishment, there is a difference in the nature of *dharma* and Brahman.

PRAMĀṆABHEDA – THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PRAMĀṆAS EMPLOYED IN THE PURSUIT OF THE TWO JIJÑĀSĀS

भा. चोदनाप्रवृत्तिभेदात् च । या हि चोदना धर्मस्य लक्षणं सा स्वविषये नियुञ्जाना एव पुरुषं अवबोधयति । ब्रह्मचोदना तु पुरुषं अवबोधयति एव केवलं, अवबोधस्य चोदनाऽजन्यत्वात् न पुरुषः अवबोधे नियुज्यते । यथा अक्षार्थसंनिकर्षेण अर्थावबोधे तद्वत् ।

Bh.Tr. There is a difference between what is to be known (i.e. *jijñāsya*) (through *dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā*), because there is also a clear difference in the mode of imparting the knowledge through their respective *pramāṇas* – means of knowledge. (This abridged sentence is now being explained.) The *codanā*

(scriptural injunction), or the *pramāṇa* (the means of knowledge) of *dharma*, instructs a person, urging him to take up the actions enjoined by it (to accomplish that *dharma*). By contrast, *Brahmacodanā* (the means of knowledge that reveals Brahman) merely imparts knowledge (without urging a person to undertake any action) because *Brahmajñāna* is born immediately through its *pramāṇa*. *Brahmacodanā* does not urge a person to do something to gain the knowledge of Brahman, just as one is not asked to do something to gain perceptual knowledge once contact between sense-organs and sense objects is established.

The difference in the mode of operation of the *pramāṇas* of the two *jijñāsās* is now described to highlight the distinction between that which is sought to be known through them. According to Vedānta, *codanā* in this context stands for a sentence that imparts the knowledge of an unknown thing. According to *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, the word *codanā* means a scriptural injunction that prompts a person to undertake certain actions (*kriyā*) or desist from prohibited actions. Take, for instance, the injunction, ‘A person desirous of gaining heaven must perform the sacrifice’. This statement provides information on the means to gain heaven and at the same time urges the aspirant to perform a specific sacrifice. By contrast, statements such as ‘This *ātmā* is Brahman’ that reveal what Brahman is merely impart the direct knowledge that ‘I’ am in reality Brahman, totally free from Creation. They do not urge a person to do something, simply because there is nothing required to be done. It would be incorrect to say that something needs to be done to gain knowledge after the operation of the *pramāṇa*, because once set into motion, the means of knowledge imparts the knowledge on its own. It is like gaining perceptual knowledge through the sense-organs. The contact of sense-organs with their respective sense objects directly gives rise to perception. Such sense-contacts do not induce the perceiver to do something additional to gain perceptual knowledge. In short, *dharma* is to be known through a

pramāṇa that urges the performance of actions required to achieve desired results, whereas Brahman is to be known by a non-active *pramāṇa* which merely imparts the knowledge that directly confers liberation without involving any action. This is *jijñāsyabheda* (the difference between what is to be known through *dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā*), as a result of which the word ‘*atha*’ in this *sūtra* meaning ‘thereafter’ (*ānantaryam*) cannot be taken to mean a sequence (*krama*) linking the two *jijñāsās*. After refuting one by one each alternative proposed meaning of *atha* (in the sense of *ānantaryam* [thereafter]) by demonstrating its inapplicability, the precise meaning of *atha* is now being established.

‘ATHA’, HERE MEANS AFTER THE ACQUISITION OF SĀDHANA CATUṢṬĀYA-SAMPAṬṬI (THE FOURFOLD QUALIFICATIONS)

भा. तस्मात् किमपि वक्तव्यं यदनन्तरं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा उपदिश्यते इति। उच्यते – नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः, इहामुत्रार्थभोगविरागः, शमदमादिसाधनसंपत् मुमुक्षुत्वं च । तेषु हि सत्सु प्रागपि धर्मजिज्ञासायाः ऊर्ध्वं च शक्यते ब्रह्म जिज्ञासितुं ज्ञातुं च न विपर्यये । तस्मात् अथ शब्देन यथोक्तसाधनसंपत्त्यानन्तर्यं उपदिश्यते ।

Bh.Tr. Therefore something, after the accomplishment of which alone *Brahmajijñāsā* (the inquiry into the nature of Brahman) is recommended (by the author of *Brahmasūtra*), is required to be stated. This is now being enumerated: Discrimination (*viveka*) between the eternal (*nitya*) and the ephemeral (*anitya*), indifference (*virāga*) to sense-pleasures here and heavenly pleasures hereafter, accomplishment of means like *śama*, *dama* etc., and *mumukṣutvam* – the intense yearning for liberation. Only when these qualifications have been acquired – irrespective of whether before or after taking to *dharmajijñāsā* – can Brahman be

inquired into and known, and not otherwise. The word *atha* therefore recommends inquiry directly after (*ānantaryam*) the accomplishment of the aforesaid means.

The fourfold qualifications (*sādhana-catuṣṭaya-saṃpatti*) are indispensable for an inquiry into the nature of Brahman. This is strictly in accordance with the Upaniṣads. Statements in the Upaniṣads enunciate these qualifications, and since the Upaniṣads are valid means of knowledge, the authenticity of these qualifications is established. The fourfold qualifications that make up the *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-saṃpatti* are described in detail below:

Vivekaḥ (Discrimination): All that is produced by action (*karma*) is transitory. The *Chāndogyopaniṣat* declares, ‘Just as sense-pleasures produced by actions invariably come to an end, so too do heavenly pleasures earned through *puṇya* and enjoyed hereafter get destroyed’ (*Ch.U.* 8-1-6). This is the lot of all that is *anātmā*. By contrast, *śruti* passages such as, ‘*Ātmā* is neither born nor dies because it is the ever-existent independent knowledge-principle’ (*Kṛ.U.* 1-2-18), and ‘*Ātmā* called *bhūmā* is immortal and all that is distinct from it is perishable’ (*Ch.U.* 7-24-1 and *Bṛ.U.* 3-4-2), ascertain the everlasting nature of *ātmā*. Thus discrimination is the ability to distinguish and determine that *ātmā* is eternal and all that is *anātmā* (not ‘I’) is ephemeral.

Virāgaḥ (Indifference or Dispassion): The *śruti* contains declarations such as ‘A *mumuksu* develops dispassion after discovering through thorough investigation that enjoyments obtained through actions are impermanent and liberation cannot therefore be produced by *karma*’ (*Mu.U.* 1-2-12). They induce disinterestedness in actions and their results. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat* elaborates at length the statement ‘everything is dear to oneself for the sake of

oneself'. This and similar statements in the Upaniṣads inculcate in mature people a dispassion towards the physical body and the senses, as well as towards worldly objects, beings and events. This dispassion extends to heavenly pleasures which are adjudged to be a source of happiness till dispassion is born. Such a person is no longer under the sway of desires.

Vedānta is falsely charged with creating a guilt complex by emphasizing *virāga* or *vairāgya* as a pre-requisite for liberation. In prescribing *durita-kṣaya* – means to nullify the results of past bad actions – Vedānta does acknowledge the existence of the adverse unconscious (mind) in a *mumukṣu* – an aspirant for *ātmañāna*. Prohibited actions in the past – either in this or in previous lives – result in sorrowful and unpleasant experiences. These in turn build-up the adverse unconscious mind. Vedānta suggests preparatory measures such as a life given to *dharma*, *karma-yoga*, prayers and *upāsana*s, as these aim to wipe out the build-up in the unconscious mind, instead of raking up the grave of unpleasant past experiences. Such measures counteract the build-up of the unconscious mind in past and present lives. In their self-styled scientific orthodoxy, psychologists and psychiatrists do not accept rebirth, the build-up (impressions) of past lives in the unconscious mind, the law of *karma*, *Īsvara* and other associated aspects. Non-acceptance of such phenomena by those who hold that what meets the eye constitutes the only means to knowledge cannot stand as evidence to invalidate the truth.

Vedānta recommends *vairāgya* as the correct perspective towards the world. It is the outlook towards life and living, and the resultant conduct, of a healthy and mature mind. It is not recourse taken to by a frustrated, weak and sickly psyche. Notwithstanding this, if a person

experiences guilt, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that an immature person has been forced to observe *vairāgya* without adequate preparation through suitable guidance. Such an individual has to be educated to discover the limitations of desired entities (objects, beings or otherwise) even if these are considered highly covetable from the individual's worldly standpoint. One must bear in mind that the Upaniṣads urge only *mumukṣus* to take up *virāgaḥ* and not *bubhukṣus* – persons steeped in sense-enjoyment taking sense-enjoyments as the only goal of life. For a *bubhukṣu*, the Vedas furnish a long shopping list of desirable worldly and heavenly objects along with the means to their procurement as regulated by *dharma*.

That is why the Vedas clearly enjoin two distinct paths, namely the path of *pravṛtti dharma* consisting of 'act and achieve' and the path of *nivṛtti dharma* – 'renounce and discover the ultimate truth'. The path of *pravṛtti dharma* is designed in such a way that followers develop maturity of mind over course of time whilst fulfilling their immediate desires at the same time. *Pravṛtti dharma* indirectly leads to *nivṛtti dharma*. To ask those imbued with 'a large number of desires' to follow the *nivṛtti* path is like putting the cart before the horse. On the other hand, to profess that *vairāgya*, or the *nivṛtti* path, is unnecessary in order to gain *ātmañāna* / *Brahmajñāna* is to expect the cart to run without the horse. Such a notion is born of a misunderstanding of the actual nature of *ātmañāna*. The fact is: 'if an individual gains *tattvajñāna* (*ātmañāna*), then itself his desires cease. *Tattvajñāna* and desires cannot co-exist like light and darkness'⁴³ (*Yogavāsiṣṭha, nirvāṇa uttara, 37-30*).

Śama-damādi-sādhanaṣṭpat (Accomplishment of the six

43. ज्ञता चेदुदिता जन्तोस्तदिच्छास्योपशाम्यति ।

नैतयोः स्थितिरैकत्र प्रकाशतमसोरिव ॥३०॥ (यो.वा.नि.उ.३७-३०)

means *śama, dama* etc.): The necessity of cultivating the six means, namely, *śama, dama* and the rest can be traced to the following exhortation in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. ‘One must directly know *ātmā* in one’s own *antaḥkaraṇa* having become *śanta, dānta, uparata, titikṣu, samāhitaḥ, śraddhāvān* (*Bṛ. U.* 4-4-23, *mādhyandina* recension). The six requirements mentioned in this *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* statement correspond to the six required means, namely, *śama, dama, uparati, titikṣā, samādhāna* and *śraddhā* in that order.

Śama is the withdrawal of the mind from mundane activities.

Dama is abstention from the activities of the senses.

Uparati or *uparama* is the renunciation of enjoined daily (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) *karmas* (actions) to enable a life of complete dedication to the pursuit of self-knowledge. This is another name for *sannyāsa*. However, in a preliminary text of Vedānta called *Tattvabodha*, *uparama* is described as the discharge of one’s duties.

Titikṣā is forbearance in the face of the unavoidable pairs of opposites in life such as heat and cold, joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour, calumny and praise etc., without rancour or remorse.

Samādhāna is a state of mind free from sleep, laziness and inadvertency. It is also single-pointedness of the mind during which the normal outward activities of the senses and mind are kept in check.

Śraddhā is faith or an attitude of trust in the scriptures, the teaching of the preceptor, and Parameśvara the Creator.

The accomplishment of these six means is *śamādi-sādhana-saṃpat*.

Mumukṣutvam (intense yearning for liberation): *Mokṣa* (liberation) is the direct knowledge of one's nature as the independent, ever-existent, self-evident knowledge-principle and is itself limitless happiness totally free from ignorance (*avidyā*). *Upaniṣadic* statements that describe the everlasting (*nitya*) nature of liberation seek to induce *mumukṣā* (intense desire to gain *mokṣa*). Some of these are: 'The *jñānī* who is liberated is no more reborn' (*Kalāgni Rudropaniṣat*). 'The *jñānī* attains that abode from which he is not born again' (*Kṛ.U.* 1-3-8). 'Having known Brahman, the person gets liberated and gains immortality' (*Kṛ.U.* 2-3-8).

These fourfold qualifications are linked by a cause and effect relationship. The prior qualification serves as the cause for the subsequent. For example, dispassion for sense objects, the means to sense-pleasures, cannot be cultivated in the absence of the discrimination that *ātmā* is eternal and that sense-pleasures here or hereafter are ephemeral. For a person who lacks dispassion, it is impossible to withdraw the mind and senses from sense objects, as a result of which *śama* and *dama* cannot be acquired. There can be no intense yearning for liberation in the absence of *śama* and *dama*.

Discrimination (*viveka*) and the rest are indispensable for an inquiry into the nature of Brahman and for gaining its knowledge. This can be substantiated through the rule of "presence (*anvaya*) and absence (*vyatireka*)" applied to these fourfold qualifications. It is possible to undertake *Brahmajijñāsā* either before or after *dharmajijñāsā* and gain *Brahmajñāna* provided an individual has these fourfold qualifications, but not otherwise. Even if the inquiry into the nature of Brahman is conducted out of curiosity without having acquired these fourfold qualifications, it is not possible to gain the *Brahmajñāna* that liberates. The fact that an inquiry into the nature of Brahman conducted out of curiosity without acquiring these four qualifications will not lead to the *Brahmajñāna* that

liberates will become clear later when the nature of *Brahmajñāna* is described in detail. The ascertainment of the meaning of the word ‘*atha*’ is now being concluded. It recommends the inquiry into the nature of Brahman only after the fourfold qualifications have been acquired. Only then does the inquiry become fruitful.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD ‘*ATAH*’

Some contend that *viveka* and *vairāgya* are of no relevance. According to them, it is incorrect to say that everything except *ātma* is impermanent or that heavenly pleasures too are at best transitory. To buttress their claim, they cite Vedic statements such as ‘the *puṇya* earned by those who perform the *cāturmāsya* sacrifice is indestructible (*akṣayyam*).’ This, they say, shows that one can stay in heaven permanently, and that no one need develop dispassion for heavenly pleasures. Another contention is that liberation in the form of identity between *jīva* and Brahman is impossible due to the clear distinction between the two. Some are also of the opinion that any worthwhile accomplishment must concern an entity that can be either acquired or given up. The ever-existent Brahman does not fulfil these conditions. So they believe that *mumukṣā* too is not possible. All such doubts and objections are invalidated through the use of the word ‘*atah*’ (therefore) in this *sūtra* by justifying the fourfold qualifications as the indispensable pre-requisite for undertaking *Brahmajñāna*.

भा. अतः शब्दः हेत्वर्थः । यस्मात् वेदः एव अग्निहोत्रादीनां श्रेयःसाधनानां अनित्यफलतां दर्शयति – ‘तद् यथा इह कर्मचितः लोकः क्षीयते एवं एव अमुत्र पुण्यचितः लोकः क्षीयते’ (छान्दो. ८-१-६) इत्यादिः । तथा ब्रह्मविज्ञानात् अपि परं पुरुषार्थं दर्शयति – ‘ब्रह्मवित् आप्नोति परम्’ (तैत्ति. २-१) इत्यादिः । तस्मात् यथोक्तसाधनसंपत्यनन्तरं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा कर्तव्या ।

Bh.Tr. The word ‘therefore’ (*atah*) here stands for reason. The reason the inquiry into Brahman should be undertaken

after acquiring the aforesaid qualifications is because the Veda points out the impermanence of results of *agnihotra* and the other (*karmas*) which are the means to *śreyah* (the relative good) through passages such as ‘Just as sense-pleasures produced by actions invariably perish, so too do heavenly pleasures hereafter earned through *punya* invariably suffer destruction’ (*Ch.U.* 8-1-6), and also because it (the Veda), via statements such as ‘The knower of Brahman attains the highest’ (*Tai.U.* 2-1), reveals the highest accomplishment (i.e. liberation) obtained through the direct knowledge of Brahman.

The word ‘*loka*’ in the *śruti* passage (*Ch.U.* 8-1-6) quoted in the *bhāṣya* stands for the sense-pleasures which depend on the external world of objects, beings and events. Amongst all the Vedic rituals and sacrifices, *agnihotra* is a fundamental/primary ritual while *aśvamedha-yāga* is the most exalted. Two rules are implied by the above passage from *Chāndogyopaniṣat*, viz. ‘Anything that is limited is destructible’ and as a corollary, ‘Everything that is created is short-lived’. These rules refute the earlier statement that the *punya* produced by *cāturmāsya* sacrifice is indestructible (*akṣayyam*). What that statement signifies is only relative indestructibility. Lord Kṛṣṇa too has stated in the *Bhagavadgītā* that those who go to heaven, including *Brahmaloka*, return (*B.G.* 8-16). The *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣats* state very clearly that *ātmā*, termed *Bhūmā* in these passages is immortal and imperishable (*Ch.U.* 7-24-1 and *Bṛ.U.* 3-4-2). In light of the above, *vairāgya* is possible.

In addition to pointing out the impermanence of *karmaphala* (the results of action), the Veda describes the liberation attained through *Brahmajñāna* as the highest gain and immortal in nature. It is the direct cognition of our true nature as the self-existent knowledge-principle which is limitless happiness totally free from any iota of sorrow. The status of *jīva* is apparent because it is a superimposition (*adhyāsa*) on Brahman. This proves that the identity

between *jīva* and Brahman is possible, and can be realized. Knowing this, a mature person endowed with *viveka* and *vairāgya* can indeed develop *mumukṣā* – an intense yearning for liberation. This justifies the mandate of the *sūtra* laying down the indispensability of the fourfold qualifications as a pre-requisite for undertaking *Brahmajijñāsā*.

BRAHMAJIJÑĀSĀ IS A GENITIVE DETERMINATIVE COMPOUND (ṢAṢṬHĪ-TATPURUṢA SAMĀSA) WITH THE GENITIVE CASE IN THE SENSE OF THE ACCUSATIVE (KARMAṆĪ ṢAṢṬHĪ)

Sūtras are brief in their composition, like short phrases. At times, some word or words, called *adhyāhāra*, need to be added to the *sūtra* to form a complete sentence. In the first *sūtra*, the word that needs to be added is ‘*kartavyā*’ (should be done). The *bhāṣyakāra* begins by elaborating on the compound (*samāsa*) that constitutes the word *Brahmajijñāsā*. An explanation of the compound (*samāsa*) helps to establish the meaning of the two components, namely Brahman and *jijñāsā*. It also aids in determining the relationship between the word added – ‘*kartavyā*’ – and the rest of the sentence and helps to clarify that the implied meaning of the word *jijñāsā* is inquiry (*vicāra*).

भा. ब्रह्मणः जिज्ञासा ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा । ब्रह्म च वक्ष्यमाणलक्षणं ‘जन्माद्यस्य यतः’ इति । अतः एव न ब्रह्मशब्दस्य जात्यादि अर्थान्तरं आशङ्कितव्यम् । ब्रह्मणः इति कर्मणि षष्ठी, न शेषे, जिज्ञास्यापेक्षत्वात् जिज्ञासायाः जिज्ञास्यान्तरानिर्देशात् च ।

Bh.Tr. *Brahmajijñāsā* is the *jijñāsā* of Brahman. Brahman will be defined in the (next) *sūtra* as ‘That from which the birth, sustenance and destruction of this universe take place’. For this very reason, the word Brahman should not be taken to mean caste, etc. The genitive (i.e. sixth) case in the phrase ‘of Brahman (*Brahmaṇah*)’ is used

in the accusative sense and indicates a (grammatical) object and not a general relation (*sambandha*), because *jijñāsā* (the desire to know) depends on the *jijñāsyā* (the thing to be known) and also because no specific mention has been made of anything other (than Brahman) that is to be known.

Some question why *Brahmajijñāsā* cannot be taken to be a dative determinative compound, viz. *Brahmaṇe jijñāsā* (*jijñāsā* for Brahman), like the interpretation of *dharmajijñāsā* as *dharmāya jijñāsā* (*jijñāsā* for *dharma*) by some expounder of *pūrvamīmāṃsā*. The answer is clear when the requirements of the word *jijñāsā* (the desire to know) in conveying its complete sense are considered. The word *jijñāsā* is derived from the desiderative (*sannanta*) form of the verbal root *jñā* (to know). The desiderative conveys the meaning that a person wishes or desires to perform the action denoted by the root or desiderative base. The transitive verb ‘to desire’ generally needs its (grammatical) object to be declined in the accusative, or what is termed as object, case. The result of the desire is mentioned after the grammatical object. Therefore the component word *jijñāsā* decides the word *Brahmajijñāsā* as a genitive compound to determine the object of desire. As a matter of fact, when an object of desire is specified, the result of the fulfilment of the desire is the same as the object of desire. For instance, in the statement, ‘the desire to gain heaven’, the result of obtaining the desire is heaven itself. For this reason, the *Śābara bhāṣya* (the commentary on *Jaiminisūtras* by Śābaraswāmī) describes *dharmajijñāsā* as the ‘desire to know *dharma*’ by interpreting it as a genitive determinative compound. However, when the implied meaning of the word *jijñāsā*, viz. ‘inquiry’ is considered, the dative determinative compound, ‘*jijñāsā* for *dharma*’ (*dharmāya jijñāsā*) can be accepted only in the sense of inducing a desire for results such as the heavens. It is easier to first inculcate a desire for the tantalizing result, since otherwise an inquiry into

dharma to ascertain its means is painful by its very nature. Likewise, some commentators on the *Brahmasūtras* prior to the *bhāṣyakāra* may have interpreted *Brahmajijñāsā* as a dative compound viz., ‘*jijñāsā* for Brahman’ in order to attract the seeker by pointing to the result first. It should be clear that in the case of *Brahmajijñāsā*, Brahman itself is the result of gaining *Brahmajñāna*.

The *bhāṣya* then refers to the second *sūtra*, which defines Brahman thoroughly. Both according to the Veda and in common parlance, the word ‘*Brahma*’ in general can refer to the Brahmin caste, or the individual *jīva*, or the Veda, or one of the Trinity called *Brahmā* (ब्रह्मा). These meanings are inapplicable to the word ‘*Brahma*’ used in this first *sūtra* since they are absolutely unrelated to the concepts communicated in the second *sūtra*.

In the phrase *Brahmaṇaḥ* (of Brahman) in *Brahmaṇaḥ jijñāsā* (ब्रह्मणः जिज्ञासा), the genitive case (sixth case) should be taken in the sense of the accusative (i.e. the object) case (called *karmani śaṣṭhī*) which means ‘the desire to know the nature of Brahman (i.e. ब्रह्मणः जिज्ञासा or ब्रह्मस्वरूपस्य जिज्ञासा)’. Brahman becomes the *karma* (the grammatical object) of *jijñāsā* – the desire to know. The genitive case (the sixth case) can also be taken as *śeṣa* (i.e. something related in general), and if the genitive case in *Brahmaṇaḥ* is taken as *śeṣa*, the phrase *Brahmaṇaḥ jijñāsā* will come to mean ‘the desire to know something related to Brahman (i.e. *Brahma-sambandhinī jijñāsā*)’. This is not correct because a desire to know depends on the *jijñāsya* – the thing to be known as its object – and not on something related to the thing to be known. *Jijñāsā* (the desire to know) is a desiderative form of the verb *jñā* – to know. The object of desire in the word *jijñāsā* is knowledge and that knowledge has Brahman as its object. The full implication of a transitive verb cannot be grasped without knowing something about its object. Therefore what is required first in a meaningful sentence with the transitive verb ‘desire to know’ is the object of knowledge, or in other words the thing to be known, and not

something related to it. This necessarily implies that the genitive case referred to above specifies the object (*karma* – the thing to be known) and not *śeṣa* – something related to it.

Some argue that the object (*karma*) of *jijñāsā* should be things such as the definition of Brahman, its *pramāṇa*, auxiliary means to know Brahman, reasoning in support of its existence etc. and that Brahman should be considered subsequently in relation to them as their principal. This is not correct because there is no specific mention in the *sūtra* of anything other than Brahman as that which is to be known. To consider that things unstated in the *sūtra* are the object of the verb ‘desire to know’ and to overlook Brahman which is directly indicated by the *sūtra* is simply uncalled for. It is tantamount to licking one’s palm after throwing away a fistful of food.

The opponent takes recourse to a rule in the Pāṇinīya grammar (*Pā.Sū.* 2-3-50), which specifies the use of the genitive in the sense of general relation, and presents his view:

भा. ननु शेषषष्ठीपरिग्रहे अपि ब्रह्मणः जिज्ञासाकर्मत्वं न विरुध्यते,
संबन्धसामान्यस्य विशेषनिष्ठत्वात् ।

Bh.Tr. Contrary proposition: There is no bar to taking Brahman as the (grammatical) object of *jijñāsā* (the desire to know) even when the genitive case is accepted in the sense of general relation because any relation depends on its specific principal.

Entities always associated with a specific principal can be ascertained on knowing the principal. But the contender has a point which will be revealed in the next paragraph of the *bhāṣya*. The Vedāntist answers the contention at this time without addressing this point and discusses it later to bring out its invalidity.

भा. एवं अपि प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मणः कर्मत्वं उत्सृज्य सामान्यद्वारेण परोक्षं कर्मत्वं कल्पयतः व्यर्थः प्रयासः स्यात् । न व्यर्थः, ब्रह्माश्रिताशेषविचारप्रतिज्ञानार्थत्वात् इति चेत् न, प्रधानपरिग्रहे तदपेक्षितानां अर्थाक्षिप्तत्वात् । ब्रह्म हि ज्ञानेन आप्तुं इष्टतमत्वात् प्रधानम् । तस्मिन् प्रधाने जिज्ञासाकर्मणि परिगृहीते यैः जिज्ञासितैः विना ब्रह्म जिज्ञासितं न भवति तानि अर्थाक्षिप्तानि एव इति न पृथक् सूत्रयितव्यानि । यथा राजा असौ गच्छति इति उक्ते सपरिवारस्य राज्ञः गमनं उक्तं भवति तद्वत् ।

Bh.Tr. Vedāntic Doctrine: Even if it is so (i.e. even if Brahman as the object of *jijñāsā* can be deduced through its related entities), it would be futile to make the effort to indirectly imagine the status of object through general relation to Brahman and abandon its direct ascertainment. If it is argued that such an effort is not in vain because it upholds an inquiry into all other factors subsidiary to Brahman, the argument does not hold water since dependent entities are included by implication when the principal is comprehended. Brahman is the principal object of inquiry because it is the accomplishment of Brahman that is specifically sought through its knowledge. When the principal object of inquiry is grasped, factors without which an inquiry into Brahman is not possible are included by implication. They need not be mentioned separately in the *sūtra*. It is like making the statement, 'There goes the king', a statement that clearly implies that the king is accompanied by his retinue.

Even if the genitive in this case is taken in the sense of a general relation, it is possible to indirectly deduce that Brahman is the object of inquiry. But according to another rule of grammar in the *Pāṇinīya sūtra* (2-3-65), the genitive in Samskrit is both the subject and the object when used in conjunction with a word derived from a verb. '*Jijñāsā*' is such a word. The genitive suffix in the word

Brahmaṇah (of Brahman) can therefore convey the object case directly in accordance with this rule. When the object case can be directly conveyed, it is not worth postulating it indirectly.

In his defence, the opponent argues that *Brahmajñāna* necessarily depends on related principles such as its definition (*lakṣaṇa*), means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), reasoning (*yukti*), knowledge (*jñāna*), means (*sādhana*) and result (*phala*). An inquiry into these is associated with *Brahmavicāra* in order to gain *Brahmajñāna*. If the genitive is accepted in the sense of the object case, the inquiry gets restricted to Brahman alone, and thereby the contender justifies that his efforts are not futile.

The Vedāntic doctrine refutes this stand. The comprehension of the main object of inquiry necessarily presupposes the association of other required entities by implication. There is therefore no need to mention these separately in the *sūtra* by accepting the genitive in the sense of general relation. The illustration: ‘There goes the king’ makes this point clear.

The genitive in the object case is also justified because it is in accordance with *Upaniṣadic* statements.

भा. श्रुत्यनुगमात् च । ‘यतः वै इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते’ (तैत्ति. ३-१) इत्याद्याः श्रुतयः, ‘तद्विजिज्ञासस्व तद्ब्रह्म’ इति प्रत्यक्षं एव ब्रह्मणः जिज्ञासाकर्मत्वं दर्शयन्ति । तत् च कर्मणि षष्ठी परिग्रहे सूत्रेण अनुगतं भवति । तस्मात् ब्रह्मणः इति कर्मणि षष्ठी ।

Bh.Tr. And (the genitive in the sense of the object case is also justified) because it is in conformity with the (relevant) Vedic passages. *Śruti* statements such as ‘that from which these beings are born’ (*Tai.U. 3-1*) etc. explicitly indicate Brahman as the object of the desire to know through the phrases ‘that is Brahman, desire to know it directly’ (*Tai.U. 3-1*). The same (viz. Brahman

as the object of desire to know) is in keeping with this *sūtra* provided the (aforesaid) genitive is accepted in the sense of the object case. Therefore the genitive in the word *Brahmaṇaḥ* (of Brahman) is in the sense of the object case.

The *śruti* passage (*Tai.U.* 3-1) quoted in the *bhāṣya* exhorting the *mumukṣu* to take to *Brahmajijñāsā* has the same object of inquiry viz. Brahman as this first *sūtra* provided the genitive case is taken in the sense of the accusative. This concludes the findings on the use of the genitive in the context of the first *sūtra*. The genitive in this *sūtra* indicates Brahman as the object of inquiry, and not something related to Brahman.

BRAHMĀVAGATIḤ (DIRECT COGNITION) OF BRAHMAN

The components of the word *jijñāsā* are the verb ‘*jñā*’ (to know) and the desiderative suffix ‘*san*’. Their meaning is now being defined.

भा. ज्ञातुं इच्छा जिज्ञासा । अवगतिपर्यन्तं ज्ञानं सन्वाच्यायाः इच्छायाः कर्म, फलविषयत्वात् इच्छायाः । ज्ञानेन हि प्रमाणेन अवगन्तुं इष्टं ब्रह्म ।

Bh.Tr. *Jijñāsā* is the desire to know. The grammatical object of the desire expressed by the desiderative (*san*) is the knowledge (*jñānam*) culminating in the direct cognition of Brahman called *avagatī*, because the subject-matter of any desire is its very result. Brahman is accepted to be revealed by the *pramāṇa* of *jñāna* – the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* conforming to Brahman which confers its direct cognition. (vide pg. 127, fn. 46)

Jijñāsā means the desire to know. Any desire presupposes a knowledge of the object of the desire. It is not possible to entertain a desire for an unknown object. In the case of *Brahmajijñāsā* (the

desire to know Brahman), the object of the desire is *Brahmajñāna*, the knowledge of Brahman. Again, *Brahmajñāna* is the result of this desire. This throws up the question: how can one and the same *Brahmajñāna* be both the cause and the result of the desire indicated by the desiderative suffix (*san*) in the word *jijñāsā*? The answer in a nutshell is that there is a difference between the actual knowledge that prompts the *mumukṣu* to take to *Brahmajijñāsā* and the knowledge of Brahman accomplished as a result of *Brahmajijñāsā*. The *bhāṣya* first describes the second, namely, the exact nature of the *Brahmajñāna* that is gained as the result. Thereafter, some light is thrown on the first, namely, the meagre knowledge regarding Brahman that prompts the *mumukṣu* to take to *Brahmajijñāsā*.

Avagati is *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (the direct cognition of Brahman) wherein *caitanya* (pure awareness) – totally free from self-ignorance, the veiling (*āvaraṇa*) born of ignorance and its effects – becomes manifest or, in other words, directly known. It is the culmination of the *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) in the form of *jñāna* – the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* conforming to the true nature of Brahman called *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti**. This *vṛtti* confers *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (the direct cognition of Brahman). In the *avagati* of Brahman, the ignorance of Brahman along with its veiling (*āvaraṇa*) and the entire gamut of its effects get totally terminated in addition to the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* and the *cidābhāsa* (reflection of *caitanya*) in it.

Generally, the object of an action differs from its result (*phala*). For instance a destination – a place – is the object of travel while reaching the destination is the result. Hence a doubt is raised: how can one and the same *Brahmajñāna* or *avagati* of Brahman be both the object and the result of the desire in the case of *jijñāsā*? The *bhāṣya* resolves this by pointing out that the object of desire of any desire (*icchā*) is itself the intended result of that desire. It is true that there is a distinction between objects and results, in case of other actions, but the same does not hold true in the case of desire. *(*Anubhūti-Prakāśa*, Ch. XIII - 214 to 216)

Another doubt arises based on the fact that both *jñāna* and *avagatī* actually mean knowledge. Being synonyms, *avagatī* cannot be a final result having *jñānam* as its means. Therefore it is improper to draw a distinction between the two by describing *avagatī* as the culmination of *jñāna*. The answer becomes clear if the exact nature of the word *jñānam* – as used here – is considered. According to Vedānta, the knowledge (*jñānam*) of any given thing is the *cidābhāsa* obtained in the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* when the *antaḥkaraṇa* conforms to the thing. For practical purposes, this *vṛtti* itself is taken as the *jñānam* (knowledge) of the thing*. It is for this reason that the *bhāṣyakāra* refers to the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* – the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* conforming to the true nature of Brahman – as *jñānam* in the phrase *jñāna-pramāṇa*. This *vṛtti* endowed with *cidābhāsa* destroys the ignorance of Brahman and serves as the means to achieve the culmination of *Brahmajñāna* called *Brahmāvagatī* or *Brahmasakṣātkāra* (the direct cognition of Brahman). This is why the *bhāṣya* affirms that Brahman is required to be revealed by a *pramāṇa*, namely, the *jñāna* that confers the direct cognition of Brahman. In fact, Brahman is always manifest in its true nature without a trace of ignorance or its effects. It is our vision that is veiled by ignorance. When the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* called *jñāna-pramāṇa* eliminates ignorance along with its effects, we say Brahman is manifested or revealed. It is like saying ‘the sun shines now’ when the wind has driven away the covering clouds. The sun always shines. It is only the obstruction that hindered our vision of the sun that was eliminated, enabling us to see the shining sun.

It is imperative that the *mumukṣu* first understands clearly what is the *Brahmajñāna-svarūpa* – the nature of *Brahmajñāna* – or what is called *Brahmāvagatī*. To do so, it is advisable to investigate the modality of gaining *Brahmajñāna* in greater detail. The nature of general experience (*anubhava*) and knowledge and the relation between the two need to be understood properly. In this respect, the modality of gaining perceptual knowledge (*pratyakṣa-jñāna*) can be of assistance. (* vide pg. 127, fn. 46)

Life is a continuous series of experiences. To experience is to be aware of something – to be conscious of something. Not a single moment passes without specific experience during the waking or dream states. And there is experience during the deep sleep state as well. During deep sleep, there is no specific cognition, including cognition of oneself as ‘I’. Yet, the recollection (*pratyabhijñā*) – ‘I slept well, I did not know anything’ – on waking reveals the experience of the non-cognizance of the world during sleep, including the individual notion of ‘I’. The recollection shows that the object of experience during sleep was awareness of a homogeneous nothing. This is equally applicable to the states of swoon and anaesthesia. The basis of all *vyavahāra* – action in the world – is experience. No person can exist without an experience at every moment. The specific experiences during both the waking and dream states are produced by *sthūla-vṛttis* (gross thoughts) in the *antaḥkaraṇa*. Experience during deep sleep is produced by *sūkṣma-avidyā vṛttis* (the subtle *vṛttis* of ignorance).

All *vṛttis* are inert. They are illumined – brought to the level of consciousness / cognition of the individual as knowledge – by *caitanya-svarūpa ātmā*. *Ātmā* – pure awareness – is the self-evident cognitive principle. It is *anubhava-svarūpa* – self-experiencing in nature. It is also *jñapti-svarūpa* – the self-knowing principle. It is *svapprakāśa* – self-revealing – as well. *Ātmā* enables all varieties of experience and knowledge.

DEFINITION OF ANUBHAVA (EXPERIENCE)

The word *anubhava* (experience – as ‘to be aware of’) is derived from the verbal root *bhū* – to be; to become; to be born; to happen; to exist etc. The verb *bhū* takes the prefix *anu* in the sense of ‘corresponding to’, ‘similar to’, or ‘like’. Further, a suffix *ap* (अप्) is added to *anubhū* to form the abstract noun *anubhavaḥ*. An abstract noun is a noun that denotes a quality, condition or something intangible rather than a concrete object. Derived as above, the word *anubhava* (experience) signifies a state of conforming

with or becoming (or being, existence) similar to that of a given thing (that is experienced). *Anubhūti* is a synonym of *anubhava*. It is defined as *vṛttipratibimbīta caitanya* – pure awareness principle reflected in a *vṛtti* (a thought)⁴⁴. *Anubhava* is *māyāvṛtṭyārūḍha-cidābhāsaḥ* – the *cidābhāsa* (reflected *caitanya*) obtained in *māyāvṛtṭi* (*māyā* modified as a thought)⁴⁵.

DEFINITION OF *Jñānam* (KNOWLEDGE)

The word *jñānam* (a state of cognizing or being aware of with decisiveness) on the other hand is an abstract noun derived from the verbal root *jñā* – to know; to ascertain; to comprehend; to experience; to recognise etc. The suffix *lyut* (ल्युट्) is added to *jñā* to derive the noun *jñānam*. It means knowledge; knowing; understanding; proficiency; conscience; the means of knowing; the intellect (*buddhi*); *caitanya*; *Brahmātmaikya-jñānam*. *Jñānam* as knowledge means cognition true to the nature of the thing to be known when it is used in the case of *Brahmajñāna* or direct perception (*pratyakṣa*).

PRAMĀ (THE CORRECT KNOWLEDGE)

In the normal course, both *anubhava* and *jñānam* (in the case of direct knowledge) signify experience or knowledge which is *yathārtha* – true to the nature of the entity involved. At times, both can be *ayathārtha* – at variance with the entity involved – due to some defect or limitation in the means of experience or knowledge. Thus an experience or knowledge can be correct or incorrect. Correct experience is conclusive in nature. There is no rule that an experience is invariably inconclusive. Incorrect knowledge is called *bhrama* – erroneous knowledge. A sea-shell perceived as a piece of silver is

44. श्री वासिष्ठमहारामायणतात्पर्यप्रकाशकव्याख्या by परमहंस-श्रीमदानन्दबोधेन्द्रसरस्वती on योगवासिष्ठः 6-3-6 (पूर्वार्ध) ।

45. श्री वासिष्ठमहारामायणतात्पर्यप्रकाशकव्याख्या by परमहंस-श्रीमदानन्दबोधेन्द्रसरस्वती on योगवासिष्ठः 6-3-7 (पूर्वार्ध) ।

an example of erroneous perceptual knowledge. In Vedāntic terminology, *pramā* is correct knowledge (*yathārtha jñānam*). Correct perceptual knowledge is defined as *caitanya* (pure awareness) itself.⁴⁶ Here, what is meant by *caitanya* is not *śuddha-caitanya* (the pure awareness principle free from all *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛttis*), but *caitanya* reflected or manifest in a specific *vṛtti* (thought) conforming to the nature of the thing to be known. Such a *vṛtti* is called *viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*, or *tattadākāra-antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* in general. For practical purposes, the *viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* is called *jñānam* (knowledge). It is called so secondarily because it qualifies the *caitanya*, enabling the knower to cognize the characteristic features of the entity to be known. *Śuddha caitanya* by itself cannot ever be *pramā* since it cannot terminate the ignorance of a given thing. A *vṛtti* is always directly (*aparokṣatayā*) cognized. If a *vṛtti* were indirect (*parokṣa*), it could not end ignorance or erroneous notion (*bhrama*), which is directly experienced.⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that according to Vedānta, both *jñānam* and *anubhava* are basically *cidābhāsa* produced in the related *vṛttis*. The *vṛttis* impart the features of the entity known or experienced to the *cidābhāsa* contained in them.

SIX TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

Valid knowledge can be classified into six types depending on the six different *pramāṇās* – means of knowledge – employed. They are:

- i) Knowledge through direct perception.
- ii) Knowledge by inference.

46. प्रत्यक्षप्रमा च अत्र * चैतन्यमेव । यत्साक्षादपरोक्षाद् ब्रह्म इति श्रुतेः । (वे.प.भा.) (*चैतन्यमेव = वृत्तिप्रतिबिम्बितचैतन्यं वृत्त्यभिव्यक्तचैतन्यं वा प्रमा । न तु शुद्धचैतन्यं, तस्य अज्ञानानिवर्तकत्वेन प्रमात्वायोगात् ।) (compare अनुभवः मायावृत्त्यारूढचिदाभासः, अनुभूतिः वृत्तिप्रतिबिम्बितचैतन्यम् । pg. 126) ज्ञानावच्छेदकत्वात् च वृत्तौ ज्ञानत्वोपचारः । तदुक्तं विवरणे-अन्तःकरणवृत्तौ ज्ञानत्वोपचारात् (वे.प.भा.) । तच्च ज्ञानं (वृत्तिः) अपरोक्षरूपम् । परोक्षत्वे अपरोक्षभ्रमनिवर्तकत्वानुपपत्तेः (वे.प.भा.) ।

- iii) Knowledge based on similarity.
- iv) Knowledge gained by the word or *āgama* (the Vedas).
- v) Knowledge based on presumption.
- vi) Knowledge of the absence of a thing.

Not all of the above six types of knowledge involve a direct experience of the entity concerned. In perceptual knowledge, for example, the direct experience of a perceptible object is possible through the contact of the senses with sense objects. The 'I' – *aparokṣa ātmā* –, whose knowledge is gained through means of the Vedas, is always experienced directly without the intervention of the senses. This is possible because it is *anubhava-svarūpa* – self-experiencing in its nature. An experience conforming to the thing to be known forms the basic constituent or prerequisite of both direct perceptual knowledge (*pratyakṣam*) and direct self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*). More on this will be seen later.

MODALITY OF GAINING DIRECT PERCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE (*PRATYAKṢAM*)

Let us go into how exactly perceptual knowledge takes place. Water in a lake assumes the shape of a field when it flows out through an opening such as a canal and enters a field. Similarly the *antaḥkaraṇa* made up of *sattvaguṇa* capable of acquiring knowledge assumes the form of a sense object such as a pot when it emerges through sense-organs such as the eyes and envelops the sense object, thereby assuming the form of the pot. This state of the *antaḥkaraṇa* is called *viśayākāra-vṛtti* – a thought conforming to the object to be known (*Ve.P.B.*)⁴⁷. This mode whereby the *viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* endowed with *cidābhāsa* objectifies the thing (*viśaya*) to be known by assuming its form is called *vṛtti-vyāpti*.

47. यथा तडागोदकं छिद्रान्निर्गत्य कुल्यात्मना केदारान् प्रविश्य तद्भदेव चतुष्कोणाद्याकारं भवति, तथा तैजसं अन्तःकरणमपि चक्षुरादिद्वारा निर्गत्य घटादिविषयदेशं गत्वा घटादिविषयाकारेण परिणमते । स एव परिणामो वृत्तिः इत्युच्यते । (वे.प.भा.)

“अयं घटः” इति घटाकाराकारितचित्तवृत्तिः अज्ञातं घटं विषयीकृत्य तद्गत अज्ञाननिरसनपुरःसरं स्वगतचिदाभासेन जडं घटमपि भासयति । (वेदान्तसार)

The term *vṛtti-vyāpti* means *vṛtti-viśayatvam*⁴⁸ or *vṛtti-karmatvam* – *viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* permeated by *cidābhāsa* which assumes the form of the thing to be known. This *vṛtti-vyāpti* removes the ignorance of the thing to be known. The *cidābhāsa* (the reflection of *caitanya*) in the *viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* is called *phala*. The *phala* illumines the inert object to be known. This modus operandi is called *phala-vyāpti*, wherein the *phala* objectifies the thing to be known in order to reveal it.⁴⁹

The correct knowledge of a thing directly perceived necessarily corresponds to an experience true to the nature of that thing; but it is not so in the case of erroneous knowledge. The same rule applies to the knowledge of *ātmā* which is always *aparokṣa* – the most direct, revealing as the very ‘I’. The *aparokṣa jñāna* of *anubhava-svarūpa ātmā* necessarily requires its *yathārtha anubhava* – true to the nature of *ātmā* – free from all the *anātmā* that is superimposed on it. The knowledge that *ātmā* is identical to Brahman is of the nature of direct (*aparokṣa*) cognition. If it is indirect (*parokṣa*) knowledge, it cannot remove the erroneous notion regarding oneself (*ātmā*) which is always directly (*aparokṣatayā*) experienced.⁵⁰ The knowledge of a thing that is directly perceived or of *aparokṣa ātmā* is as true as the thing to be known. Therefore the rule is that correct knowledge unconditionally requires *yathārtha-anubhava* – an experience true to the thing to be known, whether it is a directly perceptible thing (*pratyakṣa-vastu*) or *aparokṣa ātmā*. This is so because the entities to be known in both cases are directly available for experience, unlike things to be known indirectly (*parokṣataḥ*).

In his *Pañcapādikā*, Śrī Padmapādācārya establishes a rule:
ज्ञानं तु परोक्षे अनुभवानारूढोऽपि संभवति। (पंचपादिका)

48. वृत्तिव्याप्तिः – वृत्तिविषयत्वम् (सर्वतन्त्रसिद्धान्तपदार्थलक्षण संग्रहः By भिक्षु गौरीशङ्करः)

49. फलव्याप्तिः – स्वाकारवृत्तिप्रतिबिम्बितचैतन्यविषयत्वम् (सर्वतन्त्रसिद्धान्तपदार्थलक्षण संग्रहः By भिक्षु गौरीशङ्करः)

50. तच्च ज्ञानं अपरोक्षरूपम् । परोक्षत्वे अपरोक्षभ्रमनिवर्तकत्वानुपपत्तेः । (वे.प.भा.)

- Tr. *Parokṣajñāna* – indirect knowledge – is possible even without an experience true to the nature of the thing to be known.

MODALITY OF GAINING *BRAHMAJÑĀNA*

While the modality of gaining *Brahmajñāna* is somewhat similar to that of gaining perceptual knowledge, there are certain differences. The following passages from ‘Vedāntasāra’, an introductory Vedāntic text by Sadānanda Sarasvatī that is traditionally accepted, describes vividly how *Brahmajñāna* takes place.

अथ अधुना “अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि” इति अनुभववाक्यार्थः
वर्णयते । एवं आचार्येण अध्यारोपापवादपुरःसरं तत्त्वं पदार्थौ
शोधयित्वा वाक्येन अखण्डार्थे अवबोधिते अधिकारिणः अहं
नित्य-शुद्ध-बुद्ध-मुक्त-सत्यस्वभाव-परमानन्दानन्ताद्वयं ब्रह्मास्मीति
अखण्डाकाराकारिता चित्तवृत्तिरुदेति । (वे.सार)

- Tr. ‘After the ascertainment of the *Tat twam asi* (You are that Brahman) *mahāvākya*, the meaning of the sentence *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) which reveals the experience of I (*ātmā*) as *Brahmasvarūpa* is now being described. When a teacher reveals the identity between the words ‘*tat*’ (Brahman) and *twam* (you the *ātmā*) in accordance with the earlier teaching by the sentence *tat twam asi*, after ascertaining the *nirupādhika* nature of *tat* and *twam* (nature free from *upādhis*) by the method of superimposition (*adhyāropa*) and its negation (*apavāda*), there arises in the mind of a competent *mumukṣu* a specific thought termed *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*. This thought is of the nature “I am Brahman”. It conforms to the nature of Brahman, the ever-existent principle, free from ignorance and its effect, the very knowledge-principle, free from all *upādhis*, indestructible in nature, limitless happiness, free from all limitations, and nothing but non-dual *caitanya*.’

सा तु चित्प्रतिबिम्बसहिता सती प्रत्यगभिन्नं अज्ञातं परं ब्रह्म
विषयीकृत्य तद्गताज्ञानमेव बाधते । तदा पटकारणतन्तुदाहे पटदाहवत्
अखिलकारणे अज्ञाने बाधिते सति तत्कार्यस्य अखिलस्य बाधितत्वात्
तदन्तर्भूताखण्डाकाराकारिता चित्तवृत्तिरपि बाधिता भवति । (वे.सार)

- Tr. ‘That specific *vṛtti* is endowed with *citpratibimba* – the reflection of *caitanya* called *cidābhāsa*. It objectifies the hitherto unknown Brahman that is identical to *ātmā*. The *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* (endowed with *cidābhāsa*) destroys the ignorance pertaining to Brahman. Just as a cloth is burnt when its constituent threads are burnt, so also do all the effects (*kārya*) of self-ignorance – the entire Creation – get totally destroyed (terminated) when ignorance, their cause, is terminated. The *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, which too is part of Creation, also gets verily dissolved.’

तत्र प्रतिबिम्बितं चैतन्यमपि यथा दीपप्रभादित्यप्रभावभासनासमर्था
सती तया अभिभूता भवति तथा स्वयंप्रकाशमानप्रत्यगभिन्न-
परब्रह्मावभासनानर्हतया तेन अभिभूतं सत् स्वोपाधिभूताखण्डचित्तवृत्तेः
बाधितत्वात् दर्पणाभावे मुखप्रतिबिम्बस्य मुखमात्रत्ववत्
प्रत्यगभिन्नपरब्रह्ममात्रं भवति । (वे.सार)

- Tr. ‘Just as the light of a lamp overpowered by sunlight is unable to illumine the sun, so too the *caitanya* reflected in the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* – overpowered by the same (Brahman) – is rendered incapable of illumining the self-evident Brahman identical to *ātmā*. Due to the destruction of its *upādhi* viz. the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, that reflected *caitanya* becomes Brahman that is non-different from *ātmā*. It is similar to the reflection of a face in a mirror remaining as the face itself when the mirror is broken’.

The *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* conforms to the true nature of Brahman (identical to *ātmā*). It is indispensable for destroying

self-ignorance and gaining *Brahmajñāna*. Its function is similar to that of the *viṣayākārāntaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* required for the direct perceptual knowledge of sense objects. According to Vedānta, *vṛtti-vyāpti* – the objectification of the thing to be known by the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* – is common to both the perceptual knowledge of sense objects and to *Brahmajñāna*. Here, objectification stands for the assumption by the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* of the form of the thing to be known.

A pertinent doubt can arise at this juncture. Brahman/ *ātmā* is the self-luminous (*svaprakāśa*) knowledge-principle (*caitanya*). It should not need any other knower-principle since it itself is of the nature of the self-luminous knowledge-principle. How then can it be the object of an *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* as specified in *vṛtti-vyāpti*? It is true that Brahman and *ātmā* are identical and the self-luminous (*svaprakāśa*) knowledge-principle. However, this knowledge is covered by self-ignorance (*avidyā*). Therefore to dispel the ignorance, a *vṛtti* conforming in content to the true nature of Brahman such as ‘I am Brahman’ is indispensable. This *vṛtti-vyāpti* removes the ignorance. Thereafter, the *cidābhāsa* in the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* called *phala*, though present in it, is not necessary to make the self-luminous Brahman known. The *phala* is ineffective in illumining Brahman. It is redundant. This is in contrast to the mode of gaining perceptual knowledge, where *phala* is indispensable for revealing an inert object.

Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni highlights this point in his text Pañcadaśī. ‘*Vṛtti-vyāpti* is necessary to destroy the ignorance of Brahman; but Brahman being the self-luminous knowledge-principle, the *cidābhāsa (phala)* is not useful’. (P. 7-92).⁵¹ This is also the import of two paradoxical *Upaniṣadic* statements. They are: ‘Brahman should be known by the well-prepared mind only’ (*manasā eva anudraṣṭavyam* – *Bṛ.U.* 4-4-19). This shows the necessity of

51. ब्रह्मण्यज्ञाननाशाय वृत्तिव्याप्तिरपेक्षिता ।
स्वयंस्फुरणरूपत्वान्नाभास उपयुज्यते ॥ (पञ्चदशी 7-92)

vṛtti-vyāpti. ‘Brahman cannot be known by the mind’ (*yanmanasā na manute* – *Ke.U.* 1-6). This shows the futility of *phala-vyāpti*.

In the culmination of *Brahmajñāna* called *Brahmāvagati*, ignorance with all its effects, including *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* and the *cidābhāsa* in it, stand terminated. In principle, the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* is necessary to terminate the ignorance of Brahman but not to make us know the self-evident Brahman. This direct cognition of self-revealing Brahman is called *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. It is *sakṣāt* (direct) because it is not mediated but is immediate as the self-revealing principle. In this cognition, there are no intervening factors such as the knower (*pramātā*), or the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* conforming to Brahman, or the *pramāṇavyāpāra* – the functioning of *pramāṇa*. All these have already played their roles and have disappeared. What is left is only Brahman – *caitanya* and *caitanya* alone. It manifests totally free of the veiling (*āvaraṇa*) born of ignorance. This is *Brahmāvagati*, the culmination of *jñāna*. This is how Brahman gets revealed by the *pramāṇa* of *jñāna* as stated in the *bhāṣya* (viz. ज्ञानेन हि प्रमाणेन अवगन्तुं इष्टं ब्रह्म ।).

THE REASON *BRAHMASĀKṢĀTKĀRA* IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

The Vedāntic definitions of *jñānam* and *anubhava* along with the role of the associated *tattadākāra-vṛttis*, the description of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, and the fact that *ātmā* is *anubhavasvarūpa* should make it very clear that gaining *Brahmasākṣātkāra* is itself a distinct direct experience (*aparokṣānubhava*). To recapitulate:

- i) The *akhaṇḍākāra/ātmākāra/Brahmākāra-vṛtti*, conforming to *Brahmātmasvarūpa* endowed with *cidābhāsa*, is indispensable for terminating the ignorance regarding *ātmā*. The *bhāṣyakāra* describes this *vṛtti* as the *jñāna-pramāṇa* (vide pg. 124, 127 - fn. 46). It has to be *nirviśeṣa* (free from attributes), free from all the *adhyasta-upādhis* except its own form. It has to be a replica of *nirviśeṣa ātmā*.

- ii) Such a *vṛtti* terminates the ignorance of *ātmā* / Brahman. Subsequently, the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* itself gets dissolved along with the *cidābhāsa* in it.
- iii) What remains then is the self-evident Brahman in its true nature identical to *ātmā* totally free from all *adhyastapādhis*, including self-ignorance and the *tripuṭīs*. This is the culmination of *Brahmajñāna* called *Brahmāvagatī* or *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. It has to be a unique experience – *aparokṣa Brahmānubhava* / *ātmānubhava* – by virtue of the nature of Brahman alone, and not on account of the means employed. Brahman / *ātmā* is ever free by nature. But after the dissolution of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, it is free from ignorance (*avidyā*) and its effects (*avidyā-kārya*) from the stand-point of what was hitherto the *jīva*. This is *mokṣa* – *svātmani avasthānam* – as defined by the *bhāṣyakāra*. Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī defines *mokṣa* as *ātmā* itself known directly without a trace of *avidyā* or its effects.

THE NATURE OF BRAHMASĀKṢĀTKĀRA

The cognition of the perceptible Creation superimposed on Brahman (i.e. *adhyasta dṛśya prapañca*) is absent in *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. It is *nirvikalpa* (non-dual), free from *tripuṭī* viz. the triple form of the knower, the known and the knowledge-*vṛtti*, or the experiencer, the experienced and the experience-*vṛtti* or the doer, the done and the act of doing. All that remains is *yathārthānubhava*, a single homogeneous experience in conformity with Brahman. It is *cinmātra* – nothing but *caitanya*. Even the *pramātā* (the knower) or the *anubhavitā* (the experiencer) who casts the *tripuṭī* is absent because the status of *ātmā* as knower or experiencer arises only on account of ignorance and the consequent *adhyāsa* of the *anātmā* on *ātmā*. Such *Brahmānubhava* or *ātmānubhava* is possible without an experiencer (*anubhavitā*) or knower (*pramātā*) because Brahman / *ātmā* is *anubhavasvarūpa* –

the self-experiencing principle itself – without the need for any means. In the state of ignorance, the experiences of the *dṛśya* world with its specific features, *pramātā* and of ignorance are possible only because of their basis – *anubhavasvarūpa ātmā* / Brahman. In the wake of knowledge, the *adhyasta dṛśya* – *prapañca* resolves into its basis. The specific experiences of the three states of consciousness cease as a result, but not the self-revealing ever-existent *ātmā* / Brahman, the fundamental experience principle. Without such direct (*aparokṣa*) experience, the knowledge of Brahman is indirect (*parokṣa*) at best.

Ātmānubhava / *Brahmānubhava* is not available for fanciful imagination. It is precisely defined by the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*. This *vṛtti* is a replica of *ātmā* as long as it continues. As seen earlier, even this *vṛtti* drops off finally. What remains then is *ātmā* as described in the Upaniṣads. *Brahmānubhava* / *ātmānubhava* or *mokṣa* in its final stage is Brahman / *ātmā* itself, but totally free from *avidyā* and *avidyā-kārya*. This is *pramā* (the correct knowledge) of *ātmā* / Brahman without any room for doubt or interpretation. It is an *anubhava* (experience) without a subject – the *anubhavitā* (experiencer) or *pramātā* (knower) or *ahaṃkāra*. A subject (*ahaṃkāra*) is necessary for the experiences of the waking and dream states, which are not possible without this subject. In deep sleep, though *ahaṃkāra* is absent, *avidyā* is present. But in *ātmānubhava*, both the subject (*ahaṃkāra*) and *avidyā* are absent. *Ahaṃkāra* is an *anthaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*. It is *dṛśya* and therefore inert (*jaḍa*) in nature. *Ahaṃkāra* (the subject) cannot know *dṛk-svarūpa ātmā*. There is not even a trace of *ahaṃkāra* in the final stage of *ātmānubhava*. It ends in *ātmānubhava*. *Ahaṃkāra* is not an intrinsic feature (*guṇa*) of *ātmā*.⁵² *Ātmānubhava* is *nirviśeṣa* (attributeless) without any trace of *avidyā*. Actually it is indescribable because *ātmā* is so. *Ātmā* is beyond the range of words. Words can describe only *jāti* (species),

52. उपलभ्यमहंकरणं न भवेत्पुरुषस्य गुणः । (verse 22 - श्रुतिसारसमुद्धरणम् by तोटकाचार्य)

guṇa (attribute), *kriyā* (action) and *saṃbandha* (relation). *Ātmā* / Brahman is free from all these. Even so, the Upaniṣads define or describe *ātmā* / Brahman from the practical stand-point of a *mumukṣu*.

A doubt can arise at this point: how can an impermanent (*anitya*) experience produced by a transient *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* be that of Brahman, which is *nityānanda* (absolute happiness) and *nityajñapti* (the absolute knowledge-principle)? The answer becomes clear when we consider the factor that establishes the permanence or impermanence of a thing. It is not the fleeting duration of an experience that is a criterion for establishing the impermanent nature of a thing experienced. It is the nature of the thing experienced that determines whether it is everlasting or not. The objects, beings or events of the empirical world experienced are necessarily transitory because the nature of the world is so. They are born; they perish. The world is not transitory because its experience is limited by time. *Ātmā* / Brahman is the ever-existent principle totally free from Creation. It cannot become transient because the *Brahmānubhava* / *ātmānubhava* is transient. The impermanence of such an experience is due to the specific condition of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, which is by nature constantly changing. The *Kāthopaniṣat* (2-3-11) cautions against the unsteadiness of this state.⁵³

As seen earlier, at the final stage of *ātmānubhava* / *Brahmānubhava*, the transitory *tripuṭī* also gets dissolved and what remains is only the experience (*anubhava*) of *nitya* (ever-existent) *ātmā* identical to Brahman. The *Kāthopaniṣat* (2-3-5) exhorts us to strive for this direct cognition of *ātmā* in this human embodiment, as the *ātmadarśana* (*ātmānubhava*) in a very pure and steady human intellect (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is as distinct as seeing one's face in a mirror.⁵⁴

53. योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥ कठ - २-३-११

54. यथा आदर्शो तथा आत्मनि (स्वबुद्धौ आदर्शवत् निर्मलीभूतायां विविक्तं आत्मनः दर्शनं भवति इत्यर्थः) । कठोपनिषत् / भा. २-३-५

THE PRAMĀṆA OF AKHAṆḌĀKĀRA-VṚTTI

The terms *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, *Brahmākāra-vṛtti*, *Brahmavṛtti* and *ātmākāra-vṛtti* are synonyms. A description of this *vṛtti* found in the text *Vedāntasāra* conforms to its description in the *Maṇḍalabrāhmaṇopaniṣat* (2-3)⁵⁵ (*Śuklayajurveda*), the *Tejobindūpaniṣat* (1-37)⁵⁶ (*Kṛṣṇayajurveda*) and the *Muktikopaniṣat* (2-53)⁵⁷ (*Śuklayajurveda*). The *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* corresponds to the *prajñā* of a *sthitaprajñā* described in Ch-2 of the *Bhagavadgītā*. This can be verified from the description of *prajñā* in the *Adhyātmopaniṣat* (42-44)⁵⁸ (*Śuklayajurveda*). In fact, the *Tejobindūpaniṣat* (1-43 to 46)⁵⁹ exhorts *mumukṣus* to develop the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*. It also terms skilful talk of Brahman without proper *vairāgya* and a steady *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* as sheer verbosity. These *mantras* are quoted by the *bhāṣyakāra* in another one of his texts – *Aparokṣānubhūti* (verses 130 to 133) as well.

55. समाधौ मृदिततमोविकारस्य तदाकाराकारिताखण्डाकारवृत्त्यात्मकसाक्षिचैतन्ये प्रपंचलयः सम्पद्यते प्रपंचस्य मनःकल्पितत्वात् (मण्डलब्राह्मणोपनिषत् 2-3)

56. निर्विकारतया वृत्त्या ब्रह्माकारतया पुनः ।
वृत्तिविस्मरणं सम्यक् समाधिरभिधीयते ॥ (तेजोबिन्दूपनिषत् , 1-37)

57. ब्रह्माकारमनोवृत्तिप्रवाहोऽहंकृतिं विना ।
संप्रज्ञातसमाधिः स्यात् ध्यानाभ्यासप्रकर्षतः ॥ (मुक्तिकोपनिषत् , 2-53)

58. स्थितप्रज्ञो यतिरयं यः सदानन्दमश्नुते ॥ ४२॥
ब्रह्मण्येव विलीनात्मा निर्विकारो विनिष्क्रियः ।
ब्रह्मात्मनोः शोधितयोरेकभावावगाहिनी ॥४३॥
निर्विकल्पा च चिन्मात्रा वृत्तिः प्रज्ञेति कथ्यते । (अध्यात्मोपनिषत् , 42-44)

59. ये हि वृत्तिं विहायैनां ब्रह्माख्यां पावनीं पराम् ।
वृथैव ते जीवन्ति पशुभिश्च समा नराः ॥४३॥

ये तु वृत्तिं विजानन्ति ज्ञात्वा वै वर्धयन्ति ये ।
ते वै सत्पुरुषा धन्या वन्द्यास्ते भुवनत्रये ॥४४॥

येषां वृत्तिः समा वृद्धा परिपक्वा च सा पुनः ।
ते वै सद् ब्रह्मतां प्राप्ता नेतरे शब्दवादिनः ॥४५॥

कुशला ब्रह्मवार्तायां वृत्तिहीनाः सुरागिणः ।
तेऽप्यज्ञानतया नूनं पुनरायान्ति यान्ति च ॥४६॥ (तेजोबिन्दूपनिषत् 1-43 to 46)

According to the *Muktikopaniṣat*, there are 1180 Upaniṣads in all. The *śākhās*, the traditional recensions of all the four Vedas, are 1180 in number and each of these 1180 *śākhās* contains one Upaniṣad. The principal among these Upaniṣads number 108. They are enumerated in the *Muktikopaniṣat*. This Upaniṣad also lists the Veda to which each belongs and its *Śānti-mantra*. Unfortunately, many *śākhās* of the Vedas are lost and so too are the Upaniṣads contained in them. The principal 108 Upaniṣads are available, as are a few others.

Repeated reference to the term *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* is found in the sixth *aṃśa* of Śrī Śivarahasyam – popularly known as *Ribhu Gītā*. The teaching of the *Ribhu-Gītā* has originated from none other than Lord Śiva himself.

INDISPENSABILITY OF *BRAHMĀKĀRA-VṚTTI*

Some scholars are of the view that a specific *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* is not required to know Brahman. If a *vṛtti* is required to know Brahman just as it is required to know objects (*viśayas*), Brahman will become just another external object distinct from ‘I’ (*ātmā*), and will also be inert like other objects.

If the knowledge of Brahman that these scholars allude to signifies actual *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, the *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* is certainly not required any more, since we have already seen, the *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* or *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* itself gets extinguished once it has accomplished its function of destroying ignorance resulting in *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. However, if it is insisted that this *vṛtti* is not necessary for destroying ignorance, contenders have to clarify how ignorance gets terminated. *Caitanya* is the *adhiṣṭhāna* (basis) of superimposed ignorance and hence cannot end it. Again no *pramāṇa* can produce *pratyakṣa* (directly perceptible) or *aparokṣa* knowledge without the specific *tattadākāra-vṛtti* – the *vṛtti* conforming to the *pratyakṣa* or *aparokṣa* entity – which destroys ignorance. This *vṛttivyāpti* is indispensable for terminating ignorance.

The nature of any *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* is to take the form of the entity it comes across (i.e. to become *tattadākāra*). It does so without actually objectifying the entity as distinct from itself. It is the *pramātā* who objectifies the entities as distinct from oneself. Brahman is the true nature of the *pramātā*, and in fact his very nature. The *pramātā* ceases to exist in *Brahmasākṣātkāra* where Brahman and Brahman alone exists after the removal of ignorance and a second entity is absent. Therefore, in the absence of the *pramātā* in *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, the occasion for Brahman to become an external object does not arise at all.

As shown earlier with reference to inert objects (*viśayas*), inert objects are characterized by the fact that they become known through *phalavyāpti* – the *cidābhāsa* reflected in the *viśayākāra-vṛtti*. Though the *cidābhāsa* is present in the *Brahmākāra-vṛtti*, it is incapable of illumining its very source, the self-evident knowledge-principle that is Brahman. This shows that the *cidābhāsa* or *phalavyāpti* is superfluous in knowing Brahman. In other words, *vṛttivyāpti* by itself can destroy the ignorance of Brahman. Since *phalavyāpti* does not play a role in gaining the knowledge of Brahman, Brahman does not become inert merely because of the *Brahmākāra-vṛtti*.

BRAHMĀKĀRA-VṚTTI IS POSSIBLE

The role, relevance and possibility of a *vṛtti* conforming to Brahman or *ātmanā* will become clearer from the following excerpts from the *Bhagavadgītā-bhāṣya* (Ch. 18-50).⁶⁰

⁶⁰. भ.गीता १८-५० सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाऽऽप्नोति निबोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥५०॥

भाष्य – सिद्धिं प्राप्तः = स्वकर्मणा ईश्वरं समभ्यर्च्य तत्प्रसादजां कायेन्द्रियाणां ज्ञाननिष्ठायोग्यतालक्षणां सिद्धिं प्राप्तः ; यथा येन प्रकारेण ब्रह्म परमात्मानं आप्नोति तथा तं प्रकारं ज्ञाननिष्ठाप्राप्तिक्रमं मे निबोध । अनेन या ब्रह्मप्राप्तिः प्रतिज्ञाता तां इदंतया दर्शयितुं आह निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा इति ।

- भा. निष्ठा पर्यवसानं परिसमाप्तिरित्येतत् ।
 कस्य?
 ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य या परा ।
 कीदृशी सा?
 यादृशं आत्मज्ञानम् ।
 कीदृक् तत्?
 यादृशः आत्मा ।
 कीदृशः असौ?
 यादृशः भगवता उक्तः उपनिषद्वाक्यैः न्यायतश्च ।
- भा. पूर्वपक्षः – ननु विषयाकारं ज्ञानम् । न विषयः, नापि आकारवान् आत्मा इष्यते क्वचित् । तस्मात् आत्माकारं ज्ञानं इति अनुपपन्नम्। कथं तर्हि आत्मनः ज्ञानम्? सर्वं हि यद्विषयं ज्ञानं तत् तत् आकारं भवति । निराकारश्च आत्मा इति उक्तम् । ज्ञानात्मनोश्च उभयोः निराकारत्वे कथं तद्भावनानिष्ठा?
- भा. सिद्धान्तः – न, अत्यन्त निर्मलत्व-स्वच्छत्व-सूक्ष्मत्वोपपत्तेः आत्मनः, बुद्धेश्च आत्मसमनैर्मल्याद्युपपत्तेः आत्मचैतन्याकाराभासत्वोपपत्तिः ।
 सर्वत्र हि बुद्ध्यादि देहान्ते आत्मचैतन्याभासता आत्मभ्रान्तिकारणं, इत्यतः नामरूपाद्यनात्माध्यारोपणनिवृत्तिरेव कार्या । तस्मात् अविद्याध्यारोपणनिराकरणमात्रं ब्रह्मणि कर्तव्यं । बाह्याकारभेदबुद्धिनिवृत्तिः एव आत्मस्वरूपालम्बने कारणम् ।
- Tr. In order to directly demonstrate *Brahmaprāpti* (the gaining of Brahman), Lord Kṛṣṇa describes it as *jñānasya parā niṣṭhā* – the most exalted final state of knowledge or steadfastness in *mokṣa* – in *Bhagavadgītā* (Ch 18-50). *Parā jñānaniṣṭhā* is explained by the *bhāṣyakāra* in the following discussion.

Question (Q): What is meant by *niṣṭhā* ?

Answer (Ans.): *Niṣṭhā* is culmination, steadfastness. It signifies

both the final point (*pariyavasānam*, *parisamāptih*). as well as the firmness, stability or *sthairyam* (of the mind in *ātmā-svarūpa*).⁶¹

Q : Culmination of what ?

Ans : The acme (final point) or most exalted final state of *Brahmajñāna*.

Q : What is the nature of this culmination (*niṣṭhā*) ?

Ans : This *niṣṭhā* is in conformance with *ātmajñāna* – the knowledge of *ātmā*.

Q : What is the nature of *ātmajñāna* ?

Ans : *Ātmajñāna* is a replica of *ātmā* (i.e. in the form of an *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* corresponding to or conforming to the nature of *ātmā*, and referred to secondarily as *jñāna*).

Q : What is the nature of *ātmā* ?

Ans : The nature of *ātmā* is as described by Lord Kṛṣṇa, *Upaniṣadic* sentences and reasoning.

Q : But knowledge (*jñānam*) is always in conformance with the form (*ākāra*) of an object (*viśaya*). Nowhere is *ātmā* accepted either as being an object or having a form. It is therefore improper to say that *ātmajñāna* has the form of *ātmā*. Since knowledge of any object (in the form of *vṛttis*) conforms to that object, and *ātmā* is not an object, how is *ātmajñāna* possible at all? *Ātmā* is described as formless. If both *ātmā* and its knowledge are formless, how is it ever possible to gain steadfastness (*niṣṭhā*) in contemplation (*bhavanā*) on *ātmajñāna*?

Ans : It is not so. *Ātmā* is completely *nirmala* (pure – free from all that is *adhyasta*/ superimposed), *svaccha* (clear – completely unconnected to the virtues and vices of all the *dṛśyas*

61. ज्ञेयनिष्ठत्वं ज्ञेये स्थैर्यम् - योगवासिष्ठ नि.पू. 74-27 तात्पर्यप्रकाशव्याख्या ।

illuminated by it) and *sūkṣma* (subtle – *nirguṇa* – free from the *guṇas*). It is possible for the *buddhi* (i.e. *antaḥkaraṇa*) to assume a form that is exactly like *ātmacaitanya* because it is capable of conforming to the nature of the absolute purity, clarity and subtlety of *ātmā*. The cause of the erroneous ‘I’ notion in the *buddhi* down to the gross body is due to their semblance to *ātmacaitanya*. Hence to gain the knowledge of *ātmā*, what has to be accomplished is simply the withdrawal (*nivṛtti*) from all the superimposed *anātmā* characterised by name and form. All that is required for *Brahmajñāna*, therefore is the *nirākaraṇam* of *avidyādhyāropaṇa*, namely, termination of the ignorance and its effect. The means to abide in the true nature of *ātmā* is verily the withdrawal (*nivṛtti*) of the mind from the distinct pluralistic cognitions alien to *ātmā* (*B.G.Bh.* 18-50). In short the knowing of *ātmā* is to end the superimposed ignorance with its effects (*Bṛ.U.Bh.* 1-4-10)’.

This state of mind described above, free from the superimposed *nāmarūpātmaka dṛśya*, is described as *yoga* in the *Kāthopanīṣat* (2-3-9 to 11). In his *bhāṣya*, the *bhāṣyakāra* also affirms that *ātmā* abiding in its true nature – free from the superimposition of entities effected by ignorance – can be directly known only in that state.⁶²

⁶² न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसाऽभिवृत्तः* य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ कठ - २-३-९
*आत्मा ज्ञातुं शक्यते इति वाक्यशेषः । (भाष्य)

यदा पंचावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।

बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टति तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥ कठ - २-३-१०

तां योगमिति# मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।

अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥ कठ - २-३-११

is for योगं. एतस्यां हि अवस्थायां अविद्याध्यारोपणवर्जितस्वरूपप्रतिष्ठः आत्मा (ज्ञातुं शक्यते is अध्याहारः from भाष्य २-३-९)

In his *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni quotes certain verses from a Purāṇa to describe *Brahmavijñāna* – the direct cognition of Brahman. The quotation confirms that the preponderance of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, termed *jñāna* in the *sūtrabhāṣya*, is the means (*pramāṇa*) to gain *Brahmāvagati* – *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. The quoted Purāṇic verses are as follows.

‘A pure *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* (free from the cognition of all *dr̥śya*), is born in the mind of a *mumukṣu* who practises *sādhana-caṭuṣṭya-sampatti* and pursues the means of the *Mahāvākya*. This provides access to the knowledge of the identity between *jīva* and Brahman. The *Śāṅkarī cit* – the manifestation (or reflection) of the self-existent *cit* (pure awareness) which is *Brahmasvarūpa* reflected in that *vṛtti* – is itself *Brahmajñāna*. That alone destroys the ignorance of *ātmā* (and reveals *jīva-brahmaikya*).’⁶³

The Bhāmatī gloss provides the meaning of *avagati* as *sākṣātkāra*, which as seen earlier, is revealed through the final steadfastness of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*.

ONLY BRAHMĀNUBHAVA ENDS ADHYĀSA

In his *Pañcapādikā*, Śrī Padmapādācārya defines *avagati* as *sākṣāt anubhavaḥ* – the direct experience of Brahman/*ātmā*. In this work, Śrī Padmapādācārya concludes his comments on the *adhyāsabhāṣya* by stating that the elimination of *adhyāsa* – the cause of calamitous *saṃsāra* – is possible only by gaining self-knowledge (*jñānam*) culminating in *Brahmānubhava*.⁶⁴

63. From विवरणप्रमेयसंग्रह by विद्यारण्य
ततः सर्वाङ्गनिष्ठस्य प्रत्यग्रहैकगोचरा ।
या वृत्तिर्मानसी शुद्धा जायते वेदवाक्यतः ॥८॥

तस्यां या चिदभिव्यक्तिः स्वतः सिद्धा च शांकरी ।
तदेव ब्रह्मविज्ञानं तदेवाऽज्ञाननाशनम् ॥९॥

64. एवं अहंकर्तृत्वप्रमुखः क्रियाकारकफलात्मकः लोकव्यवहारः अध्यस्तः
नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावे आत्मनि । अतः तादृक् ब्रह्मात्मानुभवपर्यन्तात् ज्ञानात्
अनर्थहेतोः अध्यासस्य निवृत्तिरूपपद्यते इति तदर्थविषयवेदान्तमीमांसारम्भः
उपपद्यते । (पंचपादिका)

WHY *ĀTMĀNUBHAVA* IS THE CULMINATION OF *ĀTMAJÑĀNA*

The following reflections throw more light on the *sākṣādanubhava* (or direct experience) of *ātmā*.⁶⁵

Q : What does the word *sākṣāt* (direct) in the phrase *sākṣādanubhava* of *ātmā* mean?

Ans : *Sākṣāt* means *avyavahitam* (i.e. not separated by anything intervening – *Br.U.* 3-4-1 *bhāṣya*), immediate, or not mediated, by virtue of the fact that it takes place without the operation / presence of any intermediaries such as the sense-organs, mind, intellect, *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*, knower (*pramātā*), or even the *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge).

Q : In that case, how is a direct experience of *ātmā* ever possible, since all experiences take place through the instrumentality of some of the above mentioned intermediaries?

Ans : *Ātmā* is *anubhavasvarūpa* – *anubhava* (experience) is the very nature of *ātmā*. It is a self-experiencing principle.

Q : Is the experience in the so called *ātmānubhava* (free from *dṛśya*) that of *ātmacaitanya* or of something else? If it is the experience of something else (other than *ātmacaitanya*), that something else has to be *dṛśya*, inert (*jaḍa*) and a

^{65.} Based on श्रीवासिष्ठमहारामायणतात्पर्यप्रकाशव्याख्या by परमहंस श्रीमदानन्दबोधेन्द्रसरस्वती on योगवासिष्ठः, वैराग्यप्रकरणं सर्गः ३, श्लोकः ६. दृश्यं नास्तीति बोधेन मनसो दृश्यमार्जनम् । संपन्नं चेत्तदुत्पन्ना परा निर्वाणनिर्वृतिः ॥६॥ यो. वा. वै. प्र. 3-6

व्याख्या – अनुभूयते इति उक्तः (stated in earlier verse जगद्भ्रमोऽयं दृश्योऽपि नास्त्येवेत्यनुभूयते) अनुभवः किं आत्मचैतन्यं एव उत अन्यः । न तावदन्यः। चिद्व्यतिरिक्तस्य जडतया विषयतया च अनुभवत्वायोगात् । आत्मा एव चेत् सः पूर्वम् एव अस्तीति किं शास्त्रेण इति आशंक्याह — दृश्यमिति । सत्यं, आत्मैवानुभवः, तथाप्यसौ दृश्यसहकृतः न तदनुभवः किन्तु मनसो वृत्तिरूपेण आत्मतत्त्वसाक्षात्कारबोधेन अविद्यानाशात् तदुपादानकदृश्यमार्जनं दृश्यं कालत्रयेऽपि नास्ति एवंरूपं संपन्नं चेत् नित्यसिद्धात्मरूपापि परा निर्वाणनिर्वृतिः तस्मात् तत्त्वज्ञानात् उत्पन्ना इव भवति इति केवलः तद्द्वारा स्वरूपभूतः अपि अनुभवः शास्त्रफलं इत्यर्थः ।

sense object (or *viśaya*, binding in nature), since everything apart from *cit* (*caitanya*) is *dṛśya*. Now to talk about a distinct experience of *dṛśya* is meaningless. *Dṛśya* does not need a separate experience, since we experience the *dṛśya-jagat* incessantly. We do not need the *śāstra* (Vedānta) for its knowledge. On the other hand, if it is the *anubhava* (experience) of *ātmā* alone that is sought, the experience is already available since *ātmā* itself is *anubhava-svarūpa*, the self-experiencing principle. We experience *ātmā* in and through and concurrent with each experience of every object. Where then is the need for a separate *ātmānubhava*? Is a distinct *ātmānubhava* even possible? Why do we need the *śāstra* (Vedānta) for *ātmānubhava* when *ātmā* itself is *anubhavasvarūpa*?

Ans : Yes, it is true; *ātmā* is experience itself (i.e. *anubhava-svarūpaḥ*) – the self-experiencing principle. Yet, what is experienced in the state of ignorance is *ātmā* intermixed with the *adhyasta* (superimposed) *dṛśya-jagat*. This experience is *sopādhika*, and not the correct (*yathārtha*) experience of *nirupādhika ātmā* in its true nature.

Q : What then is the correct (*yathārtha*) experience of *ātmā* ?

Ans : Firstly, *avidyā* (ignorance) has to be destroyed by *jñāna-pramāṇa* (vide pg. 122, 127-fn.46). The true nature of *ātmā* gets directly revealed thereby, namely, *ātmatattva-sākṣātkāra-bodha* is gained. It is gained by means of the *ātmākāra-vṛtti* (i.e. *manasaḥ vṛttirūpeṇa*). As a result of this *vṛtti*, all effects of ignorance in terms of the *adhyasta* (superimposition) on *ātmā*/Brahman, or *dṛśya-prapañca*, disappear from the range of experience. Even though *ātmā* exists forever in its true nature and never changes, it is only when the *ātmākāra-vṛtti* is gained that the experience of *ātmā* in its limitless *ānandasvarūpa* appears as if born through the knowledge of *ātmā*. The experience involving

the *ātmatattva-sākṣātkāra* of *ātmā* is free from all that is *adhyasta* or *drśya*, in contrast to the state of ignorance, where the experience is intermixed with the *adhyasta*. Thus despite being one's true nature, the experience of *ātmā* appears to be born as a result (*phala*) of the *śāstra* (Vedānta) through the knowledge in the form of *ātmatattva-sākṣātkāra* (the direct cognition of *ātmā*) gained through the *ātmākāra-vṛtti*, also known as *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, occurring in a pure (*śuddha*) and steady (*nīscala*) mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*).

Q : Why is it necessary to completely stop the *adhyasta* or *drśyaprapaṅca* from one's range of experience, when the *śāstra* (Vedānta), the ultimate *pramāṇa*, throughout declares that everything is Brahman and the entire *adhyasta anātmā* is *mithyā* (false) in nature?

Ans : Yes, everything – the entire *mithyā adhyasta anātmā* – is Brahman. Such statements are ornamental after gaining *Brahmajñāna*. But to simply quote these in the state of ignorance to refute the means that is indispensable is untimely, premature and disastrous (*Yogavāsīṣṭha, Utpatti* 67-60 and 61). Everything is indeed Brahman, to the extent that the superimposed *prapaṅca* has no independent existence without its *adhiṣṭhāna* (basis) – Brahman. It is an equation of *bādha-sāmānādhikaranyam* (juxtaposition with inherent negation), as seen in the illustration of the *sthāṇurayam puruṣaḥ* – “the post is a man”, a post in the darkness being mistaken for a thief. In this case, the basis – post – has to be known directly devoid of the superimposed entity – the thief. The *bhāṣyakāra* says that the *sāmānādhikaranyam* – viz. everything is Brahman (*sarvam Brahma*) – is intended for the dissolution (*praviḷāpanārtham*) of Creation (*prapaṅca*, – *Sūtrabhāṣya* 1-3-1).⁶⁶ The *śruti* statement – *sarvam Brahma* – does not intend to confer the status of *nirvikārī* (changeless) Brahman to the *vikārī* (ever changing) *mithyā jagat*.

⁶⁶. सर्वं ब्रह्म इति तु सामानाधिकरण्यं प्रपंचप्रविलापनार्थम् ।

Therefore *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna* should be free from all the *adhyasta*. The *bhāṣyakāra* highlights this aspect when he says : The means to abide in the true nature of *ātmā* is verily the withdrawal (*nivṛtti*) of the mind from the distinct pluralistic cognitions alien to *ātmā* (*B.G.Bh.* 18-50). *Dvaita jagat* and *advaita* Brahman cannot be known simultaneously. 'The *Brahmajñānī* absorbed in Brahman does not perceive the *jagat*, whereas the individual engrossed in the *jagat* does not know Brahman, just as a sleeper does not know dream, and a dreamer knows not sleep'⁶⁷.

Sage Vāsiṣṭha, in considering the nature of *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna*, provides the rationale for this prerequisite. He states: 'This too is the unique nature of *tattvajñāna* (*ātmajñāna*), namely the *ahaṃkāra* which is false (erroneous), having known its true nature, merges in *ātmā*. The complete extinction of seer (*draṣṭā*) and seen (*dṛśya*) is the highest *nirvāna* (*mokṣa*)'. '*Dṛśya* with its accompanying *tripuṭī* is absent in *nirvāna* (*mokṣa*). *Mokṣa* is (also) not present in *dṛśya* and *tripuṭī*. *Mokṣa* and *dṛśya* / *tripuṭī* cannot co-exist, like light and darkness'⁶⁸. Sage Aṣṭāvakra warns : O son ! You may learn or even teach different *śāstras* many a time. Nevertheless, your mind will not get absorbed in *ātmā* unless you withdraw from all *dṛśyas*[#].

Sureśvarācārya highlights the above fact: a *jñānī* whose mind is absorbed steadfastly in *ātmā* does not perceive the *dṛśya-jagat*⁶⁹.

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67. ब्रह्मात्मा वेत्ति नो सर्गं सर्गात्मा ब्रह्म वेत्ति नो ।
सुषुप्तो वेत्ति नो स्वप्नं स्वप्नस्थो न सुषुप्तकम् ॥ (यो.वा.नि.उ. ४०-९)
68. एष एव स्वभावो यद् द्रष्टृदृश्यक्षयोऽखिलः ।
ज्ञात्वाऽसत्या विनिर्वाणमहंतात्मनि गच्छति ॥८॥
निर्वाणे नास्ति दृश्यादि दृश्यादौ नास्ति निर्वृतिः ।
मिथोऽनयोरनुभवो न च्छायातपयोरिव ॥९॥ (यो.वा.नि.उ.सर्ग ३७)
- #. आक्षेप शृणु वा तात नानाशास्त्रण्यनेकशः ।
तथापि न तव स्वास्थ्यं सर्वविस्मरणादृते ॥ (अष्टावक्रगीता १६-१)
69. आत्मन्येवारूढभावो जगदेतन्न वीक्षते ॥५६॥ (पंचीकरणवार्तिकम्)

From the stand-point of the *paramārtha svarūpa* (true nature) of *jagat* free from the *adhyasta upādhis* of names and forms, the statement “Everything is Brahman” is *de jure* (a legitimate statement). But given that the attributes of *jagat* are vivid, the statement is not *de facto* (not founded in fact). The *Pratīkādhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 4-1-4) implies this truth when it says that *pratīkās* (symbols) such as the sun, mind, space, name etc. with their *upādhis* of names and forms cannot be Brahman by themselves, but are Brahman *paramārthataḥ* (in their true nature) free from *adhyasta upādhis*. What holds good for a *pratīka* is true of the entire *jagat*. The *jagat* with its names and forms as it presently obtains is not Brahman in and of itself. It is so only in its true nature free from *upādhis*. A mere repetition of the statement “Everything is Brahman” without *Brahmasākṣātkāra* cannot do away with the need for *prapañca-pravīlāpana* as a means.

Direct knowledge is true to the thing to be known. An *anṭhakaraṇa-vṛtti* not true to the nature of *ātmā* – not free from *adhyasta prapañca* – cannot remove its ignorance. It should be a replica of *ātmā* / Brahman, i.e. *ātmākāra* / *Brahmākāra* – free from the experienced *mithyā prapañca*. A mere verbal denial of *adhyasta* claiming it to be *mithyā* (apparent) is only a consolation. Such verbal denial is not capable of dissolving the *adhyasta saṃsāra*, which is *anubhavasiddha* – established by direct experience. The termination of the vivid experience of *saṃsāra* should also be *anubhavasiddha*. Problem and solution have to have the same degree of reality. The absence of perception of the *adhyasta dīṣya* in deep sleep does not bring the experience of *saṃsāra* to an end. The root cause of *saṃsāra*, viz. the *adhyāsa* of ignorance, is present in deep sleep. It is not a state entirely free from *adhyāsa*. *Aparokṣa Brahmajñāna* is not possible without the direct cognition of *ātmā* / Brahman

in its true nature free from the *adhyasta dṛśya prapañca*. That is why the *bhāṣyakāra*, in concluding the *adhyāsabhāṣya*, emphasizes the need to abandon (*prahāṇa*) the calamitous *adhyāsa* with its root cause (vide pg. 90).

To explain it differently, when a rope is mistaken for a snake in the dark, the absence of a snake can be ascertained only upon direct perception of the rope, and the consequent non-presence of the snake under light. The snake or rather the erroneous impression of a snake concealed the rope. The rope cannot be known if the snake continues to be perceived without catching the sight of the actual rope at least once. The same is true with *ātmā*. *Ātmā* / Brahman apparently concealed by the features of the *adhyasta* (superimposed) embodiment and by perception is not available for direct cognition as 'I' in its true nature.⁷⁰ If *ātmā* free from the *adhyasta dṛśya* is not directly appreciated, the superimposed (*adhyasta*) delusion 'I am a *saṃsārī*' will persist as a direct experience. In that case, 'I am Brahman' will become a matter of *śraddhā* (faith) similar to the existence of the heavens and Vedānta will be reduced to a non-verifiable *pramāṇa* similar to *dharmajijñāsā*. This is not the case.

The *yathārthānubhava* (experience true to the nature) of whatever is experienced is the basic constituent – cardinal essence – of both direct perception (*pratyakṣa-jñāna*) and direct self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna* of *ātmā*). There cannot be *aparokṣa-jñāna* (direct self-knowledge) without *ātmānubhava* / *Brahmānubhava* (experience conforming to the true nature of *ātmā*/Brahman), which is the unconditional requirement. Statements such as 'I am

70. एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु (ब्रह्मादिस्तंबपर्यन्तेषु) गूढः (संवृतः दर्शनश्रवणादिकर्मा अविद्यामायाच्छन्नः अतः एव) आत्मा न प्रकाशते (आत्मत्वेन कस्यचित्) । (Kṭ.U./Bh. 1-3-12)

Brahman' drawn from the Vedānta-*pramāṇa* but simply mouthed without gaining the *yathārthānubhava* of *ātmā* Brahman as *paramānanda-svarūpa*, although supported by a level of reasoning, at best represent *parokṣa-jñāna* (indirect knowledge) which cannot destroy the *aparokṣa bhrama* (directly experienced delusion), 'I am a *saṃsārī*'.

The notion 'I am a *saṃsārī*' is a *saṃvīt* (*caitanya* conditioned by an *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*). This *saṃvīt* is subjective knowledge (*prātibhāsika*) during the period of the ignorance of *ātmā*, just like the knowledge 'this is silver' in the example of a sea-shell mistaken for silver. The existence of the notion 'I am a *saṃsārī*' cannot be negated without a direct experience in the form of 'I am free from sorrowful *saṃsāra*'. It is similar to the mistaken impression of the existence of silver coming to an end through the experience that what exists is in fact a shell. Sage Vasiṣṭha vividly brings out the principle underlying this phenomenon. Some contenders object that experience alone cannot be the basis for the knowledge of the existence of an entity, as seen in the case of silver which, though experienced in the sea-shell, is found to be non-existent. In reply, the principle is enunciated: 'any entity whatsoever known internally (subjectively – *prātibhāsikatayā*) by a *saṃvīt* (by way of an *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti*) is experienced by it (*saṃvīt*) exactly as known, irrespective of the fact that the knowledge of the entity is true or false. In short, what is known thus (subjectively), whether true or false, is established by experience' (*Yogavāsiṣṭha, Nīrvāṇa uttara, 79-31*)⁷¹. The outcome of this implies that any deeply rooted erroneous knowledge of an entity, which is subjectively experienced (e.g. the

71. यान्तर्वेत्ति यथा संवित्सा तथानुभवत्यलम् ।
अस्तु सत्यमसत्यं वा सिद्धमित्यनुभूतितः ॥ यो.वा.नि.उ. 79-31

notion that 'I am a *saṃsārī*') cannot be terminated without the correct experience of that entity.

The distinction between the direct (*aparokṣa*) and indirect (*parokṣa*) knowledge of *ātmā* is based on the presence or absence of *ātmānubhava*/*Brahmānubhava* – the unique experience conforming to the true nature of *ātmā* / Brahman.

THE *BHĀṢYAKĀRA* EMPHASIZES TERMINATION OF *ĀTMĀNĀTMĀDHYĀSA*

It is noteworthy that in the following passages (*Gītā Bh.* 18-50), the *bhāṣyakāra* repeatedly emphasizes the need to eliminate (*nivṛttiḥ* or *nirākaraṇam*) of *ātmānātmādyāsa*.

- i) नामरूपाद्यनात्माध्यारोपणनिवृत्तिः एव कार्या । (To gain the knowledge of *ātmā*, what needs to be accomplished is only the termination or withdrawal (*nivṛtti*) of all the superimposed *anātmā* characterised by name and form).
- ii) अविद्याध्यारोपनिराकरणमात्रं ब्रह्मणि कर्तव्यम् । (With respect to *Brahmajñāna*, all that is required is the *nirākaraṇam* of *avidyadyāropaṇa* – shutting out of cognition all superimposed entities effected by ignorance).
- iii) बाह्याकारभेदबुद्धिनिवृत्तिः एव आत्मस्वरूपालम्बने कारणम् । (The means to abide in the true nature of *ātmā* is verily the withdrawal of the mind from the distinct pluralistic cognitions alien to *ātmā*).

TERMINATION OF *ĀTMĀNĀTMĀDHYĀSA* IS POSSIBLE

Adhyāsa is *sarvaloka-pratyakṣa* – directly experienced by one and all. It is *anubhavasiddha* – established by experience. The entire *adhyasta-dṛśya-prapañca* including *ajñāna* which encompasses all *antaḥkaraṇvṛttis* or the three states of

consciousness, is *anubhavasiddha*. Its total absence – never to return – should also necessarily be *anubhavasiddha*. There is no rule to the effect that *anubhava* (experience) is possible only in the presence of the *adhyasta ahaṃkāra* as *pramātā*, *anubhavitā* (experiencer) or *jñāta* (knower). *Nirvikalpa-samādhi*, in which the *tripuṭī* is absent, proves that the absence of the entire *adhyasta-prapañca* is experiential. *Samādhi* by itself is not *ātmajñāna*. It is one of the means to prepare the mind to gain *Brahmasākṣātkāra* / *aparokṣajñāna*. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that the mind cleansed by *samādhi* is an indispensable means to gain self-knowledge when he says:

आत्मना (समाधिपरिशुद्धेन अन्तःकरणेन) आत्मानं (परं चैतन्यं) पश्यन् (उपलभमानः)..... (B.G./Bh. 6-20).

Tr. Directly knowing *ātmā* through the mind cleansed (purified) by means of *samādhi*.....

In fact, all experiences are possible due to *anubhavasvarūpa ātmā*. Even when the *ātmānātmādhyāsa* ends as in the case of a *jīvanmukta*, *anubhavasvarūpa ātmā* continues in terms of *svarūpānubhava*, *ātmānubhava*, *Brahmānubhava*. This vindicates the following definitions of *mokṣa*.

- i) *Ātmā* itself free from *avidyā* and its *kārya* (effect) is *mokṣa* (*Vedāntakalpalatikā*).
- ii) *Svātmani avasthānam* (the abidance in *ātmā*) is *mokṣa* (*Tai.U.Bh. 1-12; Ke.U. Pada Bh. 2-4*).

It cannot be contended that *adhyāsanivṛtti* (the termination of *dṛśya ātmānātmādhyāsa*) is not possible to achieve. It is certainly possible. The different means such as *sādhana-catustaya-saṃpatti*, *amānitvādi* (B.G. 13-7 to 11), *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*, *aṣṭāṅgayoga* or what is termed as *śraddhā-bhakti-dhyānayoga* (*Kai.U. 1-2*) or *adhyātmayogādhiḡamaḡ* (*Kṛ.U. 1-2-12*) culminate directly or indirectly in *adhyāsanivṛtti*. Take for instance *adhyātmayogādhiḡamaḡ*.

It is defined as –

विषयेभ्यः प्रतिसंहृत्य चेतसः आत्मनि समाधानं अध्यात्मयोगः,
तस्य अधिगमः (प्राप्तिः, *Kṭ.U. Bh.* 1-2-12) ।

Tr. The accomplishment (*adhigamaḥ*) of the absorption of the mind (*samādhānam / samādhiḥ*) in *ātmā* through a total withdrawal of the mind from sense objects (*viśayas*) is *adhyātmayogādhigamaḥ*.

Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni describes *adhyātmayogādhigamaḥ* as *pratyagātma-samādhī-prāptiḥ* – the achievement of the state of total absorption of the mind in *ātmā* (*Jīvanmuktiviveka*, Ch.-2).

Sage Vālmīki, describing *jīvanmukti* to his disciple Bharadvāja based on his own direct experience, comments on the need to end the cognition of *dṛśya-jagat* or *adhyasta-prapañca*. ‘O good man, to forget the delusion of this *jagat* – experienced just like the (non-existing) blueness of the sky – such that it is not remembered again is what I consider an exalted accomplishment. It cannot be experienced without the knowledge that in reality there is no *dṛśya* at all. Even though *dṛśya* is perceived, it is certainly possible to experience its total absence. The unsurpassed happiness of *mokṣa* (*parā nirvāṇanirvṛtiḥ*) is born when the mind is cleansed of *dṛśya* by the knowledge (i.e. by the *jñāna-pramāṇa*, *ātmākāravṛtti* directly revealing *ātmā*) that it (*dṛśya*) does not exist (in the three periods of time)⁷², (*Yo. Vā, Vai*, 3-2 to 6).

⁷² भ्रमस्य जागतस्यास्य जातस्याकाशवर्णवत् ।
अपुनःस्मरणं मन्ये साधो विस्मरणं वरम् ॥
दृश्यात्यन्ताभावबोधं विना तन्नानुभूयते ॥
जगद्भ्रमोऽयं दृश्योऽपि नास्त्येवेत्यनुभूयते ॥
दृश्यं नास्तीति बोधेन मनसो दृश्यमार्जनम् ।
संपन्नं चेत्तदुत्पन्ना परा निर्वाणनिर्वृत्तिः ॥ (योगवासिष्ठः, वैराग्यप्रकरणम्,
Ch. 3-2 to 6) vide page 144, footnote 65 also.

DEFINITION OF *ĀTMĀNUBHAVA*

In his commentary on the next *sūtra*, the *bhāṣyakāra* specifies *ātmānubhava*/*Brahmānubhava* as the culmination of *Brahmajñāna* and draws a distinction between the modes of operation of the *pramāṇas* in the case of *Brahmajñānāsā* and in the case of *dharmajñānāsā*. The nature of *ātmānubhava* is defined clearly as ‘I am pure non-dual awareness free from all sorrows’ (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 4-1-2 सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तैकचैतन्यात्मकोऽहं इति एषः आत्मानुभवः) । (*ātmā*), being self-evident (*svaprakāśa*; *svayamjyoti*), whatever is signified by the term ‘I’ – whether in the state of ignorance or of knowledge, whether in conjunction with *adhyasta* objects or not – is necessarily self-evident. So the experience of ‘I’ persists invariably at all times, whether true to its nature or otherwise. Total freedom from all sorrows is possible only when the experiential *adhyasta anātmā*, including ignorance, is completely eliminated (*nirākṛta*, *nivṛtta*) from one’s cognition.

THE RESULT (*PHALA*) OF *BRAHMĀVAGATIḤ*

The end result of *Brahmāvagati* is now described:

भा. ब्रह्मावगतिः हि पुरुषार्थः, निःशेषसंसारबीजाविद्याद्यनर्थनिबर्हणात् ।
तस्मात् ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासितव्यम् ।

Bh.Tr. The direct cognition of Brahman called *Brahmāvagati* is the highest human accomplishment because it destroys the entire *saṃsāra* and everything that is disastrous in nature, along with its root cause, *avidyā*. Therefore Brahman should be inquired into.

Human accomplishments (*puruṣārthas*) that are deemed worthwhile are grouped into four categories :

- i) *Dharma* : Accomplishment of the relative good in terms of sense-pleasures here and heavenly pleasures hereafter through the means of scriptural injunctions – scriptural do’s and don’ts.

- ii) *Artha* : Acquisition of assets such as wealth, possessions etc.
- iii) *Kāma* : Fulfilment of desires not proscribed (*niṣiddha*) by the scriptures.
- iv) *Mokṣa* – Liberation : Abidance in one's true nature, which is forever free from all limitations and sorrows and is itself limitless happiness.

The *puruṣārtha* referred to here as *mokṣa* is the result of *Brahmāvagatī*, in the face of which all other accomplishments lose their significance. The Pañcapādikā describes *Brahmāvagatī* as *Brahmarūpatā-sākṣāt-karaṇam* – the direct cognition of Brahman in its true nature. Having expounded on the meaning of the words in the *sūtra*, the import of the *sūtra* is now pronounced in a tone of command exhorting one to undertake *Brahmavicāra* – the inquiry into the nature of Brahman. The eligibility of an individual to take to inquiry having been established by the words ‘*atha*’ and ‘*ataḥ*’ of this *sūtra*, *Brahmavicāra* is quite tenable.

BRAHMAN IS LIMITLESS (ANANTA) HAPPINESS (ĀNANDA)

Brahmāvagatī is described as the highest human accomplishment. But does it not lack happiness, and is not the seeking of happiness the fundamental urge of all living beings? This doubt is born of ignorance of Brahman. The nature of Brahman is simultaneous ever-existence (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*) and happiness (*ānanda*) which is limitless (*ananta*). Brahman does not lose its intrinsic nature of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* (happiness) only because it is *ananta* (*Sarvasāropaniṣat*). The *ānanda* (happiness) that is universally experienced by the *jīva* in deep sleep or in sense-pleasure originates from the only primary source of happiness, viz. *ātmā* / Brahman / *Bhūmā* (*Kai.U. 15, Mā.U. 5, Bṛ.U. 4-3-32, Ch.U. 7-23-1*). Scriptures use different synonyms for the word happiness (*ānanda*) to describe the nature of happiness of Brahman. Some of these are:

ānandam (*Br.U.* 3-9-28, 4-3-32/33; *Tai.U.* 2-4, 2-7, 3-6), *sukham* (*Ch.U.* 7-23-1, *Ṛt.U.* 5-12, *Śv.U.* 6-12, *B.G.* 6-21/27), *kam* (*Ch.U.* 4-10-4/5), *rasaḥ* (*Tai.U.* 2-7), *priyam* (*S.R.U.* 58/59). Generally, words such as *ānanda* and *sukham* indicate *viśayānanda*, the limited sense-pleasure born of contact with sense objects. But when used to describe Brahman, these limitations are eliminated by qualifying *ānanda* etc. with words which specify limitlessness, eternity and exaltedness. Such words are: *Bhūmā* (infinite), Brahman, *anantam* (limitless), *śāśvatam* (eternal), *ātyantikam* (endless), *parama* (primary, best), *uttamam* (exalted) etc. Thus unlike *viśayānanda*, the words *ānanda*, *sukham* etc. used to specify Brahman indicate the unborn, self-evident (*svaprakāśa*), limitless happiness, the *svarūpa* of Brahman free from *tripuṭī* (*Br.U.Bh.* 3-9-28, 4-3-32).

The *Taittiriya* (2-8/*Bh.*) and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (4-3-33/*Bh.*) Upaniṣads contain an inquiry into the measure of *ānanda* (happiness – not *ananta*) enjoyed by beings in different species of embodiments. The inquiry starts with the happiness enjoyed by an ideal emperor as the basic unit, with a hundredfold increase in each successively higher embodiment upto the highest embodiment, *Hiraṇyagarbha*. The counting stops here. The *ānanda* (happiness) enjoyed in all these embodiments is akin to a drop in the ocean of happiness that is Brahman (*Br.U.* 4-3-32). Thus *Brahmānanda* is limitless happiness and non-dual in nature which is self-evident in *Brahmāvagatī*. *Brahmāvagatī* is therefore the highest human accomplishment.

BRAHMAVICĀRA IS VALID

Brahmavicāra and its result were elaborated in the context of the *adhyāsa* of the *jagat* on Brahman. Nevertheless a doubt remains, viz., whether Brahman is already known or unknown by anyone at any time. This topic is broached to show that Brahman is neither totally unknown nor completely known, indicating the necessity of *Brahmavicāra*.

भा. तत्पुनः ब्रह्म प्रसिद्धं अप्रसिद्धं वा स्यात् । यदि प्रसिद्धं न जिज्ञासितव्यम् । अथ अप्रसिद्धं न एव शक्यं जिज्ञासितुं इति।

Bh.Tr. Furthermore, the question arises, is Brahman known or unknown. If already known, an inquiry into it is not needed. If totally unknown, it is simply not possible to undertake an inquiry into it.

It is always an unknown entity whose knowledge is sought in order to end ignorance of that entity. Any attempt to know an entity already known is meaningless. Therefore, the question of undertaking an inquiry into a Brahman that is already known does not arise. On the other hand, if it is totally unknowable at all times, none can inquire into it as it transcends the realm of the human intellect. Either way, says the contender, an inquiry into the nature of Brahman is not feasible. The *bhāṣya* points out that inquiry into Brahman is certainly possible because Brahman is known only vaguely in general and not fully in its true nature.

भा. उच्यते - अस्ति तावत् ब्रह्म नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावं, सर्वज्ञं, सर्वशक्तिसमन्वितम् । ब्रह्मशब्दस्य हि व्युत्पाद्यमानस्य नित्यशुद्धत्वादयः अर्थाः प्रतीयन्ते, बृहतेः धातोः अर्थानुगमात्।

Bh.Tr. Brahman, by nature ever-existent (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), sentience (*buddha*), ever-free from limitations (*mukta*), omniscient (*sarvajña*) and endowed with omnipotence (*sarvaśaktimattva*), is indeed known; an etymological interpretation of the word Brahman shows that the meanings of the above words ever-existent, pure etc. are consistent with the meaning of its verbal root *Brh*.

The word *asti* (i.e. is) is used in the *bhāṣya* in the sense of *prasiddhi* – being known – and not existence because the topic under discussion is whether Brahman is known and not whether it exists. Now the question arises: what are the means of knowledge through which Brahman can be known? If it is accepted that

Brahman is known through *śruti* passages such as ‘*satyam jñānam anantam Brahma*’, it can be argued that this does not make much sense since these are words. It is well-known that words are substantiated by forms and an object, being or event in the world, whereas, Brahman is not associated with any form in the world. Hence, Brahman cannot be described through any words such as ‘Brahman’.

The above doubt is addressed by showing that Brahman, with or without attributes, is certainly known. This is proved through the etymological derivation of the word Brahman. The very use of the word Brahman in the Upaniṣads and the *sūtra* implies that the word has a meaning since meaningless words are never employed in sentences that serve as a *pramāṇa* – means of knowledge. The word Brahman means ‘bigness’ (*mahatva*). This is in accordance with Pāṇinī’s system of grammar, which defines ‘*Bṛh*’ as a verbal root implying growth. The ‘bigness’ conveyed by the word Brahman is one of limitless nature since nothing can limit Brahman. This can be verified from the Upaniṣads, where the word Brahman is juxtaposed with the word *ananta* (limitless) to indicate that bigness is a common feature of both words. Limitless bigness is not possible if a thing has limitations or lacks attributes such as omniscience and omnipotence. Limited, valueless, defective things in the world are considered insignificant. The etymological derivation ‘that which is limitlessly big is Brahman’ (*Bṛmhaṇāt Brahma*) thus establishes that Brahman is ‘*nityam* (ever-existent), free from all limitations of time, space and objects. It is ‘*śuddham*’ (pure) because it is free from ignorance and its ramifications. Brahman is ‘*buddham*’ (sentience) since it is devoid of inertness. It is also ‘*muktam*’ as it is truly free from bondage, even in the presence of apparent bondage. Thus there is something called *nirguṇa Brahma* (the attributeless Brahman) which is flawless and perfect in all aspects, that is certainly known. Similarly, Brahman as the Creator principle endowed with omniscience and omnipotence is also known. The lack of knowledge or power to create anything is tantamount to limitation, which is

absent in the limitless Brahman. This also determines that Brahman is omniscient and omnipotent. Yet, this is only a general knowledge of Brahman and not complete by itself capable of fully destroying its ignorance about itself. That is the reason why inquiry into Brahman needs to be undertaken.

भा. सर्वस्य आत्मत्वात् च ब्रह्मास्तित्वप्रसिद्धिः । सर्वः हि आत्मास्तित्वं प्रत्येति, न 'न अहं अस्मि' इति । यदि हि न आत्मास्तित्वप्रसिद्धिः स्यात् सर्वः लोकः न अहं अस्मि इति प्रतीयात् । आत्मा च ब्रह्म ।

Bh.Tr. The existence of Brahman is also known since it is the very *ātmanā* ('I') of all. Everyone does experience their own existence as 'I am'; never does one experience 'I am not'. If the existence of oneself (*ātmanā*) were not known, everyone would experience 'I am not'. (Moreover) *ātmanā* ('I') itself is Brahman.

'I am' is a universal, self-evident experience. It proves the existence of oneself (*ātmanā*). But the question is, what does the fact 'I exist' have to do with Brahman? Here is the answer. The Vedas declare that this very same 'I' (*ātmanā*) is Brahman.

If Brahman is already known as *ātmanā*, we are again confronted with the question of why it needs to be inquired into at all. The doubt is presented and addressed.

भा. यदि तर्हि लोके ब्रह्म आत्मत्वेन प्रसिद्धं अस्ति ततः ज्ञातं एव इति अजिज्ञास्यत्वं पुनः आपन्नम् ।

Bh.Tr. If Brahman is known in the world as oneself (*ātmanā*), that it is already known shows once again that it need not be inquired into.

To know an entity is to get rid of the ignorance of that entity. The beneficial results of its knowledge are gained either directly or indirectly as the case may be. Indirectly usually refers to making

use of the means gained from any specific knowledge. If *ātmā* is already known, there is no scope for any inquiry to gain its knowledge, since neither does ignorance about it have to be ended nor can any result be obtained anew. Yes, that is true; even so, the present knowledge of *ātmā* is entirely different from its true nature. Hence it should be inquired into. Otherwise, it is like the knowledge 'this is silver' where the object is in actuality a sea-shell. The knowledge is true only to the extent that there does in fact exist something termed as 'this', which does not however correspond to the reality of the sea-shell. It is erroneous knowledge. Similarly, *ātmā* / Brahman is known in general as existing and as *caitanya* (the sentience principle) expressed and experienced as 'I am', but not known fully in its true nature of limitless happiness. The *śruti* declares that Brahman, identical to *ātmā*, is *viññānam* (the pure knowledge-principle) and of the nature of unsurpassed happiness (*ānanda*) totally free from sorrow (*Bṛ.U.* 3-9-28). By contrast, we commonly experience ourselves to be limited, miserable, *saṃsārī*. This common experience proves that our knowledge of the nature of *ātmā* is only vague and general about its sentience and existence; even then its specific nature remains unknown. If we had a correct knowledge of the nature of *ātmā* without *Brahmavicāra*, there would be no controversy or divergent views about its nature. If a sea-shell is known to be a sea-shell, different views about it, such as it is silver, dye etc., cannot arise. The very fact that there is widespread dispute about the nature of *ātmā* proves that its specific nature is completely unknown though it is known vaguely in general. This is pointed out in the following passage of the *bhāṣya*, where conflicting views are cited. It should be understood that the notions of general and specific features attributed to *ātmā* are only imaginary. They are due to the distinct and literal meanings of the words such as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* which signify *ātmā*.

भा. न, तद्विशेषं प्रति विप्रतिपत्तेः । देहमात्रं चैतन्यविशिष्टं आत्मा इति प्राकृताः जनाः लोकायतिकाः च प्रतिपन्नाः । इन्द्रियाणि एव चेतनानि आत्मा इति अपरे । मनः इति अन्ये । विज्ञानमात्रं

क्षणिकं इति एके । शून्यं इति अपरे । अस्ति देहादिव्यतिरिक्तः संसारी, कर्ता, भोक्ता इति अपरे । भोक्ता एव केवलं न कर्ता इति एके । अस्ति तद्व्यतिरिक्तः ईश्वरः सर्वज्ञः सर्वशक्तिः इति केचित् । आत्मा सः भोक्तुः इति अपरे । एवं बहवः विप्रतिपन्नाः युक्तिवाक्यतदाभाससमाश्रयाः सन्तः ।

Bh.Tr. No. (It is not correct to say that Brahman need not be inquired into) because there is a dispute about its specific nature. Lay people (completely unexposed to scriptural knowledge) and materialists, followers of the *cārvāka* (school of thought), consider the sentient physical body itself to be *ātmā*. Other materialists understand the sentient senses alone to be *ātmā*. Still others take the mind to be *ātmā*. The followers of (a certain school of Buddhistic thought called) *Kṣaṇika-vijñānavādī* take *ātmā* to be flickers of momentary consciousness. The nihilists (belonging to a Buddhistic school) consider *ātmā* to be non-existent. (*Tārkikas* and some) others say that *ātmā* is *saṃsārī*, the doer (*kartā*) and experiencer (*bhoktā*) distinct from the physical body. The followers of the *Sāṅkhya* school of thought are of the view that *ātmā* is only the experiencer (*bhoktā*) but not the doer (*kartā*). The followers of the *Yoga* school of thought consider that there is an *Īśvara* (the Creator) who is omniscient and omnipotent but distinct from the individual *saṃsārī jīva* (*ātmā*). The Vedāntist asserts that *Īśvara* is the true nature of the *bhoktā jīva* (which in reality is the non-doer [*akartā*] *sākṣī*, the all-illuminating knowledge-principle). Thus, taking recourse to reasoning and *śruti* texts as well as their semblances, different schools of thought differ in their concept of *ātmā*.

Some claim that in spite of differences in the understanding of the nature of *Brahmātmā*, all can attain the highest goal of life

regardless of the doctrine they place their faith in. This renders *Brahmavicāra* superfluous. This viewpoint is now disputed.

भा. तत्र अविचार्य यत्किञ्चित् प्रतिपद्यमानः निःश्रेयसात् प्रतिहन्येत अनर्थं च ईयात् । तस्मात् ब्रह्मजिज्ञासोपन्यासमुखेन वेदान्तवाक्यमीमांसा तदविरोधितर्कोपकरणा निःश्रेयसप्रयोजना प्रस्तूयते ॥१॥

Bh.Tr. One who accepts any of the conflicting views without a thorough inquiry will be deprived of *mokṣa* (liberation) and will be subjected to sorrows. Therefore by introducing *Brahmajijñāsā* (the desire to know Brahman), the sacred inquiry is commenced into the *Upaniṣadic* (Vedāntic) sentences supported by reasoning unopposed to Vedānta. This is the means to gain *mokṣa*.

The direct knowledge of identity between Brahman and *ātmā* alone can confer liberation. Liberation is not possible through other doctrines, which are incapable of conferring *Brahmajijñāna*. A person ignorant of his true nature can degrade to any despicable depth in sorrowful *saṃsāra*. The *bhāṣyakāra* concludes his exposition on the meaning of the *sūtra* by exhorting *mumukṣus* to take to *Brahmavicāra*.

To summarize, this *sūtra* elaborates the following four topics:

- i) The knowledge *jīvabrahmaikya* is tenable because the bondage of the *jīva* is the outcome of *adhyāsa* born of *avidyā* – self-ignorance.
- ii) The subject of *Brahmajijñāsā* (*Brahmavicāra*) is different from that of *dharmajijñāsā*. Thus inquiry into the nature of Brahman is relevant and is neither a repetition nor superfluous or redundant.

- iii) The words ‘*atha*’ and ‘*ataḥ*’ of the *sūtra* establish the *adhikārī* – the eligible person – who is competent to undertake inquiry into the nature of Brahman.
- iv) The nature of Brahman is not totally unknown and yet not completely known. An incomplete, vague and general knowledge of Brahman / *ātmā* cannot give liberation. *Brahmavicāra* is therefore justified as the appropriate means to gain *Brahmajñāna*. It alone makes us discover our true nature – *ātmā* identical to Brahman – which is limitless happiness totally free from the least trace of sorrow. Thus *Brahmajñāna* averts *saṃsāra*.

DEFINITION OF BRAHMAN

(जन्माद्यधिकरणम्)

BRAHMASŪTRA 1-1-2

SUMMARY OF JANMĀDYADHIKARAṆAM – THE TOPIC OF THE SECOND SŪTRA

The Vaiyāsika-nyāyamālā presents a summary of the second *sūtra*.

Subject: *Brahmalakṣaṇam* – the definition of Brahman.

Doubt: Can Brahman be defined?

Contrary Proposition (*Pūrvapakṣa*): The words origin (*janma*), sustenance (*sthiti*) and destruction (*bhaṅgam*) used in the statement ‘*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante ...*’ (*Tai.U.* 3-1-1) refer to this world. How can they bear any relation to (the attributeless) Brahman? Again each of the words *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam* found in the *śruti* passage ‘*satyam jñānam anantam Brahma*’ (*Tai.U.* 2-1-1) connotes a distinct meaning from the point of view of linguistics. How can they jointly establish the one, non-dual Brahman? Therefore it is not possible to define Brahman either through a *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* (a feature which defines an entity via an adventitious relationship with that entity) or through a *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (the intrinsic characteristic of an entity).

Doctrine (*Siddhānta*) : Even though origin, sustenance and destruction are attributes of the world, their cause is Brahman. The *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* of Brahman can be established through the method of juxtaposition with negation (*bādhasāmānādhikaraṇyam*), akin to discerning

a (mistaken) snake from its basis – the garland. Though *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam* have different meanings in the context of the world, they can in fact indicate one and the same Brahman just as the word son, grandson, brother, son-in-law, husband etc. can refer to the same individual based on the relationship between the person using the word and the individual referred to. This proves that these three words can jointly serve as the *svarūpalakṣaṇa* of Brahman. The explanation also establishes that the same Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of this Creation.

THE SECOND *SŪTRA* IS INTRODUCED

The first *sūtra* established the indispensability of *Brahmavicāra*. The import of the first *sūtra* is now restated to bring out the link between the earlier topic and this topic (*adhikaraṇa*).

भा. ब्रह्मजिज्ञासितव्यं इति उक्तम् ।

Bh.Tr. It was stated (in the first *sūtra*) that *Brahmavicāra* (inquiry into Brahman) should be undertaken (by a *mumukṣu* in order to gain *Brahmajñāna*).

In order to undertake an inquiry into Brahman, a specific examination of aspects that are pertinent, such as *Brahmapramāṇas* (the means of knowledge to know Brahman), *Brahmalakṣaṇa* (the definition of Brahman), *Brahmayukti* (supporting reasoning to confirm the validity of that which is to be known, identify the valid means of knowledge, and discard invalid means) etc. is indispensable. These aspects cannot be examined without a precise knowledge of what exactly is meant by Brahman. Thus a definition (*lakṣaṇa*) of Brahman is an inevitable prerequisite. However, the opponent objects with the contrary proposition that it is not possible to define it. The *bhāṣyakāra* introduces the second *sūtra* to address this objection, and starts by paying homage to the author of the *sūtras*.

भा. किं लक्षणं पुनः तद् ब्रह्म इति अतः आह भगवान् सूत्रकारः –

Bh.Tr. The question that (now) arises is – ‘What is the definition of Brahman?’ Therefore the revered author of the *sūtras* answers (in the following *sūtra* – *Janmādyasya yataḥ*).

The word *kim* is used here in the *bhāṣya* in the sense of an objection (*ākṣepa*) implying that Brahman cannot be defined. The present *adhikaraṇa* (topic) addresses this objection (*ākṣepa*) or doubt, with the *ākṣepa* providing an *ākṣepa-saṅgati* (link in the form of an objection) with the previous *jijñāsādhikaraṇa*.

जन्माद्यस्य यतः ॥२॥

[पदच्छेदः – जन्मादि (the origin, sustenance and destruction), अस्य (of this Creation), यतः (take place from which) (तद् ब्रह्म – that is Brahman)

पदार्थोक्तिः – अस्य-जगतः, जन्मादि-जन्मस्थितिभंगम्, यतः-यस्मात्, (तद् ब्रह्म) ।

Tr. (Brahman is) that from which the origin, sustenance and destruction of this Creation (take place).]

Though Brahman is defined in this *sūtra* as the (*upādāna* – material) cause of the origin, sustenance and destruction of Creation, it is also its efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*). This fact is taken for granted here. It is corroborated by *Prakṛtyadhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 1-4-23 to 27) in which Brahman is established as both the material as well as the efficient cause of Creation. The statement – Brahman is the cause of Creation – can be questioned because the attributeless (*nirguṇa*) and changeless (*avikāri*) Brahman is incapable of being the cause of anything. In response, it must be understood that attributing the cause of Creation to Brahman is akin to seeing the (mistaken) silver in the sea-shell. The status of

Brahman as the cause is only in the sense that the superimposed (*adhyasta*) Creation has no existence without or apart from Brahman.

THE MEANINGS OF THE WORDS ‘JANMĀDYASYA YATAH’

भा. जन्म उत्पत्तिः आदिः अस्य इति तद्गुणसंविज्ञानः बहुव्रीहिः । जन्मस्थितिभङ्गं समासार्थः । जन्मनः च आदित्वं श्रुतिनिर्देशापेक्षं वस्तुवृत्तापेक्षं च । श्रुतिनिर्देशः तावत् ‘यतः वै इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते’ (तैत्ति. ३ - १) इति अस्मिन् वाक्ये जन्मस्थितिप्रलयानां क्रमदर्शनात् । वस्तुवृत्तं अपि, जन्मना लब्धसत्ताकस्य धर्मिणः स्थितिप्रलयसंभवात् । अस्य इति प्रत्यक्षादिसंनिधापितस्य धर्मिणः इदमा निर्देशः । षष्ठी जन्मादिधर्मसंबन्धार्था । यतः इति कारणनिर्देशः ।

Bh.Tr. *Janma* stands for birth (origin). ‘*Janma*’ is the first member of the compound ‘*janmādi*’, which is an attributive (*bahuvrīhi*) compound called *tadguṇasaṃvijñāna* in which the sense of the attributive member is also present. The compound ‘*janmādi*’ connotes origin, sustenance and destruction. The word *janma* (origin) is mentioned first. This is in accordance with the *Upaniṣadic* declaration ‘*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jayante*’ (*Tai.U.* 3-1) and (universally observed) fact. The sequence specified in the *Upaniṣadic* declaration is origin, followed by sustenance and then destruction. It is an acknowledged fact that for any given entity, sustenance (*sthiti*) and destruction are possible only after the entity comes into existence through birth. The word *idam* (this) is the uninflected form of *asya* (of this), and stands for *jagat* (Creation), the existence of which is established through direct perception, inference and the other

means of knowledge. The genitive case (the sixth case) in the word *asya* (of this) indicates the relation between the attributes (*dharmas*) origin etc. and their locus, the entity (*dharmi*) viz. *jagat* (Creation) to which they pertain. The word *yataḥ* (from which) specifies the cause.

An attributive compound (*bahuvrīhi samāsaḥ*) is a type of compound that qualifies an entity that is not itself part of the compound by specifying a certain characteristic or quality the entity possesses. It is therefore adjectival in nature and assumes the gender of the substantive (noun) it qualifies. An example of a *bahuvrīhi samāsaḥ* is *Pītambaraḥ* (*Hariḥ*) – ‘the one whose garment is yellow’. It means Lord Viṣṇu. In the English language, examples of such compounds are good-natured or narrow-minded with reference to specific individuals. *Janma* (origin) is the adjective of the compound *janmādi* formed by the conjunction of the words – origin, sustenance and destruction (*janmasthitibhaṅga*) having the neuter gender and in the singular number.

A *tadguṇasaṃvijñāna bahuvrīhi* compound is a compound that refers to a group which includes the element denoted by the first member of the compound. This type of *bahuvrīhi* compound indicates that a given element denoted by the first member of the compound is the first of the ordered group. *Janmādi* is a *tadguṇasaṃvijñāna bahuvrīhi* because in arriving at the meaning of the compound, the sense of the adjective *janma* (origin) comes across as an integral part of the compound.

It is not correct to confine the interpretation of the *sūtra* to ‘Brahman is that from which Creation is born’. For that would imply that the causes of sustenance and destruction are distinct from that of origin. Such an interpretation could not be a definition of Brahman, since Brahman is non-dual in nature. The definition of Brahman must point to a single cause of all three, origin (*janma*), sustenance (*sthiti*) and destruction (*bhaṅga*). To meet this requirement, the

compound *janmādi* in the *sūtra* jointly denotes *janmasthitibhaṅga*.

Some may question how the *janma* of the *jagat* can be first in the sequence of *janmasthitibhaṅga* when *saṃsāra* is considered to be beginningless in nature. The *bhāṣya* clarifies that the order is based on the declaration of the *śruti* (Upaniṣad) and also happens to correspond to reality. The *Upaniṣadic* sentence states: Know Brahman to be that from which all these living beings are born, by which they live having been born, and into which they merge after destruction (*Tai.U.* 3-1). This shows that the order is origin, sustenance and destruction. The word *bhūtāni* in the *Upaniṣadic* sentence stands for ‘living beings’ and not for the five great elements because the verb *jīvanti* (live) is used subsequently in the same sentence. However, in the present *sūtra* the word *bhūtāni* refers to both living beings and the five great elements – space, air, fire, water and earth. This is in keeping with the context of this *sūtra*, since it defines the cause of the entire Creation. It is also in conformity with other *Upaniṣadic* sentences referred to in the *Prakṛtyadhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 1-4-23 to 27) that deal with and define the cause of Creation.

The word *idam* (this) generally refers to only those proximate things that are directly available for perception. Lest one make that mistake, it is clarified that the word *idam*, the uninflected form of *asya* (of this), includes the entire Creation illumined by direct perception as well as other means of knowledge such as inference etc. It connotes all that is different from ‘I’ (*aḥam*).

Vaiśeṣikas contend that space and the other elements are *nitya* (eternal) in nature, and cannot have birth, sustenance and destruction. To counter this contention, it is pointed out that the genitive case in the word *asya* (of this) specifies the relationship of attributes *janma* etc. with *jagat* (the entire Creation), which includes space and the other elements. The relationship of birth, sustenance and destruction with space and other elements is brought out later in the *Viyadadhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 2-3-1 to 7).

A doubt may arise at this point: the origin, sustenance and destruction of Creation cannot define Brahman because neither Creation nor its attributes such as origin etc. have any relation with Brahman. In answer, the word used is *yataḥ* (from which). *Yataḥ* – through its ablative case – defines Brahman as the cause of *janma-sthiti-bhaṅga* of Creation. This definition of Brahman therefore holds good. In the original *Upaniṣadic* sentence, the relative pronoun *yat* (i.e. which) which is the root of the inflected word *yataḥ* refers to Brahman which is *satyam* (the ever-existent principle), *jñānam* (the knowledge-principle) and *anantam* (limitless in nature). It is further ascertained to be *ānandam* (the principle of limitless happiness). This also suggests the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (intrinsic characteristic) of Brahman along with *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam*.

THE MEANING OF THE SŪTRA – JANMĀDYASYA YATAḤ

Thus far, the meanings of the words that make up the *sūtra* have been discussed. Based on this *sūtra*'s link with the word Brahman in the previous *sūtra*, by now adding the word *tat* (that) to complete the sentence, the meaning of the entire *sūtra* is being explained.

भा. अस्य जगतः नामरूपाभ्यां व्याकृतस्य अनेककर्तृभोक्तृसंयुक्तस्य प्रतिनियतदेशकालनिमित्तक्रियाफलाश्रयस्य मनसा अपि अचिन्त्यरचनारूपस्य जन्मस्थितिभङ्गं यतः सर्वज्ञात् सर्वशक्तेः कारणात् भवति तद् ब्रह्म इति वाक्यशेषः ।

Bh.Tr. That omniscient and omnipotent cause is Brahman from which take place the origin, sustenance and destruction (*janma-sthiti-bhaṅgam*) of this Creation (*jagat*) – manifested (*vyākṛta*) as names (*nāma*) and forms (*rūpa*); consisting of innumerable doers (*kartr*) and experiencers (*bhoktr*); (which is) the basis (*āśraya*) of actions (*kriyā*) and their results (*phala*) having a fixed

(pratinīyata) place, time and specific cause; and the very nature of whose genesis (racanā) is inconceivable to the mind. The words ‘that is Brahman’ round out the sūtra and make it a complete sentence.

The four adjectival phrases qualifying the *jagat* in the *bhāṣya* above establish that the cause of the *jagat* is sentient, omniscient and omnipotent in nature; as also that it is not an entity or being in the realm of Creation itself. The implication of each of these adjectival phrases is discussed below:

(i) ‘Manifest in terms of names and forms’:

A pot-maker first conceives of the object called pot, assigns it a definite form and then proceeds to make it accordingly. It can be inferred that similarly, the supreme cause conceives of the Creation consisting of names and forms and proceeds to manifest it. Though the word *nāmarūpābhyām* (by names and forms) is in the instrumental case, it is used to communicate the actual nature of the *jagat* consisting of nothing but names and forms. The above illustration indicates that the *jagat* is born as an effect (*kārya*) of a sentient principle. It is born neither from the inert *pradhāna* as propounded by the *Sāṅkhya* school of thought nor from *śūnya* (non-existence) as advocated by the Nihilists.

(ii) ‘Consisting of innumerable and diverse (*aneka*) doers (*kartṛ*) and experiencers (*bhoktṛ*)’ :

This refutes the notion that Creation is born of *Hiraṇyagarbha* or other such deities which are themselves *jīvas* (created entities) with bodies in this *jagat*. Many *Upaniṣadic* statements corroborate this fact. For instance, ‘That supreme principle first created *Hiraṇyagarbha*’ (*Śv.U.* 6-18 – *yo Brahmāṇam vidadhāti pūrvam*) and ‘all these beings are born from *ātmā*’ (*sarve ete ātmanaḥ vyuccaranti*).

Though a doer (*kartā*) of an action is in general himself or herself the experiencer (*bhoktā*), there are certain exceptions to this rule. In a *śrāddha-karma* (the rite performed for dead relatives), the son is the performer whereas the deceased father is the recipient of the result of the rites; by contrast, in the *Vaiśvānareṣṭi* rite, the father performs the *karma* but the son reaps the fruits thereof. That is why the adjective *aneka*, meaning innumerable and diverse, is used for *karṭṛ-bhokṭṛ*.

- (iii) ‘The basis (*āśraya*) of actions and their results having a fixed place, time and specific cause’:

This adjectival phrase establishes the omniscience of the Creator principle. It is a matter of common observation that the rewarder of any action needs to have complete knowledge of that action, as also to whom, when and where the reward is to be conferred. Similarly, the Creator principle which creates the world comprising of innumerable, varied actions undertaken at different places and times, arising out of a variety of causes and yielding unique results must necessarily know everything about both the actions as well as their results.

- (iv) ‘The nature of whose genesis (*racanā*) is inconceivable (*acintya*) to the mind’:

The Creator of the *jagat*, the very design of which is universally incomprehensible, must necessarily be omnipotent in nature.

Some contend that if the compound *janmādi* is taken to stand for *janma* (origin), *sthiti* (sustenance) and *bhaṅga* (destruction) alone, its meaning would be incomplete since several other factors representing change, such as growth (*vṛddhi*), deterioration (i.e. *vipariṇāma*) and decay (*apakṣaya*) would be excluded. Why these

are not taken into account in the interpretation of the compound *janmādi* is explained as follows:

भा. अन्येषां अपि भावविकाराणां त्रिषु एव अन्तर्भावः इति जन्मस्थितिनाशानां इह ग्रहणम् ।

Bh.Tr. Origin, sustenance and destruction alone are enumerated here (in the *sūtra*) because the other modifications that entities undergo inhere in these three.

Vṛddhi (growth) and *vipariṇāma* (deterioration) come under the umbrella of *janma* (origin) while *apakṣaya* (decay) is included in *bhaṅga* (destruction).

A statement by the sage Yāska, the etymologist, elaborates that ‘the body is born; it exists, grows, deteriorates, decays and gets destroyed’. The question arises : why is this sentence not taken as the basis of the present *sūtra*? The answer is:

भा. यास्कपरिपठितानां तु ‘जायते अस्ति’ इत्यादीनां ग्रहणे तेषां जगतः स्थितिकाले संभाव्यमानत्वात् मूलकारणात् उत्पत्तिस्थितिनाशाः जगतः न गृहीताः स्युः इति आशङ्क्येत तत् मा शङ्कीति या उत्पत्तिः ब्रह्मणः तत्र एव स्थितिः प्रलयः च ते एव गृह्यन्ते ।

Bh.Tr. Since the six modifications ‘is, born, exists and the rest’ enumerated by sage Yāska are possible (only) during the period of continuance of the *jagat*, accepting these (as the basis of this *sūtra*) may give rise to the wrong notion that this *sūtra* does not address the origin, sustenance and destruction of the *jagat* with respect to its primary (root) cause; to rule out such wrong notions, sustenance and destruction are

asserted in Brahman from which the *jagat* is born (in accordance with the *śruti*). (Therefore) it is these (origin, sustenance and destruction) attributes alone that are referred to (here in *janmādi*).

It must be noted that sage Yāska's etymological interpretation is based on the direct observation of living beings during the period of continuance of the five great elements after they (the elements) are created. If these modifications are taken as the basis of the *janmādi sūtra*, the only meaning that could be drawn is that Yāska has not defined Brahman but has merely brought out the nature of the five great elements. To avoid such a misconception, the origin (and the rest) of the *jagat* from Brahman as asserted in the *śruti* alone is accepted as the source of this *sūtra*. The argument that the above etymological interpretation in Yāska's statement is based on the *śruti* and there should therefore be no objection to the statement is unacceptable, since the statement is unnecessary when the direct *śrutipramāṇa* is available.

BRAHMAN ALONE IS THE CAUSE OF THE *JAGAT*

The present *sūtra* cannot be considered an independent *sūtra* that is not a sequel to the first *sūtra*, for in that case, it could refer to something other than Brahman as the cause of the *jagat*. To prevent such an interpretation, the argument is implied in this *sūtra*, with its link to the previous *sūtra*, that the birth etc. of the *jagat* are not possible without Brahman because no other cause is available. This argument will be elaborated in detail in the *Tarkapāda* (*Br.Sū.* 2-2). Only a passing reference is made at this point.

भा. न यथोक्तविशेषणस्य जगतः यथोक्तविशेषणं ईश्वरं मुक्त्वा अन्यतः प्रधानात् अचेतनात् अणुभ्यः अभावात् संसारिणः वा उत्पत्त्यादि संभावयितुं शक्यम् । न च स्वभावतः विशिष्टदेशकालनिमित्तानां इह उपादानात् । एतत् एव अनुमानं संसारिव्यतिरिक्तेश्वरास्तित्वादिसाधनं मन्यन्ते ईश्वरकारिणः ।

Bh.Tr. Except for a Creator (*Īśvara*) characterized by the above adjectival phrase, the origin etc. of the world endowed with the above attributes cannot conceivably be ascribed to other entities such as the inert *Pradhāna* or atoms, to non-existence, to a transmigratory being (viz. *Hiraṇyagarbha*), or even to its own nature (*svabhāva*) because of the fact that a specific time, place and cause are made use of in this world (by those who seek their desired results). Those (viz. *Naiyāyikas*) who assume *Īśvara* (the Creator) to be the cause of the *jagat* consider this very same inference (as specified above and not the *śrutī*) to be the means to establish the existence etc. (viz. omniscience) of *Īśvara* distinct from the *jīva* (the individual entity).

In explaining the meaning of the second *sūtra* in its totality, the *jagat* was described as having four attributes beginning with ‘*nāmarūpabhyām vyākṛtasya*’. It was argued that the inert *Pradhāna* of the *Sāṅkhya* system, the non-existence of the Nihilists or *Hiraṇyagarbha*, himself a *samsārī*, are incapable of creating the *jagat*. The atoms or *paramāṇus* propounded by the *Naiyāyikas* and *Vaiśeṣikas* are inert in nature and in no better position either. The existence of an omniscient *Īśvara* who could perhaps create the *jagat* with the help of these atoms is also ruled out because according to *Naiyāyikas* and *Vaiśeṣikas*, anything other than the *jīva* is devoid of intelligence. The materialists called *Cārvākas* argue that it is the very nature (*svabhāva*) of *jagat* to be born, to continue and to be destroyed. Even in this case, this so-called nature cannot be its own cause since this would entail *ātmāśrayadoṣa* – the defect of self-dependence. Nature is something independent of any cause. If it were the cause of *jagat*, those who want to accomplish their desired ends would not employ a specific place, time and instruments to fulfil their goals. For example, farmers select right type of field, sow the seeds at a conducive time such as monsoon and ensure that they choose the best possible seeds in order to meet their objective of reaping their harvest.

It was explained in the *bhāṣya* that the origin, sustenance and destruction of the *jagat* cannot be from anything except the omniscient and omnipotent *Īśvara*. This means there can be no Creation without a Creator. This also implies that all that is created must necessarily have a Creator. Misguided logicians (*tārkikas*) obstinately believe that inference itself is sufficient to prove an omniscient *Īśvara* as the cause of Creation. According to them, the evidence of the *śruti* is not necessary. This argument undoubtedly holds good for created entities where both cause and effect are available for perception. Brahman – the cause of Creation – is imperceptible to the senses. Inference is therefore not applicable in ascertaining the cause of the *jagat*. Vedānta accepts inference as a means which corroborates the *śruti*. It does not accept it as an independent means to establish the cause of Creation.

INFERENCE IS NOT THE BASIS OF THE *SŪTRA JANMĀDYASYA YATAḤ*

Followers of the *Vaiśeṣika* school of thought do not accept the *śruti* as an independent means of knowledge – *pramāṇa*. They consider *pratyakṣa* (direct perception) and *anumāna* (inference) to be the only two valid *pramāṇas*. According to them, the *śruti* can reveal meaning only through *anumāna*. This view is now refuted.

भा. ननु इह अपि तदेव उपन्यस्तं जन्मादि सूत्रे । न । वेदान्तवाक्यकुसुमग्रथनार्थत्वात् सूत्राणाम् । वेदान्तवाक्यानि हि सूत्रैः उदाहृत्य विचार्यन्ते । वाक्यार्थविचारणाध्यवसाननिर्वृत्ता हि ब्रह्मावगतिः न अनुमानादिप्रमाणान्तरनिर्वृत्ता ।

Bh.Tr. Contrary proposition: Here in the *janmādi sūtra* that (inference) alone is enunciated.

Ans: No; the *sūtras* aim to string together the flowers of *Upaniṣadic* sentences; they refer to and inquire into these sentences. *Brahmāvagati* (the direct cognition

of Brahman) is attained by ascertaining the purport (*tātparya*) of *Upaniṣadic* sentences through an inquiry into their meaning and not by other *pramāṇas* such as inference etc.

The purpose of *Brahmavicāra* is to gain liberation through *Brahmāvagati* – the direct cognition of Brahman. To accomplish this, two things need to be inquired into:

- (a) The purport of *Upaniṣadic* statements.
- (b) Brahman, an indestructible principle whose knowledge is to be gained.

Inference and similar means of knowledge which operate only in the objective field cannot confer *Brahmāvagati* since Brahman is not available to the senses and the intellect as an object.

REASONING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE *ŚRUTI* IS NECESSARY

Does this mean that inference has no role at all to play as a means to gain *Brahmajñāna*? Certainly not. How inference in conformity with the *śruti* can indeed be useful is now shown.

भा. सत्सु तु वेदान्तवाक्येषु जगतः जन्मादिकारणवादिषु तदर्थग्रहणदाढ्याय अनुमानं अपि वेदान्तवाक्याविरोधि प्रमाणं भवत् न निवार्यते, श्रुत्या एव च सहायत्वेन तर्कस्य अभ्युपेतत्वात्। तथाहि – ‘श्रोतव्यः मन्तव्यः’ (बृह. २-४-५) इति श्रुतिः ‘पण्डितः मेधावी गन्धारान् एव उपसंपद्येत’ ‘एवं एव इह आचार्यवान् पुरुषः वेद’ (छान्दो. ६-१४-२) इति च पुरुषबुद्धिसाहाय्यं आत्मनः दर्शयति ।

Bh.Tr. But to corroborate the meaning of Vedāntic (*Upaniṣadic*) passages that expound the cause of the

origin, sustenance and destruction of *jagat*, reasoning unopposed to Vedāntic statements is not ruled out as a *pramāṇa* because the *śruti* (the Veda) itself accepts reasoning as a helpful means. For example, the (two) *śruti* passages viz., ‘(Ātmā) has to be inquired into and reflected upon’ (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5) and ‘just as a person to whom the directions (to Gandhāra) are provided, who is capable of ascertaining the directions does in fact reach Gandhāra, here in this *saṃsāra* (also), the *mumukṣu* who is capable of reasoning and assimilates the teachings of a competent master (*ācārya*) does attain the knowledge of *ātmā*’ (*Ch.U.* 6-14-2), indicate reasoning’s role – in the form of the intelligence of the seeker – as an accessory to (*śruti*) itself.

Dārḍhya (corroboration) of the *śruti* is a process whereby doubts and erroneous notions are removed. For example, consider the following two inferences that corroborate the declarations of the *śruti* on the origin etc. of *jagat*.

- (i) The efficient (*nimitta*) and material (*upādāna*) causes (*kāraṇa*) of Creation are identical (*abhinna*) because Creation is like the cobweb produced by a spider, an effect (*kārya*).
- (ii) Creation has its origin in a sentient principle; because it is an effect, like joy and sorrow.

The word *mantavyaḥ* (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5) means that *śruti* declarations should be reflected upon with the help of reasoning (*tarka*) to verify their possibility and suitability. The *Chāndogyopaniṣat* illustrates the necessity of reflection. A person from a place called Gandhāra is waylaid by robbers and left blindfolded in a dense forest. A compassionate passer-by takes off the blindfolds and provides him the directions to Gandhāra. The person can now reach his destination provided he has a good understanding of the directions

and correctly decipher instructions at every step of the way. It certainly takes intelligence and reasoning to decode the instructions and take correct decisions along the way.

The *śruti* too expects the *mumukṣu* to make use of his intelligence and utilize reasoning to ascertain the purport of its statements. The condition of a *jīva* is similar to that of the person waylaid. Self-ignorance, desires and the results of actions have robbed him of his own nature, which is limitless happiness, and thrown him into the forest of *saṃsāra*. When taught by a compassionate *ācārya* (teacher) “you are not a *saṃsārī* but verily Brahman” (*Ch.U.* 6-8-7), an individual capable of ascertaining the purport of this statement can directly know his own true nature through due reasoning alone, and not in any other manner.

DIRECT EXPERIENCE (ANUBHAVA) IS INDISPENSABLE FOR GAINING BRAHMAJÑĀNA, BUT NOT FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF DHARMA

Pūrvamīmāṃsā / *dharmajijñāsā* (inquiry into the nature of the *karmakāṇḍa* portion of the Veda) employs means of knowledge such as *śruti*, *liṅgam*, *vākyam*, *prakaraṇam*, *sthānam*, *samākhyā* alone. Some who have a bias in favour of *pūrvamīmāṃsā* contend that the above means of knowledge alone are sufficient for gaining *Brahmajñāna*, because Brahman, like *dharma* (*karma* / relative good), has been propounded in the Veda. They argue that it is inappropriate to talk of any other practices such as *manana* (reflection) and its accompanying reasoning, *nididhyāsana* (intense contemplation), or the direct cognition of Brahman (*Brahmasākṣātkāra*) termed as the experience of Brahman (*Brahmānubhava*), for the acquisition of *Brahmajñāna*. This is incorrect. The modes of gaining (or imparting) knowledge in *dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā* differ even though the *Veda-pramāṇa* is common. This is now taken up for clarification.

Here it is advisable to have a clear understanding of what *dharma* – the relative good – is in the context of the present discussion. The performance of good actions (*karma*) enjoined in the Vedas and the *smṛtis* yields an *adr̥ṣṭa* (unseen) result called *puṇya* or *dharma*. There are two schools of thought in *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, viz. those of *Bhātta* and *Prābhākara*. According to the *Bhātta* school, sacrifices, acts of charity and other good works are called *dharma* in the primary sense while their result *puṇya* is considered *dharma* in the secondary or implied sense. According to *Prābhākara*, the reverse holds true, where *puṇya* is *dharma* in the primary sense while sacrifices and the rest are *dharma* in the implied sense. Vedānta accepts *Bhātta*'s version in matters of *karmakāṇḍa*. The *bhaṣyakāra* therefore considers sacrifices etc. to be *dharma*.

भा. न धर्मजिज्ञासायां इव श्रुत्यादयः एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायाम् ।
किंतु श्रुत्यादयः अनुभवादयः च यथासंभवं इह प्रमाणं,
अनुभवावसानत्वात् भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात् च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य ।

Bh.Tr. For the inquiry into Brahman, *śruti* and the rest are not the only means of knowledge, unlike in the case of *dharma* *jijñāsā*. In addition to *śruti* (with *liṅgam* etc.), direct experience, (reflection and contemplation in accordance with *śruti*) are (also) the *pramāṇas* as appropriate (to the context required) because the knowledge of Brahman culminates in (direct) experience and concerns an already existent entity.

In general, *śruti*, *liṅgam*, *vākyam*, *prakaraṇam*, *sthānam* and *samākhyā* are means of knowledge considered to be *pramāṇas* for the knowledge of both *dharma* and Brahman. In this context, the word *śruti* does not stand for the Vedas, but for Vedic passages independent of *liṅga*, *vākyam*, *prakaraṇam*, *sthānam* and *samākhyā*. *Liṅga* is the capacity to reveal the meaning of a word. *Vākyam* (sentence) represents the syntactical connections between a word and other appropriate words. The dependence of the principal

sentence on its subsidiary sentences is called *prakaraṇam*. The mapping between a list of entities enumerated in a given sequence and a corresponding list of related entities that are also enumerated is *sthānam*. For example, ten sacrifices such as *Indreṣṭi*, *Agnīṣṭi* and so on are found in the Vedas ordered in a definite sequence. Ten *mantras* are also listed alongside these ten sacrifices. In such instances, the first *mantra* is to be employed for the first sacrifice, and so on. *Samākyā* stands for a similarity of names. For example, *mantras* called *ādhvaryava* are to be employed for *karmas* called *ādhvaryava*.

The *bhāṣya* states that *anubhavādayaḥ* (experience etc.) are additional means of knowledge for gaining *Brahmajñāna*. The word *ādi* (etc.) in *anubhavādayaḥ* signifies *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (contemplation). *Manana* includes *anumāna* (inference).

Anubhava (experience) is *Brahmasākṣātkāra* or the *Brahmāvagati* referred to earlier in the *bhāṣya* on the first *sūtra*. It is also termed as *Brahmānubhava* of *jīvanmuktas* – liberated here and now even while living. It is the direct (*sākṣāt*) experience or cognition of *ātma* / Brahman, where the knower (*pramātā*) or experiencer (*anubhavitā*) ceases to exist as an entity along with the *pramāṇa* which has already served its purpose (*B.G.Bh. 2-69*)⁷³. This is neither the experience of an object / being / event in the transient Creation nor any experience during the waking, dream or deep sleep states. In it is absent the *tripuṭī* – in the form of separate entities – the experiencer, experienced and experience or the knower, known and knowledge*. It is the experience of *ātmasvarūpa* / *Brahmasvarūpa* in its true nature – totally free from and independent of all entities superimposed on it which were hitherto experienced as intrinsic features of *ātma* / Brahman. *Brahmānubhava* is unlike the experience of any *adhyasta*

73. न हि आत्मस्वरूपाधिगमे सति पुनः प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारः सम्भवति ।

प्रमातृत्वं हि आत्मनः निवर्तयति अन्त्यं प्रमाणम् ।

(* *vṛtti*)

(superimposed) entity during the state of self-ignorance. Unlike in the state of ignorance, there is no cognition of superimposed entities whatsoever.

The experience of *ātmā* / Brahman in its true nature is timeless, wherein the notions of permanence (*nītyatva*) and transience (*anītyatva*) found in the relative world have lost their relevance. Even though Brahman is the unborn, indestructible, ever-existent principle whose nature is self-evident experience itself, the lasting nature of this experience during the term of the *prārabdha* of a *jīvanmukta* depends on his degree of *jñānaniṣṭhā* (steadfastness in knowledge). This seeming limitation in the period of experience of oneself as Brahman is due to the lingering embodiment, which continues till the *prārabdha karma* comes to an end. Such a sense of limitation can cease fully only in *videhamukti* – liberation free from embodiment.

To believe that no experience of *ātmā* / Brahman in its true nature – totally free from superimposed entities – is possible because it is already our *svarūpa* (true nature) is to defy the *svayamjyoti* (self-luminous principle) *śruti* (*Br. U.* 4-3-9 and 14) and deny the very nature of *ātmā* as being ever *anubhava-svarūpa* synonymous with *jñapti-svarūpa* – the self-evident principle of experience identical with the knowledge-principle. Such a misconception can lead to the wrong conclusion that the nature of *ātmā* as *anubhava-svarūpa* (self-evident experience) is relative to the superimposed (*adhyasta*) *avidyākārya* (the effects of ignorance) including *avidyā* (self-ignorance) and it ceases to be of the very nature of experience when they are absent.

Two reasons are advanced in the *bhāṣya* for the need for such an *anubhava* etc. in accordance with *śruti* as *pramāṇa* in *Brahmajñānāsā*.

- i) *Brahmajñānasya anubhavāvasānatvāt: Brahmajñāna* culminates in experience. *Brahmajñāna* is only indirect

knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*) and not direct (*aparokṣa*) knowledge until it culminates in *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct experience or cognition of Brahman.

- ii) *Brahmajñānasya bhūtavastu-viṣayatvāt ca*: Brahman is the ever-existent principle and not an entity yet to come into existence, and hence always available for experience unlike entities that are yet to come into existence (e.g. results of *karma*) or those which are *parokṣa* – not available for direct experience.

To gain liberation, the *parokṣajñāna* born of *śruti pramāṇa* has to culminate in *sākṣātkāra* (direct experience) because Brahman – the object of *Brahmajñāna* – is verily the ever-existent self-evident ‘I’ (*ātmā*) and its *sākṣātkāra* is possible. *Manana* and *nididhyāsana* are indispensable means to *Brahmasākṣātkāra*.

On the other hand, *dharma* is something yet to be performed and produced in the form of a future result (i.e. *sādhya*) that is yet to come into existence. What is required for the *anuṣṭhāna* (performance) of *dharma* in the sense of scriptural *karma* (action) is only an ascertainment of the method of *anuṣṭhāna* in accordance with the *śruti*. Its experience (*anubhava*) is not required at the time knowledge of its method of performance is gained because it is not possible since the result of the *karma* has not yet come into existence.

It would be fallacious to draw an inference that the knowledge of Brahman does not call for reflection, contemplation and experience merely because just like *dharma*, it is *Vedārtha* (propounded by the Vedas). The reason (*hetu*) proposed, viz. ‘because Brahman is propounded by the Veda’ is not applicable. *Dharma* does not require to be experienced, because it is yet to be produced (*sādhya*) and is therefore unavailable for experience, and not because the Veda is its *pramāṇa*. In *tarka* (logic), a special cause for a general effect such as ‘*dharma* is unsuited for experience at the time its mode of *anuṣṭhāna* (performance) is determined’ is called

upādhi. This definition of *upādhi* by logicians is different from the word *upādhi* used in Vedānta. *Upādhi* in this context is either a special cause for a general effect or a particular thing which leads to *hetvābhāsa* – the semblance of reason or what is called a fallacious middle term. In logic, *upādhi* is that (e.g. ‘contact of fire with wet fuel’) which invariably accompanies *sādhya* (the thing to be proved, e.g. smoke) whereas it does not do so with respect to *sāadhanam* (the *hetu* or the middle term, e.g. fire).⁷⁴

To clarify, let us consider a specific mode of an inference: There is smoke on the mountain because there is fire on it. In this inference, ‘contact with the wet fuel’ is the *upādhi*. The smoke is due to the contact of fire with wet fuel and not because of the fire itself. There is no rule that smoke invariably accompanies fire. For instance, no smoke is produced through the burning of iron. The *upādhi* ‘contact with wet fuel’ leads to the fallacious middle term (*hetu*) ‘because there is fire on the mountain’ while proving the presence of smoke on the mountain. Such a wrong inference is untenable.

The *upādhi* involving *dharma* does not apply to *Brahmajñāna*. Brahman is the self-evident ever-existing principle and so is available for experience both in the state of ignorance with all that is *adhyasta* (superimposed) on it as well as on gaining its direct knowledge minus the *adhyasta*.

In his gloss Pañcapādikā on the *Brahmasūtra bhāṣya*, Śrī Padmapādācārya, a direct disciple of the *bhāṣyakāra*, cites the following general rule while commenting on this portion.

सिद्धे वस्तुनि सम्भवति अनुभवः, तदवसाना आकांक्षानिवृत्तिः यतः।
-पंचपादिका

Tr. ‘Experience is possible in the case of an already existing

⁷⁴ साध्यव्यापकत्वे सति साधनाव्यापकत्वं उपाधिः ।

entity, because of which the desire to know it ends with its experience’.

This rule draws the contrast between the modes of gaining knowledge in both *Brahmajijñāsā* and *dharmajijñāsā* even though their *pramāṇa* (the means of knowledge) is one and the same, the Veda. Experience is not possible in *dharmajijñāsā* whereas it is inevitable in *Brahmajijñāsā*. Further, the Pañcapādīkā lays down a contrary proposition as an introduction to the *bhāṣya* passage that follows now:

Contrary proposition : ‘Complete knowledge to the point of result arises in *dharmajijñāsā* by simply taking to the *pramāṇa* of the *śruti* without experience. It does not require even an iota of reasoning. The same should be applicable to *Brahmajijñāsā* too because Vedāntic passages are also similarly the *pramāṇa* for *Brahmajijñāsā*. Lest one thinks so, the *bhāṣya* draws the distinction between the two’.⁷⁵

भा. कर्तव्ये हि विषये न अनुभवापेक्षा अस्ति इति श्रुत्यादीनां एव प्रामाण्यं स्यात् पुरुषाधीनात्मलाभत्वात् च कर्तव्यस्य । कर्तुं अकर्तुं अन्यथा वा कर्तुं शक्यं लौकिकं वैदिकं च कर्म, यथा अश्वेन गच्छति, पद्भ्याम् अन्यथा वा, न वा गच्छति इति । तथा ‘अतिरात्रे षोडशिनं गृह्णाति न अतिरात्रे षोडशिनं गृह्णाति’ ‘उदिते जुहोति अनुदिते जुहोति’ इति विधिप्रतिषेधाः च अत्र अर्थवन्तः स्युः, विकल्पोत्सर्गापवादाः च । न तु वस्तु एवं, न एवं, अस्ति, न अस्ति इति वा विकल्प्यते । विकल्पनाः तु पुरुषबुद्ध्यपेक्षाः । न वस्तुयाथात्म्यज्ञानं पुरुषबुद्ध्यपेक्षम् । किं तर्हि वस्तुतन्त्रं एव तत् । न हि स्थाणौ एकस्मिन् स्थाणुः वा पुरुषः अन्यः वा इति तत्त्वज्ञानं भवति । तत्र पुरुषःअन्यः

⁷⁵ ननु धर्मजिज्ञासायां विना अपि अनुभवेन शब्दशक्त्यनुसरणमात्रेण एव निराकाङ्क्षं फलपर्यन्तं ज्ञानं भवति, न तर्कगन्धमपि अपेक्षते, तथा इहापि स्यात्, प्रमाणत्वाविशेषात् वेदान्तवाक्यानां इत्याशङ्क्य विशेषमाह । - पंचपादिका

वा इति मिथ्याज्ञानम् । स्थाणुः एव इति तत्त्वज्ञानं, वस्तुतन्त्रत्वात् ।
 एवं भूतवस्तुविषयाणां प्रामाण्यं वस्तुतन्त्रम् । तत्र एवं सति
 ब्रह्मज्ञानं अपि वस्तुतन्त्रं एव, भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात् ।

Bh.Tr. Experience is not required in the matter of the *vaidika karma* (actions) to be performed (or whose results are yet to come into existence) because *śruti*, *liṅga* and others alone serve as the means of knowledge; (after knowledge of their mode of performance) actual implementation depends on the effort (or will) of the individual. (For instance) it is possible to perform worldly or Vedic action, refrain from doing so, or to perform them in another manner. As for example, a person may take a horse, proceed by foot, or not travel (at all). So also 'takes the sixteenth cup called *ṣoḍaṣī* in the *atirātra* sacrifice', or 'does not take the *ṣoḍaṣī* in the *atirātra* sacrifice', 'performs the sacrifice after sunrise,' 'performs the sacrifice before sunrise'. Thus injunction (*vidhi*), prohibition (*pratiṣedha*), alternative (*vikalpa*), general rule (*utsarga*), and exception (*apavāda*) are applicable in the case of *dharma* (the *karma* to be performed). But an existent entity is not subject to options such as, 'it is of such kind', 'it is not of such kind', or 'it is', 'it is not', because such an array of possibilities depends on the notion (or will) of the individual. The knowledge of the true nature of a thing does not depend on the vagaries of the human intellect but depends on the thing itself. In a lone post, (the variegated notions that) it is a post, a man or something else cannot be its true knowledge. In the same (post, the notion) 'it is a man or anything else' is a misapprehension; 'it is verily a post' is its true knowledge because it is in accordance with the entity. Thus the correctness of the knowledge of an existent entity depends on that entity. This being the case, the

knowledge of Brahman also depends on the entity (viz. Brahman) because it pertains to an existent entity (viz. Brahman).

The *śruti* with its auxiliaries alone is sufficient as a *pramāṇa* to know *dharma* or *kartavya* (the things to be done); experience is not required. The accomplishment of *dharma* depends on the efforts of the individual. Therefore, *śruti*, *liṅga* and others alone are the means of knowledge. If Brahman is considered similar to *dharma* in its nature, all things applicable to *dharma* such as ‘a thing produced by actions (*kṛtisādhyā*), injunction (*vidhi*), prohibition (*niṣedha*), option (*vikalpa*), general rule (*utsarga*) and exception (*apavāda*)’ will be equally applicable to Brahman. The *bhāṣya* proves that this cannot hold good. To begin with, the optional nature of *dharma* is brought out in the passages from *yathā aśvena gacchati* (‘as one rides a horse’) to the everyday illustration of reaching one’s destination by employing different means of transport. Thereafter, the mode of performance of *dharma* with options and alternatives as laid down in the Veda is explained in the phrases *tathā atirātre* (‘so also in the *atirātra* sacrifice’) etc. *Vidhi* is a scriptural injunction to do something, for example, ‘one should perform sacrifice’. *Niṣedha* is a prohibition exhorting an individual to desist from harmful, undesirable things; as for instance ‘do not drink liquor’. There are different kinds of *vikalpa* (option) declared in the scripture. ‘Grains of either rice (*vrīhi*) or barley (*yava*) can be offered’ is an instance of an alternate means. ‘Taking or not taking the *ṣoḍaṣī* in *atirātra* sacrifice’ is an instance of alternate means depending on the will of the individual, a volitional option. ‘Performance of sacrifice before or after sunrise’ is an option based on time of performance. ‘Offer the oblation in the *āhavanīya* fire’ is *utsarga* – a general rule. ‘Offer the oblation at every foot of the horse’ is *apavāda* – an exception to a general rule.

The applicability of all these to Brahman is refuted in the *bhāṣya* starting with ‘*na tu vastu evam*’ (‘but an existing thing is not subject to options’) up to *bhūtavastu-viṣayatvāt* (‘because Brahman

pertains to an existing thing'). 'Is this thing of such-and-such kind or not of such-and-such kind?' 'Is it a pot or is it cloth?' These are doubts about its nature. 'Does it exist or not' is a doubt regarding its very existence. Some may argue that different schools of thought entertain various notions about the nature of *ātmā* and express doubts about its existence or non-existence. In answer, it is stated that all *vikalpanāḥ* (the variety of possibilities, notions and alternatives) are born of the human intellect giving rise to doubts and erroneous concepts at the mental level. These (*vikalpanāḥ*) are not valid knowledge.

Dharma, on the other hand, can be practised as laid down in the scriptures to the extent of one's knowledge thereof. Therefore, all alternatives and possibilities based on the scripture that depend on the human intellect are indeed valid knowledge in their own context. The same norm cannot be applied to Brahman, because knowledge of an existent entity is not governed by the human intellect. It depends on the entity itself and is determined by the entity. If birth of the knowledge of an existent entity were to depend on the human intellect just as it does for actions to be accomplished, all doubts and alternatives about the existent entity would become available in reality, since such knowledge would correspond to the entity to be known, which is not the case. But the knowledge of an existent entity is not dependent on the human intellect; on the contrary, it is imparted by valid means of knowledge in accordance with the nature of the entity to be known. The nature of a given entity always remains the same. Therefore, only the knowledge of a given entity conforming to its nature alone is valid knowledge, while all remaining alternatives not in conformity with the true nature of the entity are clearly erroneous. This is explained by the illustration of a post. Once ascertained to be a post, all other notions about it get falsified.

Knowledge in conformity with an entity is its correct knowledge whilst all else conjectured by the human intellect at variance from its true nature is false knowledge. The validity of the

knowledge of an existent entity depends on its conformity with the entity. This is a rule applicable to the knowledge of all existing entities. Brahman cannot be an exception. *Brahmajñāna* is about an existing entity, like knowledge of a post. Therefore knowledge in conformity with Brahman alone is correct knowledge and does not depend on notions conjured up by the human intellect. Options and alternatives regarding things to be produced (*sādhya*) depend on notions of the human intellect while it is not so in the case of an existing entity. In view of such a distinction, the mode of gaining the knowledge of Brahman and *dharma* cannot be similar. This proves the necessity of *manana*, *nididhyāsana* and *sākṣāt Brahmānubhava* for gaining *Brahmajñāna*.

Thus there is an essential difference between *Brahmajñānāsā* and *dharmajñānāsā*. In the case of *dharmajñānāsā*, the *śruti* is the sole *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) and lays down the *vidhis*, *pratiśedhas* etc. for obtaining specific results. These results are something yet to come into existence and do not exist at the time of *anuṣṭhāna* – the performance of *karmas*. Therefore, no other means is available to verify the truth of these statements except *śraddhā* (attitude of trust) in *śruti*. But Vedānta *śruti* unfolds Brahman, an already existing entity which does not depend on human will or endeavour. Therefore there are roles for other means in gaining *Brahmajñāna* besides *śraddhā*. It is for this reason that there is room for means such as *manana* with its concomitant *anumāna*, *nididhyāsana* and *Brahmasākṣātkāra* in *Brahmajñānāsā*.

Two important texts, viz. *Pañcapādikā* and *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, further corroborate the need for experience and reasoning in gaining *Brahmajñāna*.

In the following paragraphs, it is important to keep in mind that though the Veda is the common *pramāṇa* for the knowledge of both Brahman and *dharma*, there is a distinction in their *avabodhana-prakāra* – their modes of gaining (or imparting) knowledge.

ANUBHAVA (EXPERIENCE) AND REASONING ARE INDISPENSABLE IN GAINING BRAHMAJÑĀNA – PAÑCAPĀDIKĀ

In commenting on this *bhāṣya* portion, Śrī Padmapādācārya justifies the indispensability of experience and reasoning for gaining *Brahmajñāna*.

कथम् ? कर्तव्यं हि कर्तव्यत्वात् एव असिद्धस्वभावं न अनुभवितुं शक्यं इति न तदाकांक्षा, इह तु सिद्धस्य साक्षाद्रूपेण विपर्यासगृहीतस्य सम्यग्ज्ञानेन साक्षात्करणमन्तरेण न मिथ्याज्ञानोदयनिवृत्तिः; द्विचन्द्रादिषु तथा दर्शनात् । न हि कर्तव्यसिद्धार्थनिष्ठयोः प्रमाणत्वसाम्यात् अवबोधनप्रकारेऽपि साम्यम् । यदि स्यात् पुरुषेच्छावशनिष्पाद्यत्वमपि स्यात् । ततो विधि-प्रतिषेध-विकल्प-समुच्चयोत्सर्गापवाद-बाधाभ्युच्चय-व्यवस्थितविकल्पादयोऽपि प्रसज्येरन् । न वस्तुनि युक्तमेतत् ; निःस्वभावत्वप्रसंगात् । तथा च एकस्मिन् वस्तुनि स्थाणु पुरुषो वा इति विकल्पः, न वैकल्पिकद्रव्यत्यागवत् सम्यग्ज्ञानं भवति स्थाणुरेव इति निश्चितैकार्थता परमार्थे । यतः वस्तुस्वभावपरतन्त्रं सिद्धवस्तुज्ञानं, न ज्ञानपरतन्त्रं वस्तु । यदि स्यात् शुक्तिरजतमपि तथा स्यात् । कर्तव्यज्ञानं पुनः वैपरीत्येऽपि सम्यगेव योषा वाव गौतम अग्निरित्यादिषु दर्शनात् । तत्रैवं सति ब्रह्मज्ञानमपि वस्तुतन्त्रमेव भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात् । अतः युक्तः युक्तेः अनुप्रवेशः, अनुभवापेक्षा च न इतरत्र । - पंचपादिका ।

Tr.'Q: How (is it that an enjoined *karma* – Vedic action – to be performed and a result to be obtained as a result of action, i.e. *kartavya/ sādhyā*, do not require experience)?

Ans: The *karma* to be performed and the result to be accomplished are non-existent at the time of gaining knowledge of the mode of performance of the action, since the action or result is either yet to be performed or accomplished. Therefore no experience is required simply because it is not possible; however, in the case of *Brahmajñāna*, Brahman is ever-existent and available for experience.

(Q : Brahman may be ever-existent and available for experience. Nonetheless, why is its experience required, especially if its nature itself is experience – *anubhava*?)

Ans: Brahman is experienced erroneously (as a *saṃsārī*, which it is not). Right knowledge (understanding/grasp) obtained through the *śruti* alone cannot end the delusion without *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct experience of Brahman (which alone eliminates the obstruction of ignorance). The delusion of one moon mistakenly appearing as two (when one's sight is obstructed by a finger held before the eyes) vanishes only when the obstruction is eliminated.

In comparing the modes of gaining knowledge of (a) the means of producing something (viz. *dharma*) and (b) something pre-existing (viz. Brahman), it cannot be said that there is similarity between the two merely because the means of gaining knowledge, the *pramāṇa*, is the same in both cases. (*Dharma* is something produced in accordance with notions of individual human will, based on one's choices.) If the mode of gaining knowledge were similar in both cases, the ever-existing entity (viz., Brahman) would also be reduced to something produced in accordance with the notions of the individual human will. Furthermore, the various alternatives based on injunction (*vidhī*), prohibition (*niṣedha*), alternative (*vikalpa*), synthesis (*samuccaya*), general rule (*utsarga*), exception (*apavāda*), contradiction (*bādha*), addition (*abhyuccaya*) etc. would become applicable to the pre-existing entity as well. This would be incorrect in the case of a pre-existing entity, since the contingency could arise that the entity becomes featureless (i.e. not possessing any specific feature) (because the features of the entity would be shaped by the notions ascribed to it by any given individual).

(Thus in determining the nature of an entity, for example, the post cited in the *bhāṣya*), the various options considered, namely whether it is a post, a man or something

else, do not constitute correct knowledge, whereas the various options regarding the oblations made in a sacrifice do constitute correct knowledge in spite of the variety of options. The correct ascertainment of an object which corresponds to the true nature of the object (for example, the post is a post) is correct knowledge because knowledge of an existing entity depends on the nature of the entity, whereas the true nature of an entity does not depend on its knowledge.

If the true nature of an entity were to depend on the knowledge of the entity, a sea-shell mistaken to be silver would turn into actual silver.

On the other hand, the knowledge of an action to be performed (as stated in the *śruti*) can be correct knowledge even if there is contrariety in the statement of *śruti*. This can be seen in statements such as ‘O Gautama, woman is verily fire’ (i.e. look upon woman as fire in the *upāsana* called *Pañcāgni vidyā* Ch.U. 5-8-1 and Br.U. 6-2-13).

This being so (i.e. since knowledge depends on the nature of an entity, but the nature of an entity does not depend on its knowledge), the knowledge of Brahman also depends on the entity (viz. Brahman) alone because it is about an entity that is pre-existing. Therefore, the corroboration provided by reasoning (*yukti*) and the requirement of experience (*anubhava*) are proved (by way of this passage) as *pramāṇa* in the case of *Brahmajñāna*, but not in the other (case of *dharma – kartavya / sādhyā*).

ANUBHAVA AND REASONING ARE INDISPENSABLE FOR GAINING BRAHMAJÑĀNA – VIVARAṆA-PRAMEYA - SAṄGRAHA

Commenting on the same portion of the *bhāṣya* in his *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni also asserts the necessity of *anubhava* and reasoning in order to gain *Brahmajñāna*. He also defines *Brahmānubhava*.

युक्त्यनुभवयोरपि ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायां अपेक्षितत्वात् । युक्त्यपेक्षा पूर्वमेव प्रसाधिता । अनुभवः नाम ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कारफलकः अंतःकरणवृत्तिभेदः । न च तमन्तरेण ज्ञानाकांक्षा निवर्तते । न च ब्रह्मस्वरूपं अनुभवितुं अयोग्यं इति शंकनीयं, घटादिवत् सिद्धवस्तुत्वात् ।

(पूर्व पक्ष) - विमतं ब्रह्मवाक्यं (i.e. ब्रह्मतात्पर्यकवेदान्तवाक्यं) अनुभवनिरपेक्षफलपर्यन्तज्ञानजनकं प्रमाणभूतवेदवाक्यत्वात् , धर्मवाक्यवत् इति चेत् ,

(सिद्धान्त) - न, अनुभवायोग्यविषयत्वोपाधिहतत्वात् , न हि अनुष्ठानसाध्यः धर्मः अनुष्ठानात् पूर्वं वाक्यबोधवसरे अनुभवितुं योग्यः । अनुष्ठानं तु विनापि अनुभवं शाब्दज्ञानमात्रात् एव सिद्ध्यति इति अनपेक्षितः एव धर्मानुभवः । अतः धर्मात् अत्यन्तं विलक्षणस्य सिद्धस्य ब्रह्मणः युक्ता युक्त्यनुभवापेक्षा ।

-विवरणप्रमेयसंग्रहः

Tr. 'Reasoning (*yukti*) and experience are also required to know Brahman. The need for reasoning was proved in the earlier portion (of the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*). A specific type of *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* (viz. *Brahmākāravṛtti* or *akhaṇḍākāravṛtti* that is in conformity with Brahman), which produces *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct experience or cognition of Brahman, is called *anubhava*. The desire to gain *Brahmajñāna* cannot come to an end without *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. It is not correct to suppose that the true nature of Brahman (devoid of the superimposed *nāma-rūpātma* *jagat*) is something unsuited to experience, because Brahman is a pre-existing entity like a pot, available for experience.

It may be argued that since disputed Vedāntic sentences which ascertain Brahman are Vedic sentences having the status of a *pramāṇa*, they are similar to Vedic sentences that reveal *dharma* and therefore produce

knowledge culminating in the result (viz. liberation) independent of experience (*Brahmānubhava*).

The reply: This inference is not correct. This inference is defective due to the *upādhi* – “*dharma* as something unfit to experience”. (An *upādhi*, as seen earlier, is something that leads to a fallacious *hetu*, or middle term). *Dharma* – being something to be accomplished by the performance (*anuṣṭhāna*) of actions (*karma*) – is not available for experience before the actual *anuṣṭhāna*, that is to say, at the time the meaning of the *śruti* sentence that imparts knowledge of the *anuṣṭhāna* is understood. And Vedic *karma* can be performed without experience by understanding the meaning of *śruti* sentences. Therefore the experience of *dharma* is not necessary. The foregoing proves that the ever-existent Brahman, totally distinct from *dharma*, requires reasoning and experience to gain its knowledge’.

In short, an experience conforming to the true nature of Brahman / *ātmā* is indispensable for gaining *Brahmajñāna*. The experience of *ātmā* in its true nature – not one mixed with *adhyasta* entities as in the state of ignorance – is the basic constituent (*avibhājya-ghaṭaka*) of *aparokṣajñāna* (direct self-knowledge). Otherwise, knowledge is *parokṣa* – indirect. The experience of *dharma* is not possible at the time of gaining knowledge of its *anuṣṭhāna* or at the time of the actual *anuṣṭhāna* because *dharma* is yet to be born. Things already existent are available for experience. The knowledge of directly perceptible entities (i.e. *pratyakṣa*) and *aparokṣa vastu* necessarily requires *yathārthānubhava* – an experience true to the nature of the entity. The desire to know an existing entity can come to an end only when *yathārthānubhava* is gained. The knowledge of Brahman, the only ever-existing entity, is no exception to this rule. Direct knowledge (*aparokṣajñāna*) necessarily requires such experience, whereas indirect knowledge (*parokṣajñāna*) does not. Though the Veda is the common *pramāṇa* for the knowledge of both Brahman and *dharma*, there is a distinction

in their *avabodhana-prakāra*, their modes of imparting knowledge. Being in conformity with the entity, knowledge depends on the entity and not on human notions; but a given entity does not depend on either knowledge or the *pramāṇa*. The *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-sampatti* suggested by the word ‘*atha*’ in the first *Brahmasūtra* becomes highly relevant in the context of *Brahmānubhava*. An individual lacking in *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-sampatti*, *cittaśuddhi* (purity of mind) and *cittanaiścalya* (steadiness of mind) cannot hope to get *Brahmānubhava* in spite of being exposed to *śravaṇa*. All that *parokṣajñāna* needs is *śraddhā* in the *śruti* and an average intelligence.

By worldly standards, stray pieces of information can easily pass off as knowledge. Lest one thinks so, the *bhāṣyakāra* defines *Brahmajñāna* as that which culminates in *anubhava*. *Brahmajñāna* is not rambling semantics. It is imperative that *mumukṣus* first understand the *svarūpa* (exact nature) of *ātmajñāna*/*Brahmajñāna*.

ABIDANCE IN THE APAROKṢA-JÑĀNA (DIRECT COGNITION) OF ĀTMĀ IS A STATE OF NIRVIKALPA (NON-DUAL) EXPERIENCE

The direct cognition of *ātmā* is a distinct experience. It is free from the experience of the perceptible Creation (*dr̥śya-prapañca*) superimposed (*adhyasta*) on Brahman. There are no *tripuṭīs* in that state. It is the *nirvikalpa* (non-dual) homogeneous experience of *cit* and *cit* alone. This was seen in the context of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*. One should bear in mind that the knowledge of *ātmā* qualified by the experience of *adhyasta upādhis* or *viśayas* is by no means the cognition of *aparokṣa ātmā* in its true nature. Obviously it is not direct *ātmajñāna*.

This can be further verified by comparing the nature of knowledge in the case of *pratyakṣa* (direct perception) and in the case of *aparokṣa ātmā*. A perceptible object (*indriya-pratyakṣa*) and *ātmā* are both directly available for knowing. Their knowledge is as true as the thing to be known. In both cases, the *pramāṇajanya-vṛtti* must conform exactly to the thing to be known. Theoretically,

according to Vedānta, knowledge (*jñānam*) is *caitanya* in the sense of the *cidābhāsa* in the *tattadākāra-vṛtti* – the thought corresponding to either the perceptible object to be known or *ātmā*. But for practical purposes, it is the *tattadākāra-vṛtti* itself that is taken as knowledge. *Ātmā* is *nirvikalpa* (non-dual), *nirviṣaya / nirupādhika* (free from all superimposed *dṛśyas*), *prapañcopaśama* (free from Creation). In short, it is free from self-ignorance and the resultant *adhyasta* entities. The *ātmākāra-vṛtti* must therefore also be a replica of *ātmā*. The make-up of *antaḥkaraṇa* is such that it can conform to the nature of *ātmā* in the form of an *ātmākāra-vṛtti* (*B.G.Bh.* 18-50)⁷⁶. Such an *ātmākāra-vṛtti* true to the nature of *ātmā* alone can end the ignorance of *ātmā*. The ignorance of *ātmā* cannot end in any other way. This *vṛtti* reveals the *śodhita (nirupādhika) tvam pada* (you the *jīva* in reality). Due to the *anubhava-svarūpatva* of *ātmā* it is necessarily a direct experience of the *tvam pada* in its true nature free from *upādhis*. The cognition of the *śodhita tvam pada* cannot communicate by itself that it is *Brahmasvarūpa*. It is the *pramāṇa*, the *mahāvākya* that has to point out that it (the *tvam pada*) is Brahman. However, the *mahāvākya pramāṇa 'tat tvamasi'* (you are Brahman) will not operate unless the *śodhita (nirupādhika) tvam* is directly cognised. Without this cognition, the *mahāvākya* will be akin to introducing a person to a schizophrenic whose basic perception of the person being introduced is already distorted. The equation of the *mahāvākya* points out that *tat* and *tvam* are identical. This will hold good only if *tvam* is cognised in its true nature. The *tvam* (you) as it obtains now, namely a *saṃsārī* identified with its *upādhis*, cannot by itself be *tat pada* – Brahman.

The *śodhita (nirupādhika) tvam* revealed by the *ātmākāra-vṛtti* is an exact replica of *ātmā* which is *nirvikalpa* (non-dual – free from the *tripuṭī* of *jñātā, jñāna** and *jñeya*). *Ātmā* is the only self-revealing or self-experiencing (*anubhava-svarūpa*) principle, whether the individual is an *ajñānī* or a *jñānī*. During the state of

76. अत्यन्त निर्मलत्वस्वच्छत्वसूक्ष्मत्वोपपत्तेः आत्मनः, बुद्धेश्च
आत्मसमनैर्मल्याद्युपपत्तेः आत्मचैतन्याकाराभासत्वोपपत्तिः ।

(* *vṛtti*)

ignorance, all *adhyasta* entities are experienced in the presence of *anubhava-svarūpa ātmā*. The ever-existing *anubhava-svarūpa ātmā* continues even when the entire *adhyasta prapañca* is ended from cognition. What remains is the experience of *ātmā* unqualified by all that is *adhyasta*, including the *pramātā* and *ahaṃkāra*. It is from this point that the *bhāṣyakāra* emphasises the need to end the entire *adhyasta* in order to gain *ātmajñāna* (*B.G.Bh.* 18-50)⁷⁷. The ever-existent *aparokṣa* (self-revealing), *ātmā* is always available for direct cognition / experience in its true nature provided the obstructions that deny *ātmānubhava* – namely, *adhyasta* entities along with their cause – are eliminated. The *ātmākāra-vṛtti* (also an *adhyasta*) too gets terminated in *jñāna-niṣṭhā*. What remains then is *anubhava-svarūpa ātmā* / Brahman alone. This also explains why Vedānta insists on the development of a *śuddha* (*nirviṣaya* – pure) and *nīścala* (steady) *antaḥkaraṇa* through means such as *sādhana-catustaya saṃpatti*, *karmayoga* and *upāsana*.

THE MEANS PROVE THAT *BRAHMAJÑĀNA* IS A *NIRVIKALPA* STATE

The Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā* define means to gain *ātmajñāna* / *Brahmajñāna*, and these means make it amply clear that *ātmānubhava-Brahmānubhava* is *nirvikalpa* in nature. These and such other means including *sādhana-catustaya saṃpatti* would be requisites totally uncalled for if a mere understanding of Vedānta itself were *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna*. Let us look at some excerpts from the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*.

- i) ‘Some *yogīs* directly cognise *ātmā* in their highly purified intellect (*antaḥkaraṇa*) by means of *dhyāna*’ (*B.G.* 13-24).

To accomplish *dhyāna* (meditation – *ātmacintana*), the senses need to be totally withdrawn from their sense-pursuits.

They are made to abide in the mind. The mind is withdrawn

77. नामरूपाद्यनात्माध्यारोपणनिवृत्तिरेव कार्या ।.... तस्मात् अविद्याध्यारोपणनिराकरणमात्रं ब्रह्मणि कर्तव्यं ।.... बाह्याकारभेदबुद्धिनिवृत्तिः एव आत्मस्वरूपालम्बने कारणम् ।

from all its (usual) functions and made absorbed in *ātmā* by single pointed *cintanam* (thinking). *Dhyāna* (here) stands for the uninterrupted flow of the *ātmākāra-vṛtti* like the flow of oil (when poured from one vessel to another) – (*B.G.Bh.* 13-24).

ii) The description of *yoga* (*dhyāna* or the absorption of mind in *ātmā*) in the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* brings out facets of the state of mind of the *yogī* above.

a) A person who succeeds in accomplishing *yoga* (i.e. *yogārūḍhaḥ*) is *sarvasaṅkalpa-sannyāsī* – one who has relinquished all desires for things here and hereafter along with their means (*B.G.* 6-4).

b) The mind of an accomplished *yogī* which is absorbed in *ātmā* resembles the steady flame of a lamp in a windless place (*B.G.* 6-19). It has no cognition other than that of *ātmā*, and therefore no other *vṛttis*.

c) The mind of a *yogī* is *niruddham* – free from all its functions (*sarvataḥ nivārita-pracāram*, *B.G. Bh.* 6-20), i.e. it is free from *vṛttis* (*B.G.* 6-20).

The person in that state of *yoga* delights in *ātmā* by directly knowing it through the means termed *ātmanā* – through the mind highly purified by *samādhi* (*samādhi-parisuddhena antaḥkaraṇena* – *B.G.* 6-20; *B.G.Bh.* 6-20).

d) The *Brahmabhūtaḥ* (one who has gained Brahman i.e. a *jīvanmukta*) knows me (*Bhagavān*) precisely by knowing ‘how great’ (*yāvān*) and ‘who’ (*yaḥ*) I am in reality (*tatvataḥ*) through *bhakti* (characterised by *ātmajñāna*), (*B.G.* 18-55). Here, *yāvān* stands for *sagūṇa* Brahman with the entire expanse of *upādhis*

(i.e. *upādhikṛta-vistarabhedah*), while *yaḥ* refers to *nirguṇa* Brahman free from all that is superimposed (i.e. *vidhvasta-sarva-upādhibhedah* – *B.G. Bh.* 18-55). This shows that the direct knowledge of Brahman free from all *upādhis*, which has to be *nirvikalpa*, is indispensable. That alone can be the knowledge of the transcendent (*nirupādhika*) Brahman in its true nature. *Śruti* declarations such as '*sarvam Brahma*' only reveal the immanent (*sarvavyāpī*) nature of Brahman as the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the entire *adhyasta jagat*. The *jagat* has no independent existence apart from Brahman. Such *śruti* statements do not intend to confer the status of *nirvikārī* (changeless) Brahman on the *vikārī* (ever-changing) *jagat*. The *sāmānādhikaraṇyam* viz. everything is Brahman (*sarvam Brahma*) is used only for the sake of dissolving Creation – *prapañca-pravilāpanārtham* (*Br.Sū. Bh.* 1-3-1). This was already seen in the context of *Brahmāvagatī*. The principle is: though the *jagat* is non-different (*ananya*) from Brahman on account of the cause-effect relation between the two, the true nature of *jagat* is Brahman but the true nature of Brahman is not *jagat* (*Br.Sū. Bh.* 2-1-9)⁷⁸. *Brahmajñāna* must necessarily be true to the nature of *nirguṇa* Brahman – totally free from the *adhyasta prapañca* (i.e. *vidhavastha-sarva-upādhibheda*).

- e) The *Kaṭhōpaniṣat* (1-2-12) states that the accomplishment of *adhyātmayoga* is the means to know *ātmā* directly. This is defined as making the mind absorbed in *ātmā* after withdrawing it from *viśayas* – sense objects (*Kṛ.U.Bh.* 1-2-12). In his *Jīvanmuktiviveka*, Vidyāraṇya Muni describes *adhyātmayoga* as *pratyagātma-samādhiḥ*.

- f) A *vivekī* (*prājñāḥ*) has to withdraw the senses from

78. अनन्यत्वे अपि कार्यकारणयोः कार्यस्य कारणत्वं नतु कारणस्य कार्यात्मत्वं 'आरम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः' (ब्र.सू. २-१-१४) इति वक्ष्यामः । (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 2-1-9)

their objects and absorb them into the mind. The mind has to be withdrawn from its function and absorbed into the intellect (*buddhi*). The *buddhi* has to be absorbed into *Hiraṇyagarbha* (wielder of the macrocosmic *buddhi*). That is to say, the individual *buddhi* should be made as pure as *Hiraṇyagarbha*'s. Finally, such a prepared *buddhi* has to be absorbed in *śānta ātmā* – *ātmā* free from all specific cognitions (*sarva-viśeṣa prastamitarūpe*, *Kṛ.U.* 1-3-13, and its *bhāṣya*).

- g) *Ātmā* is known through the means of *hṛt-manīṭ* (*Kṛ.U.* 2-3-9). *Hṛt-manīṭ* is *avikalpayitrī buddhi* (*nirvikalpā buddhi*), the *buddhi* that ceases to indulge in *vikalpa* (duality) (*Kṛ.U. Bh.* 2-3-9).

That *hṛt-manīṭ* is gained when all the senses remain withdrawn from their sense objects, the mind no longer indulges in its function, and the intellect does not take to its function (*Kṛ.U.* 2-3-10).

The above state of the senses, mind and intellect is termed *yoga* (*Kṛ.U.* 2-3-11). *Ātmā* free from all *adhyasta* entities, namely self-ignorance along with its effects (i.e. *avidyādhyāropaṇa-varjitaḥ*), abiding in its true nature (*svarūpa-pratiṣṭhaḥ*) is directly known in that state (*Kṛ.U.Bh.* 2-3-11) ⁷⁹.

The above passages clearly demonstrate that *Brahmānubhava* or *Brahmajñāna* is *nirvikalpa*. It is a state of the *antaḥkaraṇa*. *Ātmajñāna* is a *manodharma* – a disposition of mind (*antaḥkaraṇa* – *Ribhu-Gītā*).⁸⁰ *Ātmā* does not assume any states whatsoever. It is non-dual and changeless. It is the same all the

79. तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणम् । (कठ, २-३-११)

एतस्यां हि अवस्थायां अविद्याध्यारोपण वर्जितस्वरूपप्रतिष्ठः आत्मा (ज्ञातुं शक्यते)।
- कठभाष्य, २-३-११

80. श्री शिवरहस्यम्, 6th *Aṃśa*, Ch. 32, verse 12 - The *Ribhu-Gītā*.

time. The perception of a rope mistaken for a snake is not a correct perception of the rope in its true nature. However, whether known correctly or mistakenly, the rope remains unchanged, it is the perception that changes. It is the deluded perceiver who exhibits states of ignorance and knowledge, and not the rope. Identified with the gross, subtle and causal bodies, the *jīva* has to begin the pursuit of gaining self-knowledge from its present *sopādhika* state. *Buddhi* is the means to gain this knowledge. As seen earlier, steadfastness of the *ātmākāra-vṛtti* / *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* is indispensable. Obviously, it is a state of *antaḥkaraṇa*. The *Kaṭhōpaniṣat* (2-3-11) calls it *yoga*. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes it as both *Brāhmī sthitiḥ* (the state of abidance in Brahman – *B.G.* 2-72) and *yoga* (*B.G.* Ch. 6). This is *Brahmāvagatiḥ*, *Brahma-sākṣātkāra* or *Brahmānubhava*. Anything short of this *sākṣātkāra* is not the *aparokṣajñāna* of Brahman. At best it can be *parokṣajñāna* or *youktika-jñāna* (knowledge gained through reasoning). Direct self-knowledge (*aparokṣa Brahmajñāna*) is not verbosity or a play of words.

The indispensability of gaining *Brahmānubhava* / *ātmānubhava* is evident from the following *śruti* passages:

‘Where is there delusion and grief for one whose mind is engaged in his own true nature to the point of experience (*anubhava-paryantā buddhiḥ*) (and) who sees the identity of his own self and Brahman in accordance with the *śāstra*-scriptures?’ (*Varāhōpaniṣat* 4-4-3).

‘In vain does the ignorant fool rejoice in Brahman without its experience, akin to enjoying fruits on a branch that is reflected (in a lake)’ (*Maitreyōpaniṣat* 2-23).

THE NATURE OF VEDĀNTA PRAMĀṆA

Sentiments, biased views and rambling semantics have no role in gaining knowledge. This is all the more so in the acquisition of *Brahmajñāna*. Wise counsel states: A rational statement uttered even by a child is worthy of acceptance, an irrational statement by

even *Brahmā* – one of the Trinity – should be discarded like a blade of grass. (*Yogavāsiṣṭha* 2-18-3).⁸¹

Earlier, we had taken a look at the contention that since Vedānta is a Vedic *pramāṇa* similar to the *pramāṇa* which reveals *dharma*, the experience is not necessary for *Brahmajñāna*, and had seen the fallacy in this contention. The contention was also refuted by the *Pañcapādikā* and the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*. Lest such doubts recur, let us understand the nature of the Vedānta *pramāṇa* fully, especially with respect to the nature of self-knowledge, whether experiential or non-experiential.

Knowledge is defined as -

ज्ञानं तु प्रमाणजन्यं यथाभूतविषयं च (ब्रह्मसूत्र भाष्य 3-2-21) ।

Tr. Direct knowledge of an entity is born of *pramāṇa* and has as its object the true nature of the entity (known, *yathābhūta-viṣayam*, *Br.Sū.Bh.* 3-2-21).

Knowledge is said to be both *vastutantram* (*vastvadhīnam*) – dependent on the entity to be known – and *pramāṇatantram* (dependent on its *pramāṇa*). That knowledge of an entity is *vastutantram* is evident from the *tattadākāra-vṛtti* (a thought conforming to the true nature of an entity) required to gain direct knowledge of an entity. Therefore, the nature of such knowledge is governed by the actual nature of an entity. Hence direct knowledge must be true to the nature of an entity. Accordingly, whether such knowledge is experiential or not is determined by the entity to be known and not by its *pramāṇa*.

In the case of entities that are *pratyakṣa* and *aparokṣa* it is the role of *pramāṇa* to produce knowledge true to the nature of the entity. Therefore, knowledge is said to be *pramāṇatantram* (dependent on the *pramāṇa*). But the *pramāṇa* does not determine the nature of knowledge. On the contrary, the type of *pramāṇa*

⁸¹. युक्तियुक्तमुपादेयं वचनं बालकादपि ।

अन्यत्तृणमिव त्याज्यमप्युक्तं पद्मजन्मना ॥ (योगवासिष्ठः 2-18-3)

employed depends on the nature of the entity. The *bhāṣyakāra* points this out in the *Kaṭha-bhāṣya*, when he states, ‘senses (*indriyas*) are made by sense objects to reveal themselves’ (*Kṭ.U.Bh.* 1-3-10). The *pramāṇa* reveals the *prameya* (the entity to be known) exactly as it is (प्रमाणं च यथाभूतवस्तुविषयम् । *Br.Sū. Bh.* 1-1-4). The *pramāṇa* is not influenced by erroneous projections or by the will of the *pramātā* (knower).

The Veda is *svataḥ-prāmāṇa* – A self-proved or self-evident *pramāṇa*. This means that the *pramā* (knowledge) produced by it is not required to be validated by any other *pramāṇa*. The *pramā* born of the Veda is valid in and of itself. Even this fact does not signify that all knowledge produced by the Veda is non-experiential. As shown earlier, it is the entity that determines the nature of knowledge – namely, whether knowledge is experiential or not. An understanding of the origins of *svataḥ-prāmāṇyam* (status of being a self-proved *pramāṇa*) of the Veda can provide more clarity in this respect.

The source of the concept of *svataḥ-prāmāṇyam* can be traced to the *autpattika-sūtra* (औत्पत्तिकसूत्र – *Jai.sū.* 1-1-5). The context is as follows. The first *Jaiminisūtra* exhorts those who have completed the study of the Vedas to inquire into the nature of *dharma* (also *adharmā* – *Jai.sū.* 1-1-1). The question arises: what is *dharma*? This is answered in the second *sūtra*. *Dharma* is that which procures all that is good in life in keeping with *vidhis* (*codanā*) – Vedic injunctions that prompt one to take to *karma* (*Jai.sū.* 1-1-2). The third *sūtra* examines the *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) of *dharma* characterised by *vidhi* (*codanā*) – (*Jai.sū.* 1-1-3). The fourth *sūtra* rules out the possibility of direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) as a *pramāṇa* for *dharma* because *pratyakṣa* operates only with respect to existing objects which come in contact with the *indriyas* (senses) whereas *dharma* is imperceptible (*Jai.sū.* 1-1-4).

A doubt arises at this juncture: is it possible that *dharma* is non-existent because it is imperceptible? No, it is not. The fifth *sūtra* defines the *pramāṇa* for *dharma* and how it operates. It states: ‘The

relation of a word (*śabda*) to its meaning is *autpattika* – natural (*svābhāvika*) or everlasting (*nityaḥ*). *Upadeśaḥ* – the teaching of *codanā* (*vidhi* – Vedic injunction) – is the *pramāṇa* for *dharma*. *Codanā* is foolproof. Therefore *codanā* is the *pramāṇa* for things that are *adr̥ṣṭa* – yet to be produced or imperceptible. According to *Ācārya Bādarāyaṇa* (too), it does not need any other (*pramāṇa*) – it is self-proved’ (*Jai.sū.* 1-1-5).

Incidentally, reference is made to *Ācārya Bādarāyaṇa* (sage *Vyāsa*) in the *sūtra* not to refute the *mīmāṃsā* doctrine but from a sense of adoration. According to the first interpretation of *Brahmasūtra* (1-1-3) ‘*śāstrayonitvāt*’, Brahman – as the cause of the Vedas – is proved to be omniscient (*sarvajña*). Therefore there cannot be any error whatsoever in the Vedas.

The meaning of the Vedic word (*śabda*) is natural (*svābhāvika*) or everlasting (*nitya*), namely the said meaning need not be validated by any other *pramāṇa*. *Brahmasūtra* (1-3-28) mentions that Creation (*jagat*) consisting of presiding deities etc. (*devatādi*) is born of Vedic words in the sense that the *jagat* is revealed by them in the form of word-meanings. Though the individual entities specified by the words are born, their species (*ākṛti* or *jāti*) are *nitya*. The deities Indra, Rudra and others are also *nitya* in terms of species. Therefore the word and its meaning are natural and everlasting. The unique features of these deities are revealed by portions of the Vedas such as *mantra* and *arthavāda*. The words Indra, Rudra etc. also stand for the offices or posts that these deities occupy. It is in this sense too that the word and its meaning are natural and everlasting. The statement “the Creation is born of words” does not mean that words constitute the material cause of *jagat*, as Brahman is. It means the *vyavahāra* (dealings) of words and their clearly perceptible meaning is possible provided words are always connected to their meanings as species (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 1-3-28).

The *autpattika sūtra* describes the *pramāṇa* of *dharma* which

is imperceptible, yet to be produced, and non-verifiable at the time of gaining its knowledge. In contrast to *dharma*, Brahman is ever-existing and *aparokṣa* – indeed the constant experience of ‘I’. The Vedānta *prāmāṇa* is verifiable, unlike the *prāmāṇa* of *dharma* as means to heaven. The *utpattika sūtra* does not postulate a rule that all knowledge born of Vedic *pramāṇa* is non-experiential. As seen already, the nature of knowledge – whether experiential or non-experiential – is governed by the nature of the thing to be known and not by the *pramāṇa*. *Ātmānubhava / Brahmanubhava* is the very nature of direct self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-ātmañāna*). It is *pramāṇa-phala* – the result produced by the *pramāṇa*. It is not some extraneous factor employed to authenticate *ātmañāna*. *Svataḥ-prāmāṇyam* of Vedānta affirms the validity of such knowledge.

According to Vedānta, all six *pramāṇas* accepted by it have *svataḥ-prāmāṇyam*, including *śabda* (*āgama* – the Veda) . What is indispensable are defect-free *sāmagrīs* – the essential factors that are required for the *pramāṇa* to operate. The *pramā* resulting from the use of any of these accepted *pramāṇas* is necessarily valid provided the *sāmagrīs* are defect-free, otherwise the *pramāṇa* fails to function. For example, the direct perception of the form of an object is authentic if the eyes are healthy, the light is sufficient, the mind backs the eyes and the object is within the range of sight. *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* – the standard book on the categories of Vedānta – describes the *svataḥ-prāmāṇyam* of all six *pramāṇas* after concluding its discussion on *anupalabdhi pramāṇa*.

Svataḥ-prāmāṇyam – the status of being a self-proved or self-evident *pramāṇa* – is not a criterion that dictates that knowledge imparted by the *pramāṇa* is non-experiential. If it were so, *pratyakṣa-ñāna* (direct perception) – which is gained by the *pratyakṣa svataḥ-prāmāṇa* would be non-experiential. That is contrary to universal experience. Direct perception is experiential.

To say that *svataḥ-prāmāṇyam* signifies total independence of the *pramāṇas* is not correct. First of all, *pramāṇas* depend on

appropriate, defect-free *sāmagrīs*. Moreover, *anumāna*, *arthāpatti*, *upamā*, *anupalabdhi* and *śabda* (the Veda) depend on *pratyakṣa*, which is termed the *jyeṣṭha pramāṇa* – the first or the chief *pramāṇa*.

The nature of the Vedānta *pramāṇa* is such that on producing direct self-knowledge, it ends the *pramātā* and itself ceases to exist as a *pramāṇa*. It is like a *pramāṇa* in dream losing its status as a *pramāṇa* on waking up (*B.G.Bh. 2-69*)⁸². *Ātmā* / Brahman is the *svarūpa* (true nature) of the impostor *pramātā* – the knower (*jīva*). Operated to the point of fruition, the Vedānta *pramāṇa* reduces the *pramātā* to its *nirupādhika-svarūpa* viz. *ātmā*. As a result, *ātmā* / Brahman can never become the *prameya* that can be known as an object by the *pramātā* even if Vedānta has the status of a valid *pramāṇa* to know *ātmā* – Brahman. This distinguishes the Vedānta *pramāṇa* from others. That is why *ātmā* / Brahman is called *aprameya* – a thing that cannot be known by the *pramātā* as an object distinct from itself.

Cittaśuddhi or *cittaprasāda* is indispensable for the Vedānta *pramāṇa* to produce *Brahmajñāna*. It is defined as the purity of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, which can display Brahman in its true *nirupādhika* state as a faithful replica (*cittasya Brahmākāra-prathanānukūlā svacchatā*). As shown already, the *tat tvam asi mahāvākya* will fail to function unless there is a direct appreciation of the *śodhita tvam pada* – the *nirupādhika* 'I'.

In his teaching to Lord Rāma, sage Vasiṣṭha emphasizes the indispensability of *citta-śuddhi*, for which means such as *sādhana-catuṣṭaya* are imperative. The sage says – ‘Approaching a *guru* and exposing oneself to his teaching is only a formality in terms of observing the norms of the scriptures. The primary means of gaining *Brahmajñāna* is *prajñā* (the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*) born in

⁸² न हि आत्मस्वरूपाधिगमे सति पुनः प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारः सम्भवति । प्रमातृत्वं हि आत्मनः निवर्तयति अन्त्यं प्रमाणं । निवर्तयदेव च अप्रमाणीभवति स्वप्रकालप्रमाणं इव प्रबोधे । (भगवद्गीताभाष्यम् 2-69)

the pure *antaḥkaraṇa* (*śuddha citta*) of the disciple.’ (उपदेशक्रमो राम व्यवस्थामात्रपालनम् । ज्ञप्तेस्तु कारणं शुद्धा शिष्यप्रज्ञैव राघव ॥ *Yogavāsīṣṭha*, *Nirvāṇa-Pūrva*, 83-13). This shows that an unprepared mind cannot gain direct *Brahmajñāna* in spite of exposure to the Vedānta *pramāṇa-śravaṇa*. Let us bear in mind that the Vedānta *pramāṇa* fails to operate for sure unless the *mumukṣu* has the indispensable defect-free *sāmagrīs* such as a *śuddha citta* with *citta-naiścalya*, capable of bearing in itself the replica of *nirviśeṣa ātmā* as revealed by the *akhaṇḍākāra/ātmākāra vṛtti*. Otherwise it would be akin to seeing with defective eyes, giving rise to a vision that is distorted.

Having understood the nature of the Vedānta *pramāṇa*, it should be very clear that the role of *ātmānubhava/ Brahmanubhava* is not to validate or corroborate this *pramāṇa*. Rather, it is the inevitable final *pramāṇa-phala* (result produced by *pramāṇa*). The lack of *ātmānubhava* in spite of efforts indicates that the *pramāṇa* has failed for want of defectless *sāmagrīs*. The distinction between the *Veda-pramāṇa* with respect to the *karmakāṇḍa* and with respect to Vedānta should be clearly understood. The former does not need experience (*anubhava*) while gaining knowledge because experience is just not possible. That is not the case in *ātmajñāna*. Mere *youktika-jñāna* (knowledge born of reasoning) or some information about *ātmā* gleaned from the *śāstra* can at best be *parokṣajñāna*. It is not *aparokṣa*. *Parokṣajñānīs* are still under the spell of *adhyāsa* like animals etc. This was seen in the *paśvādibhiṣca avīśeṣāt* portion of the *adhyāsa bhāṣya*.

ROLE OF KARMAYOGA AND BHAGAVAD-BHAKTI (INTENSE LOVE FOR ĪŚVARA)

Vedāntic teaching can lead to *Brahmajñāna* only if the *mumukṣu* has *cittaśuddhi* and *cittanaiścalya*, which are indispensable for the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta to operate. *Dharmānuṣṭhāna*, a life of adherence to the do's and don'ts enjoined in the Vedas, has the effect of *duritakṣaya* (annulling of past *pāpas*). Thereupon dawns *viveka*, leading to *sādhanacatuṣṭaya-saṃpatti*.

Karmayoga and *Bhagavadbhakti* serve as means to gain *śuddhi* (purity) and *naiścalya* (steadiness) of *citta* (mind).

If *Brahmajñāna* is not gained in spite of exposure to proper Vedāntic teaching, the only possible diagnosis is that these preparatory means are lacking. Sage Vālmīkī, finding that his disciple Bharadvāja did not gain *Brahmajñāna* even after being taught the *Yogavāsīṣṭha*, exhorts him to take to *saguṇeśvaropāsanā* – devotional worship of *saguṇa* Brahma. Vālmīkī advises:

भज सम्भरिताभोगं परमेशं जगद् गुरुम् । (Yo.Vā.Ni.Pū. 127-33)

Tr. 'Invoke the Supreme Lord (*Parameśa*), the universal preceptor, who wields different embodiments (to guide and protect his devotees).'

Bhagavadbhakti or devotion is intense love towards *Parameśvara*. In Vedic parlance, *bhakti* falls under the category of *karma* and is not a separate concept. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that he has prescribed two distinct modes of living, with firm adherence (*niṣṭhā*) to *jñāna* and *karma* (B.G. 3-3) respectively. *Karma* is an indirect means to *ātmajñāna*. *Karma* cannot destroy self-ignorance and produce *jñāna* because it is itself a product of self-ignorance. On the other hand, *bhakti*, despite being a *karma*, is a distinct *sāadhanā* (means) for preparing the mind to gain *ātmajñāna*. In *Kaliyuga*, *bhakti* has the further advantage that it is a very practical means.

Karmayoga is the discharge of one's duties with an attitude that allows one to gain the disposition conducive to the attainment of self-knowledge. The natural tendency is to perform *karmas* (actions) prompted by desire for their results. This afflicts the individual with worry, anxiety, excitement and restlessness, which in turn rob him of the calm and unruffled disposition necessary for *jñānam*. An attitude of *karmayoga* based on steadfast devotion to *Īśvara* prevents such an undesirable state of mind. *Karmayoga*

transforms *karma* into a worshipful offering to *Īśvara*. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes this principle:

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः । (B.G. 18-46)

Tr. By worshipping through one's *karma* the *Īśvara* from whom all elements and beings are born (or because of whom all beings function), and by whom the entire Creation is pervaded, the eligible person (*mānavah*) gains the capability (*siddhi*) that enables steadfastness in *ātmaññāna*.

The teaching on how to effect this change in attitude during the performance of *karma* is enunciated in the following verse:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ (B.G. 2-47)

Tr. (O Arjuna), your business is to be concerned with action (*karma*) alone and never with its results. Do not be the author of the results of action (which is a recipe for transmigration). Let not your inclination be to inaction either (merely because you do not desire results).

Lord Kṛṣṇa asks us to engage ourselves in *karma* without preoccupation with its results. A *karmayogī* should rise above concepts such as 'This *karma* is mine', 'Its results are due to my efforts', 'I am the person entitled to the results of action', 'I did', 'I deserve', 'I shall enjoy the results'. These strengthen the erroneous 'I notion' (*ahaṅkāra*) in the embodiment, and breed anxiety, worry and restlessness. A mind engrossed in such factors cannot take to *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana* and gain *ātmaññāna*. What is recommended by Lord Kṛṣṇa is a *samabuddhi* (an equanimous mind, unaffected by results) rather than *saṅgabuddhi* (a mind totally attached to the results of actions).

Lord Kṛṣṇa does not say that the doer does not have a right to the results of his actions. 'The performer of action is the

reaper of its results unless he is a *jñānī*’ (*B.G.* 18-12). Grammatically speaking, the particle *mā* is mainly used in the sense of prohibition (forbidding). In rare cases *mā* may mean negation (*na* – no). To quote Bhagavān Śrī Sathya Sai Baba ‘*mā phaleṣu*’ means ‘refuse the fruit’ or ‘do and deny the consequence.’⁸³ Certainly the doer can, out of his own free will and determination, refuse to be affected by results, favourable or unfavourable. The question arises: If desire should not be entertained for the results of action, who will look after us? Such doubts do not disturb a *karmayogī*. For him, liberation from the circle of birth and death is more important than fleeting comfort and happiness in life. A *karmayogī* has firm *śraddhā* (attitude of total trust) in Bhagavān who has made an assurance, ‘*Yogakṣemam vahāmyaham*’ (I take care of all the needs of my earnest devotee) (*B.G.* 9-22), and has full confidence that Bhagavān will certainly look after him (*karmayogī*). This shows that *Bhagavadbhakti* is an integral part of *karmayoga*.

MOKṢA IS ANUBHAVĀRŪḌHA (ABSORPTION/ STEADFASTNESS IN BRAHMĀNUBHAVA)

In principle, *aparokṣa ātmajñāna* / *Brahmajñāna* confers *mokṣa* (liberation). But it is not by means of some *adrṣṭa* (*puṇya*) born of *karma* or *upāsana*. For practical purposes, *Brahmasākṣātkāra* / *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna* itself is *mokṣa* wherein *avidyā* (self-ignorance) along with its effects is terminated. As seen earlier, *mokṣa* is *ātmā* itself, known directly without a trace of *avidyā* (*Vedānta Kalpalatikā*). In other words, *mokṣa* is *svātmani avasthānam* (abundance in *ātmā* – *Taittirīya* / *Kena Bh.*). *Ātmā* being *anubhavasvarūpa* and now free from *avidyā* and its effects (for the *jīva* who has got *ātmajñāna*), *mokṣa* is nothing but the self-evident experience of *ātmā-svarūpa* without the *tripuṭī* – *pramātā*, *prameya* (as distinct from *pramātā*), and *pramāṇa*. Thus *Brahmajñāna* itself is *mokṣa*, provided there is *jñānaniṣṭhā* / pre-requisite for *jīvanmukti*. This shows that *ātmajñāna* / *Brahmajñāna* is also a unique experience.

⁸³ ‘Gītā Vāhinī’, Ch.V., by Bhagavān Śrī Sathya Sai Baba.

The following passages from the *sūtrabhāṣya* corroborate the above.

- (i) प्रत्यक्षफलत्वात् च ज्ञानस्य फलविरहशंका अनुपपत्तिः । कर्मफले स्वर्गादौ अनुभवानारूढे (अप्राप्तानुभवे) स्यात् आशंका, भवेत् वा न वा इति । अनुभवारूढं (प्राप्तानुभवं) तु ज्ञानफलं 'यत् साक्षात् अपरोक्षात् (i.e. अपरोक्षं) ब्रह्म' (*Br.U.* 3-4-1) इति श्रुतेः, 'तत् त्वं असि' (*Ch.U.* 6-8-7 etc.) इति च सिद्धवत् उपदेशात् । (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 3-3-32)

Tr. *Mokṣa*, the result of *jñāna*, is immediate/direct. Therefore no doubt can be entertained about its absence or failure. Heaven etc. are the results of *karma*. Their result is not available for experience (at the time *karma* is performed). Therefore there is room for doubt regarding the achievement of results, namely, whether the results will be obtained or not. By contrast, *mokṣa*, the result of *Brahmajñāna*, is absorption/steadfastness in *Brahmānubhava* / *ātmānubhava* (then and there). It is corroborated by the *śruti* statement, 'Brahman is immediate, the most intimate self-evident 'I' (*Br.U.* 3-4-1)'. In its teaching 'You are Brahman' (*Ch.U.* 6-8-7 etc.), the *Chāndogyopaniṣat* also presents Brahman as ever-accomplished (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 3-3-32).

- (ii) अनुभवारूढं एव च विद्याफलं, न क्रियावत् कालान्तरभावी इति असकृत् अवोचाम । (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 3-4-15).

Tr. We have often stated that *mokṣa* – the result of *Brahmajñāna* – is absorption in *Brahmānubhava* alone. Unlike *karma*, it is not something that comes into existence after a period of time. (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 3-4-15).

BRAHMAN IS NOT A SENSE OBJECT

The *bhāṣya* now proceeds to answer the following doubt entertained by some in this context. The doubt is first presented, then clarified.

Doubt: If Brahman is an existent entity and not something required to be produced, like *dharma*, it too should be an object of *pramāṇas* such as direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) etc., as are objects such as the existing pot. Accordingly, since it is *anumāna* (inference) and not the *śruti* that is the *pramāṇa* for an existent entity, one should investigate the inference in the *janmādisūtra* that ascertains the cause of Creation. As far as the *śruti* is concerned, it at best restates what is known through the other *pramāṇas*. The *śruti* is not a *pramāṇa* for existent entities, so any inquiry into the *śruti* to know Brahman is futile. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that the *Brahmasūtras* serve essentially to string Vedāntic sentences together.

भा. ननु भूतवस्तुत्वे ब्रह्मणः प्रमाणान्तरविषयत्वं एव इति वेदान्तवाक्यविचारणा अनर्थिका एव प्राप्ता । न। इन्द्रियाविषयत्वेन संबन्धाग्रहणात् । स्वभावतः विषयविषयाणि इन्द्रियाणि, न ब्रह्मविषयाणि । सति हि इन्द्रियविषयत्वे ब्रह्मणः, इदं ब्रह्मणा संबद्धं कार्यं इति गृह्येत । कार्यमात्रं एव तु गृह्यमाणं किं ब्रह्मणा संबद्धं किं अन्येन केनचित् वा संबद्धं इति न शक्यं निश्चेतुम् । तस्मात् जन्मादिसूत्रं न अनुमानोपन्यासार्थं, किं तर्हि वेदान्तवाक्यप्रदर्शनार्थम् ।

Bh.Tr. Contrary proposition: If Brahman is an (already) existing entity, it should be the object of other means of knowledge. Any discussion on the *Upaniṣadic* text would therefore be useless.

Ans: It is not so; because Brahman is not a sense object (*viśaya*). Therefore, its connection with Creation (as the cause) cannot be grasped through any other means of knowledge (either). By their very nature, the senses have external entities as their objects, and not Brahman. If Brahman were an object of the senses, it could have been known (through other means of knowledge) that this Creation is connected to Brahman (i.e. created by Brahman) as its effect. But when the

effect, viz., Creation, alone is perceived, it is not possible to determine whether it was created by Brahman (as its effect) or by something else. Therefore the *janmādi-sūtra* is not meant to suggest inference (as the means to know Brahman) but serves to explain the *Upaniṣadic* sentence.

THE *UPANIṢADIC* SENTENCE WHICH IS THE BASIS OF *JANMĀDI-SŪTRA*

If Brahman were the object of a *pramāṇa* other than the *śruti*, an inquiry would be needed into such a *pramāṇa*. Inquiry into *Upaniṣadic* (Vedāntic) sentences to ascertain Brahman would then become futile. Here the contender should be asked which of the following two rules establishes Brahman as the cause of Creation:

- i) Any effect whatsoever that exists is born of Brahman.
- ii) Anything that is an effect has a cause.

The first rule is inapplicable. Such a *vyāpti* (invariable concomitance) cannot be proved by perception, inference or other means of knowledge (except the *śruti*) because Brahman is imperceptible to the senses. Therefore it is not possible to postulate such a *vyāpti*. In other words, Brahman cannot be the object of other *pramāṇas*. The senses are extrovert by their very nature because the Creator (*Parameśvara*) created them so. (*Kṛ.U.* 2-1-2). On the other hand, Brahman is imperceptible to the senses because it is devoid of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. That means it is not possible to use other *pramāṇas* to verify the rule that this *jagat* is born of Brahman.

As for the second rule, it can prove only that there is a cause of Creation, but it is impossible to conclude without the help of the *śruti* that the cause is Brahman. To ascertain that the cause of the *jagat* is nothing but Brahman, it is the *śruti* alone that must be

resorted to. The role of inference is secondary and serves to reason out the possibility that Brahman can be both the material and efficient cause of the *jāgat* in addition to being omniscient and omnipotent etc. as declared in the *śruti*. That the material and efficient cause of the *jāgat* is one and the same Brahman is illustrated by drawing parallels with instances such as mud and the pot made of mud, or the spider and the web created by it. This justifies that the *janmādi-sūtra* is based on the *śruti* – an *Upaniṣadic* sentence. The actual *Upaniṣadic* sentence involved will be revealed in the next passage of the *bhāṣya*.

भा. किं पुनः तत् वेदान्तवाक्यं यत् सूत्रेण इह लिलक्षयिषितम् ।
 ‘भृगुः वै वारुणिः । वरुणं पितरं उपससार । अधीहि भगवः
 ब्रह्म इति’ उपक्रम्य आह – ‘यतः वै इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
 येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत् प्रयन्ति अभिसंविशन्ति तत्
 विजिज्ञासस्व । तत् ब्रह्म इति’ (तैत्ति. ३-१) । तस्य च
 निर्णयवाक्यम् – ‘आनन्दात् हि एव खलु इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
 आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति । आनन्दं प्रयन्ति अभिसंविशन्ति
 इति’ (तैत्ति. ३-६) । अन्यानि अपि एवं जातीयकानि
 वाक्यानि नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावसर्वज्ञस्वरूपकारणविषयाणि
 उदाहर्तव्यानि ॥२॥

Bh.Tr. Q: Which Vedāntic sentence does the *sūtra* (to define Brahman) allude to here (*iha*) in that case?

Ans: The *Taittirīyopaniṣat* begins with, ‘Renowned Bhr̥gu, son of Varuṇa, (who sought to know Brahman) approached his father (and requested); O revered father! Please teach me about Brahman’, and continues with (the father’s reply) – ‘Please know Brahman to be that from which all these living beings are born, having been born by which they live and into which they merge back after destruction’ (*Tai.U.* 3-1). The affirming sentence (*nirṇaya-vākya*m, where Bhr̥gu keys down this

teaching) is ‘Verily from *ānanda* (the limitless independent happiness which is Brahman) alone are all these living beings born, having been born they live by *ānanda* and into *ānanda* they merge after destruction’ (*Tai.U.3-6*). Other *Upaniṣadic* sentences of a similar nature which reveal the cause (Brahman) to be *nitya* (the ever-existent principle, free from time), *śuddha* (free from Creation), *buddha* (the very knowledge-principle), *mukta-svabhāva* (ever liberated) and *sarvajñā-svarūpa* (omniscient in nature) should also be cited.

The word *iha* (here i.e. in this case) in the question refers to the Brahman that is desired to be known, and is now being defined. The question seeks to know which specific sentence provides a definition of Brahman and should be inquired into.

The sentence ‘*yato vā imāni*’ was quoted earlier in the *bhāṣya* of this *sūtra* when indicating the sequence of origin (*janma*), *sthiti* (sustenance) and *bhaṅga* (destruction) of Creation. It was explained there that the word *bhūtāni* in that context stood for ‘living beings’. In the present context, the same term must be taken to include both living beings and the five great elements (*pañca-mahābhūtāni*).

The first *Brahmasūtra* exhorted the *mumukṣu* to inquire into and obtain the knowledge of Brahman. The second *sūtra* provided the definition of Brahman for those desirous of knowing it. In a similar vein, the *śruti* also teaches about Brahman to a *mumukṣu* who is a *Brahmajijñāsu* – one desirous of knowing Brahman – by taking recourse to the distinctive features of Creation. In order to show that this *sūtra* is in keeping with the import of the *śruti*, the initial portion of the sentence where the son who is a *Brahmajijñāsu* approaches his father who is a *Brahmajjñānī* seeking *Brahmajjñāna* is also quoted. *Adhīhi* means call to mind in the sense of *upadiśa* – please teach. The word *yena* (in *yena jātāni*) is in the

singular because any statement referring to multiple causes cannot define Brahman. To illustrate, ‘whatever is the cause of Creation is one’ remains an incomplete definition because it does not specify an explicit cause, whereas ‘whatever is the single cause of Creation is Brahman’ or ‘whatever is the cause of Creation is the non-dual Brahman’ makes the definition complete.

The definition given in ‘*yato vā īmāni*’ is a *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* (i.e. a feature which defines an entity through an adventitious relation with it). What then is the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (the intrinsic characteristic) of Brahman? The answer is indicated by the word *yataḥ* (that from which). It is also suggested by the *nirṇāyaka-vākya*m (affirming sentence) of this teaching that reveals Brahman, beginning with ‘*ānandād hyeva*’ as *satyam* (the ever-existent principle), *jñānam* (the knowledge-principle) and *ānanda* (limitless independent happiness). This affirmation by Bhṛgu is also in accordance with the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of Brahman already specified in the earlier chapter of the same Upaniṣad – in the phrase ‘*satyam jñānam anantam Brahma*’.

The definition of Brahman quoted here is not the only one. There are many others in different Upaniṣads in all four Vedas. The *Prakṛtyadhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 1-4-23 to 1-4-27), where the theme of this *sūtra* is elaborated in detail, refers to other *Upaniṣadic* sentences conveying a similar meaning. Thus all these definitions from different Upaniṣads, be it in the form of a *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* or a *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*, have their *samanvaya* (ascertained purport) in the Brahman to be known. *Mokṣa* (liberation) is gained by *aparokṣa-Brahmajñāna*.

**THE OMNISCIENCE OF BRAHMAN.
THE VEDA IS THE SOLE *PRAMĀṆA*
TO KNOW BRAHMAN**

(शास्त्रयोनित्वाधिकरणम्)

***BRAHMASŪTRA* 1-1-3**

**SUMMARY OF *ŚĀSTRAYONITVĀDHIKARAṆA* – TOPIC
OF THE THIRD *SŪTRA***

The Vaiyāsika-nyāyamālā presents a summary of the third *sūtra* as follows.

There are two interpretations (*varṇakas*) of the *sūtra* – *śāstrayonitvāt*.

The first interpretation:

Subject : The omniscience of Brahman.

Doubt : Has Brahman authored the Vedas?

Contrary proposition : In the *śruti-mantra*, ‘*vācā Virūpa nityā stutim preraya*’ (‘O Virūpa, eulogize with the eternal words’) the Veda called *nityā vāk* (the eternal words) is described as eternal. Thus being without a beginning, the Veda cannot have an author. (The word Virūpa in the mantra is an address to a deity).

Doctrine : The Veda comprising Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva is described as the exhalation (i.e. something effortlessly produced) of Brahman (*Br.U.* 2-4-10). Therefore Brahman is the author of the Veda. Its description as eternal (*nitya*)

in the aforesaid *śruti* is to show that the same is revealed just like the Veda in the previous *kalpa* – Creation.

Brahman is omniscient because it is the author of the all-revealing Veda.

The second interpretation:

Subject : The Veda alone is the *pramāṇa* to know Brahman.

Doubt : Can Brahman be known only by the Veda or by other means of knowledge as well?

Contrary proposition: Brahman being a thing much like a pot and other objects, it can also be known by direct perception, inference and other similar means of knowledge.

Doctrine: Brahman is free from the attributes of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Therefore it cannot be an object of sense-perception. It is also devoid of any distinguishing mark, feature or similarity with anything else, and so on. As a result, means of knowledge such as inference, illustration and others are incapable of making it known. *Śrutis* such as ‘I am asking you about that *Puruṣa* (i.e. Brahman) unfolded in the Upaniṣad’ (*Bṛ.U.* 3-9-26) point out the Veda alone as the means of knowledge to know Brahman.

THE THIRD *SŪTRA* IS INTRODUCED

Having recapitulated the topic of the earlier *sūtra*, the *bhāṣyakāra* introduces the third one by showing the connection between the two with respect to the first interpretation.

भा. जगत्कारणत्वप्रदर्शनेन सर्वज्ञं ब्रह्म इति उपक्षिप्तं तदेव द्रढयन्
आह –

Bh.Tr. It was indicated that Brahman is omniscient by showing it to be the cause of Creation. Confirming the same topic, the author of the *sūtra* says ‘Śāstrayonitvāt.’

By stating that the sentient Brahman is the cause of *jagat*, the *Sūtrakāra* has in fact asserted its omniscient nature because any Creation is preceded by a sentient producer having knowledge thereof. So it establishes that Brahman is omniscient because it is the cause of the entire Creation. It is well-known that a creator has knowledge about his creation before starting, as seen in the case of a pot-maker. The omniscience of Brahman is corroborated by proving that it is the author of the Vedas. Thereby it is refuted that the inert *Pradhāna* (of the *Sāṅkhya* school of thought) and others are the cause of *jagat* respectively. Brahman as the cause of both Creation and the Vedas proves its omniscience. Therefore this *adhikaraṇa* has the secondary connection with the previous one, both dealing with the same theme (*ekaviṣayatva*) viz. the omniscience of Brahman.

Or this *adhikaraṇa* proves Brahman to be the author of the Vedas by refuting the objection (*ākṣepa*) that Brahman cannot be the Creator of everything because the Vedas are eternal, according to some *śruti*, and thus the Veda cannot have any author. In this case, the present *sūtra* gets related to the previous one by the secondary connection in the form of an objection, since the said objection is refuted herein.

शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ॥३॥

पदार्थोक्ति :- [i) शास्त्रं प्रति कारणत्वात् (सर्वज्ञं ब्रह्म) ।

ii) शास्त्रगम्यत्वात् (ब्रह्म प्रमाणान्तरवेद्यं न) ।]

Tr. i) First interpretation: (Brahman is omniscient because it is the cause of the scriptures consisting of the Ṛk, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva Vedas.

- ii) **Second interpretation: (Brahman cannot be known through any other means of knowledge) because it can be known only by means of the scriptures viz. the Vedas.**

THE FIRST INTERPRETATION OF THE THIRD *SŪTRA*

Brahman, besides being the cause of the entire Creation, is also the cause of the Vedas called *śāstra* (the scripture). Therefore it is omniscient. Based on this fact, the words of the *sūtra* are now being commented upon by taking into account the two connections with the previous *sūtra* viz. the sameness of the topic (*ekaviṣayatva*) and the objection (*ākṣepa*) to it.

भा. महतः ऋग्वेदादेः शास्त्रस्य अनेकविद्यास्थानोपबृंहितस्य प्रदीपवत् सर्वार्थविद्योतिनः सर्वज्ञकल्पस्य योनिः कारणं ब्रह्म । नहि ईदृशस्य शास्त्रस्य ऋग्वेदादिलक्षणस्य सर्वज्ञगुणान्वितस्य सर्वज्ञात् अन्यतः संभवः अस्ति । यत् यत् विस्तरार्थं शास्त्रं यस्मात् पुरुषविशेषात् संभवति, यथा व्याकरणादि पाणिन्यादेः ज्ञेयैकदेशार्थं अपि सः ततः अपि अधिकतरविज्ञानः इति प्रसिद्धं लोके । किमु वक्तव्यं अनेकशाखाभेदभिन्नस्य देवतिर्यङ्मनुष्यवर्णाश्रमादिप्रविभागहेतोः ऋग्वेदाद्याख्यस्य सर्वज्ञानाकरस्य अप्रयत्नेन एव लीलान्यायेन पुरुषनिःश्वासवत् यस्मात् महतः भूतात् योनेः संभवः, ‘अस्य महतः भूतस्य निःश्वासितं एतत् यत् ऋग्वेदः’ (बृह. २-४-१०) इत्यादिश्रुतेः तस्य महतः भूतस्य निरतिशयं सर्वज्ञत्वं सर्वशक्तिमत्त्वं च इति।

Bh.Tr. Brahman is the *yoni* – the cause – of the great scripture consisting of R̥gveda and the rest, which is supplemented by many branches of knowledge, which reveals things (worthy of being known) like a lamp, and which is almost omniscient. Because a scripture of this kind in the form of R̥gveda etc., having the quality of omniscience, cannot originate from any cause other than one that is itself omniscient. It is well-known in

the world that while any voluminous treatise such as grammar etc. composed by a specific person – Pāṇini or others – pertains to a portion of the subject matter, the knowledge of the author extends beyond his work. (If this holds true for worldly matters like grammar), how much more so for the unsurpassed omniscience and omnipotence of that limitless being, from which the birth of the mine of all knowledge called Ṛgveda etc. consisting of manifold branches, the cause of the distinction of all the different deities, animals, human beings, *varṇas* (the caste system), *āśramas* (the stages of life) and others takes place in the form of sport as it were like the exhalation of a person. This is evident from *śruti* statements such as ‘All that is Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda and Atharvāṅgīrasa is the exhalation of this limitless being’. (*Br.U.* 2-4-10).

Many adjectives like *mahān* (great) and others are employed to describe the *śāstra* (scripture) consisting of Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva to establish the omniscience of its cause. *Mahān* means that which is great in terms of both magnitude and content. *Śāstra* is that which instructs (*śāsanāt*) about all that is beneficial (*hīta*). To show that the word *śāstra* indicates by implication all means of knowledge in the form of words, the same is qualified as that which is supplemented by many branches of knowledge. These are Purāṇa, *nyāya* (reasoning), *mīmāṃsā* (sacred inquiry), *dharmaśāstra* (code of laws), *śikṣā* (phonetics), *kalpa* (hand book of rituals), *nirukta* (etymology), *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *chandas* (prosody) and *jyotiṣa* (astronomy). These ten branches of knowledge suggest that celebrated personages like Manu accepted the Veda as valid means of knowledge. The Veda is compared to an all illuminating lamp (*pradīpa*). It shows the Veda as valid because it reveals all things worthy of being known and sought in life. Yet, the Veda is called *sarvajñakalpa* (almost omniscient) and not *sarvajña* (omniscient) because it is inert in nature. The word *yoni*

(cause) refers to both the material (*upādāna*) and efficient (*nimitta*) causes.

It may be asked how Brahman, the cause of the *śāstra* (the Veda), can be omniscient if the Veda is so? This is so because the presence of omniscience in the effect, the Veda, is not possible without its presence in the cause – Brahman. The rule is that the power in an effect is identical to that in its cause.

Another reason given to establish the omniscience of Brahman is that the knowledge of an author of a treatise is far vaster than the knowledge contained in the work. It can be inferred as follows. The Veda is born of a being whose knowledge is vaster than the knowledge propounded in the Veda; because it is the means of knowledge in the form of sentences such as are found in grammar, Rāmāyaṇa and other compositions. The invariable rule applicable here is derived in the *bhāṣya* sentence beginning with the phrase *yadyadvistarārtham* (i.e. whatever voluminous treatise etc.). If a text containing limited knowledge is born of a person who is more knowledgeable, then the inevitable corollary is that the Veda with its vast range of knowledge beyond human imagination should necessarily originate from an omniscient being. Its omniscience and omnipotence cannot be questioned. This is also corroborated by the *śruti* ‘*asya mahato bhūtasya niśvasitam etad Ṛgvedaḥ*’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-10). This *Upaniṣadic* statement also serves as the basis of the present *sūtra* that sets out to prove the omniscience of Brahman. To show that the Veda is *apouruṣeya* (not born of human efforts), the *Upaniṣad* uses the word *niśvasitam*, like effortless exhalation. The effortlessness or spontaneity here refers to Creation of (the Veda) in a trice without dependence on any other means of knowledge and without any effort put in to know its meaning.

The inference drawn here is only to corroborate the omniscience of Brahman as declared in ‘the one who is omniscient’ (*Mu.U.* 1-1-10) by showing the unsurpassed knowledge of the

Creator of the Veda. It does not mean that the Veda is created by the knowledge of the things contained therein. Such a notion will contradict the *śruti* statement '*niśvasitam*' indicating the effortlessness and independence of Brahman – as *Īśvara* – in creating the Veda. *Īśvara*, remembering the series of the self-created Veda in the past *kalpa* (Creation), reveals the same to *Hiraṇyagarbha* and others at the beginning of the present *kalpa*. *Īśvara* knows it invariably since His knowledge is not veiled by any ignorance. Therefore Brahman who plays the role of *Īśvara* is omniscient.

THE SECOND INTERPRETATION OF THE THIRD *SŪTRA*

So far, Brahman has been defined. Next, the means of knowledge to know Brahman needs to be known. Both the definition and the means of knowledge are inevitable for *Brahma-nirṇaya* – to ascertain Brahman. Therefore the second interpretation (*varṇaka*) of this *sūtra* has the connection of 'having the same result (viz. *Brahma-nirṇaya*)' with the previous *sūtra* or the *adhikaraṇa* (topic). The basis of this *varṇaka* is the *Upaniṣadic* sentence, 'I am asking you about that *Puruṣa* (i.e. Brahman) unfolded in the Upaniṣad' (*Br.U.* 3-9-26). The doubt is whether this *śruti* ascertains that the Veda alone is the *pramāṇa* to know Brahman. Some opine that the single Creator, the omniscient Brahman, can also be inferred from the evidence of the effect in the form of Creation, whose formation is inconceivable to the human mind. Therefore the Veda alone is not the *pramāṇa* to know Brahman. To dispel any such doubt, the *sūtra śāstrayonitvāt* establishes that Brahman can be known only through the *pramāṇa* of the Veda and not by any other means of knowledge. In the case of the second interpretation the word *yonī* (as the cause) from the *sūtra* means *pramāṇa*. The *Bhāṣya* establishes this doctrine.

भा. अथवा यथा उक्तं ऋग्वेदादिशास्त्रं योनिः कारणं प्रमाणं अस्य
ब्रह्मणः यथावत् स्वरूपाधिगमे । शास्त्रात् एव प्रमाणात्
जगतः जन्मादिकारणं ब्रह्म अधिगम्यते इति अभिप्रायः । शास्त्रं

उदाहृतं पूर्वसूत्रे – ‘यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते’ इत्यादि। किं अर्थं तर्हि इदं सूत्रं, यावता पूर्वसूत्रे एव एवं जातीयकं शास्त्रं उदाहरता शास्त्रयोनित्वं ब्रह्मणः दर्शितम् । उच्यते - तत्र पूर्वसूत्राक्षरेण स्पष्टं शास्त्रस्य अनुपादानात् जन्मादि केवलं अनुमानं उपन्यस्तं इति आशङ्क्येत तां आशङ्कां निवर्तयितुं इदं सूत्रं प्रवृत्ते, शास्त्रयोनित्वात् इति ॥ ३ ॥

Bh.Tr. Or the scripture consisting of Ṛgveda and others as described previously is *yoni*, the cause, in the sense of the *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) for knowing this Brahman in its true nature. The import of the *sūtra* is that Brahman which is the cause of the origin (*janma*) and other facets of Creation is known only through the *pramāṇa* of scriptures (the Vedas). The relevant scriptural passage ‘that from which all these living beings are born’ (*Tai.U.* 3-1) was quoted in the context of the previous *sūtra* (*Br.Sū.* 1-1-2). Then what is the purpose of this present *sūtra* when the *Sūtrakāra* (the sage Vyāsa) has (already) shown the scripture – (the Veda) – to be the *pramāṇa* to know Brahman by citing such *śruti* texts in the previous *sūtra*? The answer follows. The words in the previous *sūtra* did not mention the scripture – (the Veda as the *pramāṇa*) clearly. A doubt may arise that only the inference indicated by *janmādi* (the origin of the *jagat* etc.) is suggested there. To obviate this doubt this *sūtra* ‘*śāstrayonitvāt*’ was formulated.

As explained in the *bhāṣya*, this *sūtra* with its second interpretation is meant to clarify that the earlier *sūtra* does not speak of an independent inference indicated by *janmādi* to know Brahman. Thus the Veda alone is the *pramāṇa* for knowing Brahman.

THE APPLICABILITY (SAMANVA YA) OF VEDĀNTA (THE UPANIṢADS) IN BRAHMAN (समन्वयाधिकरणम्)

BRAHMASŪTRA 1-1-4

SUMMARY OF SAMANVA YĀDHIKARAṆAM – THE TOPIC OF THE FOURTH SŪTRA

The Vaiyāsika-nyāyamālā summarises the topic of the fourth *sūtra* – *Tat tu samanvayāt* – as follows. This *sūtra* has been interpreted in two ways (*varṇakās*). The first interpretation is based on the second interpretation of the third *sūtra* '*śāstrayonitvāt*'. It is connected by *ākṣepa-saṅgati* (connection by objection). The second interpretation of this *sūtra* has an incidental connection with the topic of the third *sūtra*.

The first interpretation:

Subject : Vedāntic statements (the Upaniṣads) prove and reveal Brahman and are not centred on the performer (*kartā*) of rituals, deities (*devatās*) and other factors connected to the rituals, or Vedic sacrifices.

Doubt : Are Vedāntic sentences (statements) auxiliaries of Vedic *karmas* that establish the doer, deities etc. associated with *karmas*, or do they reveal Brahman independently?

Contrary proposition: Vedānta serves to establish the performer of sacrifices, deities etc. It does not reveal Brahman.

Doctrine : Vedānta is not part of the *karmakāṇḍa* (portion on *karma*) of the Vedas. It belongs to an entirely different and independent portion called *jñānakāṇḍa* (portion on knowledge). Six criteria, *upakrama-upasaṃhāra* and the

rest, are employed to ascertain the purport of Vedic statements. On the basis of these six criteria, it is proved that Vedānta directly establishes Brahman alone. The unfoldment of Brahman cannot be said to be of no utility. The knowledge of Brahman destroys sorrowful *saṃsāra*. It enables one to directly discover one's own self as limitless happiness. There is no basis for coming to the conclusion that Vedānta is an auxiliary of *karmas* aimed at establishing the doer, deities and other factors involved in sacrifices.

The second interpretation:

Subject : The purport of Vedāntic statements is Brahman. They do not enjoin *upāsanā* (meditation).

Doubt : Do Vedāntic statements (such as 'ātmā has to be known directly' – *Br.U. 2-4-5*) enjoin *upāsanā* or is Brahman their purport ?

Contrary proposition: A scripture (*śāstram*) is that which enjoins or exhorts (*śāsanāt*). Vedānta cannot be an exception. Injunctions such as 'ātmā should be inquired into (*śrotavyaḥ*)', (*Br.U. 2-4-5*) and 'should be reflected upon (*mantavyaḥ*)' etc. prove that the goal of Vedānta is to enjoin *upāsanā*.

Doctrine : That which is not dependent (*ādhīna*) on the doer (*kartā*) cannot be the object of an injunction. A scripture (*śāstram*) can also unfold and reveal the true nature of an existent entity (*siddhavastuśaṃsanāt*). *Manana* (reflection) etc. are enjoined as steps to facilitate the pursuit of gaining the direct knowledge of Brahman. Therefore the purport of Vedānta is Brahman.

INTRODUCING THE FOURTH SŪTRA

The *pūrvapakṣa* (contrary proposition) that Vedāntic statements are connected to *karmas* is now presented.

भा. कथं पुनः ब्रह्मणः शास्त्रप्रमाणकत्वं उच्यते, यावता 'आम्नायस्य क्रियार्थत्वात् आनर्थक्यं अतदर्थानाम्' (जै.सू. १-२-१) इति क्रियापरत्वं शास्त्रस्य प्रदर्शितम् । अतः वेदान्तानां आनर्थक्यं, अक्रियार्थत्वात् । कर्तृदेवतादिप्रकाशनार्थत्वेन वा क्रियाविधिषेत्वं, उपासनादिक्रियान्तरविधानार्थत्वं वा । नहि परिनिष्ठितवस्तुप्रतिपादनं संभवति, प्रत्यक्षादिविषयत्वात् परिनिष्ठितवस्तुनः । तत्प्रतिपादने च हेयोपादेयरहिते पुरुषार्थाभावात् । अतः एव 'सः अरोदीत्' इति एवं आदीनां आनर्थक्यं माभूत् इति 'विधिना तु एकवाक्यत्वात् स्तुत्यर्थेन विधीनां स्युः' (जै.सू. १-२-७) इति स्तावकत्वेन अर्थवत्त्वं उक्तम् । मन्त्राणां च 'इषे त्वा' इत्यादीनां क्रियातत्साधनाभिधायित्वेन कर्मसमवायित्वं उक्तम् । न क्वचित् अपि वेदवाक्यानां विधिसंस्पर्शं अन्तरेण अर्थवत्ता दृष्टा उपपन्ना वा । न च परिनिष्ठिते वस्तुस्वरूपे विधिः संभवति, क्रियाविषयत्वात् विधेः । तस्मात् कर्मापेक्षितकर्तृस्वरूपदेवतादिप्रकाशनेन क्रियाविधिषेत्वं वेदान्तानाम् । अथ प्रकरणान्तरभयात् न एतत् अभ्युपगम्यते, तथा अपि, स्ववाक्यगतोपासनादिकर्मपरत्वम् । तस्मात् न ब्रह्मणः शास्त्रयोनित्वं इति प्राप्ते उच्यते -

Bh.Tr. But how can it be said that the scripture (Vedānta) is the means of knowledge to know Brahman? The *Jaiminisūtra* of the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* shows that the total focus of the Veda is *karma* (action) – 'Since the Veda is meant for actions (such as sacrifices), statements in the Veda that do not deal with the same (viz. actions) have no utility' (*Jai.Sū.* 1-2-1). Therefore, either Vedāntic statements are futile because they do not serve the purpose of action, or else they are subsidiary constituents (*śeṣa*) of the injunctions of *karma* (action),

useful in revealing the doer (*kartā*), deities and other factors (connected to *karma*), or are meant to enjoin other types of actions such as *upāsana* (meditation) and the rest (*śravaṇa* – inquiry, *manana* – reflection etc.).

An already existent entity is the object of other *pramāṇas* such as direct perception etc., and therefore there is no scope for (the Veda) to establish it. Besides, there is no worthwhile accomplishment (i.e. *puruṣārtha*) in establishing something that can neither be acquired nor given up. It is in order to prevent the misconception that statements such as ‘He (viz. Lord Agni) cried’ are futile that Jaimini talks of their usefulness in his *sūtra* – ‘Due to their consonance with *vidhis* (scriptural injunctions), such statements become *pramāṇas*, in praise of those injunctions’ (*Jai.sū.* 1-2-7).

Mantras such as ‘O branch, (I cut) thee’ are inseparably connected to *karman* (actions) because they describe *karma* and its means. Nowhere (in Vedic passages) are Vedic statements seen to be purposeful if not connected with *vidhi* – scriptural injunctions, nor is this possible. A *vidhi* invariably pertains to an action. A *vidhi* cannot therefore apply to the nature of an existing entity. Therefore Vedāntic statements have the status of being subsidiary constituents (*śeṣa*) of *vidhi* (injunctions) which reveal the nature of the *kartā* (doer), deities and other factors required in the performance of *karma*.

Even if it is contended that Vedānta belongs to a division other than that of *karma* and the above arguments do not hold water, what does hold good is that Vedāntic statements are meant (to reveal) other

types of *karma* such as *upāsana* (meditation) etc. contained in those statements (*svavākyagata*). Therefore the scripture (i.e. Vedānta) cannot be the *pramāṇa* for Brahman. In reply to this contrary proposition, the doctrine is presented (in this next *sūtra* – *Tat tu samanvayāt*).

According to the *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, Vedic statements have a purpose and serve as means of knowledge provided they directly enjoin the performance of *karma* that is beneficial, or prohibit actions that are harmful. In addition, they can be indirectly valid as *pramāṇa* through their subsidiary connection, either by way of praise or condemnation, with statements of injunction (*vidhi*) or prohibition (*niṣedha*), or by revealing essential aspects of *vidhi*, as the case may be. In the contrary proposition, these factors are cited to deny Vedāntic statements the status of being an independent *pramāṇa* unless they are connected to *karma* or *upāsana*s either directly or indirectly. An overview of the backdrop against which this contrary view arose is useful.

The first *Jaimini-sūtra* (1-1-1) ‘*athāto dharmajijñāsā*’ in *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, exhorts the seeker seeking the relative good here and hereafter to inquire into the nature of *dharma* after a study of the Vedas. The reason for this recommendation of inquiry upon completion of the study of the Vedas is that the *dharma* affirmed in the Vedas teaches of things that bear fruit. The ascertainment of the nature of *dharma* is essential. The word *atha* in this *Jaimini sūtra* stands for ‘after the study of the Vedas’. The study of the Vedas indicated by the word *atha* has its sanction in the Vedic mandate *svādhyāyaḥ adhyetavyaḥ* – ‘One must study one’s own branch of the Veda’. This emphasizes that the study of the Veda is highly beneficial.

The next *Jaimini sūtra* – *codanā* (चौदना) *lakṣaṇaḥ arthaḥ dharmah* (1-1-2) – defines *dharma*. ‘*Dharma* is that which procures relative good here and hereafter as laid down by a *codanā* – the

scriptural injunction called *vidhi* (which prompts one to take to *karma*).’ This *sūtra* reveals that *vidhi* (called *codanā*) is the *pramāṇa* for *dharma* which is a *sādhya* – something to be accomplished. Proponents of the contrary view hold that the *sūtra* (*Jai.sū.1-1-2*) also suggests a rule that *Veda-prāmāṇya* – the authenticity of the Vedas as *pramāṇa* – invariably has the inherent feature of *kāryaparātva*, i.e. all Vedic statements deal wholly with *karma* such as sacrifices etc. Thus they are of the view that *Veda-prāmāṇya* is invariably linked to *kāryaparātva*.

But the Vedas contain many statements of *arthavāda* i.e. praise or condemnation. For example, ‘The renowned deity Vāyu is very swift’. The question arises: do such statements have *Veda-prāmāṇya*? On the basis of the imagined rule suggested above, *Veda-prāmāṇya* is invariably accompanied by *kriyārthatva* or *kāryaparātva* – engaged in the performance of *karma*. But *karma* is absent in statements of *arthavāda*. Accordingly, the view that Vedic statements not dealing with *karma* become incidental and of no utility and are not significant enough to gain the status of *pramāṇa* is presented in *Jaimini sūtra* (1-2-1), ‘*āmnāyasya*’ as cited in the contrary proposition in the *bhāṣya* above. In this *sūtra*, the word *āmnāya* stands for the *mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa* portions of the Veda.

Actually the *sūtra* (*Jai.Sū 1-2-1*) is an interim *pūrvapakṣa* (contrary view) in *pūrvamīmāṃsā*. It is expounded in the context of ascertaining the status of *arthavāda* statements. It does not intend to establish a final position or doctrine regarding *arthavāda* statements. At the concluding stage of the argument, the preliminary observation that *arthavāda* statements have no *prāmāṇyam* is dismissed in *Jaimini sūtra* 1-2-7 by pointing out that these statements are in fact useful as *pramāṇa*: ‘However, since they are in consonance with *vidhi*, such statements do become *pramāṇas*. They serve as praise for these injunctions (*vidhis*)’. For example, the Vedic statement ‘The deity Vāyu is swift’ is an *arthavāda*. It is a statement of praise indicating that *karmas* dedicated to Lord Vāyu produce quick results.

Based on this reasoning, the contender argues that Vedāntic statements are not meaningful because they neither lay down any *karma* nor have any relation with any *vidhi*, as seen with statements of *arthavāda*. The contender is aware, however, that Vedānta is a part of the Vedas. Study of the Veda based on the injunction ‘*svādhyāyaḥ adhyetavyaḥ*’ includes the study of Vedānta. Therefore, as a result of this injunction, Vedānta must necessarily be held to be useful and not of no worth. The Veda will not enjoin the study of something which is of no utility. The contender therefore changes his earlier stand on Vedānta. He says that Vedānta consists of statements which throw light on the *kartā* (doer), the deity, the results and other factors related to *karma*. Thereupon he presents Vedānta as a *pramāṇa* of the *śeṣa* (subsidiary constituent) of *karma*.

This position too does not hold water because Vedānta belongs to an exclusive division of the Veda where no *karmas* are mentioned. Hence it cannot be determined that Vedāntic statements are a secondary constituent of *karma*.

To counter this objection, the contender modifies his stand yet again. He states that Vedānta is meant to enjoin other types of *karma* such as *upāsana* (meditation), *śravaṇa* (inquiry) and *manana* (reflection) etc.

But then the question arises, why dwell on these deliberations which are not found in the Veda? Why dismiss Brahman which has been explicitly propounded by Vedānta – an independent portion of the Veda – itself?

In response, in an attempt to justify his view, the contender argues that an already existing entity (*pariniṣṭhita-vastu*) independent of action cannot be a subject the Veda is required to prove. The scope of the Veda is to establish entities unknown by other means of knowledge, whereas an existing entity can be known anyway by *pramāṇas* other than the Veda. If the Veda speaks of an entity that is in the same category as entities known by other means

of knowledge, it can only be by way of corroboration. For example consider the Vedic statement, 'Fire is the remedy for cold'. Statements in the Veda that are not in consonance with what is known differently through other *pramāṇas* are meant not for teaching what these statements obviously mean, but for some other purpose such as *upāsana* (meditation), e.g. 'the Sun is the sacrificial post'. Therefore, an existing entity like a pot known by other *pramāṇas* cannot be the topic of the Veda. Besides, no useful purpose can be served by such means of knowledge for an existing entity that can neither be acquired nor abandoned. For, worthwhile results are always in terms of the acquisition of happiness or freedom from sorrow. Such results can be achieved either by doing that which is beneficial or desisting from doing that which is harmful. This is possible only through the knowledge of the pursuits that lead to the acquisition of desirable things and the abandonment of undesirable things. They cannot be accomplished by the knowledge of an existing entity unrelated to action.

Consolidating his arguments, the contender shows how Vedic statements revealing existing entities can nevertheless indeed have a purpose. The import of the statement 'āmnāyasya...' (*Jai.Sū.* 1-2-1) is brought out by quoting another *sūtra* (*Jai.Sū.* 1-2-7), which establishes the *pūrva-mīmāṃsā* doctrine. Such Vedic statements become useful as praise or condemnation in relation to a *vidhi* (injunction) with which they are in consonance. For example, the Vedic statement 'Imprisoned by the deities, Lord Agni cried', prohibits the performer of a sacrifice from giving silver as a sacrificial gift. Silver is forbidden since it was born from the tears of Lord Agni, according to a Vedic legend. Thus the contrary proposition arrives at a conclusion that Vedāntic statements are subsidiary constituents similar to statements of *arthavāda*.

When asked why Vedāntic statements cannot be independent like *mantras* and not secondary to *vidhi*, like statements of *arthavāda*, the contender argues that *mantras*, by revealing the

actual *karma* or its means, are always related to *karma*. For example, the *mantra* 'ise tvā' with the supplementary verb *chinadmi* (I cut) speaks of cutting a branch meant for a sacrifice. Other *mantras* like *agnirmūrdhā* (fire is the head) refer to deities connected to the *karma*.

Even if we accept this in the case of statements in the *karmakāṇḍa*, the contender has to explain why Vedānta cannot be the *pramāṇa* for unfolding the existent Brahman. The contender argues that Vedānta can have purpose only if it is in consonance with *vidhi* statements because it (i.e. Vedānta) imparts the knowledge of an existent entity in the same way as sentences of *mantra* and *arthavāda*. In the opponent's view, the purposefulness of Vedic statements is nowhere evident without their connection to *vidhi*. If asked why Vedānta cannot have a purpose without being linked to *vidhi*, he repeats that it is not possible because no result accrues from an existent entity, as he has pointed out earlier.

The argument continues. An observer suggests: let there be a *vidhi* with respect to the existent Brahman itself, instead of connecting Vedānta to some other *vidhi*. The contender refutes its possibility with respect to an existing entity because *kriyā* (action) is the field of *vidhi*. A *vidhi* (injunction) always urges a person to undertake some specific action. It may be true that in Vedic statements such as 'dadhnā juhōti – performs sacrifice with curds', a *vidhi* is possible with respect to the existing curds, but this is so because the curds constitute a means of sacrifice. But the Brahman which is inactive (*niṣkriyā* in nature) (not connected to *karma* in any way) cannot under any circumstances be considered suitable for a *vidhi*.

Based on these arguments, the conclusion of the *pūrvapakṣa* (contrary proposition) is that Vedāntic statements have the status of being a subsidiary constituent (*śeṣa*) of *vidhi* which reveal the nature of *kartā* (doer), *devatā* (deity) and other essential factors of *karma*. However, the *pūrvapakṣa* recognizes that this

conclusion can be rejected outright since Vedānta belongs to an entirely different division independent of *karmakāṇḍa* and hence has no connection whatsoever with *karma*. To prevent the possibility of such rejection, the contrary proposition is amended to present Vedānta as that portion of the Veda that is dedicated to other types of *karma* such as *upāsana*, *śravaṇa*, *manana* etc. As a result, the final conclusion of this contrary proposition is that Brahman cannot have the *śāstra* (Vedānta) as its *yonī* – means of knowledge.

The next *Brahmasūtra* addresses this objection.

तत् तु समन्वयात् ॥४॥

पदच्छेदः – तत् तु समन्वयात् ।

[पदार्थोक्तिः – किंतु तत् ब्रह्म वेदान्तात् स्वातन्त्र्येण एव अवगम्यते । कथम् ? समन्वयात् ।]

Tr. But, that Brahman is known directly through the means of Vedānta alone. How? Because indisputably all Vedāntic statements have their applicability or ascertained purport (*samanvaya*) in establishing Brahman.

THE FIRST INTERPRETATION OF THE FOURTH SŪTRA

भा. तु शब्दः पूर्वपक्षव्यावृत्त्यर्थः । तत् ब्रह्म सर्वज्ञं सर्वशक्तिं जगदुत्पत्तिस्थितिलयकारणं वेदान्तशास्त्रात् एव अवगम्यते । कथं, समन्वयात् । सर्वेषु हि वेदान्तेषु वाक्यानि तात्पर्येण एतस्य अर्थस्य प्रतिपादकत्वेन समनुगतानि । ‘सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीत्’ । ‘एकमेवाद्वितीयम्’ (छान्दो. ६ - २ - १) ‘आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीत्’ (ऐत. १ - १ - १) ‘तत् एतत् ब्रह्मापूर्वमनपरमनन्तरमबाह्यम्’ ‘अयमात्मा ब्रह्म सर्वानुभूः’ (बृह. २ - ५ - १९) ‘ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्तात्’ (मुण्ड. २ - २ - ११)

इत्यादीनि । नच तद्रतानां पदानां ब्रह्मस्वरूपविषये निश्चिते समन्वये अवगम्यमाने अर्थान्तरकल्पना युक्ता, श्रुतहान्यश्रुतकल्पनाप्रसङ्गात् । नच तेषां कर्तृस्वरूपप्रतिपादनपरता अवसीयते । ‘तत्केन कं पश्येत्’ (बृह. २-४-१३) इत्यादि क्रियाकारकफलनिराकरणश्रुतेः । न च परिनिष्ठितवस्तुस्वरूपत्वेऽपि प्रत्यक्षादिविषयत्वं ब्रह्मणः, ‘तत्त्वमसि’ (छान्दो. ६-८-७) इति ब्रह्मात्मभावस्य शास्त्रमन्तरेण अनवगम्यमानत्वात् । यत् तु हेयोपादेयरहितत्वादुपदेशानर्थक्यमिति, नैष दोषः, हेयोपादेयशून्यब्रह्मात्मतावगमादेव सर्व-क्लेशप्रहाणात्पुरुषार्थसिद्धेः, देवतादिप्रतिपादनस्य तु स्ववाक्यगतोपासनार्थत्वेऽपि न कश्चिद्विरोधः । नतु तथा ब्रह्मणः उपासनाविधिषोषत्वं संभवति, एकत्वे हेयोपादेयशून्यतया क्रियाकारकादिद्वैतविज्ञानोपमर्दोपपत्तेः । नेहोक्तत्वविज्ञानेनोन्मथितस्य द्वैतविज्ञानस्य पुनः संभवोऽस्ति येनोपासनाविधिषोषत्वं ब्रह्मणः प्रतिपद्येत । यद्यप्यन्यत्र वेदवाक्यानां विधिसंस्पर्शमन्तरेण प्रमाणत्वं न दृष्टं, तथाप्यात्मविज्ञानस्य फलपर्यन्तत्वान्न तद्विषयस्य शास्त्रस्य प्रामाण्यं शक्यं प्रत्याख्यातुम् । न च अनुमानगम्यं शास्त्रप्रामाण्यं, येनान्यत्र दृष्टं निदर्शनमपेक्षेत । तस्मात्सिद्धं ब्रह्मणः शास्त्रप्रमाणकत्वम् ।

Bh.Tr. The word *tu* (but) is used in the *sūtra* to refute the *pūrvapakṣa* – the contrary proposition. That Brahman, which is omniscient and omnipotent in addition to being the cause of the origin, sustenance and destruction of Creation (*śr̥ṣṭī*), is known only through Vedānta – the scripture.

Q: How (is Brahman known through the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta alone)?

Ans: Because (Brahman is) the ascertained purport (of all *Upaniṣadic* statements).

All Upaniṣads (termed Vedānta in the *bhāṣya*) contain statements whose purport (*tātparyā*) is to unanimously establish one and one entity alone viz. Brahman. These include statements such as – ‘Dear son, only *sat* (the indestructible Brahman totally free from name and form) existed before Creation. That *sat* (Brahman) is non-dual in nature, without differences (*bhedas*) such as *svagata* (differences within oneself), *sajātīya* (differences between members of the same species) and *vi-jātīya* (differences with members of other species) *Ch.U.* 6-2-1; ‘Before Creation there was only the non-dual *ātmā*’. *Ai.U.* 1-1-1; ‘That (*tat*) Brahman (which appears manifold due to the Creative power *māyā*) which itself is this (*etat* – self-evident – ‘*ī ātmā*), is *apūrvam* (causeless), *anaparam* (free from any effects), *anantaram* (homogeneous – with nothing other than itself), *abāhyam* (non-dual in nature)’; ‘this *ātmā* is Brahman which experiences everything (i.e. it is *cinmātra* – the pure awareness principle or knowledge-principle alone)’ *Br.U.* 2-5-19; ‘all that is in front (i.e. all that is perceived everywhere) is Brahman alone’ (*Mu.U.* 2-2-11).

It would be inappropriate to postulate other meanings when an inquiry into the words in Vedāntic statements reveals the nature of Brahman, and it is also clear that their ascertained purport (*samanvaya*) (is Brahman). It would be tantamount to discarding that which is established by the Veda and dabbling in imaginary notions about things not stated in the Veda.

It cannot be said that the purport of Vedāntic statements is to establish the nature of *kartā* (doer) etc., because *Upaniṣadic* passages such as ‘In the state of knowledge, who sees what and using what means’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-13) deny the very presence of action or

elements of action (the *kartā*, the object of action and means of action in the state of *Brahmajñāna*).

Even if Brahman is an existent entity, it is not an object of other means of knowledge such as direct perception etc. because the identity of Brahman and *ātmā* cannot be known by any means of knowledge other than the proclamation of Vedānta, 'You are that Brahman' (*Ch.U.* 6-8-7). The contender had alleged that the teaching of Brahman is futile since Brahman is something other than that which can be acquired or given up (to produce a result). This does not apply in the case of Brahman since the highest accomplishment, liberation, is gained through the destruction of all sorrows (of *samsāra*) by the direct knowledge of *ātmā*, identical with Brahman which can neither be acquired nor given up.

There is no contradiction whatsoever when a statement that describes a deity (its greatness, the result) etc. becomes an auxiliary (*aṅga*) of the *upāsana* (meditation) contained in the Upaniṣad itself. Brahman however, cannot be a subsidiary constituent of any *vidhi* (injunction) enjoining *upāsana*. Brahman is not something to be either acquired or given up. It is indeed appropriate that on gaining the knowledge of oneness with Brahman, dualistic knowledge in the form of action, the agent of action, (the means) etc. stands nullified. Once eliminated through the direct cognition of the non-dual Brahman, the knowledge of duality cannot reappear, and Brahman cannot therefore become a subsidiary constituent (i.e. *śeṣa*) of *vidhi* enjoining *upāsana*.

Elsewhere (viz. in the *karmakāṇḍa*), the authenticity of Vedic statements (such as *arthavāda*

etc.) is not accepted without their connection to *vidhi*, but this is not true of Vedānta (*śāstra*). Vedānta is the means to gain *ātmavijñāna* (the direct knowledge of *ātmā*). It cannot be refuted, because *ātmavijñāna* results in *mokṣa*. The authenticity of Vedānta (*śāstra*) is not a thing to be inferred, and does not therefore require an illustration seen elsewhere. Therefore it is established that the only means of knowledge for Brahman is Vedānta-*śāstra*.

The first *sūtra* exhorts us to gain the direct knowledge of Brahman. The adjectival phrases used for Brahman in the *bhāṣya* above viz. omniscient, omnipotent, the cause of the origin (*janma*), sustenance (*sthiti*) and destruction (*bhaṅga*) of Creation, serve to remind us of the Brahman that was defined in the second *sūtra*. The third *sūtra* declares that Brahman can be known only through the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta. This leads to the question, how can this be so? How can Vedānta alone be the *pramāṇa* to know Brahman? The fourth *sūtra* provides the answer.

The reason is furnished. The *samanvaya* – the ascertained purport (*tātparya-nirṇaya*) – of all Vedāntic statements is Brahman alone. *Anvaya* stands for intended meaning. The prefix *sam* in the *sūtra* signifies *akhaṇḍārtha* i.e. correctness and completeness of the meaning of the word *anvaya*. A sentence having a meaning that is *akhaṇḍa* also conveys a meaning that is *asamśṛṣṭa* – free from syntactic components or connections with factors of action called *kāraka* (declensional cases). Grammatically, *kāraka* is the relation between a noun and a verb or between a noun and other words governing it. *Kāraḥ* are six in number: nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative and locative (but not genitive). Generally a sentence reveals its meaning through the interconnection of its components as indicated by the cases (*kāraḥ*) used. Such connections are inoperative when the meaning is *asamśṛṣṭa* and gives rise to *akhaṇḍārtha*. *Akhaṇḍam* means that

which is complete, whole or unbroken. The *akhaṇḍārtha* of a sentence is therefore a meaning that specifies an indivisible entity alone which has no components in the form of either *kāraṅkas* or a relation to something else indicated by the genitive. Such usage is not uncommon. Definitions such as ‘The bright and the brilliant one in the sky (at night)’ indicate the moon by implication. It cannot be refuted that all words in a sentence can imply a specific thing or meaning. This is accepted for words in sentences of *arthavāda* too, which are meant to be specific praise by implication.

An inference can also be furnished as follows to establish that the non-dual Brahman is the subject matter of the knowledge born of Vedānta as ascertained through *samanvaya*. ‘The non-dual Brahman is the subject matter of the knowledge born of Vedānta, because it is the purport of Vedānta. The purport of a given sentence is the thing to be known by it, just as the thing to be known by sentences of the *karmakāṇḍa*, namely *dharma*, forms their purport’. The statement that the non-dual Brahman is the subject matter of the knowledge born of Vedānta cannot be refuted because *Upaniṣadic* words such as *satyam* (indestructible), *jñānam* (knowledge-principle) and *anantam* (limitless one) certainly reveal the non-dual Brahman.

Further, there are six (*ṣaṭ*) criteria (*liṅgas*) or characteristics used to establish the *tātparyā* (purport) of Vedāntic statements. That Brahman is the purport of Vedāntic statements can also be established through these criteria. The *ṣaṭ-liṅgas* are:

- 1) *Upakramopasaṃhāra* (beginning and end),
- 2) *Abhyāsa* (repetition),
- 3) *Apūrvatā* (uniqueness – not being the object of any other *pramāṇa*),
- 4) *Phala* (result – *mokṣa*),
- 5) *Arthavāda* (praise of non-dual Brahman and condemnation of duality),
- 6) *Upapatti* (reasoning).

The following illustrations show how the six *liṅgās* can be used to corroborate that the purport (*tātparyā*) of Vedānta – *Upaniṣadic* statements – is to reveal non-dual Brahman.

1) *Upakramopasaṃhāra*

In *Chāndogyopaniṣat* (6-2-1), sage Uddālaka teaches his beloved son Śvetaketu that this entire Creation, before it came into existence, was nothing but the one indestructible Brahman, *Sat*. The word *eva* (only) in the phrase *sadeva* refutes the existence of a world independent of Brahman. That Brahman is described as *ekam eva advitīyam* to deny any *sajātīya*, *vi-jātīya* and *svagata* differences in *sat* – Brahman. This is the *upakrama* (beginning) of the topic regarding Brahman. The topic is concluded in ‘This entire Creation has *sat* (Brahman) as its *ātmā* – its very nature’ (*Ch.U.* 6-8-7). These statements together constitute one *tātparyā-liṅga*, namely *upakramopasaṃhāra*.

2) *Abhyāsa*

The repetition of the teaching, ‘You are that Brahman’ (*Ch.U.* Ch. 6-sections 8 to 16) nine times is *abhyāsa*.

3) *Apūrvatā*

The non-dual Brahman which is devoid of sound, touch, form, taste and smell cannot be the object of any other means of knowledge. This is made clear in the statement ‘Dear son (just as salt dissolved in water, though present, cannot be seen), Brahman, (though) verily present in this embodiment cannot be perceived through the senses’ (*Ch.U.* 6-13-2). This is the *apūrvatā* of the statement.

4) *Phala*

Consider the statement: ‘For a person who has a preceptor (*ācārya*), and whose ignorance of his own self

is destroyed, the delay in gaining *videhamukti* (bodiless liberation) extends only until the present embodiment comes to an end. Thereafter, the *jñānī* attains *videhamukti*' (Ch.U. 6-14-2). This shows that *mokṣa* (liberation) is the *phala* (result) of *Brahmajñāna*.

5) *Arthavāda*

‘That *sat* (Brahman – called *devatā*) considered; let me enter into these three deities viz. fire, water and earth, in the form of *jīva* and create names and forms.’ (Ch.U. 6-3-2) is an example of *arthavāda* because an entry into something is not possible for an all-pervasive entity.

6) *Upapatti*

The illustrations of mud etc. (Ch.U. 6-1-4 to 6) provide the *yukti* (reasoning) that an effect is non-separate from its material cause.

Such six *liṅgas* are found throughout the Upaniṣads, either individually or collectively. To illustrate this, the *bhāṣya* quotes a statement of *upakrama* (beginning) from the *Aitareyopaniṣat*, viz. ‘Before Creation, there was only the non-dual *ātmā*.’ (Ai.U. 1-1-1). The concluding statement (*upasamhāra-vākya*) from *madhukāṇḍa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat* – ‘That (*tat*) Brahman which itself is this (*etat*) is *apūrvam*.....’ (Bṛ.U. 2-5-19) – establishes the attributeless (*nirviśeṣa*) nature of *ātmā*. The first three quotations in the *bhāṣya* Ch.U. 6-2-1, Ai.U. 1-1-1 and Bṛ.U. 2-5-19 are from the *Sāma*, *Ṛk* and *Yajurveda*. The fourth *Mu.U.* 2-2-11 is from the *Atharvaveda*. This demonstrates that the purport of the Upaniṣads in all four Vedas is Brahman alone. The word *purastāt* in the sentence from the *Muṇḍakopaniṣat* (2-2-11) quoted in the *bhāṣya* can mean ‘in front’ or ‘to the east’. It refers to all that is everywhere in all directions, as seen in the continuation of that *mantra*. The statement implies that everything that ignorant people perceive as not Brahman is in reality nothing but Brahman. The word *ityādī* (etc.) from the *bhāṣya* refers to statements such as ‘*satyam jñānam anantam*

Brahma’ (*Tai.U.* 2-1-1) and other statements of a similar nature.

The opponent’s contention is: Let Brahman be the purport (*tātparyā*); but why should it not be *karma* (action) alone that is propounded by Vedāntic statements? The answer: it is not correct to discard the ascertained purport of all *Upaniṣadic* statements, viz. Brahman, and imagine that it is *karma* when *karma* is not conveyed by them at all. For the rule is – ‘the meaning of a word is its *tātparyā* (the purport)’.

Karma invariably presupposes superimposed duality consisting of the doer (*kartā*), the means of action, the deity to be invoked and so on. *Upaniṣadic* passages on the other hand explicitly deny the presence of even the least trace of duality in Brahman. Therefore to imagine that Vedāntic statements reveal the doer, deity and other factors related to *karma* or that they praise *vidhi* is inappropriate. Statements can be of the nature of praise when they have no results of their own. But since Vedānta has *mokṣa* as its result, this norm which is meant for statements of *arthavāda* is inapplicable.

The contrary view was that the self-existent Brahman cannot be the purport of the Veda because an existent thing can be known by other means of knowledge. This is not true in the case of Brahman. Though self-existent, Brahman is not available to be known through any *pramāṇa* other than Vedānta because it is totally devoid of attributes. The nature of a thing to be known determines the *pramāṇa* to be employed to know it. There is no rule that an existing entity can be known only through *pramāṇas* other than the Veda. Such baseless reasoning could also be used to refute the Veda as the *pramāṇa* for *dharma*. Consider the following inference. ‘*Dharma* is not the purport of the Veda; because it is *sādhya* (a thing to be accomplished) like cooking, which is known by a *pramāṇa* other than the Veda’. Now if it is argued that *dharma* cannot be known by any other *pramāṇa* than the Veda, the same holds good for Brahman also.

The claim that the teaching of Brahman is futile because Brahman is distinct from things that can be acquired or given up is a misplaced argument. The Upaniṣads unequivocally declare that *Brahmajñāna* ensures total freedom from the sorrows of *saṃsāra* – called liberation (*mokṣa*), the highest goal of life.

The contrary proposition had also stated earlier that Vedāntic (*Upaniṣadic*) statements are dedicated to *upāsanā* (meditation). Does this refer only to those Vedāntic statements which are related to the *upāsanās* of *prāṇa*, *pañcāgni* etc. or to all Vedāntic statements? The first viewpoint is accepted. There are certain *upāsanās* recommended in the Upaniṣads to acquire steadiness of mind (i.e. *cittanaiścalya*). Therefore there is no contradiction if statements which reveal the deity, its exaltedness, the result etc., happen to be auxiliaries (*śeṣa*) of *upāsanās* contained in the Upaniṣads. But the second view is rejected outright. Vedāntic statements such as *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam Brahma* (*Tai.U.* 2-1-1) are totally free of *vidhī* (injunctions) and have their purpose in defining Brahman, whose knowledge confers *mokṣa*. To suggest that such statements convey *upāsanās* is quite improper. Thus Brahman cannot be the auxiliary (*śeṣa*) of any *upāsanā*. Further, if Brahman were an auxiliary of *upāsanā*, would it be an auxiliary before or after gaining the knowledge of Brahman? In the former case, Brahman endowed with superimposed attributes could be the auxiliary of *upāsanā*. But after gaining *Brahmajñāna*, 'I am Brahman', *upāsanā* itself is impossible because the notion of duality stands negated. The Brahman that is discovered to be oneself as a result of *Brahmajñāna* can be neither acquired nor given up. The basis and means of *upāsanā* are the notion of duality which is itself based on the notion of meditated (*upāsya*) and the meditator (*upāsaka*). Since duality is destroyed by *Brahmajñāna*, there is no question of Brahman being the auxiliary (*śeṣa*) of some *upāsanā-vidhī*.

Some may think that even if the knowledge of identity with Brahman eliminates the notion of duality, the duality can reappear, necessitating *upāsanās*. This is not possible because

Brahmasākṣātkāra – the direct cognition of non-dual Brahman – does away with the notion of duality once and for all. Thus Brahman can never be an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) of any *vidhi*.

It is true that *Veda-prāmāṇya* (the authenticity of the Veda as a *pramāṇa*) invariably holds good in the *karmakāṇḍa* with respect to statements of the nature of *arthavāda* when these are connected to *vidhi* enjoining a *karma*. Therefore, the rule – ‘wherever there is *Veda-prāmāṇya*, there is *kriyārthatva* (the status of being meant for *karma*)’ – is valid for *karmakāṇḍa*. But to draw a similar inference in the case of *jñānakāṇḍa*, namely that Vedāntic statements by themselves cannot be *pramāṇa* because they lack any connection to *karma*, is wrong. For instance, take the following inference, where the flawed nature of the inference above becomes clear. ‘Vedāntic statements are not a *prāmāṇa* on their own because they are not meant for *karma* (i.e. *akriyārthatvāt*)’. As an illustration, statements of *arthavāda* such as ‘He cried (*sorodit*)’, which are worthless on their own, can be cited.

This inference is defective, because the worthlessness of such statements of *arthavāda* on their own is ‘*upādhi*’ – the thing that leads to *hetvābhāsa* or the fallacious middle term. Even statements of *arthavāda* in the *karmakāṇḍa* are not *pramāṇa* in and of themselves because they are worthless unless connected to some *vidhi*. Their *kriyārthatvam* – connection to *karma* – renders them fruitful (*phalavat*). It is the fruitfulness of Vedic statements that gives them the status of *pramāṇa* and not necessarily *kriyārthatva* (being meant for *karma*), though in the case of *karmakāṇḍa* it appears to be cursorily so. Vedāntic statements impart the knowledge of Brahman independently. This knowledge yields liberation (*mokṣa*), the highest accomplishment in life. Being fruitful on their own, they (Vedāntic / *Upaniṣadic* statements) therefore independently have *Veda-prāmāṇya* in revealing Brahman. They need not have any connection to *karma* to become a *pramāṇa*. Thus the *Veda-prāmāṇya* of Vedānta cannot be refuted simply because they are not connected to *karma*.

Here is another contrary proposition. The status of Vedānta as a *pramāṇa* is something that cannot be directly perceived. Therefore it has to be known through inference. An inference requires certain components like *hetu* (reason, or middle term). Since Vedānta forms a substantial portion of the Veda, it is appropriate that *kriyārthatvam* (the status of being meant for *karma*) is the *hetu*, because this very *hetu* invariably accompanies statements of *karmakāṇḍa* either directly or indirectly. But such a *hetu* is not available in Vedānta because Vedānta itself refutes the connection of *kriya* (action) with its *jñānakāṇḍa* section, continues the contender. Inferential knowledge cannot be established in the absence of a *hetu*. As a result, the contrary proposition concludes that Vedānta cannot be the *pramāṇa* to know Brahman. The *bhāṣya* resolves this doubt by establishing that the authenticity of Vedānta (*śāstra*) is not a thing to be inferred and as a result, does not require an illustration seen elsewhere. The validity of a *pramāṇa* depends on its capacity to impart knowledge and not on other *pramāṇas*. It does not need any corroboration by inference. For example, the eye as the means of knowledge to see forms is a valid means in and of itself.

Any doubt about the validity of a *pramāṇa* has to be resolved by ascertaining whether the thing being made known by it is fruitful (*phalavat*), unknown (*anadhigata*) and unrefuted (*abādhita*) by any other means of knowledge. *Kriyārthatvam* cannot be the criterion for ascertaining a *pramāṇa*. If ‘being meant for action’ (*kriyārthatvam*) is the norm in determining the *prāmāṇya*, it is countered in sentences such as ‘*kūpe patet*’ – ‘should jump into the well’. It cannot be a valid *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge), though the statement deals with an action, that of jumping in a well. Else there would be a flurry of people lining up to jump into the well, which is patently absurd. This should also make it clear that statements of *vidhi* in the *karmakāṇḍa* have *prāmāṇya* because they reveal something fruitful, unknown and unrefuted. Their *prāmāṇya* is not on account of being dedicated to any *karma* (action).

The first interpretation of the *sūtra* ‘*tat tu samanvayāt*’ is now concluded. That the Vedānta-*śāstra* is the only means of knowledge for Brahman is proved because of the harmonization (*samanvaya*) of all Vedāntic statements in Brahman. Thus the *bhāṣyakāra* has presented all possible objections of followers of the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* (viz. the *pūrvamīmāṃsakas*) and answered them in the *bhāṣya* on this fourth *sūtra*. *Pūrvamīmāṃsakas* consider the Vedas, including Vedānta, to be totally dedicated to *karma*. According to them, Vedāntic statements become fruitful only as auxiliaries to the main injunctions, *vidhi* and *niṣedha*. They club *Upaniṣadic* statements with those of *arthavāda* and try to prove their utility through outcomes such as revealing the deity involved, the doer (*kartā*), the nature of the result, some virtues and events etc. If this were not so, they claim that a large portion of the Veda would be useless. In refutation, the *bhāṣyakāra* has clearly established the Vedāntic doctrine, namely, *Upaniṣadic* (Vedāntic) statements are not auxiliaries of any *vidhi* (injunction) or *niṣedha* (prohibition). They are not meant for *karma*. Vedāntic statements alone reveal Brahman independently and are fruitful in and of themselves. Thus ends the first interpretation of the fourth *sūtra*.

THE SECOND INTERPRETATION OF THE FOURTH *SŪTRA* (CONTRARY PROPOSITION)

Two glosses (*vṛttī*) have been written on the *Brahmasūtras* before this *bhāṣya* by commentators Bodhāyana and Upavarṣa. Reference to either or both as *vṛttikāra(s)* are found at places in the *sūtrabhāṣya*. These *vṛttikāras* do not accept that Brahman can be known independently through the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta. According to them, Vedāntic statements essentially enjoin *upāsanās* and describe Brahman as an auxiliary to the *vidhi* (injunction) of *upāsanā*, not to be known independent of the *vidhi*. The *bhāṣyakāra* first presents the *vṛttikāra*’s contrary proposition and then establishes the Vedāntic doctrine by exposing the fallacies in their proposition point by point.

भा.

अत्र अपरे प्रत्यवतिष्ठन्ते । यदि अपि शास्त्रप्रमाणकं ब्रह्म तथापि प्रतिपत्तिविधिविषयतया एव शास्त्रेण ब्रह्म समर्प्यते । यथा यूपाहवनीयादीनि अलौकिकानि अपि विधिशेषतया शास्त्रेण समर्प्यन्ते तद्वत् । कुतः एतत् । प्रवृत्तिनिवृत्तिप्रयोजनत्वात् शास्त्रस्य । तथाहि शास्त्रतात्पर्यविदः आहुः - 'दृष्टः हि तस्य अर्थः कर्मावबोधनम्' इति । 'चोदना इति क्रियायाः प्रवर्तकं वचनम्' । 'तस्य ज्ञानं उपदेशः' (जै.सू. १-१-५) 'तद्भूतानां क्रियार्थं समाग्रायः -' (जै.सू. १-१-२५) 'आग्रायस्य क्रियार्थत्वात् आनर्थक्यं अतदर्थानाम् -' (जै.सू. १-२-१) इति च । अतः पुरुषं क्वचित् विषयविशेषे प्रवर्तयत् कुतश्चित् विषयविशेषात् निवर्तयत् च अर्थवत् शास्त्रम् । तच्छेषतया च अन्यत् उपयुक्तम् । तत्सामान्यात् वेदान्तानां अपि तथा एव अर्थवत्त्वं स्यात् । सति च विधिपरत्वे यथा स्वर्गादिकामस्य अग्निहोत्रादि साधनं विधीयते एवं अमृतत्वकामस्य ब्रह्मज्ञानं विधीयते इति युक्तम् ।

Bh.Tr.

When it was stated that Brahman can be known only through Vedānta, others (i.e. other than the followers of *pūrvamīmāṃsā* viz. *vṛttikārāḥ*) take a contrary view (which is as follows). Although Brahman is known through the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta-śāstra, it is as the object of *upāsana* (*pratipatti*), which is itself the object of a *vidhi* (injunction), that Vedānta makes it (i.e. Brahman) known. Just as things such as 'yūpa', 'āhavanīya' etc., not commonly found in the world, are made known by the Veda as an auxiliary to *vidhi*, so too (is Brahman revealed by Vedānta as an auxiliary to *vidhi*).

Q: Why is this so?

Ans: This is because the purpose of the śāstra (the Veda) is to prompt an individual to take to *pravṛtti* (undertake

certain activity) or *nivṛtti* (desist from certain activity). For experts who know the purport of the Veda have declared – ‘It is seen that the purpose of the Veda is to impart the knowledge of *karma*.’ (*Śābarabhāṣya* on *Jai. Sū. 1-1-1*); ‘The statement that urges one to take to *karma* is called *codanā*’ (which stands for *dharma*. *Śābarabhāṣya* on *Jai. Sū. 1-1-2*); ‘The means of knowledge of *dharma* (i.e. *karma*) is the teaching’ (of the Veda, *Jai. Sū. 1-1-5*); ‘Words describing existing entities found in the Vedas have to be read with those (words) which express *karma* (action)’, – *Jai. Sū. 1-1-25*); and also ‘Since the Veda is meant to reveal *karma* (like sacrifices etc.), statements not prescribing *karma* are not useful’ – (*Jai. Sū. 1-2-1*). Therefore the purpose of the Vedas is to encourage the individual to do certain things and abstain from certain others. Other statements meant for *arthavāda*, etc. are useful as a subsidiary of *karma*. Vedāntic statements should be similarly useful due to (their) similarity with *karmakāṇḍa*. If Vedāntic statements are meant for scriptural injunctions (*vidhi paratve*), it stands to reason that just as means like *agnihotra* etc. are enjoined for one who desires heaven and the like, so too is the knowledge of Brahman enjoined for one who desires immortality.

According to this contrary proposition, *mokṣa* (liberation) is gained by *upāsana* (meditation), whereas the Vedāntic doctrine states and establishes that it is gained by *tattvajñāna* – direct cognition of the ultimate reality, viz. Brahman.

As envisaged by the opponent, the object of *vidhi* (injunction) in Vedāntic statements is *upāsana*. The question arises, what is the object of *upāsana*? (According to the opponent) Vedānta reveals that Brahman is the object of *upāsana*. This means Vedānta is an auxiliary to *vidhi*. The illustrations of *yūpa*, *āhavanīya* etc. are

cited to explain how the Brahman described in the passages such as *satyam, jñānam, anatum Brahma* becomes the *śeṣa* (subsidiary) in sentences of *vidhi* enjoining *upāsana*s. There are *vidhis* (injunctions) like ‘Ties the sacrificial animal to the *yūpa*’; ‘Offers oblations in the *āhavanīya* fire’; ‘The oblation should be offered to Indra’. These statements do not describe what a *yūpa* etc. are. However, there are other Vedic sentences which describe these constituents of *vidhi*. ‘*Yūpa* is an octagonal sacrificial wooden post prepared by cutting and paring wood.’ ‘*Āhavanīya* is one of the sacred fires.’ ‘Indra is a deity who wields the thunderbolt’. These statements are subsidiary to the statements of their corresponding *vidhis* in that they describe essential factors involved in the *vidhis*. In the same way, Vedāntic statements are subsidiary to *vidhis* enjoining *upāsana* by describing what is the *upāsya* – the thing to be meditated upon.

Vedāntist (questions): But the *ṣaḍlīngas* – six criteria, *apakramopasaṃhāra* and the rest, prove that Brahman is the *tātparya* (purport) of Vedānta. How can Brahman be a subsidiary of *vidhi*?

Contrary proposition (clarifies): The purport of the scripture (the Veda) is ascertained in accordance with the conduct of *ṛddhas* – saintly or trustworthy persons – who speak the truth. Through the speech of such reliable persons, people are inspired to take to either *pravṛtti* or *nivṛtti* – that is, do certain things or desist from doing certain things. Therefore the purpose of the Veda is *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*. Both these, *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, are born from the knowledge of *karma* (action). Therefore, the Veda is meant for action and its utility lies in *pravṛtti* or *nivṛtti* alone. The Brahman described in the Veda can be useful only when it serves as an auxiliary to action. The *bhāṣyakāra* cites the quotations given by the *pūrvapakṣa* from the *Śābarabhāṣya*, which states that venerable persons approve this view. The passages quoted show Śābaraswāmī’s endorsement of the view that the Vedas are dedicated to *karma* alone. A few

Jaimini sūtras from *pūrvamīmāṃsā* are also then quoted for the same purpose. Since venerable persons say so, it can be concluded that the Veda comprises primarily of statements of *vidhi* (injunction) and *niṣedha* (prohibition). Statements of *arthavāda*, whether praise or censure, merge into those of *vidhi*. Therefore the purpose of Vedāntic statements is *karma* alone.

Vedāntist (questions): How can Vedāntic statements impart the knowledge of *karma* when they do not refer either to the person enjoined (i.e. *niyojya*) or the thing enjoined (i.e. *vidheya*)?

Contrary proposition (clarifies): When the view of saintly persons is that all Vedic statements are directed at performing *vidhis*, it is correct to say that even *Brahmajñāna* is enjoined for those who aspire to gain immortality, just as *agnihotra* etc. are enjoined for those who yearn for the heavens.

Vedāntist (objects): The works of Jaimini and Vyāsa, the authors of *dharmajijñāsā* and *Brahmajijñāsā* respectively, make clear the difference between the *karmakāṇḍa* and the *jñānakāṇḍa* portion of the Veda. If both dealt with the same subject, two distinct divisions would not be possible. When there is a clear difference in the subject matter to be known (i.e. *jijñāsya*) in these two portions, it necessarily follows that their results (*phalas*) too should differ. If the knowledge of Brahman is enjoined in order to obtain a *karmaphala* (result of action) called liberation, there would be no difference between the results of action and a liberation that is born of action. There cannot be a distinction between things to be known through the *karmakāṇḍa* and the *jñānakāṇḍa* if the results of action and liberation are of a similar nature.

Therefore, the ever existent liberation is distinct from the results of action, which have a beginning because they are produced. It is improper to say that a *vidhi* which is *karma*-based enjoins knowledge that manifests liberation. The *bhāṣya* portion below presents this objection raised by the Vedāntist.

भा. ननु इह जिज्ञास्यवैलक्षण्यं उक्तम् – कर्मकाण्डे भव्यः धर्मः जिज्ञास्यः इह तु भूतं नित्यनिर्वृत्तं ब्रह्म जिज्ञास्यं इति । तत्र धर्मज्ञानफलात् अनुष्ठानापेक्षात् विलक्षणं ब्रह्मज्ञानफलं भवितुं अर्हति ।

Bh.Tr. (Objection by Vedāntist): But a distinction is made between the things to be known (i.e. *jijñāśya*) in the two divisions of the Veda. The thing to be known through the *karmakāṇḍa* is the *dharma* to be accomplished, whereas the thing to be known through Vedānta (i.e. *jñānakāṇḍa*) is the existent Brahman which is ever-accomplished. In these two (divisions), the result of *Brahmajñāna* has to be distinct from the result of the knowledge of *dharma* which requires the performance (*anuṣṭhāna*) of *karma*.

The contender responds by stating his view that liberation is not the result of an action cannot be proved. Therefore, it is quite proper to enjoin *Brahmajñāna* (as a *vidhi*) to gain liberation. When it is pointed out that the distinction between *Brahmajñāna* and *karmakāṇḍa* cannot survive if the results of action alone are to be known through Vedānta, the contender affirms that this is desirable. According to him, there is no such distinction between the two. The contender then can be questioned further: if the subject matter of both divisions is the same, was there any need to formulate a separate *sūtra* that exhorts one to take to inquiry into Brahman? He responds by saying that Brahman is established by the author of the *Brahmasūtra* as an auxiliary to *jñānavidhi* – a Vedic sentence that enjoins the knowledge of Brahman. The *bhāṣya* now presents this contention.

भा. न अर्हति एवम् भवितुम् । कार्यविधिप्रयुक्तस्य एव ब्रह्मणः प्रतिपाद्यमानत्वात् । ‘आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः’ (बृह. २-४-५) इति । ‘यः आत्मा अपहतपाप्मा – सः अन्वेष्टव्यः सः विजिज्ञासितव्यः’ (छान्दो. ८-७-१) ‘आत्मा इति एव उपासीत’

(बृह. १-४-७) 'आत्मानम् एव लोकं उपासीत' (बृ. १-४-१५) 'ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्म एव भवति' (मुण्ड. ३-२-९)। इत्यादिविधानेषु सत्सु कः असौ आत्मा किं तत् ब्रह्म इति आकाङ्क्षायां तत्स्वरूपसमर्पणेन सर्वे वेदान्ताः उपयुक्ताः – नित्यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वगतः नित्यतृप्तः नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावः विज्ञानं आनन्दं ब्रह्म इति एवं आदयः । तदुपासनात् च शास्त्रदृष्टः अदृष्टः मोक्षः फलं भविष्यति इति । कर्तव्यविध्यननुप्रवेशे वस्तुमात्रकथने हानोपादानासंभवात्, सप्तद्वीपा वसुमती, राजा असौ गच्छति इत्यादि वाक्यवत् वेदान्तवाक्यानां आनर्थक्यं एव स्यात् ।

Bh.Tr. (Contender replies): It cannot be so; because Brahman that is established in *Brahmamīmāṃsā* verily serves (as a *śeṣa* – auxiliary) to a *kāryavidhi* (an injunction connected to things to be produced in future). There are sacred injunctions (in Vedānta) such as: 'O (Maitreyi) *ātmā* should be known directly' (*Br.U.* 2-4-5); 'The *ātmā* that is free from sins should be inquired into; it should be known directly' (*Ch.U.* 8-7-1); 'There is *ātmā*, thus *upāsana* should be performed' (*Br.U.* 1-4-7), '*Ātmā*, referred to as *loka*, alone should be meditated upon' (*Br.U.* 1-4-15); 'The knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman.' (*Mu.U.* 3-2-9). In the context of these sacred injunctions, when there is a desire to know 'What is this *ātmā*?', 'What is that Brahman?', Vedāntic passages such as '*nitya* (ever-existent principle), omniscient, all-pervasive, ever-contented, having the nature of eternally being the pure knowledge-principle that is ever-liberated, the pure awareness principle, Brahman that is limitless happiness' become useful by revealing what Brahman – *ātmā* is. Its *upāsana* will produce the result, *mokṣa* (liberation), which is described by the Veda but is

generally unknown (like the heavens). If it is merely the existing Brahman that is described without connecting it to *vidhi* (as an auxiliary), because it (i.e. Brahman) is not available either to be acquired or given up, Vedāntic statements like the statements ‘The earth has seven continents’, ‘There goes the king’ will become futile.

The contender claims that the *Upaniṣadic* statements quoted contain an injunction (*vidhi*) of *upāsana* though in reality they exhort the *mumukṣu* to gain *Brahmātmañjāna*. So the comments on these *Upaniṣadic* quotations given in this proposition are in conformance with the contrary proposition. It is not based on the correct purport laid down in Vedānta.

The contention in the contrary proposition that the knowledge of the existing Brahman cannot produce any result is now being refuted by the Vedāntist.

भा. ननु वस्तुमात्रकथने अपि रज्जुः इयं, न अयं सर्पः इत्यादौ भ्रान्तिजनितभीतिनिवर्तनेन अर्थवत्त्वं दृष्टं तथा इह अपि असंसार्यात्मवस्तुकथनेन संसारित्वभ्रान्तिनिवर्तनेन अर्थवत्त्वं स्यात्।

Bh.Tr. (Vedāntist objects): But even the description of real things can have purpose, as seen in the removal of the fear born of wrong notions, as in statements such as ‘This is a rope and not a snake’. Likewise, passages in Vedānta that talk of the true nature of *ātmā* as free from *saṃsāra* can also have purpose in that they terminate the erroneous notion that the entity denoted by ‘me’ is a *saṃsāri* – one subject to transmigration.

The contender refutes the above objection by claiming that the illustration is inapplicable.

भा.

स्यात् एतत् एवं, यदि रज्जुस्वरूपश्रवणे इव सर्पभ्रान्तिः, संसारित्वभ्रान्तिः ब्रह्मस्वरूपश्रवणमात्रेण निवर्तेत । न तु निवर्तते, श्रुतब्रह्मणः अपि यथापूर्वं सुखदुःखादि संसारिधर्मदर्शनात्, 'श्रोतव्यः मनव्यः निदिध्यासितव्यः' (बृह. २-४-५) इति च श्रवणोत्तरकालयोः मनननिदिध्यासनयोः विधिदर्शनात् । तस्मात् प्रतिपत्तिविधिविषयतया एव शास्त्रप्रमाणकं ब्रह्म अभ्युपगन्तव्यं इति ।

Bh.Tr.

(Contender refutes): This can be so, provided the erroneous notion of oneself being a *saṃsārī* (a transmigratory entity) terminates merely by hearing of the nature of Brahman, just as the wrong notion of snake ceases on hearing of its true nature as a rope. But the delusion (of being a *saṃsārī*) does not cease, because even a person who has heard of the nature of Brahman is seen to be endowed with attributes of *saṃsāra* like joy, sorrow etc. Moreover, in the *Upaniṣadic* statement, 'ātmanā should be listened to, reflected upon and contemplated upon' (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5), a *vidhi* (injunction) stating that *manana* (reflection) and *nidhidhyāsana* (contemplation) should follow *śravaṇa* (listening) is seen. Therefore it has to be accepted that Brahman is known through the means of Vedānta as an object of *upāsana* alone enjoined by a *vidhi* (injunction).

In short, the contrary proposition in the second interpretation of this *sūtra* concludes that Vedānta is meant for *vidhi* on account of the following reasons:

- i) Words have power when they are endowed with *kriyā* (action).
- ii) The Veda can have purpose only in terms of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* or *vidhi* and *niṣedha*.
- iii) An existent thing cannot bring about a result.

- iv) The *vidhis* of *manana* and *nididhyāsana* have to be taken to after *śravaṇa*.

Therefore according to the contender, Brahman is known through the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta as an object of *upāsana* alone enjoined by a *vidhi*.

THE SECOND INTERPRETATION OF THE FOURTH *SŪTRA* (VEDĀNTIC DOCTRINE)

The *bhāṣyakāra* now establishes the Vedāntic doctrine by refuting the contrary proposition point by point. This is summarised in the following inference substantiated by two reasons: Vedāntic statements are not meant for *vidhi* because (a) they are fruitful on their own (unlike *arthavāda*) and (b) because they do not have a *niyojya* – a person to whom a *vidhi* can be enjoined. They are fruitful on their own by ending the delusion about one's true nature as in statements such as 'This is not a snake, but a rope'. The inference furnishes two reasons to highlight the dissimilarity between Vedāntic statements and those of *arthavāda* or those which involve an individual for whom a *vidhi* is enjoined. An illustration of the first reason is the statement '*sorodīt*' (He cried), which has no result of its own. In order to be fruitful, it has to be related to *vidhi*. On the other hand, Vedāntic statements are fruitful on their own since they confer *mokṣa*. They do not need to be associated with any *vidhi* in order to become purposeful. An illustration of the second reason is the *vidhi* '*svargakāmo yajeta*' (i.e. a person desirous of heaven should perform sacrifices) which is enjoined for an individual who wants to gain the heavens, presently unavailable to him. On the other hand, Vedānta does not specify a *niyojya* (an individual for whom *karma*-based *vidhi* is enjoined). A *mumukṣu* (one who wishes to get liberated) cannot be the *niyojya* of a *vidhi* because he does not hanker for a thing that is presently non-existent to him such as the heavens. All that he requires to gain liberation is to get rid of the ignorance of his true nature – the ever existing Brahman, as seen in the example of the rope mistaken for a snake.

The argument that *Brahmajñāna* is the object of an *upāsana* enjoined by a *vidhi* on the *mumukṣu* who is considered a *niyojya* is refuted by distinguishing the result of *Brahmajñāna* from that of *karma*.

THE RESULT OF *BRAHMAJÑĀNA* IS DISTINCT FROM THAT OF *KARMA*

भा. अत्र अभिधीयते – न, कर्मब्रह्मविद्याफलयोः वैलक्षणयात्। शारीरं वाचिकं मानसं च कर्म श्रुतिस्मृतिसिद्धं धर्माख्यं, यद्विषया जिज्ञासा ‘अथातो धर्मजिज्ञासा’ (जै.सू. १ - १ - १) इति सूत्रिता; अधर्मः अपि हिंसादिः प्रतिषेधचोदनालक्षणत्वात् जिज्ञास्यः परिहाराय । तयोः चोदनालक्षणयोः अर्थानर्थयोः धर्माधर्मयोः फले प्रत्यक्षे सुखदुःखे शरीरवाङ्मनोभिः एव उपभुज्यमाने विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगजन्ये ब्रह्मादिषु स्थावरान्तेषु प्रसिद्धे । मनुष्यत्वात् आरभ्य ब्रह्मान्तेषु देहवत्सु सुखतारतम्यं अनुश्रूयते । ततः च तद्धेतोः धर्मस्य तारतम्यं गम्यते । धर्मतारतम्यात् अधिकारितारतम्यम् । प्रसिद्धं च अर्थित्वसामर्थ्यादिकृतं अधिकारितारतम्यम् । तथा च यागाद्यनुष्ठायिनां एव विद्यासमाधिविशेषात् उत्तरेण पथा गमनं, केवलैः इष्टापूर्तदत्तसाधनैः धूमादिक्रमेण दक्षिणेन पथा गमनं, तत्र अपि सुखतारतम्यं तत्साधनतारतम्यं च शास्त्रात् ‘यावत् संपातं उषित्वा’ (छान्दो. ५ - १० - ५) इति अस्मात् गम्यते । तथा मनुष्यादिषु नारकस्थावरान्तेषु सुखलवः चोदनालक्षणधर्मसाध्यः एव इति गम्यते तारतम्येन वर्तमानः । तथा ऊर्ध्वगतेषु अधोगतेषु च देहवत्सु दुःखतारतम्यदर्शनात् तद्धेतोः अधर्मस्य प्रतिषेधचोदनालक्षणस्य तदनुष्ठायिनां च तारतम्यं गम्यते । एवं अविद्यादि दोषवतां धर्माधर्मतारतम्यनिमित्तं शरीरोपादानपूर्वकं सुखदुःखतारतम्यं अनित्यं संसाररूपं श्रुतिस्मृतिन्यायप्रसिद्धम् । तथा च श्रुतिः – ‘न ह वै सशरीरस्य सतः प्रियाप्रिययोः अपहतिः अस्ति’ इति यथावर्णितं संसाररूपं अनुवदति ।

‘अशरीरं वाव सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्पृशतः’ (छान्दो. ८-१२-१) इति प्रियाप्रियस्पर्शनप्रतिषेधात् चोदनालक्षणधर्मकार्यत्वं मोक्षाख्यस्य अशरीरत्वस्य प्रतिषिध्यते इति गम्यते । धर्मकार्यत्वे हि प्रियाप्रियस्पर्शनप्रतिषेधः न उपपद्यते। अशरीरत्वं एव धर्मकार्यं इति चेत् न, तस्य स्वाभाविकत्वात् । ‘अशरीरं शरीरेषु अनवस्थेषु अवस्थितम् । महान्तं विभुं आत्मानं मत्वा धीरः न शोचति’ (काठ. १-२-२२) ‘अप्राणः हि अमनाः शुभ्रः’ (मुण्ड. २-१-२) ‘असङ्गः हि अयं पुरुषः’ (बृह. ४-३-१५) इत्यादिश्रुतिभ्यः । अतः एव अनुष्ठेयकर्मफलविलक्षणं मोक्षाख्यं अशरीरत्वं नित्यं इति सिद्धम्।

Bh.Tr. The Vedāntic doctrine in response to this contrary proposition is as follows: It is not correct (to say that *Brahmajñāna* is the auxiliary of an *upāsana-vidhī*) because there is a clear distinction between the results of *karma* and the result of *Brahmavidyā* (viz. *mokṣa* – liberation).

The physical (*śārīram*), verbal (*vācīkam*) and mental (*mānasam*) *karma* (actions) described in the Veda and the *smṛtis* are termed as *dharma*. An inquiry to know the exact nature of *dharma* is initiated in the *sūtra*, ‘*Athāto dharmajijñāsā*’ (i.e. an inquiry into the nature of *dharma* should be undertaken after learning the Vedas because *dharma* teaches of things that bear fruit – *Jai.Sū.* 1-1-1). Joys and sorrows are born of the contact of senses with sense objects and are directly experienced through means of the body, the speech and the mind alone. They are the results of desirable *dharma* and undesirable *adharma*. *Dharma* and *adharma* are defined by Vedic injunctions that enjoin or prohibit respectively. These (joys and sorrows) are well-known to all living beings – from *Hiraṇyagarbha* down to an unmoving tree, for instance. The Upaniṣads describe the varying degree of happiness in embodied

beings from humans to *Hiraṇyagarbha* (*Tai.U.* 2-8; *Br.U.* 4-3-33). This shows that varying degrees of *dharma* are the cause of happiness. The gradation of *adhikārī* (eligible persons) is seen from the varying degree of *dharma*. It is well-known that *adhikāris* can be graded by the type of desires they entertain and their worldly capacity to perform *karma* in terms of progeny, wealth and other factors (viz. scholarliness and the absence of disqualifications as per Vedic norms; *Jai.Sū.* 6-1-25 to 42). In a similar manner, (it is also known that) only those who perform sacrifices etc. take the northern path on account of specific *upāsana* performed by them (whereas) those who take to means of *iṣṭa*, *pūrta* and *datta* only take the southern path through the stages of *dhūma* etc. Even there (in the heaven), there exists a gradation of pleasures and their means. This can be seen from the *Upaniṣadic* passage, ‘Having stayed there until the result of actions get exhausted, they return thereafter’. (*Ch.U.* 5-10-5). So also it is seen that the little joy that is available to embodied beings in varying degrees, from humans and beings in hell to beings of the immovable variety, is verily accomplished by *dharma* characterised by *codanā* – sacred injunction.

In the same manner, varying degrees of sorrow are seen in the various types of embodied beings, namely, those superior to humans, humans, and those inferior to humans. It is seen from the foregoing that there are varying degrees of its cause viz. *adharma*, which is made known through Vedic precepts (*codanā*) that are prohibitive in nature. It is (also) seen that (there exists) a gradation among those who perform acts of *adharma*.

Thus it is well-known through the Vedas, *smṛtis* and the process of reasoning that those afflicted with

the defect of self-ignorance etc. assume the transient existence called *saṃsāra* in the form of varying degrees of joys and sorrows produced as a result of varying degrees of both *dharmādharma* (earned earlier) accompanied by the acquisition of the body. Thus the *śruti* says – ‘There is no cessation of joys and sorrows for an individual who has identified himself with his body’ (*Ch.U.* 8-12-1). This *śruti* passage corroborates the nature of *saṃsāra* described thus far.

It is clear that in its statement, ‘Joys and sorrows (born of the contact of the senses with sense objects) do not affect one who has directly discovered *ātmā* (oneself) in its true nature, totally devoid of the embodiment’ (*Ch.U.* 8-12-1), the *śruti*, by refuting any contact of joys and sorrows with *ātmā*, refutes the claim that disembodied (*aśarīra*) *ātmā*, called *mokṣa* (liberation), is the result of *dharma* born of *pravṛtti*. If *mokṣa* were produced by *dharma*, its contact with joys and sorrows could not be denied. The argument that the state of the disembodied *ātmā* (i.e. *aśarīratva*) is itself the result of *dharma* is not correct because the *śruti* itself states that it (*aśarīratvam*) is the true nature, indeed the very nature of oneself. This can be verified from the following *Upaniṣadic* passages: ‘The *jñānī* does not experience the sorrows of *saṃsāra*, having directly known his true nature as *ātmā* which is without a body, and abides unchangingly in a variety of bodies that are impermanent. That *ātmā* is distinguished (*mahān*) and all-pervasive (*vibhu*) in nature’ (*Kṛ.U.* 1-2-22); ‘*Ātmā* called *puruṣa* is pure (*śubhrah*) and devoid of *prāna* (vital airs) and the mind,’ (*Mu.U.* 2-1-2); ‘This *puruṣa* (i.e. *ātmā*) is totally unconnected (to any embodiment and all that is experienced in the three states of consciousness, including the statuses of *kartā* and *bhoktā*) – *Br.U.* 4-3-15), and other passages.

Therefore it is proved that the ever-existent state of disembodied (*aśarīra*) *ātmā* called *mokṣa* is distinct from the result of actions that are required to be performed.

The argument that *mokṣa* (liberation) is not born of *karmaphala* (the result of action) can be proved through the following inference. 'Mokṣa is not born of actions enjoined by *vidhi* because it is distinct from the result of actions (*karmas*), just as the existent *ātmā* is not a result of actions'. To clarify the reason in this inference, viz. 'mokṣa is distinct from the result of actions', the *bhāṣya* describes *karma* and its result in the passage beginning with 'śārīram *vācīkam mānasam ca karma* 'through to' *yathāvarṇitam saṃsāram anuvadati*' (i.e. from 'Physical, verbal and mental *karma* corroborates the nature of *saṃsāra* described thus'). The *sūtra* '*athāto dharmajijñāsā*' which initiates the inquiry into *dharma* in order to know its exact nature so as to enable its performance also covers the inquiry into *adharma* to enable it to be avoided.

Codanā (चोदना) is an instruction that encourages the performance of *karma* that fructifies in good results. It is a *vidhi*. By implication, *codanā* is also an instruction that forbids bad *karma* and therefore describes a prohibition (*niṣedha*). *Dharma* and *adharma* are therefore known through *codanā* in terms of *vidhi* and *niṣedha*.

Mokṣa is imperceptible to the senses. It is totally free of sorrow. It is not something to be enjoyed as an object by the body, speech or mind. *Mokṣa* is not born of sense objects and it is unknown to ignorant persons. The *bhāṣyakāra* describes *sukha* (joy) and *duḥkha* (sorrow) in several ways to draw the contrast between *mokṣa* and joys/sorrows, which are the result of *dharma* and *adharma*. Joys and sorrows are directly perceived. The body, speech and mind are instruments in their experience. They are born of contact between senses and the sense objects. Joys and sorrows are well-known to all living beings, from *Hiraṇyagarbha* down to an insignificant creature.

The *bhāṣya* first describes *karmaphala* (the result of action) in general. Next it elaborates on *puṇya*, the result of *dharma*. Different living beings with different types of embodiments experience varying degrees of happiness. This is an indication that *dharma* – the cause of happiness – is found in varying degrees in living beings. By contrast, *mokṣa* is invariable in nature. It is the same limitless happiness. Its means is also invariable: *Brahmavidyā*, the direct knowledge of Brahman – the ultimate reality. An individual eligible to gain *Brahmavidyā* and thereby *mokṣa* is one who is endowed with *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-sampatti* – the fourfold qualifications. As for *dharma*, it can be inferred from the varying degrees of *dharma* that there is a gradation in the eligibility of persons who earn *dharma*. Those who have performed sacrifices etc. coupled with *upāsanaś* are eligible for the higher heavens through the northern path for relatively longer durations. Others who undertake the *karmas* of *iṣṭa*, *pūrta* and *datta* go to the lower heavens by the southern path. *Iṣṭa karmas* are *vedic karmas* such as the performance of *agnihotra*, performing one's daily *karmas* according to one's *varṇa* and *āśrama* or undertaking ascetic practices, speaking the truth, study of the Vedas and teaching them to others, extending hospitality to guests and offering *vaiśvadeva* oblations. *Pūrta karmas* are philanthropic activities such as establishing facilities to provide water, constructing and maintaining temples, or providing food and temporary rest-houses for the needy. *Dattam karmas* include protecting those who seek refuge, not harming others, and performing acts of charity (other than sacrificial gifts). Even in the heavens, there are gradations of happiness and means to attain heavens. Stay in the heavens comes to an end upon exhaustion of the *puṇya* earned.

In the same way, sorrow is seen in varying degrees in all living beings, namely, those superior to humans, those inferior to humans and human beings. This shows that there is a gradation both in the *adharma* which is the cause of sorrow as well as in beings that perform *adharma*. Such an existence with varying degrees of joys and sorrows is called *saṃsāra*. It is transient and is experienced by all who are ignorant and know not their true nature.

This *saṃsāra* is well described in the Vedas and the *smṛtis*. The *Bhagavadgītā* points out that those who have earned the heavens enjoy the same for a long period. Thereafter they return to this world as mortals once the *puṇya* granting them the heaven gets exhausted (*B.G.* 9-21). The nature of *saṃsāra* is also established by general reasoning. It is well-known that flames increase if firewood is added. Similarly, the gradation in the means of our varying experiences can be inferred from the varying degree of the results – joys and sorrows. *Chāndogya śruti* informs us that *saṃsāra* continues as long as the identification with one's embodiment persists.

Thereafter, *mokṣa* is described in contrast to the *saṃsāra* which is the result of *karmaphala*. The nature of *mokṣa* is opposed to *karmaphala*. It is not the result of any action. *Mokṣa* is *atīndriya* (beyond the purview of the senses) and *śokarahita* (totally free from sorrows). It cannot be enjoyed by the body, mind etc. as can the heavens. This fact is corroborated in the passage from *Chāndogyopaniṣat*. It declares that *saṃsāra* characterised by joys and sorrows cannot touch a person who has directly known that his true nature is *ātmā* devoid of embodiment. *Mokṣa* is abidance in *ātmā* that is one's true nature (*svātmani avasthānam mokṣaḥ, Tai.U. Bh.* 1-12; *Ke.U. padabhāṣya* 2-4). The abidance of the mind in *ātmā*, which is identical to Brahman, is called *ātmasākṣātkāra* or *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. Thus *mokṣa* is nothing but *Brahmātmā* free from self-ignorance and its effects. In its true nature, *ātmā* is totally free from all the superimposed *dṛśya*, including the embodiment. There is therefore no experience of the embodiment, of its concomitant joys and sorrows, or of the rest of the world in *ātmasākṣātkāra* – the direct cognition of *ātmā*. There is no identification with the body in *ātmaññāna*.

The false notion that *mokṣa* is produced by *karmaphala* is refuted by the *śruti*, which states clearly that *ātmā* has no contact with joys and sorrows. Some point out that *karmas* have the capacity to yield different types of results. Joy (*priya*) is a pleasure born of sense objects. They are of the opinion that *mokṣa* can be yet another

type of result born of *dharma* (*karma*), even though *Chāndogya śruti* denies the contact of joy (*priya*) with *ātmā*. This is not correct because *ātmā* is the ever-existing principle that is beginningless and uncaused. It is by its very nature totally unconnected to the embodiment, and the joys and sorrows produced by *karmaphala*. The same is corroborated by *Upaniṣadic* statements which describe its *svarūpa* (true nature).

The word *aśarīra* in the *Kaṭha śruti* (1-2-22) highlights the absence of the gross body in *ātmā*. Being changeless, *ātmā* is the same all the time, though it abides in all kinds of impermanent bodies, higher and lower. A second word, *vibhu* (all-pervasive), is added to *mahān* (great or distinguished) in *Kaṭhopaniṣat* (1-2-22) to dispel the notion that *ātmā* may be something that is relatively great. A person who has gained the knowledge of *ātmā* that is *aśarīra*, *mahān* and *vibhu* does not experience the *samsāra* characterised by sorrow. The *Muṇḍaka Śruti* (2-1-2) shows the absence of the subtle body in *ātmā* by describing it as free of *prāṇa* (vital airs) and the mind. This also implies the absence of the organs of action and sense-organs because *prāṇa* and mind signify the power of action and the power of knowledge respectively. *Śubhraḥ* (pure) connotes the absence of the causal body. The word *asaṅgaḥ* (unconnected) in *Bṛahadāraṇyakopaniṣat* (4-3-15) describes *ātmā* as being free from both the gross and subtle bodies. Ever-existent *ātmā*, totally free from self-ignorance, the embodiment and all the *drśya* superimposed on it, is itself liberation. Therefore it is proved that *mokṣa* is totally distinct from the results of *karmas*.

THE TEACHING REGARDING BRAHMAN CANNOT BE AUXILIARY TO A VIDHI

A further point is raised. Though liberation appears to be eternal, it may be changing in nature despite being eternal, and may therefore be the result of *dharma* (*karma*). To refute this wrong notion, a contrast is drawn between two categories of eternal entities, the relatively eternal and the truly eternal. Next, it is established

that *mokṣa*, which is identical to Brahman, cannot have any connection whatsoever with *karma* in the form of *upāsana* or *vidhi* because these have no access (approach) to the ever-existing Brahman.

भा. तत्र किञ्चित् परिणामिनित्यं यस्मिन् विक्रियमाणे अपि तदेव इदं इति बुद्धिः न विहन्यते । यथा पृथिव्या-दिजगन्नित्यत्ववादिनाम् । यथा च सांख्यानां गुणाः । इदं तु पारमार्थिकं, कूटस्थनित्यं, व्योमवत् सर्वव्यापि, सर्वविक्रियारहितं, नित्यतृप्तं, निरवयवं, स्वयंज्योतिःस्वभावम् । यत्र धर्माधर्मौ सह कार्येण कालत्रयं च न उपावर्तेते । तत् एतत् अशरीरत्वं मोक्षाख्यम् । ‘अन्यत्र धर्मात् अन्यत्र अधर्मात् अन्यत्र अस्मात् कृताकृतात् । अन्यत्र भूतात् च भव्यात् च’ (कठ. २-१४) इत्यादि श्रुतिभ्यः । अतः तत् ब्रह्म यस्य इयं जिज्ञासा प्रस्तुता, तत् यदि कर्तव्यशेषत्वेन उपदिश्येत, तेन च कर्तव्येन साध्यः चेत् मोक्षः अभ्युपगम्येत, अनित्यः एव स्यात् । तत्र एवं सति यथोक्तकर्मफलेषु एव तारतम्यावस्थितेषु अनित्येषु कश्चित् अतिशयः मोक्षः इति प्रसज्येत । नित्यः च मोक्षः सर्वैः मोक्षवादिभिः अभ्युपगम्यते, अतः न कर्तव्यशेषत्वेन ब्रह्मोपदेशः युक्तः ।

Bh.Tr. Among eternal entities, some are eternal although they change (i.e. *pariṇāmīnityam*). Even if they change, the idea of their sameness in the form of ‘that alone is this’ does not get negated. For instance, according to those who profess that the world is eternal but changing, earth and the other elements are of this nature. Similarly, the *guṇās* or properties of all created entities described in the *Sāṅkhya* school of thought are *pariṇāmīnityam*.

By contrast, this Brahman (or *mokṣa*, called *aśarīratvam* here) is absolutely eternal in the sense it is ever-existent and never undergoes any change (i.e.

kūṣasthanīyam). It is all-pervasive like space, devoid of any modification whatsoever, ever-contented, without limbs (or parts) and intrinsically the self-evident knowledge principle in its nature. Neither *dharma* nor *adharma* with their results, joys and sorrows, nor the three periods of time have access to it (Brahman). That changeless (*kūṣastham*) and eternal (*nīyam*) Brahman which is this *aśarīratvam* (*ātmā* devoid of embodiment) is called *mokṣa*. This fact (namely, that Brahman/*ātmā* is totally unconnected to *dharmādharma* and the three periods of time) is in consonance with *śruti* passages such as ‘(Please impart to me the knowledge of *ātmā* which you know directly and which is) different (*anyatra*) from *dharma* and *adharma*, different from effect (*kṛta*) and cause (*akṛta*), different from the three periods past (*bhūta*), future (*bhavya*) and present.’ (*Kṛ.U.* 2-14) etc. Therefore that *mokṣa* (liberation called *aśarīratvam*) is verily Brahman, whose inquiry is begun.

If that Brahman is taught as an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) to *upāsanā* (termed *kartavya* here) and if it is accepted that *mokṣa* is accomplished through *upāsanā* (by means of the *puṇya* produced by it), then liberation is bound to be transient in nature. If liberation is accomplished through *upāsanā*, it would become just another excellent result from among the transient *phala* of *karma* (and *upāsanās*), which has already been described as being of varying degrees. But *mokṣa* is accepted as everlasting by all schools of thought that expound on it. Therefore, it is inappropriate to conclude that the teaching (*upadeśa*) of Brahman describes Brahman as an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) to *upāsanā* (termed *kartavya* here).

Pariṇāmīnīyam is that which is both *pariṇāmī* (subject to change) and *nīyam* (eternal). Such a thing is eternal relatively and

not in the absolute sense. By contrast, liberation, which is identical with *ātmā* that is Brahman, is *kūṭasthanityam* – ever-changeless and eternal. It cannot be attained through *karma* or *upāsana*. The perception that a relatively eternal entity is of an ever-lasting nature is due to the cognition of prolonged continuance despite changes in it. Such prolonged continuance is false in nature because anything that changes is invariably subject to destruction. By contrast, the ever-lastingness of a changeless (*kūṭastha*) entity (viz. Brahman or liberation) is absolute since nothing can destroy it.

Adjectives like *pāramārthikam* (absolute) etc. employed in the *bhāṣya* prove that liberation, which is synonymous with Brahman or *ātmā*, is changeless (*kūṭastha*) and eternal, with no possibility whatsoever of any change. In addition to all-pervasiveness, the phrase ‘Like space (*vyomavat*)’ also signifies actionlessness. The phrase ‘Devoid of all modifications (*sarvakriyā-rahitam*)’ speaks of the absence of any form of modification. The phrase ‘Ever-contented (*nityatṛptam*)’ points to the redundancy of actions to gain results because it does not require any *karmaphala*. Contentment (*tṛpti* - तृप्ति) is the state of desirelessness or happiness that is free from sorrow. Liberation or Brahman is actionless because it is *niravayava* – without limbs. Action is not at all necessary to know Brahman because Brahman is the self-evident knowledge-principle (*svayamjyotisvabhāva*). *Mokṣa* is not something to be accomplished through *karma* or *upāsana* because *dharma* and *adharma* and their resultant joys and sorrows are totally unrelated to it. The three periods of time have no access to Brahman. This is another reason why *mokṣa* cannot be a product of an action, since action is possible only in the realm of time. *Śruti* passages confirm that liberation or *ātmā* is totally unconnected to *dharmādharmā* and the three periods of time.

Here is another point raised by the contender. Let the *śruti* quoted here and others cited earlier describe Brahman as changeless (*kūṭastha*) and unattached (*asaṅga*), says the contender; why should *mokṣa* not be the result of an *upāsana*, though, and

different from Brahman? The answer is that this is not possible because liberation is identical to Brahman (which itself is *ātmā*). Brahman is changeless and unconnected to *dharmādharmā* or time. Therefore liberation, being nothing but Brahman, cannot be a product of *karma* and *upāsanā* either. In this way, liberation (called *aśarīratvam*) is Brahman. That is why the inquiry into Brahman is begun. This is one of the three meanings of the *bhāṣya* phrase – ‘*ataḥ tadbrahma yasya iyaṃ jijñāsā prastutā*’.

The second meaning of this *bhāṣya* phrase is as follows: Since Brahman is totally unconnected to *dharmādharmā* or time, it cannot be a topic of *dharmajijñāsā*. That is why *Brahmajijñāsā* (an inquiry into Brahman), distinct from *dharmajijñāsā*, is begun. A separate treatise on *Brahmajijñāsā* would not be possible if Brahman were connected to *vidhi*. Were that the case, there would not remain for inquiry any topics unrelated to *upāsanā-vidhi* or *karma*. Duality is an overt factor in the *vidhi* of *upāsanā*, which is expressed in terms of *upāsaka* and *upāsya*. Duality cannot reveal the identity of non-dual *ātmā* and Brahman. A *vidhi* does not require a real identity between two entities. It can also be valid in the case of an imagined identity enjoined by the Veda, as seen in the *śruti*, ‘O Gautama (in *Pañcāgni-vidyā* – an *upāsanā*), woman is verily the fire’ (*Ch.U.* 5-8-1; *Br.U.* 6-2-13).

Or the *bhāṣya* phrase under discussion can mean that a separate inquiry into Brahman is begun since liberation cannot be accomplished through *vidhi*. The Brahman that is desired to be known is revealed by Vedānta independent of *karma* or *upāsanā* because all Vedāntic statements have their *tātparya* (ascertained purport) in Brahman alone.

If it were accepted that the teaching describes Brahman as an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) of *upāsanāvidhi*, liberation would be something produced by the *puṇya* (*apūrva*) earned through *upāsanā*. Liberation would be transient in that case. The transient liberation produced by *upāsanā* would have to be the foremost of results from among the varied transient results of *karma* (and *upāsanā*) described earlier.

This cannot hold water because liberation is accepted to be *nitya* (eternal) in nature by all schools of thought that expound on it. A liberation that is *nitya* (ever-existent) cannot be produced by an *apūrva* (*punya*) that is limited and generated through the performance of *upāsana*, being itself limited in time. Hence there is no eligible person (*niyojya*) for whom *upāsana-vidhi* can be enjoined as a means to liberation. In other words, such a *vidhi* without a *niyojya* to whom it has to be addressed is impossible. Therefore it is inappropriate to say that Vedānta teaches of Brahman as being an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) to *upāsana-vidhi*.

NOTHING REMAINS TO BE DONE AFTER GAINING BRAHMAJÑĀNA

Brahmajñāna ends the veil of ignorance about oneself and instantaneously reveals one's true nature, ever free from *samsāra*. That is *mokṣa*. There is nothing to be done to accomplish liberation once *Brahmajñāna* is gained. The result of *Brahmajñāna* is gained directly without the intermediation of *punya* (*adrṣṭa*), leading to liberation in due course. It is just like light dispelling darkness with no action involved either in dispelling the darkness or in illumining.

It is being proved further that *mokṣa* is not accomplished through any *upāsana*.

भा. अपि च 'ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्म एव भवति' (मुण्ड. ३-२-९) 'क्षीयन्ते च अस्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे' (मुण्ड. २-२-८)। 'आनन्दं ब्रह्मणः विद्वान् । न बिभेति कुतश्चन' (तैत्ति. २-९) 'अभयं वै जनक प्राप्तः असि' (बृह. ४-२-४) 'तत् आत्मानं एव अवेत् अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि इति तस्मात् तत् सर्वं अभवत्' (बृह. १-४-१०) 'तत्र कः मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वं अनुपश्यतः' (ईशा. ७) । इति एवं आद्याः श्रुतयः ब्रह्मविद्यानन्तरं मोक्षं दर्शयन्त्यः मध्ये कार्यान्तरं वारयन्ति। तथा 'तत् ह एतत् पश्यन् ऋषिः वामदेवः प्रतिपेदे अहं मनुः अभवं सूर्यः च' (बृह. १-४-१०) इति ब्रह्मदर्शनसर्वात्मभावयोः

मध्ये कर्तव्यान्तरवारणाय उदाहार्यम्। यथा तिष्ठन् गायति
इति तिष्ठतिगायत्योः मध्ये तत्कर्तृकं कार्यान्तरं न अस्ति इति
गम्यते ।

Bh.Tr. Moreover, many *Upaniṣadic* passages which state that liberation is attained on gaining *Brahmajñāna* refute the intervention of any *karma* or *upāsana* between *Brahmajñāna* and liberation. For instance, consider: ‘One who knows Brahman directly verily becomes Brahman’ (*Mu.U.* 3-2-9); ‘All results of actions of the *jñāni* that have not yet yielded their effects come to an end on gaining the direct knowledge of Brahman, which is both the ultimate cause (of *jagat*) and its effect (*jagat*).’ (*Mu.U.* 2-2-8); ‘One who directly knows Brahman whose nature is limitless happiness does not experience fear on account of anything.’ (*Tai.U.* 2-9); ‘O Janaka, (due to the destruction of self ignorance) you have verily gained Brahman (free from the fear of birth and death’. *Br.U.* 4-2-4); ‘That Brahman called *jīva* directly knew itself (through the teaching of the *guru*) verily as “I am Brahman”. By that knowledge it became whole (*pūrṇa*) i.e. it became Brahman in its true nature free from all superimposed entities that are not Brahman’ – (*Br.U.* 1-4-10); ‘When self-knowledge is gained, there is no *moha* (delusion) and mental anguish (called *śoka*) for one who has directly discovered the ultimate reality’ (*Ī.U.* 7).

So also the following *Upaniṣadic* declaration should be cited, namely – ‘Sage Vāmadeva, directly knowing Brahman to be himself, *ātmā* (in reality), as “I am Brahman” attained Brahman in its true nature (free from the superimposed Creation). (Abiding in that knowledge) he discovered, “I had become Manu and the Sun” (in the sense the entire Creation was “me”,

Brahman, alone without an independent existence)’, (Br.U. 1-4-10) – in order to refute the intervening factor of *upāsanā* (or *karma*) between *Brahmajñāna* and the *sarvātmabhāva* – the discovery that I, Brahman, am everything. It is like the statement ‘standing (she) sings’ where it is clear that there is no other action by the individual between the standing and the singing.

All the *śruti* statements quoted above invariably describe liberation as the immediate result of *Brahmajñāna*. The terms *Brahmajñāna*, *Brahmāvagati*, *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, *Brahmānubhava*, *Ātmānubhava*, *Ātmasākṣātkāra*, *Aparokṣānubhūti* and *Aparokṣajñāna* are all synonyms. They signify the direct cognition of Brahman in its true nature totally free from *adhyasta saṃsāra*, and are therefore synonymous with liberation (*mokṣa*). The exact nature of *Brahmajñāna* was already discussed and ascertained in the context of the *bhāṣya* portion ‘*avagati-paryantam jñānam*’ and ‘*anubhavāvasānatvāt Brahmajñānasya*’.⁸⁴ If liberation were the result of an *upāsanā*, it would be something that comes into existence in course of time, like heaven and the other results produced by *puṇya*. If that were true, all these *śruti* passages cited would stand negated, which is impossible. Therefore *mokṣa* is the direct result of *Brahmajñāna*, and not a product of *karma* or *upāsanā*. Actions/*upāsanā* too are not necessary to gain liberation once *Brahmajñāna* is gained though they have a role prior to it, namely, to accomplish *cittaśuddhi* and *cittanaiścalya*.

BRAHMAJÑĀNA TERMINATES THE OBSTRUCTION OF IGNORANCE THAT HINDERS MOKṢA

Ātmā is *nityamukta* – ever liberated. It can never undergo bondage. Yet *ātmā* appears to be bound as a *saṃsārī* only because

⁸⁴ Refer to the commentary on *Bhāṣya*-passages of अवगति पर्यन्तं ज्ञानम्, Page No. 122 and अनुभाववसानत्वात् भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात् च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य, Page No. 180.

of self-ignorance. All that *Brahmajñāna* does is to end this ignorance, whereby the *nityamukta-svarūpa* (ever-liberated nature) of *ātmā* is revealed. If *Brahmajñāna* were the subject of a *vidhi*, it would become a *karma* in the form of *upāsana*. Being a product of self-ignorance, an *upāsana* cannot do away with its very cause, ignorance. Therefore, Vedāntic statements impart the knowledge of Brahman; they do not enjoin *karma*. This fact is now highlighted through the Upaniṣads.

भा. ‘त्वं हि नः पिता यः अस्माकं अविद्यायाः परं पारं तारयसि’ (प्र. ६-८) ‘श्रुतं हि एव मे भगवद्दृशेभ्यः तरति शोकं आत्मवित् इति सः अहं भगवः शोचामि तं मा भगवान् शोकस्य पारं तारयतु’ (छान्दो. ७-१-३) ‘तस्मै मृदितकषायाय तमसः पारं दर्शयति भगवान् सनत्कुमारः’ (छान्दो. ७-२६-२) इति च एवं आद्याः श्रुतयः मोक्षप्रतिबन्धनिवृत्तिमात्रं एव आत्मज्ञानस्य फलं दर्शयन्ति । तथा च आचार्यप्रणीतं न्यायोपबृंहितं सूत्रम् – ‘दुःखजन्मप्रवृत्तिदोषमिथ्याज्ञानानां उत्तरोत्तरापाये तदनन्तरापायात् अपवर्गः’ (न्या.सू. १-१-२) इति । मिथ्याज्ञानापायः च ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वविज्ञानात् भवति ।

Bh.Tr. (Consider the following *śruti* passages). ‘You indeed are our father who has enabled us to cross over to the other shore of self-ignorance (*avidyā*)’. (*Pr.U.* 6-8). ‘Nārada beseeches Sanatkumāra – I have heard indeed from revered preceptors like you that one who directly knows *ātmā* crosses over the *saṃsāra* characterised by grief. O revered master, I am in grief (due to self-ignorance, in spite of all my learning). O adorable one, please help me cross over to the other shore beyond grief’ (*Ch.U.* 7-1-3). ‘Revered Sanatkumāra helps Nārada – who has overcome his limitations (in the form of likes and dislikes etc.) – cross over to the other shore of self-ignorance’ (*Ch.U.* 7-26-2). These and other similar *śruti* passages demonstrate that ‘the

removal of the obstruction that hinders *mokṣa*' is the only result of *ātmajñāna* (direct self-knowledge). Exactly similar is the (purport of the following) *sūtra* based on reasoning composed by the preceptor Gautama, the propounder of the Nyāya philosophy – 'When the subsequent causes contained in the sequence sorrow (*duḥkha*), birth (*janma*), activities in the nature of both *dharma* and *adharma* (called *pravṛttī*), defect (*doṣa*) and erroneous knowledge (i.e. *mithyājñānam*) are destroyed, liberation (*apavarga*) is gained by the termination of the immediately preceding effects respectively.' (*Nyāya-sūtra* 1-1-2). Destruction of the erroneous knowledge (about oneself) takes place through the direct cognition of the identity between Brahman and *ātmā*.

The six sages, Bharadwāja etc., approached guru Pippalāda to seek *Brahmajñāna*. On gaining the priceless knowledge, they offered adoration to their guru, and unable to find any other way of repaying the obligation, expressed their gratitude by praising him as their father. The bodily father provides only the physical body, it is the guru who reveals the nature of Brahman by destroying self-ignorance and thereby provides access to the very true 'I' identical to Brahman. He enables his disciples to cross the ocean of *saṃsāra* by the boat of *Brahmajñāna*. They discover themselves to be free from birth and death. This shows that *Brahmajñāna* destroys self-ignorance.

Devarṣi Nārada was a past master in several branches of knowledge, including the Vedas. He realized that despite all his knowledge, he was subject to grief because he did not know the true nature of *ātmā*. Hence he requested sage Sanatkumāra to impart him *ātmajñāna*. The first sentence from *Chāndogyopaniṣat* (7-1-3) quoted in the *bhāṣya* is the starting sentence of this narration and the subsequent one (*Ch.U.* 7-26-2) is the concluding sentence. Sage Sanatkumāra finds that Nārada has a mind suitably prepared to

gain self-knowledge. He imparts *ātmajñāna* to him. This proves that the cause of *saṃsāra*, riddled with grief, is self-ignorance. *Brahmajñāna* does away with ignorance about one's true self and thereby results in liberation.

Another *Upaniṣadic* statement in this category is 'One who knows this Brahman, which is available for direct cognition in the *antaḥkaraṇa*, unties the knot of self-ignorance here itself whilst living.' (*Mu.U.* 2-1-10). Thus the *Upaniṣads* emphasize that it is *Brahmajñāna* that destroys self-ignorance. That is the cause of attaining *mokṣa*, and not *karma* or *upāsana*.

It was established on the basis of the *Upaniṣads* that *Brahmajñāna* – knowledge of ultimate reality – is the result of the cessation of self-ignorance. The statement that the destruction of ignorance confers liberation is corroborated by the *Nyāya* school of thought, as shown by a *Nyāyasūtra* (1-1-2) composed by Gautama Muni, propounder of the *Nyāya* system. The *sūtra* enumerates five important factors to be considered in light of their cause-effect relationship. They are *duḥkha*, birth, *pravṛtti*, *doṣa* and *mithyājñāna*. *Duḥkha* (sorrow) signifies the manifold undesirable experiences an individual undergoes, such as suffering, torment, pain, trouble, agony, anguish, distress etc. Birth is taking embodiment each time in the process of transmigration. Sinful activities such as killing, stealing etc. produce *adharma* in the form of *pāpa* – sins. Benevolent activities such as charity, protecting the distressed and other such acts produce *dharma* in the form of *puṇya*. *Dharma* and *adharma* are achieved through activity (*pravṛtti*). *Dharma* and *adharma* are results named after their cause viz. *pravṛtti*. Attachment, hatred, envy, jealousy, haughtiness, greed etc. are defects (*doṣa*) in one's activities. *Mithyājñāna* refers to wrong concepts, such as the concept 'ātmā does not exist'. This *sūtra* should be read with every preceding word taken as the effect and its immediately subsequent word as its cause. Accordingly, in the absence of *mithyājñāna*, there would be no *doṣa* and in turn, no *pravṛtti*, birth or *duḥkha* because the respective causes would be eliminated. *Saṃsāra*, according to

naiyāyikas, is the unchecked continuance of *mithyājñāna* leading to *duḥkha*. Liberation is the cessation of the *saṃsāra* produced by *mithyājñāna*. It is gained when *mithyājñāna* is destroyed.

According to the *naiyāyikas* (followers of the *Nyāya* school of thought), the knowledge of sixteen entities (called *padārthas*) is *tattvajñāna* (knowledge of the ultimate reality), with *ātmā* being one of the *padārthas*. Seen as distinct from other entities (*padārthas*), *ātmā* is bound to be limited (*paricchinna*) and dualistic in nature in this philosophy. By contrast, Vedānta affirms that *ātmā* is non-dual and that knowledge of a limited thing cannot give permanent liberation. Therefore the question arises: how can this *nyāyasūtra* establish *mokṣa* through the knowledge of an *ātmā* which is different from other entities and dualistic in nature? The reply is that this *nyāyasūtra* is quoted not to accept the doctrine of *naiyāyikā* in toto but only to highlight the fact that ‘liberation is possible through the destruction of *mithyājñāna*’. It is for this very reason that the *bhāṣyakāra* states that *mithyājñāna* comes to an end through *Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna* – the *sākṣātkāra* (direct cognition – *vijñāna*) of the identity between Brahman and *ātmā*.

That *mokṣa* is possible only through *tattvajñāna* is the only aspect of this *nyāyasūtra* that Vedānta concedes. The notion of duality cannot be the means to liberation because ‘there is delusion when there appears to be duality in the state of self-ignorance’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-14). The erroneous concept of duality is also the cause of calamitous *saṃsāra*. This can be verified from the *Bṛhadāranyaka śruti* – ‘He who has the notion of duality is subject to transmigration’ (*Br.U.* 4-4-19).

BRAHMAJÑĀNA DEPENDS ON THE NATURE OF BRAHMAN AND NOT ON HUMAN ACTION

Some opponents contend that the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and *ātmā* is not valid knowledge and not truly non-dual in nature because it includes elements of duality. They

say instead that this knowledge is like *sāmpat-upāsanā*, or *pratīkopāsanā* which involves *adhyāsa*, or an *upāsanā* based on connection with a specific action, or an auxiliary (*aṅga*) of a *karma* in the form of a consecration. The following reply refutes this contrary proposition.

भा. न च इदं ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वविज्ञानं संपद्रूपम् । यथा ‘अनन्तं वै मनः अनन्ताः विश्वेदेवाः अनन्तं एव सः तेन लोकं जयति’ (बृह. ३-१-९) इति । न च अध्यासरूपं । यथा ‘मनः ब्रह्म इति उपासीत’ (छान्दो. ३-१८-१) ‘आदित्यः ब्रह्म इति आदेशः’ (छान्दो. ३-१९-१) इति च मनआदित्यादिषु ब्रह्मदृष्ट्यध्यासः । न अपि विशिष्टक्रियायोगनिमित्तं ‘वायुः वाव संवर्गः’ ‘प्राणः वाव संवर्गः’ (छान्दो. ४-३-१, ३) इतिवत् । न अपि आज्यावेक्षणादि कर्मवत् कर्माङ्गसंस्काररूपम् । संपदादिरूपे हि ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वविज्ञाने अभ्युपगम्यमाने ‘तत् त्वं असि’ (छान्दो. ६-८-७) ‘अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि’ (बृह. १-४-१०) ‘अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म’ (बृह. २-५-१९) इति एवं आदीनां वाक्यानां ब्रह्मात्मैकत्ववस्तुप्रतिपादनपरः पदसमन्वयः पीड्येत । ‘भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः’ (मुण्ड. २-२-८) इति च एवं आदीनि अविद्यानिवृत्तिफलश्रवणानि उपरुध्येरन् । ‘ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्म एव भवति’ (मुण्ड. ३-२-९) इति च एवं आदीनि तद्भावापत्तिवचनानि संपदादिपक्षे न सामञ्जस्येन उपपद्येरन् । तस्मात् न संपदादिरूपं ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वविज्ञानम् । अतः न पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रा ब्रह्मविद्या । किं तर्हि प्रत्यक्षादिप्रमाणविषयवस्तुज्ञानवत् वस्तुतन्त्रा ।

Bh.Tr. (Four features are denied in *Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna* /*Brahmajñāna* as follows:)

i) This *Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna* (knowledge of the identity between Brahman and *ātma*) is not the same as *sāmpat-upāsanā* described for instance in the *śruti* passage – ‘The mind is infinite and so are the deities called *Viśvedevāḥ*. The meditator who practises

this *upāsana* gains the heavens that are extensive (in terms of duration.)’ – (*Br.U.* 3-1-9).

ii) It is not in the form of a *pratīkopāsana* based on *adhyāsa* (superimposition), in the *Upaniṣadic* statement ‘One should meditate on the mind as Brahman.’ (*Ch.U.* 3-18-1) and ‘The sun is Brahman is an instruction (to practise meditation)’ – (*Ch.U.* 3-19-1), which entail the superimposition of the concept of Brahman on the mind, the sun and other entities respectively.

iii) (*Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna*) is not a meditation based on connection with a specific action either, such as ‘air (*vāyu*) is verily *saṃvarga* – that which withdraws unto itself fire, sun, moon, water etc. when they stand extinguished at the time of dissolution.’ (*Ch.U.* 4-3-1) and ‘*Prāṇa* is verily *saṃvarga* – that which withdraws unto itself the senses, the mind etc. during sleep.’ (*Ch.U.* 4-3-3).

iv) (*Brahmajñāna*) is not a consecratory auxiliary (*aṅga*) of a *karma*, such as physically looking at sacrificial liquid ghee, or other acts to sanctify oneself who, as the doer (*kartā* or *yajamāna*), is a part of *karma*.

The reasoning behind these four denials is as follows: if *Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna* were of the form of *saṃpat-upāsana* and the rest, the established purport of the identity between Brahman and *ātmā* ascertained through *Upaniṣadic* declarations such as ‘You are that Brahman.’ (*Ch.U.* 6-8-7), ‘I am Brahman.’ (*Br.U.* 1-4-10), ‘This *ātmā* is Brahman.’ (*Br.U.* 2-5-19) etc. would stand refuted. Furthermore, statements such as ‘The *hr̥daya-granthi*, namely the aggregate of desires

in the *antaḥkaraṇa* and the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) between *ātmā* and *anātmā*, is destroyed; all doubts are dispelled.’ (*Mu.U.* 2-2-8), and other such *śruti* statements which reveal the result of the termination of *avidyā* would stand refuted. Or statements such as ‘The knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman.’ (*Mu.U.*3-2-9), which reveal oneself (*ātmā*) to be Brahman itself, would be incorrect if (*Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna*) were *saṃpat-upāsanā* or any of the others. Therefore the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and *ātmā* does not depend on human action. Then what is its nature? *Brahmavidyā* depends on the very nature of the thing (i.e. Brahman), just like the knowledge of objects known through *pramāṇa* – means of knowledge – such as direct perception (i.e. *pratyakṣa*), inference – *anumāna* etc.

Certain *upāsanās* do contain the concept of identity between two things, an identity expounded in the Veda, though the two things differ in nature. Some purificatory auxiliaries of *karma* enjoined in the Veda also exhibit such identity, despite actual differences. On the basis of the above, the contender claims that the knowledge ‘*jīva* and Brahman are one’ is an imaginary identity assumed in order to gain immortality, in spite of the inherent duality between *jīva* and Brahman. Four contentions of this nature are now refuted.

- 1) Disregarding the insignificant locus (*ālabhana*) of *upāsanā*, in the sense of not paying attention to its insignificant aspect, and meditating on its identity with an exalted entity specified in the *śruti* is *saṃpat-upāsanā*. The mind is said to be infinite because of the endless number of its thoughts. The deities called *Viśvedevas* who are highly exalted are also infinite in number. Taking recourse to this similarity of infinitude between them and meditating on the identity that the *Viśvedevas* are verily the mind is one type of *saṃpat-upāsanā* described in the *śruti*. Its result is the achievement

of the heavens for a long duration. The gist of the contention here is that in the same manner, taking recourse to the similarity of *caitanya*, the principle of sentience between the insignificant *jīva*, and the most exalted Brahman, to meditate *jīva* as identical with Brahman is a *saṃpat-upāsanā*, which can result in immortality.

The Vedāntic doctrine refutes this by pointing out that a *saṃpat-upāsanā* is related to some *karmā* with a specific purpose. This is explained in the *bhāṣyakāra*'s commentary on ' *atha saṃpadah* ' (*Bṛ.U.* 3-1-6) and in the *vārtikas* on it by Sureśvarācārya. Viewing minor rituals such as *agnihotra* etc. as certain exalted rituals as described in the scripture and meditating on them with a desire to gain higher results is *saṃpat-upāsanā*. Or a person unable to perform exalted sacrifices such as *aśvamedha*, *rājasūya* and others can take to the performance of appropriate *saṃpat-upāsanās* to get their promised results. Thus *saṃpat-upāsanās* lead to the procurement of the results of certain *karmas*. They are enjoined by the Vedas, but cannot be performed at the fancy or will of the individual. The reason *Brahmajñāna* cannot be a *saṃpat-upāsanā*, which presupposes duality, will be described after discussing the three remaining contentions.

- 2) In a *saṃpat-upāsanā*, attention is focused mainly on the superior entity attributed to the basis (*ālambana*). By contrast, in the *pratīkopāsanā* involving an *adhya* (superimposition), the meditation is centred mainly on the basis (*ālambana*) of the *upāsanā*. It is an *upāsanā* of a symbol (*pratīka*). For example, the mind or the sun is meditated upon as Brahman. Brahman is superimposed (*adhyasta*) on the mind or the sun. According to the contrary proposition, the declaration 'I am Brahman' (*Bṛ.U.* 1-4-10) is similarly an instance where Brahman is superimposed (*adhyasta*) on 'I'. This is not valid, for reasons which will be furnished later.

- 3) There are other types of *upāsanās* which are based on connection with a specific action. At the time of dissolution, *Vāyu* (air) withdraws unto itself fire, sun, moon, water etc. So *Vāyu* is meditated upon as *saṃvarga* – one who causes fire etc. to merge or withdraw unto itself. Likewise, at the individual level, *prāṇa* (the vital air) is meditated upon as *saṃvarga* since the senses, the mind etc., merge into it during sleep. Some people try to see in the knowledge – ‘*jīva* is Brahman’ such an *upāsanā* based on specific action. They argue that the word Brahman which means ‘the biggest’ is derived from the verbal root *br̥h* (बृह्) or *br̥mh* (बृह्) in the sense of growth or increase. The body of the *jīva* also undergoes the modification of growth. Therefore they conclude, ‘*jīva* is Brahman’ is an *upāsanā* connected to the act of growing. Another, slightly different version is also proposed. They say that Brahman is termed thus because of its characteristic of nourishing (*br̥mhana*). ‘*Jīva* is nourished by Brahman’. Therefore ‘*jīva* is Brahman’ is an *upāsanā* based on the act of nourishing. Irrespective of the feature used to present the *upāsanā* based on a specific action, *Brahmajñāna* cannot be such an *upāsanā*. This type of *upāsanā* will also be proved wrong, along with the three other types of *upāsanās* ascribed to *Brahmajñāna*.
- 4) In *upāśu yāga*, the wife of the *yajamāna* (performer of a sacrifice) has to physically look at the sacrificial ghee. This is a part (*aṅga*) of the sacrifice. The ghee gets consecrated thereby. Sprinkling sacrificial water is also an act to sanctify certain things. In a similar manner, claims the contender, *Brahmajñāna* is enjoined to consecrate the *yajamāna* who is a part of the sacrifice as the doer (*kartā*). Thus the fourth contention is that the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and *ātmā* serves to purify the doer (or *kartā*, which is how they describe *ātmā*) who is an *aṅga* (part) of *karma*.

The following reasons refute these four contentions.

- a) The true identity of *Brahman* and *ātmā* is not an arbitrary conclusion or a passing fancy. It is the ascertained purport (i.e. *samanvaya*) of all Vedāntic statements arrived at by taking recourse to the six criteria beginning with *upakramopasaṃhāra* as means of verification. Such an authentic process of ascertainment can never be wrong. The ascertained purport would stand vitiated if *Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna* were any of *saṃpat-upāsanā* or the rest. This cannot be admitted since it contradicts *Upaniṣadic* declarations.
- b) The result of *Brahmajñāna*, described as the cessation of all desires and of *ahaṅkāra*, the identification with the body etc., called *hṛdayagranthi* (*Mu.U.* 2-2-9), is possible only when self-ignorance ends through *Brahmajñāna*. The imaginary identity assumed in the four factors, *saṃpat-upāsanā* and the rest, cannot destroy self-ignorance since the assumption of identity is not correct knowledge. Were that the case, the *Upaniṣadic* statements which describe *mokṣa* as the result of *Brahmajñāna*, wherein self-ignorance ends, would stand negated.
- c) Statements such as ‘The knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman.’ (*Mu.U.* 3-2-9) which speak of discovering the non-dual Brahman truly as oneself would stand invalidated if *Brahmajñāna* were *saṃpat-upāsanā* or the rest, because all the latter are inherently based on duality.

This proves that the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and *ātmā* cannot be any *karma* or *upāsanā*. As a result, *Brahmajñāna* cannot be a product of *karma* or *upāsanā* because it is knowledge conforming to the true nature of Brahman. If *Brahmajñāna* is not produced by *karma* or *upāsanā*, does it mean

that it is eternal (*nitya*) because an ever-existing entity having no birth alone can be so? This cannot be so. *Brahmajñāna* is produced by means of *pramāṇa*. It does not depend on human action, but depends on the very nature of Brahman. The *pramāṇa* terminates the ignorance regarding Brahman, and Brahman gets revealed in its true nature.

BRAHMAN HAS NO CONNECTION WHATSOEVER WITH ACTION

The ever existing Brahman is not something that can be produced by action, including *upāsana*. *Mokṣa* is the very nature of Brahman. It is therefore impossible to envisage that the knowledge of Brahman can be the object of an injunction (*vidhi*).

भा. एवं भूतस्य ब्रह्मणः तज्ज्ञानस्य च न कयाचित् युक्त्या शक्यः कार्यानुप्रवेशः कल्पयितुम् । न च विदिक्रियाकर्मत्वेन कार्यानुप्रवेशः ब्रह्मणः ‘अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् अथो अविदितात् अधि’ (केन. १ - ३) इति विदिक्रियाकर्मत्वप्रतिषेधात् , ‘येन इदं सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयात्’ (बृह. २-४-१४) इति च। तथा उपास्तिक्रियाकर्मत्वप्रतिषेधः अपि भवति – ‘यत् वाचा अनभ्युदितं येन वाक् अभ्युद्यते’ इति अविषयत्वं ब्रह्मणः उपन्यस्य ‘तत् एव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि न इदं यत् इदं उपासते’ (केन. १ - ४) इति । अविषयत्वे ब्रह्मणः शास्त्रयोनित्वानुपपत्तिः इति चेत् । न । अविद्याकल्पितभेदनिवृत्तिपरत्वात् शास्त्रस्य । नहि शास्त्रं इदंतया विषयभूतं ब्रह्म प्रतिपिपादयिषति । किं तर्हि प्रत्यगात्मत्वेन अविषयतया प्रतिपादयत् अविद्याकल्पितं वेद्यवेदितृवेदनादिभेदं अपनयति । तथाच शास्त्रम् – ‘यस्य अमतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः । अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातं अविजानताम्’ (केन. २ - ३) ‘न दृष्टेः द्रष्टारं पश्येः’ ‘न विज्ञातेः विज्ञातारं विजानीयाः’ (बृह. ३-४-२) इति च एवं आदि । अतः अविद्याकल्पितसंसारित्वनिवर्तनेन नित्यमुक्तात्मस्वरूपसमर्पणात् न मोक्षस्य अनित्यत्वदोषः ।

Bh.Tr. It is impossible to conceive, through any manner of reasoning whatsoever, of any connection between action (*karma*) and Brahman of such nature or its knowledge. Neither can Brahman have any connection with *karma* as the object of knowledge born of the *śrutīpramāṇa*, because this is refuted by *Upaniṣadic* statements such as ‘(Brahman) is distinct from the known (i.e. the effect in the form of Creation) and the unknown (i.e. the cause, the unmanifest – *avyākṛta*)’ (*Ke.U.1-3*), and ‘By what means (*karaṇa*) can that *ātmā* – because of which everything there is in Creation is known by all – be known as an object by anyone?’ (*Br.U. 2-4-14*). In the same way, Brahman is also denied as being the object of the act of meditation (*upāsana*). Having pointed out that Brahman is not an object of the senses in (the statement) ‘That which cannot be uttered by speech, (but) that by which speech engages in its function,’ it is (further) added: ‘Know that alone to be Brahman, and not this that you are meditating upon (as the *upāsya*)’ (*Ke.U.1-4*).

If it be urged that if Brahman is not an object of knowledge produced by the *śāstra-pramāṇa* – the Veda as the means of knowledge, (the purport of the third *Brahma sūtra* viz.) the claim that Brahman is known only through the *śāstra* (the Veda) would stand refuted, (we reply) not so; because the utility of the *śāstra* lies only in terminating the distinction (between *jīva* and Brahman) projected by *avidyā* (self-ignorance). The *śāstra* (the Veda) does not intend to establish Brahman as an object of knowing of the nature of ‘this’; instead, it destroys the duality between ‘*vedya* (the thing to be known), *veditā* (the knower) and *vedanā* (the knowledge) etc.’ projected by ignorance while establishing that Brahman is the *pratyagātmā* (the true

‘I’) which can never be ‘this’ (in the form of an object). Thus it has been declared in the Upaniṣads – ‘The *Brahmajñāni* who knows Brahman as not an object (of knowledge different from oneself) knows Brahman (in reality, whereas) he who considers Brahman as an object knows it not. (Because) Brahman is not an object to *Brahmajñānis*, (whereas) it is mistaken as an object of knowledge by ignorant people.’ (*Ke.U.* 2-3). ‘You cannot see the illuminator (*sākṣī-draṣṭā*) of a thought (called *dr̥ṣṭi*) corresponding to a visual form (*rūpa*) by means of the same thought’, ‘You cannot objectify the illuminator of the intellect (*nīścayātmikā-vṛtti*, decisive thought) through that very thought.’ (*Bṛ.U.* 3-4-2), etc. Therefore *mokṣa* (liberation) does not suffer the defect of being transient because as a result of the *Brahmajñāna* born of the *śāstra*, the *saṃsāra* which is falsely projected by *avidyā* (self-ignorance) is terminated and the ever-liberated nature of *ātmā* is revealed in reality.

Some are of the view that Brahman is an object of *karma* as an essential component of *karma* like the liquid ghee required to be physically seen by the wife of the *yajamāna* in the *upāmsu-yāga*. The contender should be asked whether Brahman is an object of knowledge that needs to be gained, or the object of an *upāsana*. The Upaniṣads assert that Brahman cannot be an object of knowledge. All that is knowable is included in the categories of manifest Creation (called *vidita*) and its unmanifest cause *avyākṛta* (called *avidita*). Brahman is totally distinct from these (*Ke.U.* 1-3) and hence cannot be an object of knowledge. The *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣat* (2-4-14) also affirms that *ātmā* – because of which everything is known – cannot be known as an object by employing any means of knowledge whatsoever in the temporal world.

The *Kenopaniṣat* too positively denies in its *mantras* that Brahman is the object of any *upāsana* – ‘That alone is Brahman

because of which all sense-organs, organs of action, vital airs and the mind function, but by all of which it can never be objectified' (*Ke.U.*1-4 to 8). Having established the nature of Brahman thus, the Upaniṣad also categorically refutes the possibility of any *upāśya* (entity meditated upon, such as deities etc. with attributes) becoming Brahman (*Ke.U.* 1- 4 to 8).

Merely because Brahman is not an object of knowledge does not mean that the acquisition of *Brahmajñāna* through the *śāstra* (the Veda), as described in the *sūtra* 'śāstrayonitvāt', stands vitiated. The Vedas as a means of knowledge only terminate ignorance and its effect – the notion that the *jīva* is distinct from Brahman. Brahman cannot be objectified as 'this' because Brahman is verily the *ātmā* – 'I' –, which can never be objectified. Brahman gets revealed in its true nature once ignorance is destroyed. The *akhaṇḍākāra/Brahmākāra-vṛtti* born of Vedānta as the *pramāṇa* destroys the ignorance of self – 'I' – Brahman. Though Brahman is the object of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, being the self-luminous knowledge-principle, it cannot be objectified by the *cidābhāsa* (reflected *caitanya*) in that *vṛtti*. The aim of the *śāstra* is only to terminate the notion of duality such as *jīva*, *jagat*, *Īśvara* etc. superimposed on Brahman. The knower (*jñātā*) objectifies every known thing as distinct from itself. However, this same knower, a product of ignorance, itself gets terminated in *Brahmajñāna* with the rest of Creation. What remains is Brahman, the self-luminous knowledge-principle, in its true nature. That is liberation. In the wake of self-knowledge, there is no occasion to objectify Brahman as there exists nothing other than Brahman.

The above fact is corroborated in *Upaniṣadic* passages from the *Kena* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat*. 'Brahman is not an object of knowledge to the person who knows it directly, whereas one who thinks he has known Brahman as an object is still in the realm of ignorance' (*Ke.U.* 2-3). The word *drṣṭi* in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* quotation (3-4-2) cited in the *bhāṣya* signifies the thought (*antahkaraṇa-vṛtti*) corresponding to the specific visual form (*rūpa*)

of an object, which makes us to know that form. Being inert in and of itself, every thought needs to be illumined (i.e. made known) by the *sākṣī* principle, *ātmā*. We are able to see a particular form because the thought corresponding to the form is made known by the *sākṣī* principle. But it is not possible for the inert thought (*vṛtti*) of that form (*rūpa*) to objectify and see *sākṣī ātmā*. This holds good in the perception of all sense objects wherein, the thoughts (*vṛttis*) signifying these objects cannot know *sākṣī ātmā*. The same is true of any thought in the nature of a decision (*niścayātmikā-vṛtti*), which cannot know its illuminator, *ātmā* (*Br.U.* 3-4-2).

The following doubt may arise at this juncture: It is agreed that the *śāstra* (the Veda) as the *pramāṇa* terminates self-ignorance with its aggregate of effects. But this termination is an effect that takes place in time. Consequently, liberation is something produced. It has a beginning. Does that not mean that being born, liberation (*mokṣa*) is transient (*anitya*) in nature? This doubt cannot stand. *Mokṣa* cannot exhibit the defect of transience. *Ātmā* identical to Brahman is ever liberated (*nitya mukta*) by its very nature. Bondage is totally alien to it, though Brahman does erroneously appear to be bound due to the obstruction (*pratibandha*) of ignorance and its consequences. The ever-liberated, ever-existent Brahman stands revealed once the obstruction is eliminated. It is not the case that Brahman was previously non-existent and is now produced anew. It is like the bright and brilliant sun covered by clouds and therefore unseen. The already existing sun is revealed in all its brightness once the clouds are dispelled. The wind that drives away the clouds does not create the sun afresh. Liberation is like the revelation of the sun when the cloud of ignorance – *pratibandha* (obstruction) – is dispelled.

MOKṢA CANNOT BE APPROACHED THROUGH KARMA BECAUSE IT IS DISTINCT FROM UTPĀDYA, VIKĀRYA, ĀPYA AND SAṂSKĀRYA

The results of action are of four types: *utpatti* (production in the form of a result, birth), *vikāra* (modification, a change in which

an existing thing is transformed into something else), *āpti* (attainment, procurement, obtaining) and *saṃskāra* (perfection, refinement). But *mokṣa* is totally distinct from *utpādya* (something produced or born), *vikārya* (something modified or changed), *āpya* (something attained, procured or obtained), or *saṃskārya* (something perfected or refined). Therefore *mokṣa* cannot be accomplished via *upāsana*, which is a specific type of action. This fact is now established.

भा. यस्य तु उत्पाद्यः मोक्षः तस्य मानसं, वाचिकं, कायिकं वा कार्यं अपेक्षते इति युक्तम् । तथा विकार्यत्वे च तयोः पक्षयोः मोक्षस्य ध्रुवं अनित्यत्वम् । नहि दध्यादि विकार्यं, उत्पाद्यं वा घटादि, नित्यं दृष्टं लोके ।

Bh. Tr. For those who claim that liberation is something produced, it is only appropriate to point out that anything produced requires a mental, oral or physical action. The same is true for those who hold the view that *mokṣa* is something modified. The transience (*anityatva*) of the liberation envisaged in both cases is certain; for we observe in the world that entities that are modified, like curds, and entities that are produced, such as pots, are transient.

Here is another contrary proposition. Let not liberation be something produced or modified. But the presumption can be made that liberation, identical with the already existing Brahman, is something similar to heaven, a place that can certainly be attained or reached.

This contention is now refuted.

भा. न च आप्यत्वेन अपि कायपिक्षा, स्वात्मरूपत्वे सति अनाप्यत्वात्। स्वरूपव्यतिरिक्तत्वे अपि ब्रह्मणः न आप्यत्वं, सर्वगतत्वेन नित्याप्तस्वरूपत्वात् सर्वेण ब्रह्मणः, आकाशस्य इव ।

Bh. Tr. Even if *mokṣa* is considered to be something attainable, it does not require an action. Brahman cannot be attained if it is (verily) one's own self (the *jīva*, because the identity already exists). Again, if Brahman is distinct from one's own self, it cannot be attained because it is all-pervasive, and ever-attained by all (in terms of presence), like (all-pervasive) space.

In the wake of knowledge, Brahman is discovered to be identical to oneself. On the other hand, it appears to an ignorant person to be distinct from oneself. In either case, Brahman cannot be reached or attained. Therefore action has no relevance in gaining liberation.

Some others consider that liberation is gained by refining or perfecting Brahman either by adding good qualities (*guṇādhāna*) to it or removing certain defects abiding in it (*doṣāpanayana*). In either case, action is an inevitable prerequisite for liberation. This standpoint is now refuted.

भा. न अपि संस्कार्यः मोक्षः, येन व्यापारं अपेक्षेत । संस्कारः हि नाम संस्कार्यस्य गुणाधानेन वा स्यात् दोषापनयनेन वा । न तावत् गुणाधानेन संभवति, अनाधेयातिशयब्रह्मस्वरूपत्वात् मोक्षस्य । न अपि दोषापनयनेन, नित्यशुद्धब्रह्मस्वरूपत्वात् मोक्षस्य । स्वात्मधर्मः एव सन् तिरोभूतः मोक्षः क्रियया आत्मनि संस्क्रियमाणे अभिव्यज्यते, यथा आदर्शे निघर्षणक्रियया संस्क्रियमाणे भास्वरत्वं धर्मः इति चेत् न, क्रियाश्रयत्वानुपपत्तेः आत्मनः । यदाश्रया क्रिया तं अविकुर्वती न एव आत्मानं लभते । यदि आत्मा क्रियया विक्रियेत अनित्यत्वं आत्मनः प्रसज्येत । 'अविकार्यः अयं उच्यते' इति च एवं आदीनि वाक्यानि बाध्येरन् । तत् च अनिष्टम् । तस्मात् न स्वाश्रया क्रिया आत्मनः संभवति । अन्याश्रयायाः तु क्रियायाः अविषयत्वात् न तथा आत्मा संस्क्रियते।

Bh. Tr. *Mokṣa* is not a *saṃskārya* (something that can be perfected or refined) that requires an action.

Saṃskāra is something that results from adding some good qualities to a thing to be perfected (viz. *saṃskārya*) or by removing defects therein. It is absolutely impossible to gain *mokṣa* through the addition of good qualities (*guṇātīśaya*) because the same (i.e. *mokṣa*) is verily Brahman in its true nature, to which no good qualities can be added. *Mokṣa* is not possible through the removal of defects either because *mokṣa* is (nothing but) *Brahma-svarūpa*, ever-free from all defects whatsoever. If it be urged that though *mokṣa* is the very nature of *ātmā*, this unmanifest *mokṣa* is revealed when *ātmā* is refined by certain actions, just as the brightness of a mirror is manifested by the act of polishing, (we reply) it is not so because it is not possible for *ātmā* to be the basis of an action. This is because no action can come into existence without modifying (or changing) the nature of its basis. If *ātmā* were modifiable by an action (*kriyā*), it would certainly become transient. Scriptural statements such as ‘This *ātmā* is unchanging (*avikārya*)’ (*B.G. 2-25*) would stand contradicted. Any contradiction of such statements is wrong. Therefore, an action abiding in *ātmā* is not possible. On the other hand, *ātmā* cannot be refined (or perfected) by a *kriyā* (an action) abiding in something else either because such action is totally unconnected to it (*ātmā*).

A thing can be improved and perfected by adding good qualities to it or removing defects therein. For instance, grains of rice are sanctified by sprinkling consecrated water on them. Soiled clothes are washed clean to remove dirt. But both these ways of refinement are totally inapplicable to Brahman because it is full (*pūrṇa*) and no good qualities can be added to it. Again, it is all-pervasive with nothing else in itself, and so no defects are ever possible in it.

Some are of the view that *mokṣa* is the very nature of *ātmā* but completely covered by the dirt of *avidyā* – self-ignorance. So it needs to be cleansed like a mirror covered by dust, whereby *mokṣa* can be revealed. The contender should be asked if that dirt of ignorance covering *ātmā* or Brahman is real or false.

If it is false, it can be destroyed only by *ātmajñāna*, and not by an action.

If the covering (veil of) ignorance is real, the following two questions arise:

Does an action abiding in *ātmā* destroy the covering or does an action abiding in something other than *ātmā* destroy it?

An action can come into existence only by effecting a change such as union or separation etc. to something else which is its basis. The changeless (*avikārī*) *ātmā* can never be the basis of any action. Lord Kṛṣṇa has declared in the *Bhagavadgītā* that *ātmā* is unchanging (*avikārya*) (*B.G.* 2-25). Therefore *ātmā* cannot have any action abiding in itself which could destroy its covering of ignorance.

If the said action abides in something other than *ātmā* as its basis, it would be distinct from *ātmā*. Such an action abiding in a different basis cannot have any connection with *ātmā*. When the two are totally unconnected, the result of the action too cannot therefore remove the covering on *ātmā*.

The illustration of cleansing a mirror cannot justify the assertion that *ātmā* can be refined. Things such as mirrors that are composed of parts (i.e. *sāvayava*) and limited in nature can undergo refinement (*saṃskāra*). But *ātmā* is partless (*niravayava*) and limitless in nature and hence not available for any refinement.

It was said that *ātmā* cannot be refined by an action abiding

elsewhere. A potential exception in this respect is pointed out, and countered thereafter.

भा. ननु देहाश्रयया स्नानाचमनयज्ञोपवीतादिकया क्रियया देही संस्क्रियमाणः दृष्टः । न । देहादिसंहतस्य एव अविद्यागृहीतस्य आत्मनः संस्क्रियमाणत्वात् । प्रत्यक्षं हि स्नानाचमनादेः देहसमवायित्वम् । तथा देहाश्रयया तत्संहतः एव कश्चित् अविद्यया आत्मत्वेन परिगृहीतः संस्क्रियते इति युक्तम् । यथा देहाश्रयचिकित्सानिमित्तेन धातुसाम्येन तत्संहतस्य तदभिमानिनः आरोग्यफलं, अहं अरोगः इति यत्र बुद्धिः उत्पद्यते। एवं स्नानाचमनयज्ञोपवीतादिना अहं शुद्धः संस्कृतः इति यत्र बुद्धिः उत्पद्यते सः संस्क्रियते । सः च देहेन संहतः एव । तेन एव हि अहंकर्त्रा अहंप्रत्ययविषयेण प्रत्ययिना सर्वाः क्रियाः निर्वर्त्यन्ते । तत्फलं च सः एव अश्नाति 'तयोः अन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति अनश्नन् अन्यः अभिचाकशीति' (मुण्ड. ३-१-१) इति मन्त्रवर्णात् । 'आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्ता इति आहुः मनीषिणः' (कठ. १-३-४) इति च।

Bh. Tr. Contrary proposition: But *ātmā* (i.e. *jīvātmā*) mistaken as *ātmā*) is seen as being purified by actions such as bath, *ācamana* (sipping of water before religious ceremonies) and wearing the sacred thread, actions which are centred on the body (distinct from *ātmā*).

Answer: It is not so, because it is *ātmā* conditioned by self-ignorance and identified (*saṃhata*) with the assemblage of body etc. (called *jīvātmā*) alone that is being purified. It is true that a close connection of bath, *ācamana* etc. with the body is directly perceived. It is appropriate to say that someone endowed with the embodiment, who has mistaken the body as himself due to self-ignorance alone, is purified by a bath and other such actions related to the body.

For instance, the individual (i.e. *jīva*) identified with the body, in whom the feeling ‘I am healthy’ is born due to the equilibrium of the three bodily humours (as per *Āyurveda*) resulting from medical treatment centred on the body, does (indeed) experience the result, namely health. In the same manner, the individual (the *jīva*) – in whom the feeling ‘I am clean and purified by bath, *ācamana*, and wearing the sacred thread etc.’ (related to the body) is born – alone is (one who is) purified. Moreover, it is that individual (the *jīva*) who is firmly united with the body (in terms of identification). All activities are truly performed by it (i.e. the *jīva*) itself, the object of the ‘I notion’ which conducts itself as ‘I am the doer’ and is endowed with all the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛttis*. That *jīva* alone experiences the results of actions. (This can be verified) from the following *Upaniṣadic* passages: ‘One (viz. *jīva*) of the two (viz. *jīva* and *Īśvara*) experiences the results of its actions of varied types (whereas) the other (viz. *Īśvara*) remains in its nature of self-luminous knowledge-principle without experiencing (the same)’ (*Mu.U.* 3-1-1) and ‘Wise people describe *ātmā* endowed with the body, senses and mind as *bhoktā* (i.e. *saṃsāri jīva*)’ (*Kṛ.U.*1-3-4).

The word *ādī* (etc.) used in the context of purifying acts such as bath, *ācamana* and wearing the sacred thread refers to *sandhyāvandanam* (the morning and evening prayers) and other such actions. *Ātmā* is distinct from the body. It is not correct to say that *asaṅga* (totally unattached) *ātmā* is purified by actions centred on the body. The erroneous notion ‘I am the body’ arises with the firm identification with one’s embodiment due to the superimposition of self-ignorance. Such a mistaken being called *jīva* is purified by acts such as bath etc. centred on the body. The *bhāṣya* refers to the *jīva* by a non-specific word ‘someone (*kaścit*)’ to indicate it is subject to various embodiments after death in order to experience the varied results of its actions. The feeling of becoming healthy as

a result of medical treatment centred on the body amply illustrates how purificatory acts such as bath etc. centred on the body can create a sense of purity in the notional *jīva* due to erroneous identification. The whole show of *saṃsāra* comprising of 'do and achieve' is conducted solely by the *jīva* endowed with *ahaṃkāra* – the 'I' notion in the embodiment. Such a *jīva* alone is the experiencer (*bhoktā*) of all the results of actions. The Upaniṣads corroborate this fact. Thus it is established that actions abiding in the body cannot perfect or refine *ātmā*. It is *bhoktā* (the *saṃsārī jīva*) who is available for *saṃskāra* (perfection or purification).

It should be clear that the notional being *jīva*, namely *ātmā* endowed and identified with the embodiment, alone can gain the false perfection (called *saṃskāra*). By contrast, actual *ātmā* is totally free from the embodiment and is never available for acts of perfection. Upaniṣadic passages to this effect are now cited.

भा. तथा च 'एकः देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा । कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवलः निर्गुणः च' (श्वेता.६-११) इति । 'सः पर्यगात् शुक्रं अकायं अत्रणं अस्नाविरं शुद्धं अपापविद्धम्' (ईशा.८) इति च। एतौ मन्त्रौ अनाधेयातिशयतां नित्यशुद्धतां च ब्रह्मणः दर्शयतः । ब्रह्मभावः च मोक्षः । तस्मात् न संस्कार्यः अपि मोक्षः। अतः अन्यत् मोक्षं प्रति क्रियानुप्रवेशद्वारं न शक्यं केनचित् दर्शयितुम् । तस्मात् ज्ञानम् एकं मुक्त्वा क्रियायाः गन्धमात्रस्य अपि अनुप्रवेशः इह न उपपद्यते ।

Bh. Tr. Similarly, (the nature of *ātmā*) is declared in the Upaniṣads – '*Ātmā* is *ekaḥ* (one and the same non-dual principle abiding in all), *devaḥ* (self-luminous knowledge-principle), *gūḍhaḥ* (not available for cognition because of being concealed by *māyā*), *sarvavyāpī* (all-pervasive), *sarvabhūtāntarātmā* (the true "I" in all), *karmādhyaakṣaḥ* (illuminator of all

actions), *sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ* (inhabitant in all as their very basis), *sākṣī* (one who makes everything known directly without depending on anything else), *cetā* (the pure awareness / pure knowledge-principle), *kevalaḥ* (non-dual, free from *drśya*) and *nirguṇaḥ* (free from all attributes)' (*Śv.U.* 6-11). 'Ātmā is the all-pervading (*paryagāt*), resplendent knowledge-principle (*śukram*), devoid of subtle body (*akāyaḥ*), free from wounds and sinews (*avraṇaḥ* and *asnāviraḥ* i.e. free from gross body), free from attachment etc. (*śuddhaḥ*), free from sins and *puṇya* (*apāpavidhaḥ*)' (*Ī.U.* 8). These two *mantras* show that no good qualities can be added to Brahman and that it is (also) ever-free from all defects whatsoever.

Liberation is *Brahmabhāvaḥ* – the very nature of Brahman (i.e. *Brahmasvarūpaḥ*). For this reason too, liberation is not something that can be perfected. Moreover, no one can possibly point to any other means through which any action (other than those that result in birth, change, procurement or perfection) can approach liberation (because there is no fifth type of result of action besides birth etc.). Therefore, except knowledge, even the whiff of an action (*kriyā*) cannot provide an approach to liberation.

Ātmā is one and the same non-dual principle abiding in all. Yet ignorant people fail to know its true nature because it is concealed by *māyā* – which is synonymous with self-ignorance. It is not correct to say that *ātmā* is totally unrelated to *jīva* or distinct from it, and therefore unknown. To dispel such doubts the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣat* points out that *ātmā* is all pervasive (*sarvavyāpī*) and the true 'I' in all (i.e. *sarvabhūtāntarātmā*). Since *ātmā* is all-pervading and the very 'I' in all, the absence of its true cognition is caused only by *māyā*.

Though *ātmā* is the 'I' in all beings, it cannot be the doer (*kartā* – the *samsārī*) because it is *karmādhyakṣa* or *kriyā sākṣī*, the illuminator (*sākṣī*) of all actions. And yet *sākṣī ātmā* is not truly distinct from the entities illumined (*sākṣya* or *dṛśya*) so that real duality could result, as it is the very basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of all that is created. In other words, the entire created *dṛśya* is superimposed on *sākṣī ātmā*, which is the basis of everything.

The words *cetā* (the pure awareness principle /*caitanya* principle) and *kevalaḥ* (the non-dual principle free from *dṛśya*) describe what *sākṣī* is. It is well-known in the world that a person who is a knower of a specific thing or event but not an active part or participant therein is called *sākṣī* (witness). The word *ca* (च) in the above quotation (6-11) from the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣat* signifies the absence of any defect in *ātmā*. Thus *ātmā*, being *nirguṇa* (free from attributes) and *nirdoṣa* (devoid of defects), is not available for any perfection either by adding excellence/good qualities (*guṇa*) or by removing defects/*doṣas*.

The *Īśāvāsyaopaniṣat* quotation describing the nature of *ātmā* begins with the masculine pronoun *saḥ* (he). Therefore the rest of the words in that sentence, such as *śukram* etc., that are in the neuter gender have to be taken to be in the masculine gender. The words *avraṇaḥ* (free from wounds) and *asnāviraḥ* (free from sinews) together connote that *ātmā* is free from the gross body.

The two *Upaniṣadic mantras* quoted in the *bhāṣya* prove that no good qualities/excellence can be added to Brahman and that it is ever-free from defect. Another reason why liberation is not something that can be accomplished through perfection is because it is *Brahmabhāvaḥ*. It is identical with the very *Brahmasvarūpa* (the nature of Brahman). Brahman is not available for perfection. For this reason too, liberation is not something that can be perfected.

Incidentally, the definition of *mokṣa* that we arrive at here in this *bhāṣya* portion is *Brahmabhāvaḥ*, becoming of the true nature

of Brahman itself. The component *Brahma* in the compound *Brahmabhāvaḥ* stands for *Brahmasvarūpa* – the true nature of Brahman. *Bhāvaḥ* is ‘becoming’ in the sense of making the mind absorbed in Brahman by causing the mind to conform to its true nature. *Bhāvaḥ* also means a state of being. So liberation is the state of being Brahman in its true nature. In the state of self-ignorance, Brahman appears to be at variance from its true nature. In view of this, the direct cognition of *Brahmasvarūpa* is considered to be a state, though Brahman is free from all states in reality. This direct cognition of Brahman is a state of the *antaḥkaraṇa*.

As established thus far, actions resulting in *utpatti* (birth), *āpti* (procurement), *vikāra* (change) and *saṃskāra* (perfection) cannot result in liberation. There is no fifth type of result of action which can serve as a means to liberation. Action cannot therefore accomplish liberation. Does this mean then that liberation is impossible to achieve and it is futile to commence with this treatise to ascertain *Brahman*? That is not the case. This *śāstra* is meant for gaining *Brahmajñāna*. Liberation is gained by *Brahmajñāna* and not by action.

KNOWLEDGE IS NOT AN ACTION ENJOINED BY INJUNCTION (*VIDHI*)

The contender claims that there is a contradiction in the statement that liberation is gained by knowledge and not by action, in that knowledge itself is an action. This contention is addressed in the following *bhāṣya* portion.

भा. ननु ज्ञानं नाम मानसी क्रिया । न । वैलक्षण्यात् । क्रिया हि नाम सा यत्र वस्तुस्वरूपनिरपेक्षा एव चोद्यते, पुरुषचित्तव्यापाराधीना च । यथा ‘यस्यै देवतायै हविः गृहीतं स्यात् तां मनसा ध्यायेत् वषट् करिष्यन्’ इति । ‘संध्यां मनसा ध्यायेत्’ (ऐ.ब्रा. ३ - ८ - १) इति च एवं आदिषु । ध्यानं चिन्तनं यदि अपि मानसं तथा अपि पुरुषेण कर्तुं अकर्तुं अन्यथा वा कर्तुं शक्यं,

पुरुषतन्त्रत्वात्। ज्ञानं तु प्रमाणजन्यम् । प्रमाणं च यथाभूतवस्तुविषयम् । अतः ज्ञानं कर्तुं अकर्तुं अन्यथा वा कर्तुं अशक्यं केवलं वस्तुतन्त्रं एव तत् । न चोदनातन्त्रम् । न अपि पुरुषतन्त्रम् । तस्मात् मानसत्वे अपि ज्ञानस्य महद्वैलक्षण्यम्। यथा च 'पुरुषः वाव गौतम अग्निः' 'योषा वाव गौतम अग्निः' (छान्दो. ५-७-१, ५-८-१) इति अत्र योषित्पुरुषयोः अग्निबुद्धिः मानसी भवति । केवलचोदनाजन्यत्वात् क्रिया एव सा पुरुषतन्त्रा च । या तु प्रसिद्धे अग्नौ अग्निबुद्धिः न सा चोदनातन्त्रा । न अपि पुरुषतन्त्रा । किं तर्हि प्रत्यक्षविषयवस्तुतन्त्रा एव इति ज्ञानं एव एतत् न क्रिया । एवं सर्वप्रमाणविषयवस्तुषु वेदितव्यम् । तत्र एवं सति यथाभूतब्रह्मात्मविषयं अपि ज्ञानं न चोदनातन्त्रम् । तद्विषये लिङ्गादयः श्रूयमाणाः अपि अनियोज्यविषयत्वात् कुण्ठीभवन्ति उपलादिषु प्रयुक्तक्षुरतैक्षण्यादिवत्, अहेयानुपादेयवस्तुविषयत्वात् ।

Bh.Tr. Contrary proposition: But knowledge itself is indeed a mental action.

Ans: That is not the case, there exists a distinction (between the knowledge and the mental action called meditation). It is well-known that (a Vedic) mental action is an action enjoined (by an injunction) and does not consider the actual nature of the thing (meditated upon). It is dependent on human volition (*puruṣa-cittavyāpāra*). For example, meditation (which is a mental action) is enjoined in *śruti* passages such as 'The deity for whom the sacrificial oblation is taken as an offering (by the *adhvaryu*, the *Yajurvedic* priest) should be meditated on mentally (by the *hotā*, the *Rgvedic* priest), while uttering – *vaṣaṭ* (a formula used while offering the oblation)'; '(The deity) *Sandhyā* should be meditated upon mentally' (*Ai.Brā.* 3-8-1) and such others.

Meditation (*dhyānam*) means thinking (of a specific thing). It is an action even though it is mental (in nature). It is an action that can be performed, not performed or performed in some other manner, because an action depends on human effort or will. In contrast to mental action (*dhyānam*), knowledge is born of a *pramāṇa* (a valid means of knowledge). A *pramāṇa* has as its object the true nature of an entity (in other words, *pramāṇa* produces knowledge true to the nature of the entity). Therefore it is not possible to perform an act of knowledge or not perform it or perform it in some other way, because knowledge depends entirely on the entity to be known alone. It depends neither on injunction (*codanā-vidhi*) nor on human effort or will. Therefore there is a great difference between knowledge and mental action (termed meditation), even though knowledge is mental in nature.

For example, the viewing of man or woman as fire, as called for in the *Upaniṣadic* statements ‘O Gautama, man is verily fire.’ (*Ch.U.* 5-7-1) and ‘O Gautama, woman is verily fire’ (*Ch.U.* 5-8-1) is an act that is mental in nature. It is truly a (mental) action because it is born of injunction alone and dependent on human will. By contrast, cognizing directly perceived fire as fire is neither dependent on injunction (*codanā*) nor on human will. What then is it? It (i.e. the direct perception that this is fire) is knowledge alone and not an action because it is dependent on the entity (fire) directly perceived as an object. And that is how it should also be understood with respect to things that are the object of any *pramāṇa* – any means of knowledge.

(In the world), since knowledge is not something enjoined by an injunction (*vidhi*), the

knowledge corresponding to the exact nature of Brahman, which is identical to *ātmā*, too is not dependent on any injunction (*vidhi/codanā*). Due to the absence of an individual (viz. *niyojya*) for whom injunctions are enjoined, as also for want of a purpose (*viśaya* i.e. result) that can be accomplished through action, the sense of the potential and imperative moods found in *Upaniṣadic* statements pertaining to the knowledge (of Brahman/*ātmā*) also stands blunted. It is like the sharpness of a razor that becomes blunted when used on (hard things like) rock etc. Another reason why (the Brahman that is required to be known cannot be the subject-matter of a *vidhi*) is that the Brahman that is the topic (of *Upaniṣadic* statements) can neither be acquired nor rejected (since it is one's own self).

Knowledge (*jñānam*) no doubt pertains to the mind. It originates in the mind and therefore is mental (*mānasam*) in nature. But it cannot be an action enjoined by an injunction (*vidhi / codanā*) because knowledge depends wholly on the entity to be known and can never be a result produced by action. By contrast, a Vedic mental action (*kriyā*) is enjoined independent of the actual nature of the entity involved and depends on human volition. This is illustrated by *mantras* from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.

When a sacrificial oblation is to be offered to a specific deity, the *adhvaryu* (the *Yajurvedic* priest) gets ready by holding it in his hand. At the same time, the *hotā*, the *Rgvedic* priest, must mentally think of the deity to whom the oblation is being offered whilst uttering aloud the formula ' *vaṣaṭ* '. Depending on the type of sacrifice, any one of the words *svāhā*, *śrouṣaṭ*, *vouṣaṭ*, *vaṣaṭ*, *svadhā* is to be uttered with the *mantra* when offering the oblation to the deity, such as *Indrāya vaṣaṭ*, *Indrāya svāhā*, *Pūṣṇe vaṣaṭ* etc. The oblation is offered by the *adhvaryu* when the word *vaṣaṭ* is uttered.

Another illustration from the *bhāṣya* is: ‘The deity *Sandhyā* should be meditated upon mentally’. In both the above instances, the priest does not have an idea of the exact nature of the deity invoked. Yet he meditates on it as called for by the injunction. This illustrates that a mental action (called meditation) enjoined by a *vidhi* (an injunction of the Veda) does not require the knowledge of the thing meditated upon. It is wholly dependent on human will and effort.

The mere fact that it is mental in nature, like knowledge (*jñānam*), cannot lead to the conclusion that (*dhyānam*) is an action (*kriyā*). The occurrence of something at the mental level is not the criterion for being an action. Likewise, knowledge does not become an action because it is a mental phenomenon. Instead, knowledge is not an action because it is not accomplished through the means of action which depends invariably on human will and effort. By contrast, meditation is subject to human will and effort. Therefore, meditation becomes an action in spite of being mental.

Unlike a mental action, knowledge is born of valid *pramāṇa*. A *pramāṇa* has as its object the exact nature of the entity to be known. Knowledge is determined by the object; there is no scope for human will or effort in its ascertainment. Knowledge is not *codanā tantra* i.e. not dependent on a *codanā* (injunction) in the sense it is neither the subject-matter of nor the thing enjoined by an injunction. Neither is it *puruṣatantra* – dependent on human will and effort. *Puruṣatantra* refers to an entity which is produced by human action. There is thus a great difference between knowledge (*jñānam*) and meditation (*dhyānam*). Knowledge is not different from the entity to be known and not *puruṣatantram*. By contrast, meditation is independent of the entity involved and is also *puruṣatantram*.

The distinction between knowledge and meditation (mental action) is further illustrated by the *upāsana* called *Pañcāgnividyā* from the *Chāndogyopaniṣat*. This *upāsana* enjoins meditation on man and woman as fire. Man and woman can never be fire; yet it is

possible to meditate on them as fire based on the Vedic injunction. But such meditation is not knowledge of fire. The difference between the *upāsana* and knowledge of fire becomes clear when actual fire is directly perceived. The knowledge of fire perceived directly is neither enjoined by *codanā* (injunction) nor is it *puruṣatantram*. The perception of fire is the knowledge of fire and not an action because it is wholly dependent on the fire directly perceived as an object.

Some may argue that even though direct perceptual knowledge of an object depends on that object, knowledge produced by Vedic statements should necessarily be an action enjoined by a *vidhi* (injunction) because of the absence of any external object corresponding to the *vidhi*. It is not correct to say so.

The *bhāṣya* addresses this doubt by pointing out that the knowledge of objects gained through appropriate *pramāṇas* such as *śabda* (*śruti*), *anumāna* (inference) etc. is verily dependent on the objects known and is not an action born of *vidhi*. As a rule in all cases, knowledge conforms to the object and is gained only through an appropriate *pramāṇa*. As a result, knowledge can never be the thing enjoined by a Vedic injunction. Based on what is stated so far, the knowledge of the ever-existent indestructible Brahman is not dependent on any injunction (*codanā*).

The opponent contends that the Upaniṣads contain many injunctions regarding self-knowledge. For instance, ‘*Ātmā* should be investigated’; ‘You must know Brahman’ (*Ke.U.* 1-5); ‘*Ātmā* must be known directly’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-5). He contends that the potential (*liṅ* – लिङ्) and imperative (*lot* – लोट्) moods as well as the potential passive participle (*tavya*) used in these injunctions do enjoin action for the acquisition of knowledge. Yes, it is true that such usage is found in the Upaniṣads. Even so, these injunctions are incapable of enjoining an individual to take to action in the context of gaining knowledge. The reason being that the subject matter of these statements is knowledge which cannot be accomplished through action and which is not any of the four results that can be gained

through action. *Upaniṣadic* statements urging the *mumukṣu* to gain self-knowledge lack the following two factors:

- i) A *niyojya* addressed by *vidhi* (injunction) – an individual who performs the *karma* or *upāsana* considering it as a duty enjoined on him for gaining the desired result.
- ii) A *kṛtisādhyā-viṣaya* – a result which can be accomplished through an action (i.e. *viṣaya*).

Therefore the potential moods etc. in these statements become blunt and thus ineffective in enjoining the *mumukṣu* to take to action. It is like the sharp edge of a razor becoming blunted when used on a rock. Just as hard things like a rock cannot be the object of a razor, so too *Brahmajñāna* cannot be the object of any *vidhi* (injunction).

Now if action cannot be enjoined to gain the knowledge of Brahman, could it be that Brahman itself is enjoined by *vidhi* as an object to be accomplished by action? No. This is not possible because *vidhi* or *codanā* always prompt the *niyojya* – the person addressed – to undertake an action, whereas *Upaniṣadic* statements bearing a semblance to injunction (*vidhi*) have the true nature of Brahman as their subject matter, and not action. Brahman is something that cannot be acquired or rejected because it is truly one's own self. In view of the fact that *Upaniṣadic* statements bearing a semblance to injunction (*vidhi*) have the true nature of Brahman as their subject matter, and not action, the imperative and potential moods in Vedāntic statements become ineffective in enjoining something to be done.

THE PURPOSE OF *UPANIṢADIC* STATEMENTS WHICH BEAR A SEMBLANCE TO *VIDHI*

The purpose of *Upaniṣadic* statements which appear to be similar to *vidhis* is now explained.

भा. किमर्थानि तर्हि 'आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यः' इति आदीनि विधिच्छायानि वचनानि । स्वाभाविकप्रवृत्ति-विषयविमुखीकरणार्थानि इति ब्रूमः । यः हि बहिर्मुखः प्रवर्तते पुरुषः इष्टं मे भूयात् अनिष्टं मा भूत् इति, न च तत्र आत्यन्तिकं पुरुषार्थं लभते, तं आत्यन्तिकपुरुषार्थवाञ्छिनं स्वाभाविक-कार्यकरणसंघातप्रवृत्तिगोचरात् विमुखीकृत्य प्रत्यगात्मस्रोतस्तया प्रवर्तयन्ति 'आत्मा वा अरे दृष्टव्यः' इत्यादीनि। तस्य आत्मान्वेषणाय प्रवृत्तस्य अहेयं अनुपादेयं च आत्मतत्त्वं उपदिश्यते। 'इदं सर्वं यत् अयं आत्मा' (बृह. २-४-६) 'यत्र तु अस्य सर्वं आत्मा एव अभूत् तत् केन कं पश्येत् केन कं विजानीयात् विज्ञातारं अरे केन विजानीयात्' (बृह. ४-५-१५) 'अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म' (बृह. २-५-१९) इति आदिभिः ।

Bh.Tr. (If moods in Vedāntic statements that appear to enjoin action, such as the imperative and others, stand blunted), what then is the purpose of *Upaniṣadic* statements like 'O, (Maitreyī), *ātmā* should be known directly, should be inquired into' (*Br.U.* 2-4-5) which bear a semblance to injunctions? We answer that these statements are meant to wean (an individual) away from the objects of natural extroverted pursuit (viz. from sense objects).

The extroverted individual who engages in (sense objects) with the thought 'Let me have desired objects, let me not have undesirable objects' does not gain the highest happiness by doing so. Such an individual desirous of gaining the highest accomplishment (viz. liberation) must be made to turn away from sense objects, the pursuit of which falls within the ambit of the natural activity of this aggregate of body and senses. Passages such as '*Ātmā* should be known directly' (*Br.U.* 2-4-5) etc., having dissuaded

the *mumukṣu* from the pursuit of sense-pleasures, urge him to take to (the means of gaining self-knowledge) by diverting his stream of thought to *ātmā*.

It is to the individual who engages (thus) in the inquiry of *ātmā*, which can neither be acquired nor rejected, that the true nature of *ātmā* is taught by texts such as – ‘All that exists (in Creation) is this *ātmā*’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-6); ‘In the state of knowledge, in contrast to the state of ignorance, what form can be seen and through what means of cognition, what object can be known and through what means, when everything has become *ātmā* alone to the *Brahmajñāni*?’ ‘O, Maitreyī, by what instrument of cognition can one know that (knowledge-principle) which knows everything?’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-14; 4-5-15); ‘This *ātmā* is Brahman’ (*Br.U.* 2-5-19).

Certain *Upaniṣadic* passages do appear to contain directives similar to injunctions pertaining to well-known sacrifices, for instance, in that they contain the potential or imperative moods or the potential passive participle. Such usage is meant to praise *ātmajñāna* (self-knowledge), the means to gain the liberation – the highest accomplishment.

Now *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (contemplation) are indispensable in gaining self-knowledge. The natural tendency in extroverted persons is to indulge in sense-pursuits under the presumption that such indulgence alone is the goal of life. Pursuit of this nature is a great hurdle and hindrance to *śravaṇa* and the other measures. Sense indulgence cannot lead to limitless happiness or give total freedom from sorrow. The praise of *ātmajñāna* in statements resembling injunctions exhorts the *mumukṣu* to give up the hankering for sense objects and strive to gain *Brahmajñāna*. These statements urge those who are serious about gaining liberation to draw their minds

away from sense indulgence and engage in *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* in order to know their own true nature.

The nature of self-inquiry is demonstrated in the *bhāṣya* through some Vedāntic passages and becomes clear when their implication is ascertained. Take the statement ‘All that is considered to be Creation is in fact nothing but *ātmā*.’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-6). This statement negates the reality ascribed to all that is *anātmā* by revealing the true nature of the same to be *ātmā* alone. ‘There is not even the trace of dualism in the form of perceiver, perceived, specific perception and means of perception in the direct cognition of *ātmā*-Brahman. *Ātmā*, because of which everything is known, cannot be objectified by any means of knowledge whatsoever. All that there is the ever-existent and self-luminous knowledge-principle – Brahman alone.’ (*Br.U.* 2-4-14; 4-5-15). ‘This “I”, hitherto mistaken as an embodied *saṃsārī*, is nothing but Brahman when known in its true nature free from all superimposed *upādhis*.’ (*Br.U.* 2-5-19). In short, there is no room for duality in Brahman, which is *ātmā* itself. Injunctions (*vidhi*) can subsist only in the realm of duality and have no *locus standi* in Brahman, the latter being totally free from all dualistic *dṛśyas*.

ALL DUTIES END WITH *ĀTMAJÑĀNA*

Earlier,⁸⁵ the contender had claimed that any worthwhile goal to be accomplished in life (i.e. *puruṣārtha*) can be accomplished only through action. Any accomplishment would therefore necessarily be the object of either *pravṛtti* (action) or *nivṛtti* (withdrawal from action), continued the contender, and knowledge of an existing thing, which does not involve action, thus lacks the status of being a *puruṣārtha*. It is now shown that the fact that actions are inessential even after *ātmajñāna* is not a drawback of Vedānta but a great ornament in and of itself.

⁸⁵ Refer to (i) प्रस्तावना भाष्य of *Br. Sū.* 1-1-4, from कथं पुनः to न ब्रह्मणः शास्त्रयोनित्वं इति प्राप्ते उच्यते , Page No. 227 (ii) तु शब्दः to ब्रह्मणःशास्त्रप्रमाणकत्वम् । Page No. 234 and 235

भा. यदपि अकर्तव्यप्रधानम् आत्मज्ञानं हानाय उपादानाय वा न भवति इति, तत् तथा एव इति अभ्युपगम्यते । अलंकारः हि अयं अस्माकं यत् ब्रह्मात्मावगतौ सत्यां सर्वकर्तव्यताहानिः कृतकृत्यता च इति । तथा च श्रुतिः – ‘आत्मानं चेत् विजानीयात् अयं अस्मि इति पूरुषः । किं इच्छन् कस्य कामाय शरीरं अनुसंज्वरेत् ।’ (बृह. ४-४-१२) इति । ‘एतत् बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान् स्यात् कृतकृत्यः च भारत’ (भ.गी. १५-२०) इति स्मृतिः । तस्मात् न प्रतिपत्तिविधिविषयतया ब्रह्मणः समर्पणम् ।

Bh.Tr. (Earlier) statements (by the contender), to the effect that the knowledge of *ātmanā* (Brahman) that is totally independent of action (or totally unapproachable through action) cannot be a (means) to either acquire or reject something, are accepted (by us) in its entirety. The fact that ‘All duties end and a complete sense of contentment (born of having done all that needs to be done) arises when *ātmanā* identical to Brahman is directly known’ is an ornament to us (Vedāntists). It has been said in the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*: ‘If the individual *jīva* knows *ātmanā* directly as “I am this self-luminous *Parabrahma* (the *sākṣī* of all *antaḥkaraṇavṛttis* in all beings)”, desiring what sense-enjoyments and for whose sake will he become sorrowful on account of the afflictions of the body?’ (*Br.U.* 4-4-12). ‘O Arjuna, having known this supreme secret (ultimate reality), the person becomes a *jñānī* and one contented, having done what needs to be done’ (*B.G.* 15-20). Therefore Vedānta does not present (or reveal) Brahman as the object (*viśaya*) of an *upāsana* *vidhi* (an injunction enjoining an *upāsana*).

The *bhāṣya* cites quotations from the *Bṛhadāraṇyakoṇiṣat* and *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* to corroborate the absence of duties for an *ātmajñānī*. When an individual knows himself directly as ‘I am

Brahman of the nature of limitless happiness’, there remains neither sense-pleasure nor a *bhoktā* (experiencer) and there remains no occasion for getting afflicted on account of the body. All that remains in *Brahmasākṣātkāra* is the *paramānanda svarūpa* Brahman and Brahman alone. There remains no duality of *bhoktā* (experiencer) and *bhogyā* (sense objects). An *ātmajñānī* (i.e. *Brahmajñānī*) therefore is a totally contented person with no duties. The word ‘*ceḥ*’ (if) in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka mantra* quoted (*Bṛ.U.* 4-4-12) indicates that it is difficult to gain self-knowledge. This is an exhortation to the *mumukṣu* to put in industrious efforts. The seventh chapter of the text *Pañcadaśī* composed by Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni and consisting of 298 verses is an exhaustive commentary on this *mantra* and describes the absolute contentment of a *jīvanmukta* – a person liberated even whilst living in the existing embodiment. Thus the *bhāṣya* establishes that Brahman is not the object of any *upāsana vidhi* and concludes its refutation of the stand taken by the *vṛttikāra*.⁸⁶

VEDIC PASSAGES DO DESCRIBE EXISTING ENTITIES AS WELL

Some followers of *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, the *Prābhākaraḥ*, claim that the *jīva*, well-known as the doer (*kartā*) and experiencer (*bhoktā*) of results in the world, cannot be the topic of Vedānta. They add further that Brahman does not exist distinct from the *jīva* because the Vedas reveal only *karma*, and there is no *pramāṇa* to prove the existence of Brahman. This contrary proposition is now refuted.

भा. यद् अपि केचित् आहुः – ‘प्रवृत्तिनिवृत्तिविधि-
तच्छेषव्यतिरेकेण केवलवस्तुवादी वेदभागः न अस्ति’ इति तत्
न, औपनिषदस्य पुरुषस्य अनन्यशेषत्वात् । यः असौ
उपनिषत्सु एव अधिगतः पुरुषः असंसारी ब्रह्म, उत्पाद्यादि
चतुर्विधद्रव्यविलक्षणः स्वप्रकरणस्थः अनन्यशेषः, न असौ न

⁸⁶ Refer to *Bhāṣya* passage अत्रापरे प्रत्यवतिष्ठन्ते to ब्रह्मज्ञानं विधीयते इति युक्तम् | Page No. 247

अस्ति न अधिगम्यते इति वा शक्यं वदितुम्, 'सः एषः न इति न इति आत्मा' (बृह. ३-१-२६) इति आत्मशब्दात् आत्मनः च प्रत्याख्यातुं अशक्यत्वात्, यः एव निराकर्ता तस्य एव आत्मत्वात् । ननु आत्मा अहंप्रत्ययविषयत्वात् उपनिषत्सु एव विज्ञायते इति अनुपपन्नम् । न । तत्साक्षित्वेन प्रत्युक्तत्वात् । नहि अहंप्रत्ययविषयकर्तृव्यतिरेकेण तत्साक्षी सर्वभूतस्थः समः एकः कूटस्थनित्यः पुरुषः विधिकाण्डे तर्कसमये वा केनचित् अधिगतः सर्वस्य आत्मा, अतः सः न केनचित् प्रत्याख्यातुं शक्यः विधिषोषत्वं वा नेतुम् । आत्मत्वात् एव च सर्वेषां न हेयः न अपि उपादेयः । सर्वं हि विनश्यत् विकारजातं पुरुषान्तं विनश्यति । पुरुषः हि विनाशहेत्वभावात् अविनाशी, विक्रियाहेत्वभावात् च कूटस्थनित्यः, अतः एव नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावः । तस्मात् 'पुरुषात् न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः' (कठ. १-३-११) 'तं तु औपनिषदं पुरुषं पृच्छामि' (बृह. ३-१-२६) इति च औपनिषदत्वविशेषणं पुरुषस्य उपनिषत्सु प्राधान्येन प्रकाश्यमानत्वे उपपद्यते । अतः भूतवस्तुपरः वेदभागः न अस्ति इति वचनं साहसमात्रम् ।

Bh.Tr. Some say, 'Apart from activity (*pravṛtti*), inactivity (*nivṛtti*) and their auxiliaries (*śeṣa*), no part of the Veda is solely dedicated to establishing an existing entity'. It is incorrect to say so, because *ātmā* (Brahman) taught in the Upaniṣads is not dependent on anything else (unlike *karma*). The *ātmā* (*puruṣa*) is known only through Upaniṣadic statements and is Brahman free from *saṃsāra* (*asaṃsārī*). It is *utpādyādī caturvidha-dravyavilakṣaṇaḥ*, namely, distinct from things that can be produced (*utpādyā*), changed (*vikārya*), procured (*āpya*) or perfected (*saṃskārya*). That *puruṣa* (*ātmā*) is *svaprakaraṇasthaḥ*, that is to say, established in its own section of the Veda (viz. *jñānakāṇḍa*), and is *ananyaśeṣaḥ*, that is to say, independent of the other section (viz. *karmakāṇḍa*). It

is impossible to say that *ātmā* does not exist or cannot be known, because the word *ātmā* is (clearly) used in the *Upaniṣadic* statement, ‘The one who was revealed (through the instructions) “not this, not this” (in *madhukāṇḍa* – *Br.U.* 2-3-4 to 6) is this *ātmā*.’ (*Br.U.* 3-9-26). It is also impossible to deny *ātmā* because he who refutes its existence is himself verily *ātmā* .

Contrary proposition: It is inappropriate to say that *ātmā* is known only through passages in the *Upaniṣads*. It is well-known in the world as the object of the ‘I’ notion (*aham pratyaya*).

Answer: It is not correct to say so. This was already addressed⁸⁷ (earlier) when it was pointed out that *ātmā* is the *sākṣī* (illuminator) of the ‘I’ notion (and not its object). *Puruṣa* (*ātmā*) is distinct from the doer (*kartā*) which is the object of the well-known ‘I’ notion (*aham-pratyaya*), and is its *sākṣī* (illuminator) (i.e. of *kartā*), abiding in all beings (*sarvabhūtaḥ*), void of differences (*samaḥ*), one (*ekaḥ*), non-dual (*advaya*), ever-changeless (*kūṭasthaḥ*), ever-existent (*nityaḥ*), and the true ‘I’ in all (*sarvasya ātmā*). It cannot be known by anyone through either the *karmakāṇḍa* or *tarkaśāstra* (logic). Therefore this *puruṣa* (*ātmā* – the pure awareness principle) can neither be negated by anyone nor ascertained to be the auxiliary (*śeṣa*) of a Vedic injunction (*vidhi*). It can neither be abandoned (*heyāḥ*) nor acquired (*upādeyaḥ*), because it is the very *ātmā* – the true ‘I’ of all.

All changing entities of perishable nature are destroyed, except the changeless *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is indestructible because there exists no cause that can

⁸⁷ Refer to *Bhāṣya* passage - तथा च एको देवः to अनुप्रवेशः इह न उपपद्यते, Page No. 292

destroy it. Also, in the absence of any means that can lead to its modification, it is the (only) ever-changeless, ever-existent entity. For these reasons, *puruṣa* is of the nature of being eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha* – free from superimposed Creation), the knowledge-principle (*buddha*), and ever-liberated (*mukta*). Therefore the adjective *oupaniṣadaḥ* (i.e. taught in the Upaniṣads) qualifying the *puruṣa* (*ātmā*), in *Upaniṣadic* passages such as, ‘There is nothing superior to *puruṣa* (of the nature of *caitanya* alone); that is the culmination, the highest accomplishment in life.’ (*Kṛ. U.* 1-3-11), and ‘(O *Śākalya*), I am asking you about the *puruṣa* taught in the Upaniṣads’ (*Bṛ.U.* 3-9-26), is possible (only) if it is the *puruṣa* that is mainly expounded in the Upaniṣads. Consequently, to state that there is no part of the Veda that teaches (independently) of an existing entity is nothing short of foolhardiness.

The Vedāntic doctrine outright rejects the opponent’s claim that there is no *pramāṇa* for proving the existence of Brahman. *Ātmā* that is identical to Brahman can be known only through the *pramāṇa* of the Upaniṣads and by no other means of knowledge whatsoever. *Ātmajñāna* destroys *saṃsāra* and so is fruitful. Also, *ātmā* is not auxiliary (*śeṣa*) to any action. Therefore there is no basis for arriving at the conclusion that the entire Vedas impart the knowledge of action (*karma* or *upāsana*) alone and nothing else.

The opponent who affirms that the Vedas reveal only action should be asked to explain why he thinks so. The reason(s) can be one or more from the following five only:

- i) Brahman does not exist at all.
- ii) Brahman cannot be known through the means of Vedānta (Upaniṣads) because it is not taught therein.
- iii) Brahman is an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) of action (*kārya*).

- iv) Brahman is widely known through means of knowledge other than the Veda.
- v) Brahman is contradicted by other means of knowledge.

The first two possible reasons are ruled out in view of the fact that the Brahman identical to *puruṣa* (*ātmā*) is in fact taught in the Upaniṣads. Its existence is therefore proved by the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta. Another proof that Brahman exists is the use of the word ‘*ātmā*’ and the description of its nature in the Upaniṣads (*Bṛ.U.* 3-9-26). It is well-known that *ātmā* is identical to Brahman. The true nature of ‘I’ in all beings is *ātmā*. It can never be negated. Thus Brahman does exist.

The four adjectives for *ātmā*/Brahman, viz. ‘*asaṃsārī* (free from *saṃsāra*)’, ‘distinct from the four types of things that can be produced (*utpādya*) etc.’ (*utpādyādī caturvidha-dravyavilakṣaṇaḥ*), ‘established in its own section of *jñānakāṇḍa* (*svaprakaraṇasthaḥ*)’, and ‘independent of the other section, the *karmakāṇḍa*’ (*ananyāśeṣaḥ*), show that Brahman is not an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) of action (*kārya*). Thus the third possible reason does not hold good either.

It cannot be considered that Brahman or *ātmā* is well-known in the world as the object of *aham pratyaya* (the ‘I’ notion) because *ātmā* is the *sākṣī* (the illuminator) of everything and not just the *sākṣī* of *aham pratyaya* alone. ‘*Ātmā* is *sākṣī* of everything’ was pointed out earlier in the *bhāṣya*⁸⁸ by quoting *Śvetāśvataropaniṣat mantra* (6-11). The fourth possible reason thus stands refuted.

As for the fifth possible reason, the occasion for Brahman being contradicted by other means of knowledge or by argumentation/reasoning does not arise at all. None, including the founders of other schools of thought, can know Brahman by any means of

⁸⁸ vide page 292 para 3 *bhāṣya* साक्षी चेता केवलः’
(श्वेता.६-११).

knowledge other than the Upaniṣads. It is impossible for them to refute something they do not know.

Some are of the opinion that *sākṣī* (*ātmā*) must be an *aṅga* (a part) of *karma*, like the *kartā* (doer), because of its sentient nature. This is refuted by asserting that none can ascertain that *sākṣī ātmā* is a *vidhiśeṣa* – auxiliary to an action. The question arises, is it an unknown *sākṣī* or a known *sākṣī* that could be considered an *aṅga* of *karma*. An unknown *sākṣī* could not be an *aṅga* of *karma* because anything that can be used as an *aṅga* (part) of *karma* has to be known first. And for a known *sākṣī* to be an *aṅga* of *karma* would be an innate contradiction. *Karma* mandates cognition of duality, whereas the non-dual *sākṣī ātmā* is known directly in the state of knowledge where there is no cognition of duality. As a result, *sākṣī* cannot be a *karmāṅga*.

There is yet another reason why it cannot be a *karmāṅga*. *Sākṣī ātmā* is in fact the basis of everything and can therefore neither be given up nor acquired. This is shown by pointing out *sākṣī* is *sarvasya ātmā* – the *ātmā* (the true nature) of all – and so cannot be abandoned or acquired. *Vijñānavādins* contend that *puruṣa* (*ātmā*) is fit to be given up because it is impermanent (*anitya*). This is not true since *puruṣa* continues to exist even when all of Creation is destroyed. *Puruṣa* (*ātmā*) is indestructible because there is no cause that can destroy it. A changing thing may have to be given up. *Puruṣa* is changeless, and is not something that can be abandoned on that count either.

A thing that can be acquired by an action involves change (*vikāra*). Being changeless (*nīrvikārī*), *puruṣa* (*ātmā*) cannot be something that can be acquired. In its true nature, it is the ever-existent knowledge principle (*nityabuddha*), ever-free (*nityamukta*) from all that is superimposed on it.

Some argue that *ātmā* has to be abandoned to gain Brahman. This does not hold water because there is nothing superior to *ātmā* for which it can be abandoned. *Ātmā* itself is Brahman. So

it is the most exalted principle. *Upaniṣadic* passages describe *puruṣa* (*ātmā*) as the most exalted culmination of everything and its knowledge alone as the highest goal of life.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat* (3-9-26) refers to *puruṣa* as *oupaniṣadaḥ* – that which is taught or established in the Upaniṣads. In a debate described in the Upaniṣad, sage Yājñavalkya asks his opponent Śākalya to unfold the *puruṣa* taught in the Upaniṣads. The adjective *oupaniṣadaḥ* qualifying *puruṣa* becomes tenable only when *puruṣa* is revealed independently or principally (*prādhānyena*) in the Upaniṣads without being auxiliary (*śeṣa*) to any injunction (*vidhi*). Thus it is proved that the Vedānta portion of the Vedas does reveal the ever-existent Brahman. Its denial can only be an act of utter foolishness.

THE VEDAS REVEAL NOT JUST KARMA, BUT USEFUL ENTITIES UNKNOWN THROUGH OTHER PRAMĀÑAS

Some statements by experts on the *karmakāṇḍa* were presented earlier⁸⁹ in the contrary proposition and are now restated to show their inapplicability to Vedānta.

भा. यद् अपि शास्त्रतात्पर्यविदां अनुक्रमणम् – ‘दृष्टः हि तस्य अर्थः कर्मावबोधनं’ इति एवं आदि, तद्धर्मजिज्ञासाविषयत्वात् विधिप्रतिषेधशास्त्राभिप्रायं द्रष्टव्यम् । अपि च ‘आम्नायस्य क्रियार्थत्वात् आनर्थक्यं अतदर्थानां’ (जै.सू. १ - २ - १) इति एतत् एकान्तेन अभ्युपगच्छतां भूतोपदेशानर्थक्यप्रसङ्गः । प्रवृत्तिनिवृत्तिव्यतिरेकेण भूतं चेत् वस्तु उपदिशति भव्यार्थत्वेन, कूटस्थनित्यं भूतं न उपदिशति इति कः हेतुः । नहि भूतं उपदिश्यमानं क्रिया भवति । अक्रियात्वे अपि भूतस्य क्रियासाधनत्वात् क्रियार्थः एव भूतोपदेशः इति चेत् । न एषः दोषः । क्रियार्थत्वे अपि क्रियानिर्वर्तनशक्तिमत् वस्तु उपदिष्टं एव । क्रियार्थत्वं तु प्रयोजनं तस्य । न च एतावता वस्तु

⁸⁹ vide pg. 247 *bhāṣya*.

अनुपदिष्टं भवति । यदि नाम उपदिष्टं किं तव तेन स्यात् इति । उच्यते – अनवगतात्मवस्तूपदेशः च तथा एव भवितुं अर्हति । तदवगत्या मिथ्याज्ञानस्य संसारहेतोः निवृत्तिः प्रयोजनं क्रियते इति अविशिष्टं अर्थवत्त्वं क्रियासाधनवस्तूपदेशेन ।

Bh.Tr. Statements such as ‘The ascertained purpose of the Vedas is to impart the knowledge of *karma*.’ by those well-versed in *pūrvamimāṃsā* should be taken to refer to the *karmakāṇḍa* portion of the Vedas consisting of injunctions (*vidhī*) and prohibitions (*pratiśedha*), where the topic is *dharmajijñāsā*. Those who assert that the following dictum contains an immutable rule, namely ‘Since the Veda reveals actions alone, statements in the Vedas that do not speak of actions are futile’, must then explain why existing entities have also been specified (viz. *bhūtopadeśa* in *karmakāṇḍa*) and must explain their futility under this rule.

And if the Veda talks about an existing entity (*bhūtam*) distinct from do’s (*pravṛtti*) and don’t’s (*nivṛtti*) for the sake of *dharma* (or a *karmāṅga*), why can’t it talk of the existing changeless Brahman? By no means is an existing entity described (in the *karmakāṇḍa*) (innately) an action. If it be argued that an existing entity, though not a *karma*, is discussed (in the *karmakāṇḍa*) because it is a *karmāṅga* (an auxiliary of *karma*) – since it is a means to *karma* – (we say) this is not a flaw (where Vedānta is concerned). While (the existing entity described) may serve as a means to *karma*, it cannot be denied that an entity capable of accomplishing *karma* is clearly described. (Unlike Brahman) it is its utility that makes such an existing entity an auxiliary of *karma*. It is not possible on this ground alone to say that an existing entity is not described.

Q. (Well,) if an existing entity is indeed specified (in the *karmakāṇḍa*), what do you (Vedāntists) achieve thereby?

Ans. (Listen,) here is the answer. The teaching regarding unknown *ātmā* (Brahman) is necessarily similar to the teaching of (useful) existing entities (described in the *karmakāṇḍa*). The result accomplished by the direct knowledge of *ātmā* (Brahman) is the total termination of false ignorance, the cause of *saṃsāra*. Therefore the teaching regarding *ātmā* (Brahman) has a useful result similar to the teaching regarding some existing entity which serves as a means for a (Vedic) *karma*.

The claim, ‘The ascertained purpose of the Veda is to impart the knowledge of *karma*’, made by those well-versed in the *karmakāṇḍa* portion of the Veda, has to be viewed in its proper perspective. Everything the Veda reveals is useful through and through. Passages that do not directly describe a desirable result cannot be viewed as redundant. Their utility is brought out through their connection with relevant injunctions (*vidhī*) or prohibitions (*niṣedha*). The very purpose of the Veda is to impart the knowledge of useful things that are unknowable through other means of knowledge. But the knowledge imparted in the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* is restricted to the knowledge of *karma* because its subject matter is *dharma* alone. This cannot of itself refute the knowledge of Brahman which is revealed by Vedānta (the Upaniṣads). Jaimini also points out very clearly that ‘The Veda (or *codanā*) serves as a means of knowledge by revealing things unknown but useful’ (*Jai.Sū.1-1-5*). Thus *dharma* too becomes the ascertained purport of the Veda only because it is something unknown but useful. The same norm necessarily applies to Brahman, since it is unknown by other *pramāṇas* and its knowledge is useful. *Brahmajñāna* destroys self-ignorance and brings a total end to the resultant *saṃsāra*.

Therefore, that Brahman is the subject-matter of Vedānta is unopposed to statements by those well-versed in *pūrvamīmāṃsā* or the *karmakāṇḍa*. This is brought to our notice by the *bhāṣyakāra* when he says that the findings of those adept in *pūrvamīmāṃsā* pertain only to the *karmakāṇḍa* portion. They cannot be taken to apply to the *jñānakāṇḍa*, the subject-matter of which is entirely different.

Having accepted that the purport of the *karmakāṇḍa* is *karma*, it is clear thus far that the *jñānakāṇḍa* (Vedānta) is distinct. Now the presumption that the *karmakāṇḍa* reveals only *karma* is itself negated by showing that its purpose is only to reveal unknown means for desirable ends. Whether the desirable end is an action or knowledge of some existing entity is not of prime importance. It is found that rituals, sacrifices etc. are means for achieving desired results. The purpose of Vedic injunction or commands (*vidhī*) is to reveal the means for desired accomplishments. When the *karmakāṇḍa*, according to exponents of *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, is the *pramāṇa* for existing entities such as curds (*dadhi*), *soma* juice (*soma*) etc., which are clearly distinct from *karma*, there is no reason why Vedānta cannot be the *pramāṇa* to reveal the ever-existent Brahman. This is enunciated in the *bhāṣya* portion beginning with ‘for those who accept the dictum’ (i.e. from *api ca* in the original *bhāṣya*).

The next question that arises is: what exactly is the nature of the futility (*ānarthakyam* - *Jai.Sū.* 1-2-1) imputed to words that do not convey action? Does it mean they are meaningless or that they lack useful results? If they are meaningless, the use of words like ‘*soma* (*soma* juice), *dadhi* (curds)’ etc. in Vedic statements such as ‘The sacrifice should be performed with *soma*’ and ‘curds should be offered as oblation’ would be meaningless. The contender has to perforce agree that the futility (*ānarthakyam*) described is not meaninglessness but the absence of any result. But then, things like *soma*, curds described in Vedic statements are certainly meaningful and useful as auxiliaries to the *karma* to be performed.

If existing entities such as *soma* juice, curds etc. are meaningful and useful, then what could be the reason *Upaniṣadic* words such as ‘*satyam, jñānam, anantam*’ are not useful and do not define changeless Brahman? Is it either because it (i.e. Brahman) is distinct from action or because Brahman cannot be an auxiliary to action?

The first possibility cannot hold good. Take the example of curds and *soma*. If the curds, *soma* etc. were actions by nature, they could not be auxiliaries to action, being non-distinct from action. Therefore it has to be concluded that the *Veda* does describe existing entities like curds etc. even though they are distinct from action. In like manner, the *Veda* can also describe Brahman which is not an action.

The argument that the *Veda* does not reveal Brahman because it is not an auxiliary to *karma* is also not tenable. How an existing entity comes to be an auxiliary to *karma* needs to be examined. Does this happen because the meaning of a word signifying an existing entity becomes evident only by its connection to action or is it because of some utility? The first possibility cannot hold because the meaning of a word is directly understood in a specific context without depending on its connection with any action. The meaning of a word is independent of an action. The fact that it is an existing entity that is described does not stand invalidated only because it is specified as a *karmāṅga* – an auxiliary to a *karma*. The status of an entity as a *karmāṅga* is determined by its utility. It cannot be said that an existing entity is described only when it is auxiliary to a *karma*. The description of an entity and its status as *karmāṅga* are two altogether different features. There is also no rule that an entity becomes useful only through action. A useful result can be obtained just through knowledge, as by gaining the knowledge of a rope, the basis, mistaken for a snake. This is how *Brahmajñāna* destroys the false self-ignorance and *saṃsāra* drops off. The curds etc. mentioned in *Vedic* injunctions become fruitful

through means of *karma*, whereas Brahman happens to be the highest goal of life on its own without any dependence on action. Actions are never possible in Brahman. Thus Vedānta reveals Brahman, whose knowledge is fruitful.

Next, it is proved that Vedāntic passages reveal an existing entity in a manner similar to statements of prohibition (*niṣedha-vākyas*) in the *karmakāṇḍa* portion of the Veda.

भा. अपि च 'ब्राह्मणः न हन्तव्यः' इति एवमाद्या निवृत्तिः उपदिश्यते । न च सा क्रिया । न अपि क्रियासाधनम् । अक्रियार्थानां उपदेशः अनर्थकः चेत् 'ब्राह्मणः न हन्तव्यः' इत्यादि निवृत्त्युपदेशानां आनर्थक्यं प्राप्तम् । तत् च अनिष्टम् । न च स्वभावप्राप्तहन्त्यर्थानुरागेण नजः शक्यं अप्राप्तक्रियार्थत्वं कल्पयितुं, हननक्रियानिवृत्त्यौदासीन्यव्यतिरेकेण । नजः च एषः स्वभावः यत् स्वसंबन्धिनः अभावं बोधयति इति । अभावबुद्धिः च औदासीन्यकारणम् । सा च दग्धेन्धनाग्निवत् स्वयं एव उपशाम्यति । तस्मात् प्रसक्तक्रियानिवृत्त्यौदासीन्यं एव 'ब्राह्मणः न हन्तव्यः' इति आदिषु प्रतिषेधार्थं मन्यामहे, अन्यत्र प्रजापतिव्रतादिभ्यः । तस्मात् पुरुषार्थानुपयोग्युपाख्यानादिभूतार्थवादविषयं आनर्थक्याभिधानं द्रष्टव्यम् ।

Bh. Tr. In addition (to the foregoing exposition, it needs to be noted that) *śruti* statements such as 'A Brahmin should not be killed' teach of abstaining from certain actions. Such abstention is neither an action nor a means to action. If the teaching (contained in Vedic statements) that does not advocate action is futile, instructions in (Vedic) prohibitions such as 'A Brahmin should not be killed' would also be futile. That is undesirable. The particle of negation 'not' (*na*) is connected to the act of killing, an act born of natural tendencies. Therefore, beyond the (meaning of) the

indifference connoted by the abstention from killing, it is not possible to see in the statement an action that has not been described. The reason is that the negative particle ‘not’ (*na*) serves to indicate the negation/absence of that which is connected to the particle. The comprehension of absence (or negation) created by the particle is the cause of indifference (towards the connected action). This comprehension of negation/absence imparted by ‘not’ (*na*) ceases on its own (having destroyed the tendency to kill), like a fire whose fuel is consumed. Hence we consider that except (the negation in) *Prajāpativṛta* (a vow pertaining to *Prajāpati*) etc., the sense of prohibition (indicated by ‘not’) in the statement ‘A Brahmin should not be killed’ and such other statements is indifference in the form of abstaining from the concerned action alone. Therefore it should be understood that the futility (*ānarthakyam*) referred in the *Jaimini-sūtra* ‘*āmnāyasya kriyārthatvāt-*’ (*Jai.sū.* 1-2-1) pertains to the narrations etc. contained in the *arthavāda* portion (of the Veda) which have no *puruṣārtha* (worthy result) of their own.

The particle of negation ‘not’ (*na*) in the statement ‘A Brahmin should not be killed’ is connected to the verb ‘to kill’ (*han*). Therefore the word ‘not’ negates the act of killing. Affixes that form the potential passive participle such as *tavya* (should) etc. signify means to a desirable end. The desirable end in the phrase ‘should not be killed’ (*na hantavyaḥ*) is the absence of the sorrow suffered in hell. Thus the above statement of prohibition means: Abstaining from killing ensures freedom from suffering in hell. The abstention from killing is the cause of the absence of sorrow. The individual who understands that killing is a means of sorrow abstains from the same. There is no injunction (*vidhi*) enjoining *karma* in this statement of prohibition because the topic of *vidhi* is *karma* and its means. The negation of the act of killing, in the sense of abstaining

(*nivṛtti*), indicated by the particle ‘not’, is not an action because it actually denotes abstention from action. Nor can *nivṛtti* be a means to *karma* (action) because abstaining from action cannot be the means to action, whose nature is existence itself. Abstaining from action is also opposed to action. Therefore, Vedic passages containing prohibitions reveal certain existing facts, but not *karma*. In other words, the *karmakāṇḍa* also serves as a *pramāṇa* for revealing existent entities or facts that are neither action nor a means to action. If this is not accepted, prohibitory instructions contained in the Veda will become futile. This is undesirable and not acceptable to followers of *pūrvamīmāṃsā* either.

Some argue that ‘not’ is connected to the act of killing, an act born of an innate natural tendency which leads to the resolve to kill. Therefore the statement ‘A Brahmin should not be killed’ contains an instruction that an action of the nature of a resolve not to kill has to be undertaken. Since such an instruction is not obtained through any other *vidhi*, this statement of prohibition implies the injunction (*vidhi*) that non-killing should be undertaken (*ahananam kuryāt*). This is the meaning of ‘not’ according to them. The contention is refuted by pointing out that such meanings cannot be conjured up. Very intense tendencies such as greed, envy, anger etc. instigate an individual to resort to killing. Otherwise, the tendency in every individual, by very nature, is not to kill. This indifference is characterised by abstaining from the act of killing. It is expressed in the form of absence of killing. Therefore, other than the indifference characterised by the absence of the act of killing, no action can be seen in the meaning of ‘not’. It should be kept in mind that the very nature of the negative particle ‘not’ is to inform the absence/negation of the thing connected to it. Therefore, to conjure up a contrary sense by implication is not correct when the direct meaning of ‘not’ as absence/negation is applicable. The negative particle ‘not’ (*na*) conveys ‘prohibition’ in a sentence (called *prasajya pratiṣedha*) when connected to a verb. This is the sense that is applicable here. When connected to a word other than a verb, ‘not’ conveys exception/exclusion (*pariyudāsa*). The context

in this statement of prohibition does not permit of this second meaning either. Nevertheless, if by stretching the imagination, statements of prohibition were indeed construed as conveying a sense of positive action, there would be no distinction between the statements of *vidhi* (do's) and statements of *niṣedha* (don'ts). This is not acceptable at all.

The comprehension of negation communicated by 'not' is what fosters indifference towards the act of killing. As a result, none who care for their own good engage in such prohibited acts after grasping the connotation underlying their negation. Though such comprehension ceases of its own, it does destroy the tendencies that could prompt an individual to indulge in the act of killing. Therefore there is no chance of the individual undertaking the prohibited act thereafter. Thus the prohibition indicated in statements of prohibition generally stands for abstaining from the associated action. Of course, there are exceptions such as the *Prajāpativṛta* (a vow pertaining to *Prajāpati*). This vow requires that the young *brahmacārī* (*baṭu*) 'should not look at the rising sun' (*na īkṣeta udayantam ādityam*). The statement begins with a description of the vow to be undertaken by a young *brahmacārī* (a religious student). In this particular instance, in view of the fact that the statement begins with a vow that involves action, the meaning of 'not' is accepted as undertaking a mental action characterised by a resolve not to see the sun.

Thus it is proved that the *karmakāṇḍa* portion of Veda too reveals certain existing facts that are useful. There can therefore be no hard and fast rule that the *karmakāṇḍa* invariably describes *karma* only. Vedāntic statements have the most exalted result on their own, unlike the *arthavāda* portion of the *karmakāṇḍa*. In view of this, the applicability of the word *ānarthakyam* (futility) in the *sūtra* 'Since Veda is meant to reveal *karma* (like sacrifices etc.), statements therein which are without *karma* are futile' (*Jai.Sū.* 1-2-1) is restricted to statements of *arthavāda* only, which have no utility on their own unless connected to statements of *vidhi*.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE EVER-EXISTENT BRAHMAN DOES BRING AN END TO *SAMSĀRA*

The revelation of something existing can produce a useful result too. It is not true to say that actions alone produce results. While this has been proved earlier, the opponent had some objections. Further clarification is therefore provided to prove that *Brahmajñāna* destroys *samsāra* in its totality.

भा. यदपि उक्तम् – कर्तव्यविध्यनुप्रवेशं अन्तरेण वस्तुमात्रं उच्यमानं अनर्थकं स्यात् सप्तद्वीपा वसुमती इति आदिवत् इति, तत् परिहृतम् । रज्जुः इयं न अयं सर्पः इति वस्तुमात्रकथने अपि प्रयोजनस्य दृष्टत्वात् । ननु श्रुतब्रह्मणः अपि यथापूर्वं संसारित्वदर्शनात् न रज्जुस्वरूपकथनवत् अर्थवत्त्वं इति उक्तम्। अत्र उच्यते – न अवगतब्रह्मात्मभावस्य यथापूर्वं संसारित्वं शक्यं दर्शयितुं, वेदप्रमाणजनितब्रह्मात्मभावविरोधात् । नहि शरीराद्यात्माभिमानिनः दुःखभयादिमत्त्वं दृष्टं इति तस्य एव वेदप्रमाणजनितब्रह्मात्मावगमे तदभिमाननिवृत्तौ तत् एव मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तं दुःखभयादिमत्त्वं भवति इति शक्यं कल्पयितुम्। नहि धनिनः गृहस्थस्य धनाभिमानिनः धनापहारनिमित्तं दुःखं दृष्टं इति तस्य एव प्रव्रजितस्य धनाभिमानरहितस्य तद् एव धनापहारनिमित्तं दुःखं भवति । नच कुण्डलिनः कुण्डलित्वाभिमाननिमित्तं सुखं दृष्टं इति तस्य एव कुण्डलवियुक्तस्य कुण्डलित्वाभिमानरहितस्य तद् एव कुण्डलित्वाभिमाननिमित्तं सुखं भवति । तद् उक्तं श्रुत्या ‘अशरीरं वाव सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्पृशतः’ (छान्दो. ८ - १२ - १) इति ।

Bh. Tr. The argument put forward (earlier in the contrary proposition) that the mere description of an existing entity (in the Veda), as in the statement ‘The earth has seven continents’, is futile without being connected to some *vidhi* of *karma* as an auxiliary has already been refuted. (It was shown that) a beneficial

result is also seen in describing an (actually) existing thing, as in the statement ‘This is a rope and not a snake’.

(Opponent :) But that (explanation) has (already) been refuted. Unlike the statement regarding the rope and snake, there is no utility (in merely describing Brahman) because the state of *saṃsāra* is seen (to continue) as earlier in the case of a *śrutabrahma* – the individual who has learned about Brahman.

(Vedāntist:) Here is the answer. It is (absolutely) impossible for the state of *saṃsāra* experienced earlier to be seen in a person who is *avagata-brahmātmabhāvaḥ* – one who has the direct self-knowledge ‘I am Brahman’. This is because the state of *saṃsāra* is opposed to the direct knowledge of oneself as Brahman, knowledge which is born of a valid *pramāṇa*, the Veda. It is not possible to postulate that just because an individual is seen afflicted with sorrow etc. (termed as *saṃsāra*) when identified as ‘I’ with his embodiment, he should necessarily be seen afflicted with sorrow, fear etc. born of self-ignorance when identification with the body etc. has ended on gaining *Brahmasākṣātkāra* born of a valid means of knowledge, the Veda. (For instance) sorrow is seen when the wealth of a wealthy householder having a sense of mineness in it is stolen; but when he takes to renunciation and no more experiences a sense of ownership in his (prior) wealth, sorrow on account of theft of that wealth does not arise. (Another example). Joy is seen in a person who is proud of wearing ear-rings; but when the same person neither wears the ear-rings nor has any sense of pride in wearing them, the joy born of pride does not arise. This is corroborated by the *śruti* passage, ‘Joys and sorrows (born of contacts of the senses with

sense objects) do not touch at all one who has known *ātmā* directly in its true nature, totally devoid of the embodiment.’ (Ch.U. 8-12-1).

The *śrutabrahma* referred to by the opponent is an individual who has undertaken inquiry into the nature of Brahman and gained *parokṣajñāna* – indirect knowledge. This by itself cannot guarantee direct (*aparokṣa*) *Brahmajñāna* without the *mumukṣu* developing a *śuddha-antaḥkaraṇa* (pure mind) and *citta-naiścalya* (steadiness of mind) first. However, indirect (*parokṣa*) knowledge is possible through self-inquiry undertaken with *śraddhā* even if the mind is not prepared as described above. It is true that *parokṣa* (indirect) *Brahmajñāna* cannot destroy *saṃsāra*. *Aparokṣa-brahmajñāna*, also called *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, *Brahmāvagati* or *Brahmānubhava* alone can destroy *saṃsāra* in its totality. There is no doubt that mere *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry) cannot terminate *saṃsāra*. But the destruction of *saṃsāra* through *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, or in other words the gaining of *jīvanmukti* (liberation even whilst living), cannot be refuted. The nature of *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (direct knowledge of Brahman) has already been elaborated in the commentary on the *bhāṣya* portion, *avagati paryantam jñānam*⁹⁰ and *anubhavāvasānatvāt Brahmajñānasya*.⁹¹

Here, the *bhāṣya* uses the term *avagatabrahmātmabhāvaḥ* to describe an individual who has gained *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the realization ‘I am Brahman’. *Brahmasākṣātkāra* is totally opposed to the state of *saṃsāra*. Both cannot ever co-exist. The first illustration of a rich house-holder shows that a *Brahmajñānī* has no sorrow, while the second of an individual wearing ear-rings shows that no joy can be derived from sense objects after gaining *Brahmajñāna*. In the Bhārata (India) of olden days, wearing golden ear-rings was

⁹⁰ Refer to commentary on *Bhāṣya* passage - ज्ञातुं इच्छा जिज्ञासा
..... to अवगन्तुं इष्टं ब्रह्म ।, Page No. 122

⁹¹ Refer to commentary on *Bhāṣya* passage - न धर्मजिज्ञासायामिव
श्रुत्यादयः एव to भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात् ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य ।, Page No. 180

considered a status symbol. A passage from the *Chāndogyopaniṣat* (8-12-1) is cited in the *bhāṣya* to substantiate that a *Brahmajñāni* gains *jīvanmukti*.

ĀTMĀ IS EVER-FREE FROM EMBODIMENT AND DOERSHIP

In the statement from *Chāndogyā śruti* (8-12-1) quoted above, *jīvanmukti* was described as the state of *ātmā* devoid of embodiment (*aśarīratvam*). Here, a doubt may arise. The contender argues that since freedom from the body is possible only after death and not whilst living, how can a *jīvanmukta* be freed from the embodiment even whilst living in this world? This doubt is addressed in the following passage.

भा. शरीरे पतिते अशरीरत्वं स्यात् , न जीवतः इति चेत् न, सशरीरत्वस्य मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात् । न हि आत्मनः शरीरात्माभिमानलक्षणं मिथ्याज्ञानं मुक्त्वा अन्यतः सशरीरत्वं शक्यं कल्पयितुम् । नित्यं अशरीरत्वं अकर्मनिमित्तत्वात् इति अवोचाम । तत्कृतधर्माधर्मनिमित्तं सशरीरत्वं इति चेत् न, शरीरसंबन्धस्य असिद्धत्वात् धर्माधर्मयोः आत्मकृतत्वासिद्धेः । शरीरसंबन्धस्य धर्माधर्मयोः तत्कृतत्वस्य च इतरेतराश्रयत्वप्रसङ्गात् अन्धपरम्परा एषा अनादित्वकल्पना । क्रियासमवायाभावात् च आत्मनः कर्तृत्वानुपपत्तेः । संनिधानमात्रेण राजप्रभृतीनां दृष्टं कर्तृत्वं इति चेत् न, धनदानाद्युपार्जितभृत्यसंबन्धित्वात् तेषां कर्तृत्वोपपत्तेः । न तु आत्मनः धनदानादिवत् शरीरादिभिः स्वस्वामिसंबन्धनिमित्तं किञ्चित् शक्यं कल्पयितुम् । मिथ्याभिमानः तु प्रत्यक्षः संबन्धहेतुः । एतेन यजमानत्वम् आत्मनः व्याख्यातम् ।

Bh. Tr. It is not correct to say that *aśarīratvam* (the state of disembodied *ātmā*) is possible only after the body dies because *saśarīratvam* (bodily identification) is on account of false self-ignorance. The *saśarīratvam* of *ātmā*, characterized by the notion 'The body is *ātmā*

– “I” cannot be attributed to any cause other than false self-ignorance. We have already stated that *aśarīratvam* (the state of disembodied *ātmā*) is ever-existent (*nitya*) because it is not produced by *karma* (the results of action). If it is said that the *saśarīratvam* in *ātmā* is on account of the *dharma* (good *karma*) and *adharma* (bad *karma*) performed by it (i.e. *ātmā*), this is not true because the relationship between *ātmā* and the body is itself not proved. Therefore the doership (*karṭṛtvam*) of *ātmā* with respect to *dharma* and *adharma* stands disproved. The defect of mutual dependence would (also) accrue as follows: ‘If *ātmā* has a relationship with the body, it can produce *dharma* and *adharma* (*pāpa* and *puṇya*); on the other hand, *ātmā* can have a relationship with the body only if it produces *dharma* and *adharma*.’ The view that the two (viz. the relationship of *ātmā* with the body, and the doership of *ātmā*) have a beginningless cause and effect relationship is not based on any valid means of knowledge either. Doership is not possible in *ātmā* because it has no connection with action.

It is incorrect to say that doership is possible by mere presence (without actually performing action), as seen in a king and such others (in relation to servants). Such a doership is possible in the case of a king because this relationship with his servants (as their master) is due to the payment of salaries etc. It is impossible to postulate causes such as payment of salaries etc. which can effectuate a master-servant relationship between *ātmā* and the body etc. Erroneous identification (with the body, however) is the direct cause of relationship (between *ātmā* and the embodiment). This (erroneous identification) serves to explain how *ātmā* appears to be the *yajamāna* (the performer of sacrifices).

In reality, *ātmā* is totally free from the embodiment. It is not actually endowed with a body etc. but appears to be so due to erroneous identification born of self-ignorance. For this reason, the direct knowledge of *ātmā* free from the embodiment (which freedom is referred to as *aśarīratvam*) is possible even whilst living on gaining *Brahmajñāna*. The true nature of *ātmā* is to be eternally unconnected to anything. That is *aśarīratvam* – the state of disembodied *ātmā*. It is veiled by ignorance and the consequent erroneous identification with the gross, subtle and causal bodies. That is why the knowledge of reality can reveal the *aśarīra-ātmā* whilst living.

Some people attribute the doership of *karma* to *ātmā* and claim that the relationship between *ātmā* and the body is eternal. They thereby try to justify that *upāsana* is indispensable for destroying the *dharma* and *adharma* (the *puṇya* and *pāpa* born of good and bad *karmas*) supposedly earned by *ātmā*. This is not correct because it leads to mutual dependence between ‘the relationship of *ātmā* with the body’, and ‘the *dharma* and *adharma* supposedly performed by *ātmā*’. This mutual dependence arises because if *dharma* and *adharma* are produced when *ātmā* has a relationship with the body and if the relation of *ātmā* with the body comes into existence only after it produces *dharma* and *adharma*, each becomes the cause of the other, and hence both of them cannot come into existence.

The contenders argue that the defect of mutual dependence can arise only if the results of good and bad *karmas* earned by *ātmā* in this birth become the cause of its relationship with the present embodiment. That is not the case, however, they say. It is the results of actions performed by *ātmā* in the previous embodiment that are the cause of its relationship with the embodiment in the subsequent birth, like the perennial, beginningless series of the seed and the sprout. Thus the defect of mutual dependence cannot arise, according to them. Vedāntists refute this argument as baseless since it is not founded on any valid means of knowledge. The relationship

of *ātmā* with the body effected by the results of actions in past births is not perceived directly, like the sprout from the seed and a seed from that sprout when fully developed. There is no Vedic declaration to this effect either. On the contrary, *śruti* passages such as ‘This *ātmā* is *asaṅga* – unattached’ deny the doership of *ātmā*. The changeless *ātmā* is never connected to action. Therefore it can never have doership.

Another doubt is raised: though *ātmā* is actionless on its own, it can exhibit doership through proximity to the active body and the senses. That is not correct. The sense of doership of a king or other employer in actions performed by their servants is justifiable because there is a relationship of employer and employee between them. The master pays his servant for services rendered. The illustration is erroneous when applied to *ātmā* because there can never be a master-servant relationship between *ātmā* and the embodiment.

The apparent relationship of both the embodiment and the *karmaphala* with *ātmā* in the realm of self-ignorance is like that in the series of ‘seed and sprout’. It is occasioned by the erroneous identification with the body etc. on account of false self-ignorance. The argument that the doership of *ātmā* must necessarily be accepted so that Vedic injunctions (*vidhi*) like *yajeta* (i.e. one must perform the sacrifice) do not become invalid for want of a doer (*kartā*) does not hold water either. The false doership of sacrifices and other *karmas* or *upāsanaś* referred to in the Veda is because of erroneous identification of *ātmā* with the body etc. Such doership continues until *Brahmajñāna* is gained. It invariably terminates on gaining the direct knowledge of Brahman.

IDENTIFICATION OF *ĀTMĀ* WITH THE EMBODIMENT IS NOT SECONDARY BUT ERRONEOUS

Followers of *Prābhākara-mata* – a particular school of thought in *pūrvamīmāṃsā* – argue that the relationship between

ātmā and the body etc. is secondary (*gouṇa*). A secondary identity is possible between two different perceived entities that bear some resemblance to each other. By claiming that the relationship is secondary, they actually intend to imply that the relationship between *ātmā* and the body is real and not *mithyā* (false). This argument is refuted by demonstrating the impossibility of any secondary relationship between *ātmā* and the body.

भा. अत्र आहुः - देहादिव्यतिरिक्तस्य आत्मनः आत्मीये देहादौ अभिमानः गौणः न मिथ्या इति चेत् न, प्रसिद्धवस्तुभेदस्य गौणत्वमुख्यत्वप्रसिद्धेः । यस्य हि प्रसिद्धः वस्तुभेदः, यथा केसरादिमान् आकृतिविशेषः अन्वयव्यतिरेकाभ्यां सिंहशब्द-प्रत्ययभाक् मुख्यः अन्यः प्रसिद्धः, ततः च अन्यः पुरुषः प्रायिकैः क्रौर्यशौर्यादिभिः सिंहगुणैः संपन्नः सिद्धः, तस्य पुरुषे सिंहशब्दप्रत्ययौ गौणौ भवतः न अप्रसिद्धवस्तुभेदस्य। तस्य तु अन्यत्र अन्यशब्दप्रत्ययौ भ्रान्तिनिमित्तौ एव भवतः न गौणौ । यथा मन्दान्धकारे स्थाणुः अयं इति अगृह्यमाणविशेषे पुरुषशब्दप्रत्ययौ स्थाणुविषयौ, यथा वा शुक्तिकायां अकस्मात् रजतं इति निश्चितौ शब्दप्रत्ययौ, तद्वत् देहादिसंघाते अहं इति निरुपचारेण शब्दप्रत्ययौ, आत्मानात्मविवेकेन उत्पद्यमानौ कथं गौणौ शक्यौ वदितुम् । आत्मानात्मविवेकिनां अपि पण्डितानां अजाविपालानां इव अविविक्तौ शब्दप्रत्ययौ भवतः । तस्मात् देहादिव्यतिरिक्तात्मास्तित्ववादिनां देहादौ अहं प्रत्ययः मिथ्या एव न गौणः ।

Bh.Tr. As for the erroneous (*mithyā*) nature of bodily identification, some say: ‘The “I” notion of *ātmā* that is distinct from the body etc. in one’s embodiment is secondary (*gouṇa*) in nature, and not false (*mithyā*)’. The averment is not correct because it is well-known that only an individual aware of the distinction between two entities can gain primary (*mukhya*) and secondary (*gouṇa*) knowledge.

Given two entities, for instance a lion and a person compared to a lion, an individual aware of the distinction between the two – through the method of presence and absence (*anvayavyatireka*) for example – ascertains that one of the two, having a specific bodily form and endowed with mane etc., is well-known as the primary (*mukhya*) object of the word lion and its meaning, and that the other is a person distinct from a lion but having characteristics such as cruelty and valour usually associated with a lion. For such an individual aware of the distinction, the use of the word lion and its meaning become secondary (*gouṇa*) when referring to the person endowed with the characteristics of a lion. Not so for an individual who does not know the distinction between two. For the latter individual (not aware of the distinction), the word denoting the specific entity and its meaning become the cause of erroneous (*mithyā*) knowledge when used for a different entity, and not a secondary knowledge. For example, when a post is seen in darkness, but the correct knowledge ‘This is a post’ is not gained and the word ‘a person’ and its cognition/meaning are instead attributed to the post, it is a case of erroneous and not secondary knowledge. Or when a sea-shell is viewed as silver, the word silver and the notion of silver are attributed accidentally to a sea-shell. As in the two illustrations above, the word ‘I’ and its cognition arise in the complex of body etc. in the primary sense and not in the secondary sense, due to the lack of discrimination between *ātmā* and *anātmā*. How can both (the word ‘I’ and its cognition) be called secondary in nature? Just as it happens with ignorant shepherds, in the case of people learned in the scriptures who have an indirect knowledge of the distinction between *ātmā* and *anātmā* too, the identification of the word ‘I’ and its meaning/cognition with the complex of the body

etc. is due to error alone. Therefore the ‘I’ notion in the body etc. in the case of (even) those who consider *ātmā* to be distinct from the embodiment is verily erroneous (*mithyā*) and not secondary (*gouṇa*).

The ‘I’ notion in one’s embodiment can be secondary (*gouṇa*) only when there is clear knowledge of distinction between *ātmā* and the body, mind etc. When there are similarities between two things, it is a person who knows the difference between them alone who can have their primary and secondary knowledge. Mistaking something entirely for some other thing due to doubt or error is an instance of erroneous knowledge and not secondary knowledge.

The word ‘I’ and its cognition in an individual who cannot discriminate between *ātmā* and *anātmā* may be erroneous; the question arises though, how can those learned in the scriptures who know the distinction between *ātmā* and *anātmā* entertain the erroneous ‘I’ notion? This is answered by pointing out that they are at par with ignorant shepherds and the like. The erroneous identification with the body does not disappear unless *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (the direct knowledge of Brahman) is gained. Indirect knowledge (*parokṣa jñāna*) by itself is incapable of terminating the erroneous concept about oneself, including identification with the body. This was shown in the *adhyāsabhāṣya* in the context of the topic *paśvādibhiścāviśeṣāt*⁹² (viz. the activity of a wise person having an indirect knowledge of *ātmā* is similar to that of cattle etc.)

ANNIHILATION OF SAṂSĀRA BY BRAHMAJÑĀNA STANDS PROVED

On gaining the direct knowledge ‘I am Brahman’, *saṁsāra* is annihilated beyond any trace of doubt. This topic is now concluded.

⁹² Refer to *Bhāṣya* passage पश्यादिभिश्चाविशेषात् , Page No. 75

भा.

तस्मात् मिथ्याप्रत्ययनिमित्तत्वात् सशरीरत्वस्य, सिद्धं जीवतः अपि विदुषः अशरीरत्वम् । तथाच ब्रह्मविद्विषया श्रुतिः – ‘तत् यथा अहिनिर्ल्वयनी वल्मीके मृता प्रत्यस्ता शयीता एवं एव इदं शरीरं शेते । अथ अयं अशरीरः अमृतः प्राणः ब्रह्म एव तेजः एव’ (बृह. ४-४-७) इति । ‘सचक्षुः अचक्षुः इव सकर्णः अकर्णः इव सवाक् अवाक् इव समनाः अमनाः इव सप्राणः अप्राणः इव’ इति च । स्मृतिः अपि च – ‘स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा’ (भ.गी. २-५४) इत्याद्या स्थितप्रज्ञलक्षणानि आचक्षाणा विदुषः सर्वप्रवृत्त्यसम्बन्धं दर्शयति । तस्मात् न अवगतब्रह्मात्मभावस्य यथापूर्वं संसारित्वम् । यस्य तु यथापूर्वं संसारित्वं न असौ अवगतब्रह्मात्मभावः इति अनवद्यम् ।

Bh. Tr.

Therefore it is proved that *saśarīratvam* (the identification with the body) is due to erroneous notion whereas *aśarīratvam* (the state of the disembodied self) is gained by the *Brahmajñāni* even whilst living. The following *śruti* passages describe the *Brahmajñāni* in this context. ‘Here is an illustration regarding the body of a *jīvanmukta*. Just as the slough of a snake cast off in an ant-hill remains without any notion (on the part of the snake) of ‘I’ness in it, so too the embodiment of a *Brahmajñāni* remains without any ‘I’ notion in it. Like the snake that has no identification with its slough, this *jīvanmukta* is *aśarīra* in the sense of having no ‘I’ notion in the body. Therefore he is immortal (*amṛtaḥ*), and even though alive (i.e. *prāṇaḥ* – one who breathes), he is verily the Brahman which is the self-luminous knowledge (*tejaḥ*) principle (*Br.U.* 4-4-7).’ ‘Though (*ātmā* in reality is) without eyes, it appears as though endowed with eyes, though without ears appears as though endowed with ears, though without organ of speech appears as though endowed with organ of speech, though without mind appears

as though endowed with mind, though without *prāṇa* (the vital air) appears as though endowed with *prāṇa* etc. Even *smṛti* passages like *sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā* (what is the description of a person whose mind is absorbed in Brahman? etc.) (*B.G.* 2-54 to 72) which describe the characteristics of a *sthitaprajña* show that a *Brahmajñānī* is totally unconnected to activity. Therefore there is no *saṃsāra* as earlier (i.e. in the state of ignorance) for an individual who gains the direct knowledge of Brahman as 'I'. On the contrary, one who continues to experience *saṃsāra* as earlier cannot be someone who directly knows Brahman as 'I'. Therefore this Vedāntic doctrine is unobjectionable.

A *jīvanmukta* (a person liberated even whilst living in the present embodiment) has no notion of identity with his body, just as a snake which has cast off its slough no longer considers the same to be itself. The state of *jīvanmukti* is free from the experience of bondage in terms of the suffering (*kleśa*) characterised by the features of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (*citta dharma*) such as *karṣṭva*, *bhokṣṭva*, *sukha*, *duḥkha* etc. (*Jīvanmuktiviveka*-1). The word *prāṇaḥ* in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* statement quoted means one who breathes. This attributes to the word *prāṇaḥ* the sense 'even whilst living'. Or it may stand for the *caitanya* (the pure awareness principle) because of which *prāṇa* (the vital force) functions. The word *tejaḥ* describes Brahman as the self-luminous, very (*svayamjyoti*) knowledge principle which itself is limitless happiness. *Ātmā* in reality is totally devoid of sense-organs, organs of action, and the *antaḥkaraṇa*. Even so, phrases such as 'as though with eyes' and the rest are used from the standpoint of the negation (*bādhā*) of all that is falsely superimposed on it. Lord Kṛṣṇa too states in the *Bhagavadgītā* that *ātmā* appears to have the features of all the senses, but is actually free from the senses (*B.G.* 13 - 14).

Thus Vedānta is a valid *pramāṇa*. The direct knowledge of Brahman identical to *ātmā* revealed by Vedānta liberates the *jīva*

from *saṃsāra*. Vedānta also has the status of *śāstra* (scripture) because it teaches the highest good. *Brahmajñāna* destroys *saṃsāra* in its totality.

MANANA AND NIDIDHYĀSANA NOT NECESSARY AFTER GAINING BRAHMAJÑĀNA

It was argued earlier in the contrary proposition that Brahman is an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) to injunction (*upāsana-vidhi*) because of the *upāsana-vidhis* for *manana* and *nididhyāsana* after *śravaṇa* as prescribed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat* (2-4-5). This is now refuted.

भा. यत् पुनः उक्तं श्रवणात् पराचीनयोः मनननिदिध्यासनयोः दर्शनात् विधिशेषत्वं ब्रह्मणः न स्वरूपपर्यवसायित्वं इति । न। अवगत्यर्थत्वात् मनननिदिध्यासनयोः । यदि हि अवगतं ब्रह्म अन्यत्र विनियुज्येत भवेत् तदा विधिशेषत्वम् । नतु तत् अस्ति । मनननिदिध्यासनयोः अपि श्रवणवत् अवगत्यर्थत्वात्। तस्मात् न प्रतिपत्तिविधिविषयतया शास्त्रप्रमाणकत्वं ब्रह्मणः संभवति इति अतः स्वतन्त्रं एव ब्रह्म शास्त्रप्रमाणकं वेदान्तवाक्यसमन्वयात् इति सिद्धम् ।

Bh.Tr. Further, the argument – that (Vedānta teaches of) Brahman as being auxiliary to an *upāsana-vidhi* because *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are seen enjoined after *śravaṇa* (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5), (and) not the ascertainment of the nature of Brahman, is not correct. *Manana* and *nididhyāsana* serve to gain *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct knowledge of Brahman. The directly known Brahman would be an auxiliary of a *vidhi* (injunction) if it were used elsewhere (in a *karma* or *upāsana*). But the directly known Brahman is not used (as a *śeṣa*) in any *vidhi*. Like *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* too serve to gain the direct knowledge of Brahman. Therefore the Vedānta (*śāstra*) cannot be a type of *pramāṇa* that reveals Brahman as the object of an

***upāsanā-vidhī* (because such *upāsanā-vidhī*) is itself not possible (in Vedānta). Due to the fact (that Vedānta cannot be a *pramāṇa* that teaches of Brahman as an auxiliary to *upāsanā-vidhī*), it is established that Vedānta reveals Brahman independently (and not as a *śeṣa* to an *upāsanā-vidhī*) because the ascertained purport of all Vedāntic statements is such.**

Śravaṇa, inquiry into the nature of *ātmā*, serves to gain *Brahmajñāna*. It is the main means. Like *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* also serve as means for gaining knowledge, but are auxiliary. These cannot be interpreted as *vidhīs* that have Brahman as their object. Brahman is the primary, and not an auxiliary, entity because Brahman is that which is to be known directly through the knowledge intended to be acquired. Vedānta is the means of knowledge for gaining *Brahmajñāna*. *Śravaṇa* happens to be the primary means for gaining knowledge because its subject matter is all of Vedānta itself. On the other hand, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are subordinate to *śravaṇa* because their topic is exclusively Brahman – the entity to be known through means of Vedānta. Thus *manana* and *nididhyāsana* have a definite role to play as means in gaining *Brahmajñāna*. This is in accordance with the rule of *sarvāpekṣādhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 3-4-26 and 27) where it is proved that *karma*, *śama*, *dama* etc. are also useful as means for gaining *Brahmajñāna*, though they cannot be the direct cause of *mokṣa*. The phrases '*mantavyaḥ*' and '*nididhyāsitavyaḥ*' suggest *manana* and *nididhyāsana* as means prior to the gaining of *Brahmajñāna*. They can be considered as injunctions of *upāsanā* only if their object is the Brahman that is already directly known; but that is not the case. Therefore *manana* and *nididhyāsana* serve as means auxiliary to *śravaṇa*, which is the primary means for gaining *Brahmajñāna*.

The second interpretation (*varṇaka*) of the present *sūtra* (1-1-4) was meant to address the *vṛttikāra*'s contention that Vedānta is a *pramāṇa* that reveals Brahman only as the object of an *upāsanā*-

vidhi and does not independently reveal its nature. The refutation is now concluded by pointing out that Brahman cannot be the object of an *upāsana-vidhi*. Vedānta is the *pramāṇa* for knowing Brahman in its true nature. It reveals Brahman independently. That is the *samanvaya* (ascertained purport) of all Vedāntic statements, as established earlier. This was also the focus of the first *varṇaka* (interpretation) of this *sūtra*. The direct knowledge of Brahman thus gained through Vedāntic statements results in the total destruction of self-ignorance and its resultant *saṃsāra*.

ONLY IF BRAHMAN IS NOT A VIDHIŚEṢA CAN IT BE JUSTIFIED THAT BRAHMAJĪJÑĀSĀ IS DISTINCT FROM DHARMAJĪJÑĀSĀ

Bhagavān Vedavyāsa began *Brahmajijñāsā* as an inquiry separate from *dharmajijñāsā* only because the subject and results are completely different in the two cases. This can hold good only if Brahman is not auxiliary (*śeṣa*) to a *vidhi*.

भा. एवं च सति 'अथ अतः ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा' इति तद्विषयः पृथक् शास्त्रारम्भः उपपद्यते । प्रतिपत्तिविधिपरत्वे हि 'अथ अतः धर्मजिज्ञासा' इति एव आरब्धत्वात् न पृथक् शास्त्रं आरभ्येत । आरभ्यमाणं च एवं आरभ्येत – अथ अतः परिशिष्टधर्मजिज्ञासा इति, 'अथ अतः क्रत्वर्थपुरुषार्थयोः जिज्ञासा' (जै. ४ - १ - १) इतिवत् । ब्रह्मात्मैक्यावगतिः तु अप्रतिज्ञाता इति तदर्थः युक्तः शास्त्रारम्भः – 'अथ अतः ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा' इति ।

Bh.Tr. It is only when this is so (i.e. when Brahman is revealed independent of *vidhi*) that the beginning of a separate *Brahmamīmāṃsā-śāstra* pertaining to Brahman, as in '*Atha ataḥ Brahmajijñāsā*', is justified. Clearly no separate *śāstra* would be commenced if Brahman were the topic of *upāsana-vidhi* because that topic is already begun in the *sūtra* '*Atha ataḥ*

dharmajijñāsā. If a separate *sūtra* were commenced, it would have to be ‘*Atha ataḥ pariśiṣṭa-dharmajijñāsā*’ (subsequently, therefore, the inquiry into the remaining [portion of] *dharma* [should be undertaken]), like the *Jaiminisūtra*, ‘*Atha ataḥ kratvartha-puruṣārthayoḥ jijñāsā*’ (Therefore a [separate] inquiry into the determination of things meant for sacrifice and the performer of the sacrifice [should be undertaken] subsequently). But the direct knowledge of Brahman that is identical to *ātmā* is not ascertained (in the *Jaiminisūtra*). Thus the commencement of a separate *Brahmamīmāṃsā-śāstra* in the form of ‘*Atha ataḥ Brahmajijñāsā*’ is quite appropriate.

It is only when Brahman that is independent of *vidhi* is revealed by Vedānta *pramāṇa* that this separate *Brahmamīmāṃsā-śāstra* composed by Bhagavān Vedavyāsa is justified. This stand is vindicated because the Brahman that is to be known is distinct from *dharma*; in addition, *Brahmajijñāna* is independently fruitful without any dependence on *karma* or *upāsana*. If Vedānta were to reveal *karma* or *upāsana*, its subject matter would be the same as that of *dharma*; as a result, a *Brahmamīmāṃsā-śāstra* distinct from *dharmamīmāṃsā* would be untenable.

Some argue that a separate *mīmāṃsā* into the nature of *dharma* in the form of mental actions called *upāsana* is justifiable since this aspect was not analysed earlier in the *dharmajijñāsā*. If that were so, the distinct beginning of such an inquiry would have to be ‘*Atha ataḥ pariśiṣṭa-dharmajijñāsā*’. In that case, the word *atha* (thereafter) would mean, ‘after the inquiry into *dharma* accomplished through external means (i.e. through means that are not exclusively mental in nature)’. Further the word *ataḥ* (therefore) would signify ‘because *dharma* accomplished through external means serves (by purifying the mind) as a cause to accomplish *dharma* through *upāsana* – a mental action’. *Pariśiṣṭa* (the remaining)

refers to the remaining portion of *dharmā* which according to the contender was not analysed earlier by Jaimini.

The *bhāṣyakāra* cites a precedent from the *dharmamīmāṃsā* beginning a new topic pertaining to the remaining portion of *dharmajijñāsā* as indicated above. The differentiation of entities that are *śeṣa* (auxiliary) from the *śeṣī* (the main entity) ascertained in the third chapter of *Jaiminīsūtras* is based on the criteria of *līṅga*, *vākya*, *prakaraṇa*, *sthāna* and *samākhyāna*. Now an auxiliary (*śeṣa*) has to be connected to its *śeṣī*. Therefore it is necessary to determine the connection of auxiliaries with their main entities. For example, a specific *aṅga* (auxiliary) of a sacrifice (*kratu*) is meant for the sacrifice, whereas the main sacrifice itself is meant for its performer (*puruṣa*). The injunction (*vidhi*) of result is meant for the performer of a sacrifice in general. *Arthavāda* (statement of praise or censure) is meant for the sacrifice. The topic of an inquiry such as the above to ascertain what is meant for whom begins in *dharmajijñāsā* with the *sūtra*, ‘*Atha ataḥ kratvartha-puruṣārthayoḥ jijñāsā*’. Similarly, if Brahman were auxiliary to *upāsana* and hence a part of *dharmajijñāsā*, that topic should start as already pointed out, ‘*Atha ataḥ pariśiṣṭa-dharmajijñāsā*’. But Vyāsa has not done so. Therefore it is not correct to say that *Brahmamīmāṃsā* is a part of the earlier *dharmajijñāsā*. On the contrary, the separate inquiry – *Brahmajijñāsā* – beginning with ‘*Atha ataḥ Brahmajijñāsā*’ is justified because the subject matter, namely the direct knowledge of Brahman (identical to *ātmā*), is totally distinct from *dharmajijñāsā* and is nowhere discussed or ascertained by Jaimini in *pūrvamīmāṃsā*.

ALL *PRAMĀṆAS*, INCLUDING SCRIPTURAL INJUNCTIONS, CEASE TO FUNCTION ON GAINING *BRAHMASĀKṢĀTKĀRA*

All *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge such as *vidhi* – injunctions) which have their basis in the Vedas, including direct perception, inference and the rest, can operate only in the realm of

duality. If the ascertained purport of Vedānta is the non-dual Brahman, the question arises: what is the fate of these *pramāṇas* after *Brahmajñāna*? It will be seen now that the authenticity of all *pramāṇas*, without exception, lasts only until *Brahmasākṣātkāra* is gained. They cease to be *pramāṇas* thereafter.

भा. तस्मात् अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि इति एतदवसाना एव सर्वे विधयः सर्वाणि च इतराणि प्रमाणानि । नहि अहेयानुपादेयाद्वैतात्मावगतौ निर्विषयाणि अप्रमातृकाणि च प्रमाणानि भवितुं अर्हन्ति इति । अपि च आहुः –

‘गौणमिथ्यात्मनोऽसत्त्वे पुत्रदेहादिबाधनात् ।

सद्ब्रह्मात्माहमित्येवं बोधे कार्यं कथं भवेत् ॥

अन्वेष्टव्यात्मविज्ञानात् प्राक्प्रमातृत्वमात्मनः ।

अन्विष्टः स्यात्प्रमातैव पाप्मदोषादिवर्जितः ॥

देहात्मप्रत्ययो यद्वत्प्रमाणत्वेन कल्पितः ।

लौकिकं तद्वदेवेदं प्रमाणं त्वाऽऽत्मनिश्चयात्’ इति ॥४॥

इति चतुःसूत्री समाप्ता ॥

Bh.Tr. Therefore all scriptural injunctions (*vidhis*) and all other *pramāṇas* end with the direct self-knowledge – ‘I am Brahman’ ; because these *pramāṇas* cease to have their object (*viśaya*) and subject – the knower (*pramātā*) – when direct knowledge of the non-dual Brahman that can neither be acquired nor rejected is gained, and (they) therefore no longer remain valid *pramāṇas*. Accordingly, *Brahmajñānis* also assert the following:

‘On gaining the direct knowledge of the indestructible Brahman as verily ‘I’, the son and the body etc. (i.e., dear ones and things mistaken to be ‘I’) are annulled (*bādhita*). In the absence of the secondary ‘I’ (*gouṇātmā* – i.e., near and dear ones) and the false ‘I’ (*mithyātmā* – i.e., the body, mind etc.), how can the

dealings of do's and don'ts (*vidhi-niṣedha*) take place? (i.e. by no means can they continue).'

‘*Ātmā* appears to have the false status of knower (*pramāṛtva*, i.e. *jīvatva*) before gaining the direct knowledge of its true nature that is required to be ascertained. On ascertaining the true nature of *pramātā* (*jīva*), the latter is discovered to be *paramātmā* free from all defects such as *pāpa*, *puṇya* etc. termed as *saṃsāra*.’

‘Just as the notion ‘the body is “I”’ is considered a valid *pramāṇa* (in scriptural dealings by followers of the Vedas), empirical *pramāṇas* (i.e. direct perception, inference etc.) are also valid until *Brahmasākṣātkāra* takes place.’ (This concludes the *bhāṣya* on the *samanvaya-sūtra*). Here ends the *Catussūtrī*.

Brahman being an ever-existing principle, not only is it distinct from *dharma*, which needs to be produced, its knowledge too is totally opposed to *dharma*. The subject-object relationship (*viśaya-viśayī bhāva*), doership (*karṭṛtva*), actions to be performed (*kārya*) and instruments of action (*karaṇa*) hitherto superimposed on the non-dual Brahman cease to exist on gaining *Brahmajñāna*. Therefore, all *pramāṇas* that were valid until *Brahmajñāna* is gained are rendered totally inoperative in the absence of their indispensable constituents. This also confirms the fact that Brahman cannot be an auxiliary of *upāsana* or *karma*.

All empirical dealings, whether worldly or scriptural, undertaken by the individual either for himself or for those held to be near and dear enjoy validity only before the acquisition of *Brahmajñāna*. This is corroborated by the findings of *Brahmajñānī* based on their direct experience.

The indestructible non-dual Brahman itself is the pure-

awareness (*Caitanya*) principle, the *sarvasākṣī ātmā* which makes everything known. The direct knowledge of Brahman (identical to *ātmā*) in its non-dual nature puts an end to the seeming existence of the entire dualistic world, including one's body, as well as near and dear ones because these are ascertained to be nothing but the effect of false *māyā*. It is also well-known that all activities, worldly or scriptural, are meant either for oneself having the erroneous 'I' notion in the embodiment, or for children, wife, husband etc. who are held to be dear. The body, senses, mind etc. are called *mithyā ātmā* – false *ātmā* ('I'), as in 'I am a man or woman etc.' because of total identification with them born of the ignorance of the distinction between 'I' (*ātmā*) and the embodiment. As for wife, children etc., everyone is aware that they are totally different from oneself. And yet the person becomes joyful or sorrowful depending on the joyful and sorrowful experiences undergone by them, as if these were experienced by oneself. This is a secondary (*gouṇa*) identification based on the superimposition of some of the attributes (*guṇa*) of the dear ones on oneself. In such cases, wife, husband, children etc. are considered as *gouṇa-ātmā* – the secondary *ātmā* ('I'). There being Brahman and Brahman alone in *Brahmajñāna*, both the *mithyā ātmā* and the *gouṇa-ātmā* stand annulled (*bādhitā*). *Bādhaḥ* (annulment) in this context is gaining the direct knowledge that the entire Creation does not exist in reality in all three periods of time.⁹³ All dealings (*vyavahāra*) come to an end as a result, because there is none for whose sake activities can be undertaken.

In contrast to the *gouṇa-ātmā* (the secondary 'I') and *mithyā ātmā* (the false or erroneous 'I'), *sākṣī*, the *cāitanya* (pure awareness) principle, is the *mukhya ātmā* (the main or true 'I'). Some contend that the knowledge, 'I am Brahman', is contradictory because 'I', the *pramātā*, the *saṃsārī jīva*, cannot be Brahman which is free from both the embodiment and *saṃsāra*. This objection is addressed in the second verse quoted in the *bhāṣya*. The status of *pramātā* or

⁹³ कालत्रयासत्त्वबोधः बाधः इति ईर्यते । बृहदारण्यकवार्तिकसारः (4-4-386) by Śrīmat Vidyāraṇya Munī

samsārī-jīva is false. This status is due to identification with the *antaḥkaraṇa* and manifests as an effect of false self-ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed by *Brahmajñāna*, the status of *samsārī-jīva* also gets terminated. Thereafter what remains is only ‘the *ātmā* free from all *pāpa* and *puṇya*, old age, death, sorrow, hunger and thirst etc.’ (*Ch.U.* 8-4-1)

If *pramātā* the *samsārī-jīva* is false, ‘how can all *pramāṇas* based on the *pramātā* be valid?’, is the doubt addressed in the third verse. The notion of ‘I’ness in the embodiment is false in nature; yet it is considered valid for scriptural dealings (*vaidikavyavahāra*) by followers of the Veda. Similarly, worldly *pramāṇas* such as direct perception etc. have validity from the empirical standpoint until *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct cognition of ‘I’ as Brahman – takes place. The Vedānta *pramāṇa* is not empirical in nature but a *śruti-pramāṇa*. Vedānta reveals Brahman, the ever-existent indestructible principle. The word *tu* (but) in the fourth quarter of the third verse cited in the *bhāṣya* suggests a distinction between worldly *pramāṇas* and the Vedānta *pramāṇa*. The last phrase आऽऽत्मनिश्चयात्’ (*ā-ātmaniścayāt*) in the third verse consists of two words viz. ‘*ā*’ and ‘*ātmaniścayāt*’. The word ‘*ā*’ means ‘until’. Thus it means (that worldly *pramāṇas* are valid) until the direct knowledge of *ātmā* is gained.

Here ends the *Catussūtrī*.

SUMMING-UP

INTRODUCTION

Though everything is Brahman and there is nothing other than Brahman, what is perceived nonetheless is the world of multiplicity, an error that is universal. The *Brahmasūtras* discuss the reasons for this misapprehension (*bhrama*) and ways to get rid of it.

Brahman is that principle the direct knowledge of which confers total freedom from all sorrows and reveals the ever-existing limitless happiness. It is the pure awareness principle (*caitanya*) that is one's own true nature. Brahman is the supreme good, absolutely free from the limitations of time, space and objects. Gaining the direct knowledge of Brahman is *mokṣa* (liberation) – the highest goal of life. The Upaniṣads (also called Vedānta) reveal the nature of Brahman and the means to gain *Brahmajñāna*.

The *Brahmasūtra* is a text of *mīmāṃsā* – an adored inquiry or investigation into the nature of Brahman. It is not a book of advice. It is a text of analytical inquiry into the diverse topics found within the Upaniṣads. It harmonizes (*samanvaya*) the seeming contradictions found in these topics in the Upaniṣads and shows that they all pertain unanimously to the one non-dual Brahman.

The *Brahmasūtra* has four chapters (*adhyāya*) with four sections (*pāda*) each. The first chapter, termed *Samanvayādhyāya*, establishes that the direct or indirect purport (*tātparyā*) of all Vedāntic (*Upaniṣadic*) statements is the non-dual Brahman which is identical to *ātmā*. The second chapter, titled *Avirodhādhyāya*, resolves the contradictions raised by other schools of thought regarding the harmonization (*samanvaya*) of *Upaniṣadic* statements in non-dual Brahman. *Sādhanaādhyāya*, the third chapter, inquires into the means (*sāadhanam*) required to ascertain the nature of Brahman and gain its knowledge. The fourth chapter called

Phalādhyāya describes the result of *nirguṇa Brahmajñāna* and performing *saguṇa Brahmopāsanā*. The *catuṣsūtrī* – the first four *sūtras* together with their commentary – has great importance in establishing the principal subject matter of the *Brahmasūtra*.

Self-ignorance (*avidyā*) is the root cause of *saṃsāra*. Its termination duly results in liberation (*mokṣa*) from *saṃsāra*. *Ātmā* itself – known directly without beginningless *avidyā* – is *mokṣa*. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya defines *mokṣa* as abidance in one's true nature (*svātmani avasthānam*). *Ātmā* is self-existent (*swataḥ siddha*) and self-evident (*svayamprakāśa*). It does not require any means to manifest it. But the ignorant person is unaware of his true nature. He is in need of means that can reveal *ātmā*. The means to *mokṣa* is the direct, clear cognition of his true nature (*tatsvarūpa-sākṣātkāra*) without any obstructions. *Śravaṇa* (self-inquiry), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (constant and consistent contemplation on one's own true nature) are the remedy to overcome the obstructions that hinder the gaining of the direct knowledge of one's own true nature.

To prove its utility and practicability, any scriptural text has to specify *anubandha-catustaya* or the four subject-matter related factors, viz. deserving person–*adhikārī*, subject–*viśaya*, relation–*sambandha* and utility–*prayojanam*. Sage Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa), the author of the *Brahmasūtra* points to these four in the first *sūtra*.

To begin with, the exact nature of bondage needs to be ascertained. If bondage were real, liberation would have been impossible to attain. But in actuality, bondage is due to an error (*adhyāsa*). This is implied in the first *sūtra*. With this in view, the *bhāṣyakāra* establishes the nature of *adhyāsa* – an error of superimposition – in his introductory commentary titled *adhyāsabhāṣya*.

ADHYĀSABHĀṢYAM

(An Exposition on the Error of Superimposition)

Adhyāsa is a delusion or error where a given thing is

mistaken for something else. There can be no identity between *ātmā* (*asmat* or *viśayī*) the subject and *anātmā* (*yuṣmat* or *viśaya*) the object. They are cognized as 'I' and 'this' respectively. Their attributes too cannot be mutually related. There is no identity or similarity between them to allow for superimposition. And yet, their mutual superimposition is experienced universally. It does not appear appropriate to posit its existence. But *adhyāsa*, even though its postulation is inappropriate, does exist. It is a delusion.

Adhyāsa is defined as the mistaken appearance of an entity on a basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) distinct (*bhinna*) from its own. It is experienced as a result of an earlier perception and is similar to the (actual) entity remembered. A variety of definitions of *adhyāsa* are propounded by different schools of thought. They differ with respect to the nature of the basis and the nature of the entity superimposed. However, they all agree that it is the false appearance of an entity on a basis different from its own. They are unanimous that *adhyāsa* is a false appearance of an entity having the attributes of another. *Adhyāsa* is universally experienced. It is well-known that a sea-shell can be mistaken as silver or that one moon can appear as two.

It may be argued that the superimposition of silver on a shell etc. is possible because the basis of superimposition is directly perceptible. This may give rise to a rule that the basis of superimposition should be perceptible by the sense-organs and should be an object (*viśaya*) of cognition. These two requirements cannot be met in the case of *ātmā*. Hence the superimposition between *ātmā* and *anātmā* is not possible. But such a conclusion is incorrect. *Ātmā* is not completely unknown, because it is the object of 'I cognition', self-evident (as it is *aparokṣa*) in nature, and universally experienced as 'I'. There cannot be a rule that an object can get superimposed on another object only if the latter is directly perceived by the sense-organs. Ignorant people superimpose the upper surface, impurity etc. on imperceptible space as well. Thus the superimposition of the *anātmā* on *ātmā* is possible.

Learned people consider *adhyāsa* to be *avidyā* (ignorance). The ascertainment of the true nature of the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) by distinguishing it from the entity superimposed (*āropya*) is termed knowledge (*vidyā*). *Adhyāsa* is the product of *avidyā*. The *adhiṣṭhāna* is not connected in any way, not even to the slightest extent, with that which is superimposed.

All action (*vyavahāra*) involving the *pramāṇa* and the *prameya*, be it worldly (*laukika*) or Vedic (the *Vaidika*), originates due to the mutual *adhyāsa* between *ātmā* and the *anātmā*. The scriptures dealing with *vidhī*, *pratiṣedha* and *mokṣa* are also based on *adhyāsa*. *Adhyāsa*, the basis of all action, is *sākṣipratyakṣa* – directly perceived by all without the agency of the sense-organs. Inference, presumption and the Vedas also serve as *pramāṇās* to prove *adhyāsa*.

The action of a *Brahmajñānī* is due to *adhyāsa* that is nullified (*bādhita*); whereas the action of one who has only indirect knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*) of *ātmā* is based on *adhyāsa* – as is the case with animals etc. *Ātmā* endowed with *adhyāsa* and operating as the knower (*pramātā*), doer (*kartā*) etc. is the author of all action, worldly or scriptural. For the performance of scriptural actions, the knowledge “I am an entity different from the physical body and a *saṃsārī* subject to transmigration” is sufficient. The direct knowledge of *ātmā* is not only not essential for scriptural *vyavahāra* but is opposed to it. Unembodied actionless *ātmā* cannot undertake any action unless it dons the statuses of *pramātā*, *kartā*, *bhoktā* etc. that are born of *adhyāsa*. Therefore *adhyāsa* is a prerequisite for scriptural action as well.

As stated earlier, *adhyāsa* is the mistaken cognition of an entity on a basis other than its own. Its nature is made clear by the following illustrations. People superimpose external attributes on the embodied *ātmā* in statements such as ‘I am deficient’ or ‘I am perfect’ when it is the son, wife and or other loved ones who are

deficient or perfect. The attributes of the physical body are superimposed on *ātmā* endowed with the gross body through notions such as 'I am fat', 'I am lean', 'I am fair', 'I stand', 'I walk', and 'I leap'. So too are the features of the senses (*indriyas*) superimposed as in 'I am dumb', 'I am one-eyed', 'I am a eunuch', 'I am blind'. The attributes of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, such as desire, thinking, doubt and decision are superimposed via notions such as 'I desire', 'I think', 'I doubt', and 'I decide'. Reciprocally, the *pratyagātmā* too is superimposed on the *antaḥkaraṇa* and the rest as their very basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*). This *adhyāsa* is beginningless, endless, natural, of the nature of mistaken cognition, and the producer of doership (*kartṛtva*) and experiencership (*bhokṛtva*) in *ātmā*. It is directly experienced by one and all.

Both the *jīva* and its experience of bondage are themselves unreal because they are products of unreal *adhyāsa*. Their false status substantiates the identity of *jīva* and Brahman as well as liberation. The *śārīraka-mīmāṃsā* (*Brahmasūtra*) commences with the study of certain Vedāntic (i.e. *Upaniṣadic*) statements capable of multiple interpretations and initiates an inquiry into them in order to gain the knowledge of the identity between *jīva* and Brahman. This knowledge reveals *adhyāsa* to be devoid of any truth and destroys its very root which is the cause of the calamitous *saṃsāra*. The *Brahmasūtra* establishes how all *Upaniṣadic* statements reveal the identity of the *jīva* and Brahman.

JIJÑĀSĀDHIKARAṆAM (THE FIRST BRAHMASŪTRA)

In their statements such as 'ātmā is unattached', 'this *ātmā* is Brahman', the *Upaniṣads* declare that Brahman, totally unconnected to anything, is itself *ātmā* ('I'). But the 'I' notion is universally experienced with respect to the body and the rest. Therefore the question arises, is it the unattached (*asaṅga*) Brahman that is *ātmā* or the body-mind complex. *Upaniṣadic* statements and the direct experience of *ātma jñānīs* bear testimony to the existence

of *mukti* (liberation). Thus both the fact that there is room for doubt and the result (viz. liberation) is seen in the form of direct experience call for an inquiry into *Upaniṣadic* statements to gain the direct knowledge of *ātmā* which is identical with Brahman.

अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा ॥१॥

In order to gain *Brahmajñāna*, a *mumukṣu* must inquire into *Upaniṣadic* sentences and ascertain their purport. This should be done after acquiring the fourfold qualification of *viveka*, *vairāgya* and the rest. Such a pursuit is indispensable because the results of *karmas* are impermanent whereas liberation, the result of *Brahmajñāna*, is eternal.

Atha means “after the acquisition of the fourfold qualification”. These are: i) Discrimination (*viveka*) between the eternal (*nitya*) and the ephemeral (*anitya*) ii) indifference or lack of interest (*virāga*) towards sense-pleasures here as well as heavenly pleasures hereafter iii) accomplishment of *śama*, *dama*, *uparama*, *titikṣā*, *śraddhā* and *samādhāna* iv) *mumukṣutvam* – intense yearning for liberation. Brahman can be inquired into and known irrespective of whether *dharmajijñāsā* is undertaken. But the inquiry into Brahman can be fruitful only when it is undertaken after the above qualifications are met. The word *atha* therefore recommends inquiry immediately after (*ānantaryam*) the accomplishment of the aforesaid means.

The word *ataḥ* (therefore) indicates why the nature of Brahman should be ascertained. In its passages, the Veda very clearly points out the impermanent nature of results obtained through the performance of the *karmas* and sacrifices described in the Veda. They are means to *śreyah* (the relative good). On the other hand, the Veda also reveals that liberation, the highest accomplishment, can be gained through *Brahmajñāna*. Therefore the inquiry into Brahman should be undertaken after gaining the *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-sampatti*.

Sūtras are brief in their composition. At times, some word or words, called *adhyāhāra*, need to be added to the *sūtra* to bring out its full meaning. For example, the word *kartavyaḥ* (should be done) is required to be added to the first *sūtra*. The compound in the word *Brahmajijñāsā* has to be interpreted as 'the *jijñāsā* of Brahman'. Brahman will be defined in the next *sūtra* as 'that from which the birth, sustenance and destruction of this universe takes place'. The genitive case in the word *Brahmaṇaḥ* (of Brahman) is to be taken in the accusative sense and indicates a grammatical object and not a general relation (*sambandha*); because *jijñāsā* ('desire to know') depends on the *jijñāsya* (the thing to be known). Also, no specific mention has been made of anything other than Brahman that is to be known. Thus Brahman becomes the *karma* (the grammatical object) of *jijñāsā* – the desire to know. The genitive in the sense of the object case (i.e. accusative) is also justified because it is in conformity with the relevant *śruti* passages. The *Upaniṣadic* statements 'that from which these beings are born' (*Tai.U.* 3-1) etc. quite explicitly indicate Brahman as the object of the desire to know through the sentence 'that is Brahman, (you) desire to know it directly' (*Tai.U.* 3-1). Thus Brahman as the object of the desire to know is in keeping with this *sūtra* provided the genitive case used above is accepted in the sense of the object case.

The components of the word *jijñāsā* are the verb *jñā* (to know) and *san* (the desiderative suffix). *Jijñāsā* is the desire to know. The knowledge (*jñānam*) culminating in the direct cognition of Brahman, called *avagatī*, is the object of the desire expressed by the desiderative (*san*). The object of desire of any desire is itself the intended result of that desire. Brahman is required to be revealed by the *pramāṇa* of *jñāna*. The word *jñāna* in this context stands for a specific thought conforming to the true nature of Brahman. It confers the direct knowledge of Brahman.

The *avagatī* of Brahman is *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct cognition of Brahman. In *Brahmāvagatī*, *caitanya* (pure awareness) totally free from the veiling (*āvaraṇa*) born of self-ignorance is

manifested, or, in other words directly known. It is the culmination of the *pramāṇa* in the form of *jñāna* – the *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti* (thought) conforming to the true nature of Brahman which is called *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* or *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* or *Brahma-vṛtti* or *ātmākāra-vṛtti*. In *Brahmāvagati*, the ignorance of Brahman, the veiling (*āvaraṇa* of Brahman), and all effects of veiling come totally to an end in addition to the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* and the *cidābhāsa* (reflection of *caitanya*) in it.

Pramā or the correct knowledge of a thing directly perceived necessarily corresponds to an experience true to the nature of that thing; when it is not so, it is erroneous knowledge. The same rule applies to the knowledge of *ātmā* which is always *aparokṣa* – the most direct, experienced as the very 'I'. The *aparokṣajñāna* of *ātmā* also necessarily requires its *anubhava* (experience) conforming (*yathārtha*) to its true nature, free from all the superimposed *anātmā*. The knowledge of *ātmā* identical to Brahman is direct (*aparokṣa*) in nature. Indirect knowledge (*parokṣajñāna*) cannot terminate the erroneous concept (*bhrama*) about *ātmā*, which is a directly (*aparokṣāt*) experienced principle. The correct knowledge of directly perceptible things (*pratyakṣa-vastu*) and *aparokṣa-ātmā* invariably requires *yathārtha-anubhava* to gain knowledge directly. This is so because the things to be known in both cases are directly available for experience unlike remote entities. *Parokṣajñāna* (indirect knowledge) is possible without an experience true to the nature of the thing to be known. *Yathārtha ātmānubhava* or *Brahmānubhava* is the very basis of *aparokṣajñāna* (direct self-knowledge). *Ātmajñāna* or *Brahmajñāna* without such an *anubhava* is only *parokṣajñāna*.

The nature of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* is such that it cannot be anything but a distinct experience of *ātmā* or Brahman totally free from the cognition of the *adhyasta dṛśya-prapañca* – perceptible creation, including the *tripuṭī* that is superimposed on Brahman. It is *nirvikalpa*, being entirely free from *tripuṭī* – the triple form of the

knower, knowledge and the known. All that remains is *yathārthānubhava*, a homogeneous experience in conformity with Brahman. It is *cinmātra* – nothing but *caitanya*. Even the *pramātā* (the knower) or the *anubhavitā* (the experiencer) who casts the *tripuṭī* is absent because the status of *ātmā* as knower or experiencer arises only on account of ignorance and the consequent *adhyāsa* of the *anātmā* on *ātmā*. Such *Brahmānubhava* or *ātmānubhava* is possible without an experiencer (*anubhavitā*) or knower (*pramātā*) because *ātmā* / Brahman is *anubhavasvarūpa* – verily experience in itself without the need for anything else. In the state of ignorance too, the variegated experiences of the *dṛśya* world, the *pramātā* and the experience of ignorance itself are possible only because of their basis viz. the *anubhavasvarūpa ātmā* / Brahman. In the wake of knowledge, the *adhyasta dṛśya-prapañca* being absent, its experience ceases but not the ever-existent *ātmā* / Brahman which is itself the fundamental experience principle. The knowledge of Brahman without such experience of ever-existent *anubhavasvarūpa ātmā* devoid of the features of the *adhyastha jagat* is at best indirect (*parokṣa*) and not direct (*aparokṣa*) in nature.

A description of the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, also called *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* and so on, is found in the *Maṇḍalabrāhmaṇopaniṣat* (2-3), the *Tejobindūpaniṣat* (1-37) and the *Muktikopaniṣat*. It corresponds to the *prajñā* of a *stithaprajñā* described in the *Bhagavadgītā* (Ch.-2). This can be verified from the description of *prajñā* in the *Adhyātmopaniṣat* (42-44). In fact, the *Tejobindūpaniṣat* (1-43 to 46) not only exhorts *mumuṅṣus* to develop the *akhaṇḍākāravṛtti* but also terms skilful talk of Brahman without proper *vairāgya* and a steady *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* as sheer verbosity.

The *Bhagavadgītā-bhāṣya* (Ch.18-50) also clarifies the role, relevance and possibility of such a *vṛtti* conforming to Brahman or *ātmā*. In his *Pañcapādikā*, Śrī Padmapādācārya defines *avagati* as the *sākṣāt-anubhava* of Brahman / *ātmā*. While concluding its comments on the *adhyāsabhāṣya*, *Pañcapādikā* also specifies clearly

that the destruction of *adhyāsa* which is the cause of calamitous *saṃsāra* is possible only through the knowledge that culminates in *Brahmānubhava*.

Brahmāvagati is the highest human accomplishment because it destroys the entire *saṃsāra* along with its root cause *avidyā* and its effects which are disastrous in nature. Therefore Brahman should be inquired into. The etymological meaning of the word Brahman is well-known. Brahman is also known as the *ātmā* (the 'I') in all. But there are many conflicting views about its nature. A person who accepts conflicting views without a thorough inquiry into the nature of Brahman has sorrows instead of liberation in store for him. Therefore, by introducing *Brahmajijñāsā* (the desire to know Brahman), the sacred inquiry into *Upaniṣadic* (Vedāntic) statements supported by reasoning unopposed to Vedānta is initiated. This is the means to gain *mokṣa*.

JANMĀDYADHIKARĀṆAM (THE SECOND SŪTRA)

Two methods are employed to define Brahman. The first is through the use of *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* – a feature which characterizes an entity via a transient relationship with that entity. By this method, Brahman can be defined as that from which all living beings are born, by which they live having been born, and into which they merge after destruction (*Tai.U.* 3-1). The second method of defining Brahman is through the use of a *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* – an intrinsic characteristic of an entity. Employing this method, Brahman is defined as the principle which is *satyam* (the ever-existent principle), *jñānam* (the knowledge principle) and *anantam* (the limitless independent principle) (*Tai.U.* 2-1). The second *sūtra* defines *jijñāsya* Brahman using a *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*.

जन्माद्यस्य यतः ॥२॥

Brahman is that from which the origin, sustenance and destruction of this Creation take place.

That omniscient and omnipotent cause is Brahman from which arise the origin, sustenance and destruction (*janma-sthiti-bhaṅga*) of this Creation (*jagat*) – (i) manifested as names (*nāma*) and forms (*rūpa*), (ii) consisting of innumerable doers (*kartṛ*) and experiencers (*bhoktṛ*), (iii) which is also the basis (*āśraya*) of actions and their results having a fixed place, time and specific cause, and (iv) the very nature of whose genesis is inconceivable to the mind. The four adjectival phrases qualifying the *jagat* establish that its cause is sentient, omniscient and omnipotent in nature, as also that it is not any individual entity in the realm of Creation.

The *Janmādi sūtra* does not speak of inference. The *Brahmasūtras* are meant for stringing together the flowers of *Upaniṣadic* statements. They refer to and inquire into these statements. *Brahmāvagati* (*Brahmasākṣātkāra*) is attained by ascertaining the purport (*tātparya*) of *Upaniṣadic* statements through an inquiry into their meaning and not by the other *pramāṇās* such as inference etc. Reasoning unopposed to *Upaniṣadic* statements is accepted as a *pramāṇa* to corroborate the meaning of *Upaniṣadic* passages. *Śruti* (the Veda) itself has accepted reasoning as a helpful means.

Some who have a bias in favour of *pūrvamīmāṃsā* contend that to gain *Brahmajñāna*, it is inappropriate to talk of the necessity of *manana* (reflection), *nididhyāsana* (intense contemplation) and *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (the direct experience of Brahman) because Brahman, like *dharma*, has been propounded by the same means of knowledge, the Veda. The *bhāṣyakāra* clarifies and emphasizes the need for all these, since *śruti*, *liṅga* etc. are not adequate as *pramāṇas* for the inquiry into the nature of Brahman, unlike in the case of *dharma*jñānāsā. In addition to *śruti*, *liṅga* etc., *manana*, *nididhyāsana* and direct experience as culmination are indeed *pramāṇas* as appropriate (to the extent required). *Brahmajñāna* culminates in direct experience (*anubhava*). *Brahmajñāna* is about an ever-existing entity.

Two reasons are advanced in the *bhāṣya* why *Brahmajñāna* requires the *anubhava* of Brahman:

- I) *Brahmajñāna* is only *parokṣa-jñāna* and not *aparokṣa* (direct) until it culminates in *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct experience of Brahman in its true nature free from the *adhyasta prapañca*.
- II) Brahman is the ever-existent principle and hence always available for experience unlike entities (such as *dharma*) that are yet to come into existence or those which are *parokṣa* – not available for direct experience.

The nature of the knowledge of an entity depends on the entity. It is not determined by the means of knowledge employed to know the entity. The experience of *dharma* (i.e. things such as heavens etc.) is not possible at the time of gaining knowledge of its performance because it is something yet to be performed and produced. Thus experience is not necessary in the case of *dharmajijñāsā* not because the *Veda* is the *pramāṇa*, but because *dharma* comes into existence subsequently. Therefore it would be fallacious to draw the inference that the knowledge of Brahman does not call for *manana*, *nididhyāsana* and *anubhava* (direct experience) merely because just like *dharma*, it is *Vedārtha* (propounded by *Veda*). The reason (*hetu*) given viz. 'because Brahman is propounded by the *Veda*' does not hold water. As already seen, *dharma* is not required to be experienced not because the *Veda* is its *pramāṇa* but because it is yet to be produced (*sādhyā*) and so is unavailable for experience. This is inapplicable in the case of *Brahmajñāna*. Brahman is the self-evident (*svayaṃjyotī*) ever-existing principle. The *svayaṃjyotī* principle is innately the experience principle. It is available for experience both in the state of ignorance with all that is *adhyasta* (superimposed) on it, and without the same in the wake of its direct knowledge – *aparokṣajñāna*. While commenting on this portion, the *Pañcapādikā* cites the following general rule. 'Experience is possible in the case of an

already existing entity because of which the desire to know it ends with its experience’.

The *bhāṣya* further clarifies that experience is not required in the matter of actions to be performed (or their results yet to come into existence) because *śruti*, *liṅga* and others alone serve as the *pramāṇa*. The actual implementation of things to be accomplished also depends on the efforts (or will) of the individual. For instance, it is possible to perform worldly and Vedic *karmas* or to refrain from doing so or to perform them in a different way. By contrast, the knowledge of the true nature of a thing does not depend on the vagaries of the human intellect but depends on the nature of the thing. The correctness of the knowledge of an existent entity depends on its conformity with the entity. This being the case, the knowledge of Brahman also depends on Brahman itself because it pertains to an existent entity.

While commenting on this portion of the *sūtrabhāṣya*, Śrī Padmapādācārya in Pañcapādikā and Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni in the Vivaraṇaprameya-saṅgraha have justified beyond any trace of doubt the indispensability of both reasoning and *Brahmānubhava* in gaining *Brahmajñāna*.

Some opponents are of the view that if Brahman is an already existent entity, it becomes the object of *pramāṇās* other than the *śruti*. Any discussion of *Upaniṣadic* texts in order to define Brahman would therefore be useless. The *bhāṣya* refutes this contention. Brahman is not an object of the senses. Therefore, its connection with Creation cannot be grasped through other means of knowledge. By their very nature, the senses have external entities as their object, not Brahman. If Brahman were an object of the senses, the fact that this Creation is created by Brahman as its effect could have been perceived. But when the effect, viz. Creation, alone is perceived, it is not possible to determine whether it was created by Brahman as its effect or by something else. The

Janmādi-sūtra does not therefore mean to suggest inference as the means to know Brahman, but serves to reveal the import of the *Upaniṣadic* statement.

The Vedāntic statement indicated by this *sūtra* to define Brahman is as follows. The famous personage Bṛḥgu requests his father Varuṇa to teach him about Brahman (*Tai. U.* 3-1). The father replies – ‘Please know Brahman to be that from which all living beings are born, having been born by which they live and into which they merge after destruction’ (*Tai.U.* 3-1). The statement which ascertains this teaching is – ‘Verily from *ānanda* (the limitless independent happiness which is Brahman) alone are all these living beings born, having been born they live by *ānanda* and into *ānanda* they merge after destruction’ (*Tai.U.* 3-6). Other *Upaniṣadic* statements of a similar nature which reveal Brahman, the cause of the *jagat*, can also be cited.

The definition of Brahman quoted here is not the only one. There are many others in different *Upaniṣads* in all four Vedas. The topic of this *sūtra* is further elaborated in the *Prakṛtyādhikaraṇa* (*Br.Sū.* 1-4-23 to 1-4-27), which refers to similar *Upaniṣadic* sentences. All these definitions from different *Upaniṣads*, either in the form of a *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* or a *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*, have their *samanvaya* in the Brahman to be known. Liberation is gained through *aparokṣa-brahmajñāna*.

ŚĀSTRAYONITVĀDHIKARAṆAM (THE THIRD SŪTRA)

The third *sūtra* has two interpretations.

- i) It was indicated that Brahman is omniscient by showing that it is the cause of the Creation. This is confirmed in the third *sūtra*.
- ii) So far, Brahman has been defined. The next thing that needs to be known is its means of knowledge. The definition and the means of knowledge are a must to ascertain the nature of Brahman. The third *sūtra* furnishes this means of knowledge.

शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ॥ ३ ॥

- i) **The first interpretation: Brahman is omniscient because it is the cause of the scriptures consisting of the Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva Vedas.**

Anything as well shaped as the Veda must have an intelligent author. The Veda comprising Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva is described as the exhalation (i.e. something produced effortlessly) of Brahman (*Br. U.* 2-4-10). Therefore Brahman is the author of the Veda. The description of the Veda as eternal (*nitya*) in a *śruti* is to show that the present Veda is revealed just like the Veda in the previous *kalpa* – Creation. Brahman is omniscient because it is the author of the all-revealing Veda.

- ii) **The second interpretation: Brahman cannot be known through any other means of knowledge because it can be known only by means of the scriptures viz. the Vedas.**

Brahman does not have the attributes of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Therefore it cannot be an object of sense-perception. It is also devoid of any distinguishing mark or similarity etc.. As a result, means of knowledge such as inference, illustration and the rest are incapable of making it known. *Śrutis* such as ‘I am asking you about that *Purūṣa* (i.e. Brahman) unfolded in the Upaniṣad’ (*Br. U.* 3-9-26) point to the Veda alone as the means of knowledge to know Brahman.

SAMANVA YĀDHIKARAṆAM (THE FOURTH SŪTRA)

The fourth *sūtra* has two interpretations. They refute the following contentions:

- i) Some opponents contend that Vedāntic sentences do not reveal Brahman but are auxiliaries of Vedic *karmas*. They establish the *kartā*, *devatā* etc. related to *karmas*.

- ii) Others are of the view that scripture (*śāstram*) is that which enjoins (*śāsanāt*). Vedānta cannot be an exception. Therefore they say that Vedānta is meant to enjoin *upāsana*s (meditations).

तत् तु समन्वयात् ॥४॥

But Brahman is known directly through the means of Vedānta alone, because all Vedāntic statements have their concordance in indisputably establishing Brahman alone.

- i) The first interpretation: Vedāntic statements (the Upaniṣads) establish Brahman and not the performer (*kartā*) of rituals, deities (*devatās*) and other factors connected with Vedic sacrifices. Vedānta is not part of the *karmakāṇḍa* (the *karma* section of the Vedas) but pertains to an entirely different section called the *jñānakāṇḍa* (section on knowledge). Based on six criteria called *upakrama-upasamhāra* etc. employed to ascertain the purport of Vedic sentences, it is proved that Vedānta directly establishes Brahman alone. The unfoldment of Brahman is not of no utility because its knowledge destroys sorrowful *saṃsāra* and enables one to know directly one's true nature which is limitless happiness. There is no basis for believing that Vedānta is auxiliary to *karma* and meant for ascertaining the doer (*kartā*), deities and the other factors related to sacrifices etc.
- ii) The second interpretation: Vedāntic sentences are not meant for *vidhi* because they are fruitful on their own. They do not have a *niyojya* – a person to whom a *vidhi* can be enjoined. They are like sentences such as “this is not a snake but a rope”. That which is not dependent (*adhīna*) on a doer (*kartā*) cannot be an injunction (*vidhi*). The scripture (*śāstram*) can indeed be that which unfolds an

existing entity (*siddhavastu-śaṃsanāt*). *Manana* (reflection) etc. are enjoined before gaining the direct knowledge of Brahman. Therefore, the purport of Vedānta is Brahman. The *bhāṣya* discusses the following topics at length, establishing them on a firm footing while responding to the various views put forward in the contrary propositions.

1. The result of *Brahmajñāna* is distinct from that of *karma*.
2. The teaching regarding Brahman cannot be auxiliary to a *vidhi*.
3. Nothing remains to be done after gaining *Brahmajñāna*.
4. *Brahmajñāna* terminates the obstruction of ignorance that hinders *mokṣa*.
5. *Brahmajñāna* depends on the nature of Brahman and not on human action (*karma*).
6. *Brahman* has no connection whatsoever with action (*karma*).
7. *Mokṣa* cannot be approached by *karma* because it is distinct from *utpādyā*, *vikāryā*, *āpyā* and *saṃskāryā*.
8. The knowledge of Brahman is not a *karma* enjoined by a *vidhi* (injunction).
9. The purpose of *Upaniṣadic* statements which bear a semblance to *vidhis* is to lead the *mumukṣu* away from the pursuit of sense-pleasures and urge him to take to the means of self-knowledge by diverting his stream of thoughts to *ātmā*.
10. All duties end with *ātmajñāna*.
11. Vedic passages do describe existing entities as well.
12. The Vedas reveal not just *karma* but useful entities unknown through other *pramāṇas* as well.
13. Direct knowledge of the ever-existent Brahman does bring an end to *saṃsāra*.
14. *Ātmā* is ever free from embodiment and doership.
15. The identification of *ātmā* with the embodiment is not secondary (*gouṇa*) but erroneous (*mithyā*).

16. Annihilation of *saṃsāra* by *Brahmajñāna* stands proved.
17. *Manana* and *nididhyāsana* are not necessary after gaining *Brahmajñāna*.
18. Only if *Brahmajñāna* is not a *vidhiśeṣa* can it be justified that *Brahmajñānāsā* is distinct from *dharmajñānāsā*.
19. All *pramāṇas*, including scriptural injunctions, cease to function on gaining *Brahmasākṣātkāra*.

EPILOGUE

A *mumukṣu* endowed with *sādhana* *catuṣṭaya-sampatti* should take to *Brahmajñānāsā* until *Brahmāvagati* (*Brahmasākṣātkāra*) is gained. *Brahmajñāna* culminates in *Brahmānubhava* / *ātmānubhava* because Brahman is the only ever-existing entity (*bhūtavastu*). Being an existing entity, Brahman is available for experience, unlike *dharma* in the case of *jñānāsya dharma*. Steadfastness in *Brahmajñāna* is called *Brahmaprāpti*.

SCRIPTURAL EXCERPTS WHICH PROVE THE EXPERIENTIAL NATURE OF BRAHMAJÑĀNA

Lord Kṛṣṇa defines *Brahmaprāpti* as *jñānasya* (i.e. *Brahmajñānasya*) *parā niṣṭhā* – the highest culmination of *Brahmajñāna* (*B.G.* 18-50). The *bhāṣyakāra* describes *parā jñānaniṣṭhā* as abidance, in the sense of certainty, in *ātmānubhava*⁹⁴ (*B.G.Bhāṣya* 18-55). *Ātmānubhava*, the experience of the 'true I', finds expression as 'I am non-dual pure awareness (*caitanya*) free from all sorrows' (सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तैकचेतन्यात्मकोऽहम् । *Br.Sū. bhāṣya* 4-1-2). 'I' (*ātmā*), be it in its true nature or in its mistaken form in the realm of ignorance, is always available for experience because *ātmā* is *anubhavasvarūpa*. This can be verified from our self-evident experience: 'I am'. Whether the experience conforms to *ātmāsvarūpa* (is *yathārtha*) or is unlike it (*ayathārtha*) determines whether the

⁹⁴ स्वात्मानुभवनिश्चयरूपेण यदवस्थानं सा परा ज्ञानानिष्ठा (भगवद्गीता भाष्य 18-55)

experience lies in the realm of knowledge or in the realm of ignorance. *Ātmānubhava* or *Brahmānubhava* is also defined as ‘the manifestation of *cit* (pure awareness) not coloured by the *viśayas* (*dṛśyas*) and without objectification (by the *pramātā* which has itself become extinct)’.⁹⁵

Gouḍapādācārya, the great doyen of Vedānta, describes *Brahmānubhava* or *Brahmaprāpti* in his *kārikā* on the *Māṇḍukyopaniṣat*. He indicates that the mind becomes the very replica of Brahman when Brahman is known directly.

यदा न लीयते चित्तं न च विक्षिप्यते पुनः ।
अनिंगनमनाभासं निष्पन्नं ब्रह्म तत्तदा ॥ (मांडूक्य कारिका 3-46)

Tr. ‘When the mind (that is totally withdrawn from all the pursuits and made to get absorbed in *ātmanā*) does not sleep, does not become stupefied (by the adverse unconscious – *kaśāya*), when it does not get distracted by sense objects and is very steady, free from the projection of superimposed *tripuṭīs*, it (the mind) conforms to the true nature of Brahman’. (*Māṇḍukya kārikā* 3-46).

This cannot but be a distinct *anubhava* (experience) wherein the mind, free of even the *pramātā*, virtually becomes Brahman. This is *Brahmajñāna*. The distinction between *aparokṣajñāna* (direct self-knowledge) and *parokṣajñāna* (indirect knowledge) lies in the presence or absence of *Brahmānubhava* / *ātmanubhava* (also termed *Brahmasākṣātkāra*) respectively. The indispensability of such an *anubhava* (experience) can be verified from the following statements from the *Māṇḍukyopaniṣat* and the *Bhagavadgītā* with relevant portions of the *bhāṣya*.

i) *Māṇḍukyopaniṣat* (mantra 7) defines *ātmanā* and through the command ‘*sa vijñeyah*’ exhorts the *mumuksu* to know it directly. Though the *bhāṣyakāra* has not commented on

⁹⁵ अविषयतयैव विषयानुपरक्तचित्स्फुरणम् ।

the word *viññeyaḥ* in this *mantra*, its commentary can be found elsewhere. In the *Kenopanīṣat bhāṣya* (2-5), the meaning of *vicitya* is specified as *viññāya* and further elaborated as *sākṣātkṛtya*. Therefore *viññeyaḥ* means *sākṣātkartavyaḥ*. That means *sākṣātkāra* is necessary and mere *parokṣajñāna* is not enough to gain *mokṣa*.

- ii) Lord Kṛṣṇa describes *kāma* (desire) as *jñāna-viññānanāśanam* – the destroyer of both *jñāna* and *viññāna* (*B.G.* 3-41). The *bhāṣyakāra* comments :⁹⁶

Jñānam is the knowledge gained through the *adhyātma-śāstra* and the teacher; whereas *viññānam* is the intense experience of that which is learnt from the *adhyātma-śāstra* and the teacher.

- iii) *Jñāna-viññānatṛptātmā* – the *Brahmajñānī* is contented with *Jñāna* and *viññāna* (*B.G.* 6-8).⁹⁷

The *bhāṣya* comments :

Jñānam – A thorough understanding of what is expounded in the *Vedāntic* scriptures.

Viññānam – One's own experience in accordance with what is known through the scriptures.

- iv) In defining *yoga*, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the *Brahmajñānī* as one who experiences (*vetī*) that happiness (*sukham*) which is limitless (*ātyantikam*), can be known by the *buddhi*

⁹⁶ ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् । (भ.गी. 3-41)

ज्ञानं-शास्त्रतः आचार्यतः च आत्मादीनाम् अवबोधः ।

विज्ञानं-विशेषतः तदनुभवः । (भ.गी. भाष्य 3-41)

⁹⁷ ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा । (भ.गी. 6-8)

ज्ञानं = शास्त्रोक्तपदार्थानां परिज्ञानम् ।

विज्ञानं = शास्त्रतः ज्ञातानां तथैव स्वानुभवकरणम् (भ.गी. भाष्य 6-8)

independent of the senses (*buddhigrāhyam*), and is not an object of the senses (*atīndriyam*).⁹⁸ (*B.G.* 6-21)

While commenting on the verse, the word *vetti* (which literally means 'knows') is explained by the *bhāṣyakāra* as 'experiences such happiness'.⁹⁸

v) *Savijñānam jñānam* (*B.G.* 7-2):

The *bhāṣya* elaborates on this phrase, stating that it stands for knowledge (*jñānam*) which is *vijñānasahitam* – accompanied by *vijñāna*. It is further defined as *svānubhava-samyuktam* – endowed with one's own experience.

vi) *Jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitih* (*B.G.* 16-1).⁹⁹ The *bhāṣya* comments:

Jñānam – the knowledge of things such as *ātmā* etc. gained through the scriptures and the teacher.

Yogaḥ – the reduction to experience of that which is (thus) known, through withdrawal of the senses etc. and single pointedness of the mind.⁹⁹

Vyavasthitih – Abidance, or steadfastness, in both *jñānam* and *yogaḥ*.

Thus *Brahmānubhava/ātmānubhava* is an indispensable constituent of *aparokṣa ātmajñāna/Brahmajñāna*, otherwise such knowledge is merely *parokṣa* (indirect). This experience has to be strictly in accordance with the teaching and the scriptures. Mere

⁹⁸ सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तत् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् । वेत्ति (भ. गी. 6-21)

वेत्ति – तदीदृशं सुखम् अनुभवति (भ. गी. भाष्य 6-21)

⁹⁹ ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः (भ. गी. 16-1)

ज्ञानं – शास्त्रतः आचार्यतः च आत्मादिपदार्थानां अवगमः ।

योगः – अवगतानां इन्द्रियाद्युपसंहारेण एकाग्रतया स्वात्मसंवेद्यतापादनं योगः ।

तयोः ज्ञानयोगयोः व्यवस्थितिः व्यवस्थानं तन्निष्ठता । (भ.गी.भाष्य 16-1)

understanding of Vedānta is part of the process of gaining *ātmajñāna*. That is why Sage Vasiṣṭha, at the conclusion of his teaching to Lord Rāma, exhorts him to arrive at a uniformity of the guru's original teaching, scriptural knowledge and his own *Brahmānubhava* by advising him : 'O Rāma, you should uniformize my teaching, your understanding of the *śāstra* and the direct experience (of Brahman)' (*Yo. Vā.Ni.U.* 203-21)¹⁰⁰.

The above criterion of uniformity of these three in arriving at certitude regarding correct *ātmajñāna* was also highlighted by Sage Vasiṣṭha at the beginning of his teaching. '*Ātmā* is directly known by the eligible *mumukṣu* who by repeated practice (of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nidīdhyāsana*) has gained uniformity of the teaching of the *guru*, his correct understanding of Vedānta (scripture), and his direct experience of *ātmā* (*Yo. Vā.Mu. Vya.* 13-11)¹⁰¹.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE WORD *ANUBHAVA* USED IN VEDĀNTIC TEXTS

Some Vedāntists object to the translation of the word '*anubhava*' in the phrase *ātmānubhava*/*Brahmānubhava* etc. as 'experience'. According to them *anubhava* means self-knowledge. They claim that an experience is always inconclusive in terms of knowing. Yes, it is true that all words have their limitations. The nature of *ātmā* / Brahman is beyond the range of description by words. Even then we have to communicate with frail words. That is why Vedānta emphasizes the indispensability of *ātmākāra* / *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* entirely in accordance with the true nature of Brahman. This *vṛtti*, is directly experienced and there is no *tripuṭī* in it because it is an exact replica of *ātmā* / Brahman free from duality. This is what *bhāṣya* points out in its statement: *Brahmajñāna* culminates in direct experience (vide pg. 180). Sans such an experience, that knowledge of Brahman is only indirect (*parokṣa*). It

¹⁰⁰ यथा मयोपदिष्टोऽसि यथा पश्यसि शास्त्रतः ।

यथानुभवसि श्रेष्ठमेकवाक्यं तथा कुरु ॥ (यो.वा.नि.उ. 203-21)

¹⁰¹ स्वानुभूतेश्च शास्त्रस्य गुरोश्चैवैकवाक्यता ।

यस्याभ्यासेन तेनात्मा सन्ततेनावलोक्यते ॥ (यो.वा.मु.व्य. 13-11)

indicates that Vedānta *pramāṇa* could not operate to the point of fruition for want of essential pre-requisites (*nirdoṣa sāmāgrīs*). *Brahmākāra-vṛtti* which is necessary to enable such an experience is possible (vide pg. 139 to 143). This shows that Vedānta is not verbosity. Just understanding of Vedāntic texts itself is neither *Brahmajñāna* nor *Brahmasākṣātkāra* though it is an essential step (vide pg. 363). In self-knowledge there is no cognition of *dṛśya* including the *tripuṭī* (understander, understanding, understood) (vide pg. 147). A *mumukṣu* must know very well the exact *modus operandi* of Vedānta *pramāṇa* including its *avabodhana-prakāra* (pg. 201 to 207; 189, 195). For the sake of further clarity, this commentary has unfolded all the Vedāntic terminologies thoroughly. If we consider the exact nature of *mokṣa*, *ātmajñāna/Brahmajñāna*, *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, the nature of *ātmānubhava/Brahmānubhava* and its role in gaining *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna*, it should be very clear that *Brahmajñāna* does not depend on any factors such as words, their translations and semantics. The *vṛtti* conferring the knowledge has to be true to the entity (to be known, *yathābhūtavīṣayam*, *Br.Sū. Bh. 3-2-21*). That is what the *bhāṣyakāra* gives the reason as '*bhūtavastu-vīṣayatvāt*', when he emphasizes that *Brahmajñāna* culminates in the direct experience (pg 180. *Bh.*). Therefore the translation is irrelevant while determining the nature of direct knowledge of an existing entity.

The word knowledge can be superficial or incomplete. Knowledge is also inconclusive in imparting correct knowledge if it is not in accordance with the entity to be known. All erroneous knowledge is certainly considered knowledge until it is discovered to be erroneous. Taking into account the possibility that knowledge (*jñānam*) can be erroneous, Vedānta uses the word *pramā* to denote correct knowledge. In practice, when we refer to a given knowledge or experience of a specific entity, we take it for granted that it does correspond to the true nature of that entity.

Conventionally, the word *anubhava* means experience (in the sense of 'to be aware of') and *jñānam* stands for knowledge, though rarely is one used for the other because both words have both

meanings in general (vide pg 126-127). In fact, these words are to a great extent semantically mutually interdependent. When both *anubhava* and *jñānam* are used together in a sentence, the word *anubhava* invariably indicates experience of the subject matter, in contrast to knowledge. The conclusiveness or inconclusiveness of an experience or knowledge is determined by the correctness or incorrectness of the *vṛtti* (thought) that specifies the entity being experienced or known. Experience is always direct and intimate unlike the knowledge which can be indirect also. The certitude of *ātmañāna* / *Brahmañāna* as *aparokṣa* (direct) can be gained only by an experience totally corresponding to *ātmā* / Brahman.

By itself, an experience may not be knowledge, but an experience true to the nature of the entity to be known is the basic prerequisite for knowledge in the case of *pratyakṣa* (direct perception) and *aparokṣa ātmañāna* / *Brahmañāna*. Based on *śāstra-pramāṇas* such as the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Ribhugītā*, *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, relevant portions of *bhāṣya*, Pañcapādikā, *Vivaraṇa-prameya saṅgraha*, *prakaraṇa granthas*, including grammar, this commentary on *sūtras* one and two and epilogue exhaustively establish the derivation of the words *jñānam* (knowledge) and *anubhava* (experience) in general and the exact nature of *ātmānubhava* / *Brahmānubhava* in particular, the role of the latter, the relation between *ātmañāna* and *ātmānubhava*, and the indispensability of such an experience in spite of *ātmā* being *anubhava-svarūpa* and the very content of all experiences. There is no room left for ambiguity or speculation regarding the word experience (*anubhava*) in respect of *ātmañāna*. There are no words used in the commentary that are arbitrary labels without their meaning unfolded.

Let us remember, as already established, that the culmination (*avasāna*) of *Brahmañāna* lies in *Brahmānubhava* (experience of Brahman) (*Br.Sū. Bh. 1-1-1*). Otherwise it gets reduced to indirect knowledge (*parokṣa*, and not *aparokṣajñāna*). *Brahmañāna* is not a matter of verbosity or of picking up some information about *ātmā* / Brahman from the *śāstras* and repeating it like a parrot.

The correct experience of a given entity corresponds to its true nature. Though *ātmā* is *anubhava-svarūpa* and the basic content of all experiences, what we experience, or in other words what we are aware of, in and through our life, is *saviśeṣa ātmā* – ‘I’ with attributes. But in reality, *ātmā* is ‘*nirviśeṣa*’ (attributeless), the *śodhita* (*upādhi-less*) *tvam* (you) *pada* (word) in the ‘*tat tvam asi*’ *mahāvākya*. When this *tvam* (you) i.e. ‘I’ which is *aparokṣa* is experienced (i.e. when the *mumukṣu* is aware of it) in its true nature without *tripuṭī*, the *mahāvākya pramāṇa* ‘You are Brahman’ operates. Otherwise, while experiencing ‘I’ with attributes, to equate *saviśeṣa tvam* with *nirviśeṣa* Brahman would be an incorrect equation. That is why Vedānta repeatedly emphasizes that *Brahmajñāna* culminates in the direct experience of *nirupādhika* Brahman/*ātmā*, wherein lies the certitude of *Brahmajñāna*.

Knowledge in conformity with an entity is its correct knowledge whilst all else conjectured by the human intellect at variance from its true nature is false knowledge. The validity of the knowledge of an existent entity depends on its conformity with the entity. This is a rule applicable to the knowledge of all existing entities. Brahman cannot be an exception (vide pg. 185, 186 *bhāṣya*). Therefore knowledge in conformity with Brahman alone is the correct knowledge.

The definitions of *mokṣa* examined so far should clarify that *mokṣa* is nothing short of *nirupādhika Brahmasvarūpa*. What is required is a *vṛtti* that is a replica of Brahman which destroys self-ignorance and itself drops off in *jñānaniṣṭhā*. Thereafter, the self-evident Brahman and Brahman alone remains. Semantics, including the words ‘knowledge’ or ‘experience’ or ‘Brahman’ itself, cannot approach that realm. This is *Brahmānubhava*. This is *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. This is conclusive because it is nothing but the true nature of Brahman. This is the first hand discovery of the hitherto erroneous *saṃsārī jīva*. This is the basis of *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna*. This gives the certitude to *Brahmajñāna*. Otherwise it is only *parokṣa-jñāna*. This is what *bhāṣyakāra* says in his statement: *Brahmajñāna*

culminates in *anubhava* (experience) (vide pg. 180). What is important is the nature of *Brahmānubhava*. Its conformity to Brahman / *ātmā* is testified by the *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* which ends the self-ignorance with its effects. *Brahmānubhava* / *ātmānubhava* eliminates all possibilities of *Brahmajñāna* being superficial or incomplete. It verifies the conformity of *Brahmajñāna* with Brahman. The direct knowledge of an existing entity including Brahman is valid only when it totally conforms to the true nature of that entity.

If the word *anubhava* used in the Vedāntic text is invariably translated as knowledge without distinguishing it from experience regardless of the context, many of such Vedāntic passages will make no sense. This can be verified to an extent from the *bhāṣya* passage (vide pg. 180, 185, 211) and quotations from Pañcapādikā and *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha* cited in this book (vide pg. 129, 143 - fn. 64, 184, 185, 190, 193).

Translation apart, the necessity of direct experience of *ātmā*, without *tripuṭī*, in gaining *aparokṣa-jñāna* cannot be obviated. Trying to end the directly (*aparokṣatayā*) experienced sorrowful *saṃsāra* by the indirect (*parokṣa*) *ātmajñāna* / *Brahmajñāna* which lacks the direct experience of *ātmā* / Brahman, is an adventure of quenching the thirst by drinking the mirage water! *Maitreyopaniṣat* 2-23 rejoinders: ‘In vain does the ignorant fool rejoice in Brahman without its experience, akin to enjoying fruits on a branch that is reflected (in a lake)’.

FIFTH TO SEVENTH JÑĀNABHŪMIKĀS PROVE THE EXPERIENTIAL NATURE OF BRAHMAJÑĀNA

Some Upaniṣads and *Yogavāsiṣṭha* describe in detail the *saptajñāna-bhūmikās* – the seven stages of *Brahmajñāna*. Though *Brahmajñāna* is one and the same, the varying degrees of *antaḥkaraṇaśuddhi*, *citta naiścalya*, *vairāgya* and *abhyāsa* (practice) of *nididhyāsana* give rise to varying intensities of *jñānaniṣṭhā*. These varying degrees of steadfastness of the abidance of the mind in

jñāna constitute the different stages of *jñāna*. The first three stages cover the *mumukṣu* still in the realm of ignorance. The fourth stage encompasses one on the verge of becoming *jīvanmukta*. The fifth to seventh stages point to higher and higher intensities of *jñānaniṣṭhā*. Even a cursory glance at the description of the last three stages shows that *Brahmajñāna* is experiential.

The following is a brief description of the seven stages of knowledge, with the nomenclature differing at places.

- 1) शुभेच्छा (*Śubhecchā*):
In the first stage, the mature individual develops intense *mumukṣā* with *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-saṃpatti* and a firm resolve to take to *ātma vicāra* until *ātmasākṣātkāra* is gained.
- 2) विचारणा (*Vicāraṇā*):
Actual *śravaṇa* and *manana* are initiated, and other indispensable *sāadhanās* are taken to.
- 3) तनुमानसा (*Tanumānasā*):
Coupled with the preceding two stages, the *mumukṣu* develops indifference towards sense objects and withdraws the mind from them. He attempts to get his mind absorbed in *ātmasvarūpa* through consistent *nididhyāsana*.
- 4) सत्त्वापत्तिः (*Sattvāpattiḥ*):
Having developed intense *vairāgya*, the mind is made to abide in Brahman through *nirvikalpa samādhi* leading to *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. The *jñāni* in the fourth stage is termed *Brahmavit* by the *Varāhopaniṣat* (Ch. 4), which lays down a nomenclature for individuals in these last four stages.
- 5) असंसक्तिः (*Asaṃsaktiḥ*):
As the fourth stage fructifies, there is steadfastness in *Brahmasākṣātkāra* – the direct cognition of Brahman. The *ānanda* nature of *ātmā* manifests itself very clearly. The *jñāni* who is now a *jīvanmukta* has no contact with *avidyā* and its effect, Creation. He becomes aware of the world at times on

his own due to his *prārabdha karma*, when his mind is not absorbed in Brahman. His perception of the world and his response to it are like a person half asleep. The *jīvanmukta* in this fifth stage is called *Brahmavidvaraḥ*.

6) पदार्थभाविनी (*Padārthabhāvinī*):

The sixth and seventh stages present the fructification of the fifth stage and result in a firm abidance of the mind in Brahman / *ātmā*. There is spontaneous and consistent *Brahmākāra anubhavavṛtti* in the sixth stage. The *jīvanmukta* in the sixth stage has no cognition of internal or external *dṛśyas*. He is unaware of the world, like a person in sleep. His body continues to survive through the efforts of others who bring him down to the level of body consciousness and consciousness of the world in order to feed him etc. The *jīvanmukta* in this sixth stage is called *Brahmavidvarīyān*.

7) तुर्यगा (*Turyagā*):

In the seventh stage, the mind of this *jīvanmukta* gets deeply absorbed in *ātmasvarūpa* through intense practice of the earlier stages. *Brahmākāravṛtti* has ended. He is *ānandaikaghanākāra*. Only the *anubhavasvarūpa nirviśeṣa* Brahman remains. Even others are unable to make him aware of his body. He is called *Brahmavidvariṣṭhaḥ* (the most exalted of *Brahmajñānīs-Varāhopeniṣat*, Ch. 4). The intensity of *Brahmānubhava* at this stage at its culminating point is at par with the experience in *videhmukti*. The only difference between the two states is the presence or absence of the body. Being bodiless in nature, *videhmukti* does not come under the category of the *saptajñānabhūmikās*.

It is worth noting that even an *aparokṣa Brahmajñānī* who has had *Brahmasākṣātkāra* for at least a while – even though not a *jīvanmukta* – does in fact get *videhmukti* after his *prārabdha karma* is exhausted. But he is beset by *citta-dharmas*, characterized by *karṭṭva*, *bhokṭṭva*, joys and sorrows, during his remaining life-span (*Jīvanmuktiviveka*, Ch. 2).

PRAMAṆA OF SAPTAJÑĀNABHŪMIKĀS

The following *śrutis*, *smṛti* and the *vṛddhasammata* (the consensus of great Vedāntic masters) serve as the *pramāṇa* for the *saptajñānabhūmikās*.

- i) The *Varāhopaniṣat* (Ch. 4) from the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*.
- ii) The *Mahopaniṣat* (Ch. 5) from the *Sāma Veda*. It is interesting to note that this *Upaniṣad* describes the seven stages of self-ignorance as well.
- iii) The *Annapūrṇopaniṣat* (Ch. 5) from the *Atharva Veda*.
- iv) The *Akṣyupaniṣat* (Ch. 2) from the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. This *Upaniṣat* refers to the *Jñānabhūmikās* as *Yogabhūmikās*.
- v) The *Muṇḍakopaniṣat* (3-1-4) describes the *jīvanmukta* in the seventh stage of the *jñānabhūmikās* as *Brahmavidvariṣṭhaḥ*. The description is: आत्मक्रीडः (one who sports only in *ātmā* and not with children, wife, husband etc.); आत्मरतिः (one whose love / pastime is only *ātmā*); क्रियावान् (one whose practice is *jñāna*, *dhyāna*, *vairagya* etc.); if आत्मरतिःक्रियावान् is taken as a single word, it means one whose practice is only *ātmaratiḥ*; एषः ब्रह्मविदां (सर्वेषां) वरिष्ठः । (such a person is the most exalted of all *Brahmajñānīs*). Here the word *Brahmavit* stands for *Brahmajñānī* alone and not a person who has merely studied the Vedas. This is so because the context here as indicated by the descriptions *ātmakrīḍaḥ* etc. is that of *Brahmajñāna – parā vidyā* – whereas the topic of *aparā vidyā* which includes the simple study of the Vedas was concluded in the second section of the first *muṇḍaka*. According to *Varāhopaniṣat* (Ch. 4), a *Brahmavidvariṣṭhaḥ* is a *jīvanmukta* in the seventh stage of knowledge. Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni in his *Jīvanmukti-viveka* (Ch. 4) explains that the states of *ātmakrīḍaḥ*, *ātmaratiḥ*, *kriyāvān* and *Brahmavidvariṣṭhaḥ* (*Mu.U.* 3-1-4) correspond to those of *Brahmavit* (4th stage of knowledge), *Brahmavidvaraḥ* (5th

stage), *Brahmavidvarīyān* (6th stage) and *Brahmavidvariṣṭhaḥ* (7th stage) respectively.

- vi) *Yogavāsiṣṭhaḥ* (also called *Mahārāmayāna*):
- a) *Utpatti Prakaraṇa*, *sarga* 118. Sage Vasiṣṭha's teaching to Lord Rāma. The earlier *sarga* 117 contains a description of the seven stages of self-ignorance.
 - b) *Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa (Pūrvārdha)*, *sarga* 34. This teaching called *Devārcana-vidhāna* (the highest mode of *nididhyāsana*) from *sargas* 28 to 42 is imparted by Lord Śiva to sage Vasiṣṭha. *Sarga* 34 describes only the fifth to seventh stages of the *jñānabhūmikās*. Sage Vālmīki reports that Lord Śiva went into *samādhi* at the end of the teaching. Sage Vasiṣṭha and his disciples followed suit. Lord Śiva resumed the teaching after a period (*muhūrta*).
 - c) *Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa (Pūrvārdha)*, *sarga* 120. Here, Manu teaches his son, king Ikṣvāku.
 - d) *Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa (Pūrvārdha)*, *sarga* 126. This is taught by Sage Vasiṣṭha to Lord Rāma.
- vii) *Jīvanmuktiviveka* by Śrī Vidyāraṇya Muni is replete with the quotations on the *saptajñānabhūmikās*.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE ALLEGED 'MINOR' UPANIṢADS

Here, it would not be out of context to scrutinize the bona fides of a claim made by some misguided individuals. They say that of the total 108 Upaniṣads, while ten are commented upon by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, the rest (the alleged 'minor' Upaniṣads) are later insertions and hence not authentic. This is totally baseless.

The origin of this wrong notion is unknown. Perhaps it is the product of some Ph.D. thesis written during the British regime in India under a Westerner guide with scant knowledge of Indian

scriptural lore. More often than not, the norms employed by such academics or professional scholars to arrive at a conclusion are flimsy and irrelevant and lack thorough investigation into the ancient *adhyātma-śāstra*. We have seen this in the introductory portion of this text when discussing the author and date of the *Brahmasūtras*.

These remaining Upaniṣads too along with their specific *śānti mantras* can be traced to the Vedas to which they belong. Without exception, their final content (*tātparyā*) is the same, as is the case with the much studied ten Upaniṣads. No doubt they contain a number of elaborations, new facets and deeper insights into Vedānta not found or merely hinted at in the famous ten Upaniṣads. If we find them new and difficult to understand, let us thoroughly ascertain their correctness with an open mind by giving up our *kūpa-maṇḍūka-vṛtti* (mentality of a frog in the well).

None other than Lord Śiva, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Kṛṣṇa as well as celebrated Vedāntic masters such as Vasiṣṭha, Vālmīki, Gouḍapādācārya, the *Bhāṣyakāra* and Vidyāraṇya Muni have described or quoted topics from these Upaniṣads freely in their teachings or Vedāntic works. As seen before, Lord Śiva elaborates on the fifth, sixth and seventh stages of *Brahmajñāna* (*Yo. Vā. Ni. Pu.* 34) described in these Upaniṣads, when teaching the highest mode of worshipping the Divinity principle (*Devārcana-vidhāna*). At the end of his narration, Lord Śiva demonstrates the authenticity of these stages of knowledge by himself getting absorbed in one of the three stages. This incident took place much before the *Yogavasiṣṭha* was composed. It could be either in *Tretāyuga* or much before it.

Lord Viṣṇu also refers to *Jabāla śruti* (Śivarahasyam *aṃsa* 6, called Ribhugitā, Ch. 49, vs. 35, and the *śruti* referred to is *Bhasmajābālopaniṣad*, Ch. 2). The teaching containing the reference to this incident belongs perhaps to *Satyayuga*. Lord Kṛṣṇa, who incarnated in *Dwāparayuga*, quotes the *Dhyānabindopaniṣat* (B.G.

6-25) and the *Yogaśikhā* Upaniṣad (B.G. 6-20, 21, 22) in the *Bhagavadgītā* (Ch. 6). It is obvious that sage Vyāsa, the compiler of Vedas, consents to this while composing the *Bhagavadgītā*. The exact nature of *prajñā* which is a component of the compound word *sthītaprajñā* (B.G. 2), is defined in the *Adhyātmopaniṣat*, though not described in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Sages Vasiṣṭha and Vālmīki have quoted these Upaniṣads profusely in the *Yogavāsīṣṭha* (which dates back to the *Tretāyuga*). Gouḍapādācārya, in his *Māṇḍukya Kārikā*, quotes from *Tripuratāpini*, *Avadhūta*, *Ātma* and *Brahmabindu* (or *Amṛta*) – Upaniṣads. The *prakaraṇa-granthas* (topic-wise treatises) written by the *Bhāṣyakāra* and by Vidyāraṇya Muni are replete with quotations from these Upaniṣads. The *Muṇḍakopaniṣat* simply enumerates four of the seven stages of *Brahmajñāna*, whereas *Varāha*, *Mahā*, *Annapūrṇā* and *Akṣi* – Upaniṣads elaborate all stages at length. This proves that in addition to the ten commented upon by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, the remaining Upaniṣads out of the total 108 are equally authentic.

ALLEGIANCE TO ANCESTRAL WELL (*TĀTASYA KŪPAḤ*)

A saying by the wise goes – *Advaita-darśanam-jñānam* (the direct knowledge of non-dual Brahman alone is true knowledge). It is called *parā vidya* – the most exalted knowledge. All other types of knowledge are categorized as *aparā vidya* – inferior knowledge. Notwithstanding this truth, there are many who maintain that they do not need *adhyātma-śāstra* (Vedānta) because their ancestors were experts in other branches of knowledge or other pursuits. They declare with pride that their forefathers were adept in fields such as *upāsānās*, *karma-mīmāṃsā*, *tarka* (logic), *Sāṅkhya* – philosophy, *tantra*, *mantra*, *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, medicine and alchemy. We too will pursue the path of our ancestors and not Vedānta, they say. Because of such sentimental attachment, they consider that which they are accustomed to be the best. Vasiṣṭha comes down heavily on such a mindset and ridicules these contemptible individuals. He says that they are no better than those who drink saline water from a well only because it is an ancestral well (*tātasya-kūpaḥ*), even

though the pure *Gangā* river flows nearby (*Yo. Vā.Ni.U.* 163-56). There are many followers of Vedānta too who harbour such a mentality and feel contented with whatever little information on Vedānta they gather, refusing to inquire further or verify the correctness of the information gathered so far. Vasiṣṭha advises people not to be foolish like them and remain subjected to repeated cycles of birth and death by not taking to Vedānta to the point of fruition.

THE ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF VEDĀNTIC *PRAKRIYĀS* (Modes of teaching)

This book will be incomplete without a brief analysis and ascertainment of Vedāntic *prakriyās* (mode of teaching) or *Vādas* (doctrines employed in the teaching). While they serve as means to produce *ātmaññāna* / *Brahmajñāna*, all of them have inherent limitations. This is not because of any incapacity in the Vedas or shortcomings in Vedāntic masters in the state of *jīvanmukta*, but because of the non-dual nature of Brahman which is inaccessible to mind and words. What is to be attained is Brahman totally free from *jagat*, whereas what is at our disposal is the empirical *jagat* which has no access to Brahman. 'There is no perception of the *jagat* in *Brahmajñāna*, while there is no *Brahmajñāna* so long as the *jagat* is perceived' (*Yo. Vā.Ni.U.* 40-9).

This is a stumbling block that is overcome by *jīvanmuktas*, who at times stay absorbed in Brahman free from Creation and at other times remain aware of the world and interact with it. Seers (*diṣṭārah*) in the Vedas have devised different modes / doctrines of teaching to guide *ajñānīs* (ignorant *mumuṣus*) and lead them to the attainment of *Brahmajñāna*. 'Scriptures devised by *jīvanmuktas* continue to exist in the world for the sake of *mumuṣus* as means to gain *ātmāsākṣātkāra*' (*Yo. Vā.Sti.* 13-4). 'The names of all-pervasive Brahman such as *cit* (चित्), Brahman, and *ātmā* have been coined by *jīvanmuktas* for use in the scriptures' (*Yo. Vā.Ut.* 122-35). (Lord Śiva teaches sage Vasiṣṭha): 'In order to teach *mumuṣus*, to

compose the scriptures, and to validate the Vedas, *Purāṇas* and *Brahmasūtras*, highly adorned *jñānīs* and guardians of the world such as *Brahmājī* (one of the Trinity), Rudra, and Indra have coined for the nameless *Īśvara* (Brahman) names such as *cit* (चित्), Brahman, Śiva, *ātmā*, *Īśa*, *Paramātmā* and *Īśvara* (*Yo.Vā.Ni.Pū.* 41-21 to 23).

In view of the contrast between the nature of Brahman, which is totally free from the *jagat*, and the *ādhyātmic śāstras* (scriptures) which are in the realm of *jagat*, *prakriyās* have to be viewed in their right perspective. What needs to be examined is their capacity to produce *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, without in any way dwelling on their inherent limitations.

The *prakriyās* employed most often are *ātmānātma-viveka*, *pañcakośa-viveka*, *avasthātraya-viveka*, *ḍṛk-ḍṛśya-viveka*, *puruṣa-prakṛti-vibhāga*, or *kṣetra-kṣetrajaña-vibhāga*, *avidyā / māyā-vāda*, *vāsānā-prakriyā*, *vivartavāda*, *adhyāropāpavāda*, *kārya-kāraṇa-bhāva* etc. These *prakriyās* are implied in the Upaniṣads and several Vedāntic texts, even if not referred to explicitly in them.

Take for example the existence of *avidyā* postulated in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, a magnum opus among Vedāntic treatises. The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* consists of the teaching of sage Vasiṣṭha to Lord Rāma at the behest of sage Viśvāmitra. This teaching was received from Lord *Brahmājī* by both these sages. It was composed by sage Vālmīki at the command of *Brahmājī*.

Avidyā, *māyā*, *avyakta*, *avyākṛta*, *ākāśa* (as *māyā*), *akṣara* (as *māyā*) are more or less synonyms found in many Upaniṣads. In his *bhāṣya*, Ācārya Śaṅkara introduces *avidyā* using these synonyms in addition to *ātmānātma-adhyāsa* (*Br.Sū.Bh.* 1-4-3, *I.U.Bh.* 12, *Kt.U.Bh.* 1-3-12, *B.G.Bh.* 5-14, *adhyāsabhāṣya* etc.).

In light of the synonyms of *avidyā* enumerated above, selected excerpts from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* regarding the existence /

non-existence of *avidyā/māyā* can facilitate the analysis of *avidyā-vāda*. The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* includes many narrations containing Vedāntic teachings, each complete in itself. For the sake of clarity, quotations chiefly establishing the existence of *avidyā* are cited first followed by contradictions brought up by Lord Rāma and their redressal by sage Vasiṣṭha, and then quotations regarding its non-existence.

- i) 'Goddess Sarasvati says that *avicāra* (lack of inquiry into the nature of *ātmā*) is born of *svabhāva* (*avidyā*)' (*Yo. Vā. Ut.* 21-70).
- ii) 'This entire expanse of *Jagat* is the effect of *māyā*' (*Yo. Vā. Ut.* 60-8).
- iii) '*Māyā* / *avidyā* is the cause of entire *saṃsāra*' (*Yo. Vā. St.* 41).
- iv) 'The nature of *prakṛti* is *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamogūṇas*. This *triguṇātmikā prakṛti* itself is *avidyā*. This alone is the cause of *saṃsāra*. The ultimate reality (*param padam*) is totally free from *avidyā*' (*Yo. Vā. Ni. Pū.* 9-5 and 6).
- v) 'This delusion in the form of the multitude of *dṛśyas* is termed *avidyā*. It does not exist in reality just as there is no water in a mirage. But at my behest, accept *avidyā* to be real (*satya*) for the sake of the teaching and listen to what I say' (*Yo. Vā. Ni. U.* 52-5 and 6).
- vi) The following dialogue between Lord Rāma and sage Vasiṣṭha unfolds the exact role of *avidyā* in Vedāntic teaching (*Yo. Vā. Ni. Pu.* 49-10 to 17).
Rāma: How can *avidyā* exist in Brahman, which is non-dual, all-pervasive and ever-existent in nature?

Keeping in the mind that *avidyā* does not exist from the standpoint of a *jñānī*, but is postulated for the sake of

teaching at the present level of understanding of ignorant individuals, Vasiṣṭha replies:

Earlier there was the changeless, causeless, endless, limitless Brahman. It is so now and it shall remain so forever. *Avidyā* does not exist to the slightest extent. This is an ascertainment that is irrevocable. You, me, *jagat*, quarters, heaven, earth, great elements (*mahābhūtas*), *avidyā* etc. do not exist at all. All that exists is the beginningless, endless Brahman. *Jñānīs* know that *avidyā* is only a delusion and is non-existent in reality. That which has no existence cannot be real at all.

Rāma: O revered sage, if *avidyā* does not exist, how is it that you earlier established the existence of *avidyā* in detail?

Vasiṣṭha: O Rāma, till now, you were ignorant of your true nature. It is not so any longer. Now you have become wise because of the imaginary means of imparting knowledge employed by me. *Jīvanmuktas* who know the *tātparya* (ascertained purport) of the Vedas have coined imaginary phrases such as 'this is *avidyā*', 'this is *jīva*' etc. in order to teach ignorant *mumuṅsus*.

- vii) Goddess Sarasvati states: There is no *avidyā* after *Brahmasākṣātkāra* (*Yo. Vā. Ut. 21-72*).
- viii) 'This perceived *jagat* which is the effect of *māyā* is non-dual Brahman alone. There is no *māyā* at all.' (*Yo. Vā. Ut. 60-8*).
- ix) 'The doctrine is that there is no *bhrānti* (*avidyā*)' (*Yo. Vā. Ut. 91-41*).
- x) '*Avidyā* does not exist from the standpoint of *paramārtha* (absolute reality)' (*Yo. Vā. St. 41*).
- xi) '*Ātmā* alone exists, there is no *avidyā*. This is known as the destruction of *avidyā*' (*Yo. Vā. Nī. Pu. 41-10*).

- xii) 'You will know through *aparokṣa ātmajñāna* that *avidyā* does not exist at all' (*Yo. Vā.Ni.U.* 52-7).
- xiii) 'The doctrine of all *ādhyātmic* scriptures is the denial (*apahnava*) of this entire duality (whether it is *avidyā* and its effect, the *jīva*, with the three states of consciousness, or *māyā* along with *Īśvara* and *jagat*). There is neither *avidyā* nor *māyā*. All that exists is self-evident, self-existent Brahman, free from all afflictions, which cannot be objectified (as *prameya*) or described by any *pramāṇa*, including the scriptures' (*Yo. Vā.Ni.Pu.* 125-1).

In short *avidyā* or *māyā* are but postulates in the limitless non-dual, Brahman, an *āropa* (superimposition) on Brahman, meant only for *apavāda* (negation) in order to gain *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. *Avidyā* is taken as real in terms of *vyāvahārika* (transactional) existence until *Brahmasākṣātkāra* is gained. Then it is discovered that it did not exist at all. To teach ignorant persons that *avidyā* is non-existent is to put the cart before the horse. Postulations such as the existence of *avidyā* facilitate the teaching, in spite of these limitations. This is true of all Vedāntic *prakriyās* / *vādas*. They are means to an end and not an end in themselves.

The criterion of correctness for a Vedāntic *prakriyā* vests in its capacity to produce *Brahmajñāna*. It cannot be a subject of academic interest or a scholastic feat. It is not desirable to take an obstinate stand and condemn a *prakriyā* by reading into it unstated meaning, disregarding its capacity to produce *jñāna*. *Mumukṣus* should bear in mind that *adhyāropa* in Vedānta is meant for *apavāda* and not to ascribe the status of reality to the *adhyasta*. The mode of superimposition is not important. What is necessary is that the method employed should produce the knowledge of non-dual Brahman.

Indispensable pre-requisites for *Brahmajñāna* are *sādhana-catuṣṭaya-saṃpatti* coupled with a pure and steady mind. Without

these, even *śravaṇa*, *manana* etc. are incapable of producing *Brahmajñāna*. It is noteworthy that there are *Brahmajñānīs* who have not studied scriptures at all.

In ascertaining the genuineness of Vedāntic *prakriyās*, *mumukṣus* should be guided by the following dictum from the *vārtikakāra* Sureśvarācārya. The context is the contradiction found in different *śrṣṭi-prakriyās* (theories of Creation propounded in the Upaniṣads, employed as means to impart *ātmajñāna*). He says :

प्रक्रियानियमो नापि पुंव्युत्पत्तिप्रधानतः ।
प्रतिश्रुतिविगीतिश्च प्रक्रियाणां समीक्ष्यते ॥

Tr. There is no definite rule regarding the form of a *prakriyā* (on the theory of Creation). A *prakriyā* is governed mainly by its capacity to produce *ātmajñāna*. (That is why) it is observed that different (*śrṣṭi*) *prakriyās* are at variance with one another. (*Bṛ. U. Vārtikā*, 1-4-401).

यया यया भवेत्पुंसां व्युत्पत्तिः प्रत्यगात्मनि ।
सा सैव प्रक्रियेहस्यात् साध्वी सा चानवस्थिता ॥

Tr. By whatsoever *prakriyā ātmajñāna* is produced in *mumukṣus*, that *prakriyā* alone is fruitful (*sādhvī / phalavat*) according to the *śruti*. But that same *prakriyā* is inherently defective in nature (although its utility depends on the different intellectual textures of *mumukṣus* to whom it is taught) (*Bṛ. U. Vārtikā*, 1-4-402).

This norm is equally applicable to all *prakriyās* – modes of Vedāntic teaching.

Unaware of such unavoidable modes of teaching adopted in Vedānta, the followers of many other schools of thoughts have criticised – as *anupapatti* or untenable – many Vedāntic concepts such as *māyā*, *avidyā* employed as a means to unfold Brahman. It only exhibits their ignorance of the final human goal and its means in the right perspective. Vedāntic masters have refuted those

allegations from time to time. Taking into account the unique nature of Brahman that defies all the worldly norms, the *modus operandi* adopted by *jīvanmuktas* in revealing Brahman envisages three levels of vision (*dr̥ṣṭī*):

- i) *Pāmāra-dr̥ṣṭī* - The vision of a lay person who considers the *jagat* to be true and Brahman or *Īśvara*, to be non-existent, or even if existent, different from 'I'.
- ii) *Youktika-dr̥ṣṭī* - A concept of *jagat* etc. arrived at through a logical approach based on reasoning by those skillful in inquiring into the truth and adept in ascertaining a *prameya* (thing to be known) through the operation of a *pramāṇa*.
- iii) *Tattva-dr̥ṣṭī* - The vision accomplished through a steadfast *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* as a fructification of thorough *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* wherein there is *aparokṣajñāna* of Brahman. This *dr̥ṣṭī* is found in *jīvanmuktas*.

Vedānta dismisses the first *dr̥ṣṭī* by the second and the third taken together, while the second, is refuted by the third – *tattva dr̥ṣṭī*. Sage Vasiṣṭha asserts that in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, he has followed this method of teaching to the point of direct discovery of the non-dual Brahman where the *dr̥ṣṭī*, *jīva* and *jagat* never exist. (*Yo. Vā.Ni.U.* 190-89).

MŪLĀVIDYĀ

Here, a passing reference to the *mūlāvidyā prakriyā* of *vivarāṇa* would not be out of context. Commentators have also referred to *mūlāvidyā* as *bhāvāvidyā* or *kāraṇāvidyā*. It is a *prakriyā* having its origin in the Pañcapādikā of Padmapādācārya. *Mūlāvidyā* superimposed (*āropita*) on Brahman is described as *bhāvarūpā* – existent in nature. That does not mean it is absolutely real. This *prakriyā* propounds that Brahman alone is the *pārmārthika satyam* and *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, in which nothing else exists, has to be gained. *Mūlāvidyā* is terminated by *Brahmajñāna*. Therefore

mūlāvidyā is reduced to *mīthyā* in nature though an initial existence in terms of *bhāvarūpā* was ascribed to it. It should be noted in this context that the words *āropita* (superimposed), *avāstava* (unreal), *kalpita* (imagined), *adhyasta* (superimposed), *māyika* (effect of *māyā*) and *āvidyaka* (effect of *avidyā*) are synonyms.

If *avidyā* is taken as *adhyāsa*, that *avidyā* in the form of *adhyāsa* has to be *adhyasta* (superimposed) and therefore is *mīthyā* (false) in nature. If it is not *adhyasta*, duality will be inevitably cast, resulting in the impossibility of *mokṣa* because *avidyā* as *adhyāsa* would be real. An *adhyāsa* should necessarily have a cause (*Bṛ.U. Vārtika* 1-4-478). That cause too would necessarily have to have another cause. This would lead to the defect of *regress ad infinitum* (*anavasthā doṣa*) and the impossibility of *mokṣa* (unless the *avidyā* referred to as *adhyāsa* is *mīthyā*). If it is argued that the nature of such *adhyāsa* (that is *avidyā*) is *svataḥ adhyasta* (self-superimposed), the same argument holds good in the case of *mūlāvidyā*.

The cause-effect relationship (*kārya-kāraṇa-bhāva*), *adhyāsa* and the rest are *vyāvahārika* in nature and not *pāramārthika*. Elsewhere, the *bhāṣya* says:

परमार्थावस्थायां कुतः एव वा सृष्टिः ।
गृहीते तु आत्मैकत्वे सर्वव्यवहारसमाप्तिः एव स्यात् ।

Tr. How can there be Creation in Brahman? All dealings come to an end when *ātmaññāna* is gained.

Generally, cause and effect have the same degree of reality. Therefore it is proved that an existent *adhyāsa* called *mūlāvidyā* is the cause of existent *kāryādhyāsa* (effect in the form of the *jagat* that is superimposed)¹⁰².

Thus even if *mūlāvidyā* is described as *bhāvarūpā* (existent in nature), it has only *vyāvahārika-sattā* just like the existence of *avidyā* / *māyā*, and is not *pāramārthika*. If *avidyā* is described

¹⁰². Vide *Mūlāvidyā Vimarṣe* Bibliography Sr. No. 41

anywhere in the scripture as *abhāvarūpā* (non-existent in nature), it should be understood that the statement is made from the *pāramārthika* standpoint. All norms applicable to *avidyāvāda* as seen in *Yogavāsiṣṭha* apply faithfully to *mūlāvidyā prakriyā* as well. Scholars have already established how *mūlāvidyā prakriyā* is in consonance with the *bhāṣya* and the *vārtikā*¹⁰³. Its elaboration here is beyond the purview of this book. The role of *mūlāvidyā* as a *prakriyā* capable of conferring *Brahmajñāna* cannot be refuted even if it is accepted for the sake of argument that it is not in accordance with *bhāṣya* and *vārtikā*. Any attempt to dismiss *mūlāvidyā prakriyā* is futile.

ĀŚĪRVACANAM (BENEDICTION)

We had seen earlier that sage Vyāsa is the author of the *Brahmasūtras*. In fact, Vyāsa himself received this teaching from none other than Lord Śiva. (*Śiva-Rahasyam, Aṃsa 6, viz. Ribhu Gītā 2-2*). This teaching is the highest blessing that one can aspire for. And in the entire Creation, it is the human embodiment that is specifically designed to gain this teaching of *Brahmajñāna*, which confers *mokṣa* – the highest accomplishment in life. To get a human body is very difficult. Therefore, having been born as a human, it is the prime duty of every individual to take to *Brahmajñāna* until *aparokṣa Brahmajñāna* is gained. May all gain *Brahmajñāna* and attain *mokṣa*.

ॐ तत् सत् ।

¹⁰³. Vide Bibliography, Books Sr. Nos. 41 and 42

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APPENDIX

MP3 CDs of Texts taught and other books by Śrī Swāmī Śuddhabodhānanda Saraswatī :

IN ENGLISH

- 1) *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya* (complete) with about 1000 captions, Vaiyāsika-nyayamāla and two *tīkāś* – *Ratnaprabhā* and *Nyāyanirṇaya* (wherever necessary).
- 2) *Yogavāsiṣṭha* : a) Selected 729 verses - vol. I; b) Selected verses - vol. II; c) Selected chapters; d) *Devārchana Vidhāna* (Total 14 chapters containing 621 verses) comprises the teaching by Lord Śiva to Sage Vasiṣṭha on the highest mode of *Nidhidhyāsana*.
- 3) *Jīvanmuktiviveka* by Vidyāraṇya Muni. This establishes in detail the nature, the means and the result of *jīvanmukti* based on valid *pramāṇas*.
- 4) *Naīṣkarmyasiddhi* by Sureśvarāchārya with Chandrikā and *Kleśāpahāriṇī tīkāś* (wherever necessary).
- 5) *Anubhūtiprakāśa* by Vidyāraṇya Muni (20 chapters). It contains the summary of 13 Upaniṣads: *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya*, *Chāndogya*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Praśna*, *Kauṣītakī*, *Maitrāyaṇī Kaṭha*, *Śvetaśvatara*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Kena*, *Nṛsimhottaratāpinī*.
- 6) *Upadeśa-Sāhasrī* by Śaṅkarāchārya (*Gadya* and *Padya*).
- 7) *Bhagavadgītā Bhāṣya*.
- 8) Upaniṣads *Bhāṣya* : *Māṇḍūkya*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Kaṭha*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Kena* (*Pada* and *Vākya Bhāṣyas*), *Īśāvāsya*.
- 9) *Chāndogyopaniṣat*, Ch. 6, 7, 8 (without *Bhāṣya*).
- 10) *Pañchadaśī* by Vidyāraṇya Muni.
- 11) *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* by Śaṅkarāchārya.
- 12) *Aṣṭāvakra-gītā*.
- 13) *Sanatsujātīya* (with *bhāṣya* wherever necessary).
- 14) *Daśa Śānti Mantras*.
- 15) *Vākya Vṛtti* by Śaṅkarāchārya.

- 16) Haṃsagīta.
- 17) Dṛk Dṛśya Viveka.
- 18) Pañchīkaraṇa by Śaṅkarāchārya with Vārtika of Sureśvarāchārya.
- 19) Aparokṣānubhūti by Śaṅkarāchārya (with Vidyāraṇya Deepikā wherever necessary).
- 20) Ātmabodha, Śrī Rudram and Puruṣa Sūktam.

IN HINDI

- 21) *Kaivalyopaniṣat*.
- 22) Dakṣiṇāmūrti stotra.
- 23) Svetaketuvidyāprakāśa (*Tat Tvam Asi*– Anubhūtiprakāśa Ch.3).
- 24) Sanatkumārvidyāprakāśa (Anubhūtiprakāśa Ch.4).
- 25) Aitareyopaniṣat-vivaraṇam (Anubhūtiprakāśa Ch.1)
- 26) Pañchadaśī.
- 27) *Bhagavadgītā*.

IN KANNADA

- 28) *Bhagavadgītā*.
- 29) Tattvabodha.
- 30) Upadeśa Sāram.
- 31) Bhajagovindam.
- 32) Kathopaniṣat-vivaraṇam (Anubhūtiprakāśa Ch.11)
- 33) Muṇḍakopaniṣat-vivaraṇam (Anubhūtiprakāśa Ch.6)
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- 2) Vedānta Pañchadaśī Chapter I – Tattva-viveka (Discovering your innate greatness) (Translated in Gujarati – ‘Svanī Oḷakha’)
- 3) You are Absolute Happiness – Brahmānande Yogānandaḥ Vedānta Pañcadaśī Chapter XI

- 4) Vedāntic Ways to Samādhi (Dṛk-Dṛśya-Vivekaḥ)
[Translated in : (a) Gujarati (Vedānta Vāṭe Samādhi), (b) Marathi (Vedānta Mārge Samādhi) and in (c) Kannada (Advaita Vedāntada Sāra published by Samāj Pustakālaya, Dharwad - 580 001)]
- 5) Om Based Meditation (Pañcīkaraṇam by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya)

For further details please contact :

E-mail ID : sssbvt@gmail.com

website : <https://rubhuvasishtha.wordpress.com>

Sudha Kastoori – (022) 26778551, Cell : 9769114666

Raghunandan – +91 9930902115

Girish Kapadia – +91 9867376906

INDEX

- ā-ātmaniścayāt*, 341
- abādhi*tā, 245
- abāhyam*, 236
- abhinna*, 178
- abhoktā*, 48, 62
- abhyāsa*, 48, 239, 240
- abhyuccaya*, 191
- abhyudaya*, 5
- abstract noun, 125
- ācamana*, 290, 291
- acintya*, 172
- acit*, 43
- acittva*, 43
- adharma*, 203, 257, 258, 259
- adhīhi*, 215
- adhikāra*, 94
- adhikaraṇa*, 11, 16, 219
- adhikārī*, 31, 258
- adhikṛtādhikāra*, 101, 102, 104
- adhiṣṭhāna*, 50, 199, 294
- ādhvaryava*, 181
- adhvaryu*, 296
- adhyāropāpavāda*, 41
- adhyāsa**, 55, 56, 82, 343, 344, 345
- *-ākṣepabhāṣyam*, 38
- *-ātmanātma*, 277
- *-bhāṣya(m)*, appropriateness of, 33
- *-bhāṣyam*, 38
- *Brahmānubhava* alone can end, 143
- *-kramaḥ*, 86
- *prastāvanā bhāṣya*, 31
- adhyasta**, 50, 181
- *diśya* in the state of ignorance, 145
- *prapañca*, 199
- adhyātmayoga(h)*, 153, 199
- adhyātmayogādhigamaḥ*, 152, 153
- adhyavasāya*, 82
- ādi*, 51
- adr̥ṣṭa*, 204
- advaita** Brahman and *dvaita jagat* cannot be known simultaneously (*Yo. Vā.*), 147
- *-siddhānta*, 56
- advaya*, 308
- āgama*, 205
- āgamāpāyī-tadavadhyanvaya-vyatirekaḥ*, 29
- agnihotra*, 115
- agnirmūrdhā*, 233
- Agnīṣṭī*, 181
- aḥam*, 169
- ahaṃ** *pratyaya*, 83, 308, 310
- *pratyayī*, 83
- ahananam kuryāt*, 319
- ahaṅkāra*, 39, 52
- ahaṅkāradhyāsa*, 87
- āhavanīya*, 187, 247, 248, 249
- ahinirvayanī*, 331
- ajñānanāśanam*, 143 (fn. 63)
- akartā*, 48
- akāyaḥ*, 293
- akhaṇḍa*, 238
- akhaṇḍākāravṛtti**, 24, 123, 124, 137, 143, 193, 284, 350
- its indispensability, 137
- its *pramāṇa*, 137
- akhaṇḍārtha*, 238, 239
- akhyāti*, 57
- akriyārthatvāt*, 244
- akṛta*, 265
- ākṛti*, 204
- akṣayyam*, 114

- ākṣepa**, 166, 219
 – *bhāṣya*, 44, 64
 – *-saṅgati*, 166, 225
ālambana, 277, 278
āmnāyasya, 230, 232
amṛtaḥ, 331
anādi, 51, 63, 85
anādīgata, 245
anādītva, 51
ānanda, 46
ānandād hycva, 216
anantam, 170, 239
anantaram, 236
ānantaryam, 94, 95
ananyaśeṣaḥ, 307, 310
anaparam, 236
ānarthakyam, 315, 320
anātmā, 40
anavasthā-doṣa, 61
aṅga, 237
anīrvacaniya, 51
 – *khyāti*, 56
anīyatva, 182
antaḥkaraṇa, 83
 – *-vṛtti(s)*, 46, 72
anu, 125
anubandhacatuṣṭaya, 31, 343
anubhava, 124, 125, 126, 127, 181, 191
 – definition, 125, 126
 – in *Brahmāvagati*, 181, 182
 – (*Maitreyopaniṣat*), 201
 – of *ātmā*, 197, 205, 207, 211
 – of *ātmā*, definition, 154
 – of *ātmā*, is culmination of *ātmajñāna* (*Yo. Vā. gloss*), 144 to 147
 – of Brahman, 179, 181, 189, 195, 197, 200, 205, 207, 211, 349, 350
 – of Brahman alone ends *adhyāsa*, 143
 – *-paryantā buddhiḥ*, 201
 – Pañcapādikā, 129, 184, 185, 190
 – *-sākṣāt*, 144, 145
 – *siddha*, 148
 – *siddha-vastu*, 184
 – *-svarūpa*, 125, 128, 182, 196
 – *-svarūpa* of *ātmā* does not cease in *ātmā/Brahmajñāna*, 182
 – *-svarūpa* contrast during self-knowledge **vs.** self-ignorance, 181, 182
 – (*Varāhopaniṣat*), 201
anubhavādayaḥ, 181
anubhavārūdhām vidyāphalam, 211
anubhavāvāsānatvāt (Brahmajñānasya), 180
anubhavitā, 181
anubhū, 125
anubhūti, 126
anumāna, 176, 181
anumāta, 66
anupapaṭti, 379
anuṣṭhāna, 79, 183, 189, 194
anuvṛtta-vyāvṛttānvaya-vyatirekaḥ, 29
anvaya, 27, 68, 69, 238
 – *-vyāpti*, 69
 – *-vyatireka*, 27, 69, 329
anyadharmā, 57
anyathā, 57
 – *khyāti*, 56, 57
anyatra, 57
anyonyādhyāsa, 86
ap (अप), 125
apakṣaya, 172, 173
apāpavidhaḥ, 293
aparokṣa(h), 62, 63, 197
 – *ātmā*, 128
 – *-Brahmajñāna*, 216
 – *jñāna*, synonyms, 3, 201

— <i>vastu</i> , 194	<i>athāyamaśarīraḥ</i> , 48
<i>Aparokṣānubhūti</i> , 137	<i>atirātra</i> , 186, 187
<i>apavāda</i> , 186, 187, 191	ātmā , 40, 125, 252, 253
<i>apouruṣeya</i> , 222	— <i>anubhava</i> , 359, 360
<i>aprameya</i> , 206	— <i>anubhavasvarūpa</i> , 144
<i>āpti</i> , 286	— <i>-cintana</i> , 197
<i>apūrvam</i> , 236	— different notions, 161
<i>apūrvatā</i> , 239, 240	— is intermixed with <i>adhyasta dṛśyas</i> in the state of ignorance, 145
<i>āpya</i> , 285, 286, 307	— locus of limitless love, 4
<i>ārambha</i> , 94	<i>ātmaikatvavidyā</i> , 90
<i>āropya</i> , 53, 55	ātmajñāna , 303
artha , 48, 98	— and desires cannot co-exist, 111
— <i>-vāda</i> , 204, 230, 239, 241, 242, 244, 255	— ends in <i>ātmānubhava</i> (<i>Yo. Vā.</i> gloss), 144 to 147
<i>arthādhyāsa</i> , 48, 49, 55	— (<i>manodharma</i>), 200
<i>arthāpatti</i> , 69	— obstructions of, 20
<i>asaṃsaktiḥ</i> , 368	— <i>phalam anubhavārūḍam</i> , 211
<i>asaṃsṛṣṭa</i> , 238	— remedies to remove obstructions, 20
<i>asaṅga</i> , 50, 266	— withdrawal from all <i>dṛśyas</i> is indispensable (<i>Aṣṭāvakraḡitā</i>), 147
<i>aśarīratvam</i> , 259, 263, 264, 267, 324, 325, 326, 331	ātmākāra-vṛtti , 145, 196, 197, 198
<i>asatkhyāti</i> , 58	— eliminates <i>dṛśya</i> from the range of experience, 145
<i>āśīrvacanam</i> , 382	<i>ātmakhyāti</i> , 56, 57
<i>asmad</i> , 40, 62	ātmānātmādhyāsa , 46, 60
asmatpratyaya , 62	— can be terminated (<i>bhāṣyakāra</i>), 151
— <i>-gocara</i> , 40	— should be terminated (<i>bhāṣyakāra</i>), 151
<i>āśrama</i> , 81	ātmānubhava , 197, 205, 207, 211, 359
<i>āśraya</i> , 170, 172	— definition, 154
assumption, 69	— indispensable, 201, 362
<i>Aṣṭāvakraḡitā</i> , withdrawal from all <i>dṛśyas</i> is indispensable for <i>ātmajñāna</i> , 147	— is the culmination of <i>ātmajñāna</i> (<i>Yo. Vā.</i> gloss), 144 to 147
<i>asti</i> , 157	<i>ātmāsākṣātkāra</i> , 75, 80, 262
<i>aśvamedha</i> , 278	<i>ātmāśrayadoṣa</i> , 175
<i>asya</i> , 167	<i>ātmāsvarūpa</i> , 181
<i>ataḥ</i> , 114	ātmattva , 79
<i>atha</i> , 94, 95, 96, 114	— <i>-sākṣātkāra-bodha</i> , 145
Atharvāṅgīrasa, 221	
<i>athāto dharmajijñāsā</i> , 229	

- ātmavijñāna*, 238
atyanta, 49
 – -vivikta, 49
autpattika, 204
 – -sūtra, 203, 205
avabhāsanam, 55
avabodhana-prakāra, 189, 195
avadāna, 101
avagata-brahmātmabhāvaḥ, 322, 323, 331
avagatī, 122, 123, 350
 – *manana*, *nididhyāsana*, 333
 – Bhāmatī gloss on, 143
 – Pañcapādikā on, 143
avāntarabheda, 60
āvaraṇa, 123
avasthā, 81
avayava, 46
avibhājya-ghaṭaka, 194
avidyā, 59, 63
 – -a postulate (*Yo. Vā.*), 375 to 378
 – *-kārya*, 64
avidyādhyāropaṇa-nirākaraṇam, 140
 – -*varjitaḥ*, 200
avidyāvadvīṣayāṇi, 67
avikalpayitrī buddhi, 200
avikārī, 166, 289
avikārya, 288, 289
avirodhādhyāya, 13, 30
aviruddha, 63
aviśayaḥ, 62
avraṇaḥ / asnāviraḥ, 293, 294
avyavahitam, 144
ayam, 47
ayathārtha, 126
Āyurveda, 291
Bādarāyaṇa Ācārya, 204
bādha, 191, 332
 – *-sāmānādhikaraṇyam*, 164
bādhita, 338
badhnāti, 45
bahuvrīhi samāsa, 167, 168
bāhya, 82
baṭu, 320
 benediction, 382
Bhagavadbhakti, 207 to 210
Bhagavadgitā, 152, 156, 197, 198, 201, 209
 – *bhāṣya* (ch. 18-50), 139 to 142, 147, 151, 152, 197
 – *-bhāṣya*, *Brahmākāra-vṛtti*, is possible, 139 to 142
 – heavens including *Brahmaloka* are impermanent, 115
 – on *pramāṇa*, 80
 – on *saṃskāra*, 85
bhakti, 198
 Bhāmatī gloss on *avagatī*, 143
bhaṅga(m), 164, 168, 172, 238
bhāṣya, 9
 Bhāṭṭa, 180
bhavya(h), 106, 265
bhikṣā, 81
bhikṣusūtra, 9
bhinna, 55
bhogya, 53
bhoktā, 48, 66
bhoktr, 170, 171, 172
bhrama(h), 56, 57, 126
bhū, 125
bhūta(m), 265, 313
bhūtāni, 169, 214, 215
bhūtavastu-viśayatvāt (Brahmajñānasya), 180, 183, 187, 190
bhūtopadeśa, 313
 Bodhāyana, 246
Brahmabhāvaḥ mokṣa, 292 to 295

<i>Brahmabhūtaḥ</i> , 198	— a unique experience, 133, 134
<i>brahmacārī</i> , 320	— its nature, 134 to 136
<i>Brahmacodanā</i> , 107	Brahmasūtra 1-1-1, 93, 346
<i>Brahmajijñāsā</i> , 98, 100, 123, 179, 185, 189	— 1-1-2, 164, 351
<i>Brahmajijñāsu</i> , 215	— 1-1-3, 217, 355
Brahmajjñāna , 179, 200, 243, 251, 280, 281	— 1-1-4, 203 (<i>Bh. Pramāṇam ca yathābhūtavastuviṣayam</i>), 225, 356
— and perception of <i>jagat</i> cannot co-exist (<i>Yo. Vā.</i>), 374	— Bh. 1-3-1, 199
— - its experiential nature proved by fifth to seventh <i>jñānabhūmikās</i> , 367	— Bh. 1-4-23 to 27, 166, 169, 216
— - its synonyms, 270	— Bh. 2-1-9, 199
— modality of gaining it, 130 to 133	— Bh. 2-1-14, 199, fn. 78
— <i>-modus operandi</i> adopted by <i>jīvanmuktas</i> in revealing Brahman (<i>Yo. Vā.</i>), 379, 380	— Bh. 2-3-1 to 7, 169
— needs <i>Brahmānubhava</i> , 353	— Bh. 3-2-21, <i>jñānam yathābhūtavaiṣayam</i> , 202
— <i>-svarūpa</i> , 124	— Bh. 3-3-32, <i>anubhavārūḍham jñānaphalam</i> , 211
— <i>-vṛttī-vyāptī</i> is necessary, but not <i>phala</i> , 132	— Bh. 3-4-15, <i>anubhavārūḍham vidyāphalam</i> , 211
<i>Brahmajñānasya anubhavāvāsānatvāt</i> , 180, 182	— Bh. (<i>sarvāpekṣa</i>) 3-4-26/27, 100, 334
<i>Brahmalakṣaṇa(m)</i> , 164, 165	— Bh. 4-1-2, 154
<i>Brahmamīmāṃsā</i> , 46, 54, 63	— <i>Bh. sarvam</i> Brahman is an equation for the dissolution of Creation, 146
Brahman (nature) , 2	— <i>-bhāṣya-maṅgalācaraṇa</i> , 37
— a definition, 116	— <i>-bhāṣyas</i> on, 10
— its direct cognition, 122	— date, 8
— limitless happiness, 155, 156	— <i>-māhātmyam</i> , 9
Brahmaṇaḥ , 121	— <i>-pāṇinīya sūtra</i> on, 9
— <i>jijñāsā</i> , 118	— purpose of, 21
<i>Brahmaṇe jijñāsā</i> , 117	— reasonings employed, 27
<i>Brahma-nirṇaya</i> , 223	— synonyms, 7
<i>Brahmapramāṇa</i> , 165	— the role of, 26
<i>Brahmaprāptī</i> , 139 (fn.), 140, 359	— topics, 7
(<i>Brahma-prathanānukūlam cittam</i>), 206	<i>Brahmasvarūpa</i> , 181
Brahmasākṣātkāra , 123, 124, 133, 134, 179, 181, 191, 193, 201, 244, 262, 323, 333, 339, 348	Brahmavicāra , 92, 165, 177
	— is valid, 156
	— its purpose, 162
	Brahmavidyā , 257, 277
	— - depends on the nature of Brahman, 277

- Brahmayukti*, 165
- Brahmā**, 118
- the Creator, 96
- Brahmākāravṛttī**, 193, 201, 350
- is indispensable, 138, 139
- is possible, 139 to 143
- Brahmānubhava**, 179, 181, 189, 195, 197, 200, 205, 207, 211, 349, 350, 351
- alone ends *adhyāsa*, 143
- indispensable, 201, 362
- Brahmātmaikatva-vijñāna*, 275, 276, 280
- Brahmātmaikyāvagatīḥ*, 335
- Brahmāvagatī(h)**, 124, 133, 134, 156, 176, 177, 181, 199, 201, 348, 349, 351
- its result, 154
- Pañcapādikā, 155
- Vidyāraṇya Muni on, 143
- *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha* on, 143
- Brahmī sthitiḥ*, 201
- Bṛh*, 157, 158, 279
- Br.U.**, 109, 112, 156, 178, 182
- 4-4-22 *tametam Vedānūvacanena*, 99, 100
- 6-2-13, 192
- *ātmā* is immortal and imperishable (3-4-2), 115
- *bhāṣya* (3-9-28; 4-3-32), 156
- *manasā eva anudraṣṭavyam*, 132
- nature of *ātmā* (3-4-2), 109, (3-9-28; 4-3-32/33), 156, 160
- the source of *śama-damādi* (4-4-23) *mādhyandina*, 112
- Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika* on degrees of love, 89
- bṛm̐h*, 279
- bṛm̐haṇa*, 279
- Bṛm̐haṇāt Brahma*, 158
- buddha*, 157, 158, 309
- buddhi*, 40
- caitanya*, 57, 71, 123, 332, 340
- Cārvākas*, 175
- cāturmāsya*, 114
- cetā*, 293, 294
- Ch.U.**, 109, 115, 155, 156, 178, 179, 192
- *ātmā* is immortal and imperishable, 115
- heavenly pleasures end, 109, 115
- nature of *ātmā* / (*bhūmā*), 109
- chandas*, 221
- cidābhāsa*, 50, 83, 123, 124, 196
- cidātmā*, 40
- cidātmakaḥ*, 45
- cinmātra*, 236
- cit*, 46
- citswarūpa-ātmā*, 41
- citta dharma*, 332
- cittaikāgrya**, 91
- *-pratibandha*, 23
- cittanaīścalya*, 195, 207, 208
- cittaprasāda*, 206
- cittaśuddhi*, 100, 195, 206, 207, 208
- cittva*, 43
- codanā**, 106, 107, 203, 204, 229, 258, 260, 300, 301
- *-vidhi*, 297
- dadhi*, 315
- dadhnā juhoti*, 233
- dama*, 112
- Damoclean sword, 3
- dārḍhya*, 178
- dārṣṭānta*, 76
- deha**, 40
- *-viśiṣṭātmani*, 82
- devaḥ*, 292
- devatā*, 225, 233

<i>devatādi</i> , 204	– verb (to experience), 125
dharmā , 49, 98, 180, 183, 184, 186, 187,	experiential nature of <i>Brahmajñāna</i> - scriptural excerpts, 359
188, 189, 191, 194, 203, 205, 257, 258, 259	Gandhāra, 178
– a definition (<i>Jai.Sū.</i> 1-1-2), 98	Gautama Muni, 273
dharmajijñāsā , 97, 98, 100, 105, 179, 185, 189	genitive determinative compound, 116
– and <i>Brahmajijñāsā</i> , <i>phalabheda</i> , 105	glosses on Śāṅkara <i>sūtrabhāṣya</i> , 10
– <i>jijñāsyabheda</i> , 105	goal of life, the ultimate, 2
– <i>pramāṇabheda</i> , 106	<i>gouṇa</i> , 328, 329, 330
<i>dharmamīmāṃsā</i> , 98	<i>gouṇātmā</i> , 338, 340
<i>dharmānuṣṭhāna</i> , 207	<i>grāhaka</i> , 43
<i>dharmasāstra</i> , 221	<i>gūḍhaḥ</i> , 292
<i>dharmāya jijñāsā</i> , 117	<i>guṇādhāna</i> , 287
<i>dharmi</i> , 49, 168	<i>guṇas</i> , 46
<i>dhyāna(m)</i> , 197, 198, 297	<i>guṇātīśaya</i> , 288
Direct perception, modality of gaining it, 128, 129	<i>Gurumata</i> , 57
<i>doṣāpanayana</i> , 287	<i>han</i> , 318
<i>draṣṭā</i> , 66	hetu , 68, 183, 184
<i>dr̥gdr̥śyānvaya-vyatirekaḥ</i> , 28	– <i>hetumadbhāva</i> , 51
<i>ḍṛk</i> , 53	<i>hetvābhāsa</i> , 59, 184, 244
<i>dr̥ṣṭānta</i> , 76	<i>heyah</i> , 308
<i>dr̥ṣṭi</i> , 283	<i>Hiraṇyagarbha</i> , 91, 171, 175, 200, 223, 257, 258
<i>dr̥śya</i> , 53, 262	<i>hotā</i> , 296
<i>dr̥śya / tripuṭī</i> cannot co-exist with <i>mokṣa</i> (<i>Yo. Vā.</i>), 147	<i>hṛdaya-granthi</i> , 276, 280
<i>duḥkhi-paramapremāspadānvaya-</i> <i>vyatirekaḥ</i> , 29	<i>hṛt-manīṭ</i> , 200
<i>duritakṣaya</i> , 100, 207	<i>icchā</i> , 123
<i>ekaḥ</i> , 292, 308	idam , 84, 167, 169
<i>ekakartā</i> , 102	– <i>asmad</i> , 41
<i>ekaviśayatva</i> , 219	Indra, 204
epilogue, 359	<i>Indreṣṭi</i> , 181
experience , 125, 364	<i>indriya-pratyakṣa</i> , 195
– definition, 125	<i>indriyas</i> , 40, 82
– of Brahman, 201, 367	<i>iṣe tvā</i> , 233
	Īśvara , 52, 175, 223
	– - worship, 100
	<i>itaretarāvivekaḥ</i> , 49
	<i>Jābālopaniṣat-4</i> , 'when of <i>sannyāsa</i> ', 103

- jaḍa*, 43
jagat, 167
Jai.Sū., 1-1-1, 229, 248
 – 1-1-2, 98, 229, 248
 – 1-1-5, 247, 248, 314
 – 1-1-25, 247, 248
 – 1-2-1, 227, 230, 232, 247, 318, 320
 – 1-2-7, 230, 232
 – 4-3-5 *Ekasya tu*, 99
 – 6-1-25 to 42, 258
Jaiminisūtra(s) (1-1-1 to 5), 100, 203, 250
 Janaka, king, 41
janma, 164, 168, 172, 224, 238
janmādi, 224
jāti, 204
jjjñāsā, 95, 104
 – a summary, 162, 163
 – *jjjñāsādhikaraṇam*, 92
jjjñāsya, 101, 250, 251
jīva, 59
 – *-brahmaikya*, 90
jīvanmukta, 181, 182, 198, 306, 331, 332
jīvanmuktī, 324, 332
 – *viveka*, 153, 199
jñā, 117
jñānādhyāsa, 48, 49, 55
jñānakāṇḍa, 225, 244, 245, 250, 251, 315
jñānam, 124, 126, 127, 170, 239
 – definition, 126
 – *-pramāṇajanyam*, 202
 – *-yathābhūtavaiśayam*, 202
jñānaniṣṭhā, 359 (fn.)
jñāna (jñānena)-*pramāṇa (pramāṇena)*, 122, 124, 133, 143
jñānavidhi, 251
jñāna-vijñānanāśanam, 361
jñāna-vijñānatṛptātma, 361
jñānavṛtti (as *pramāṇa*), 24, 127 (fn. 46)
jñānecchā, 95
jñānī, 75
 – absorbed in *ātmā* does not perceive the *dṛśya-jagat* (Sureśvarācārya), 147
jñaptē tu kāraṇam, 207
jñapti-svarūpa, 125, 182
jyeṣṭha pramāṇa, 206
jyotiṣa, 221
Kai.U., 155
kāla, 51
Kalāgni Rudropaniṣat, *jñānī* is not reborn, 113
 Kaliyuga, 101, 208
kalpa, 218, 221
kāma, 82, 98
kāraka, 238
kāraṇa, 52
karaṇas, 70
karma, 52
 – *-datta*, 261
 – *-iṣṭa*, 261
 – *-pūrta*, 261
 – *-śāstra*, 66
 – *-śāstrīya*, 66
 – *yoga*, 197, 208, 210
 – *yogī*, 210
karmādhyakṣaḥ, 292
karmakāṇḍa, 66, 180, 225, 244, 245, 250, 251, 308, 313, 314, 315, 319
karmāṅga, 276, 313, 316
karmaṇi ṣaṣṭhī, 116, 118
karmānuṣṭhāna, 105
kartā, 48, 66, 225, 233, 308
kartavyā, 95, 187, 190, 192
kartṛ, 170, 171, 172

<p><i>kārtsnyam</i>, 94</p> <p>kārya, 52, 171</p> <p>— <i>-paratva</i>, 230</p> <p>— <i>-vidhi</i>, 252</p> <p><i>kaścīt</i>, 291</p> <p>Ke.U., <i>pada Bh.</i> (2-4), 152</p> <p>— <i>yanmanasā na manute</i>, 133</p> <p><i>kevalaḥ</i>, 293, 294</p> <p><i>khyāti</i>, 56</p> <p><i>kim</i>, 166</p> <p>knowledge, six types, 127</p> <p><i>krama</i>, 101</p> <p><i>kriyā</i>, 170</p> <p><i>kriyārthatva</i>, 230, 244, 245</p> <p>Kṛṣṇa, 209</p> <p><i>kṛta</i>, 265</p> <p>kṛtīsādhyā(h), 106, 187</p> <p>— <i>-viśaya</i>, 301</p> <p>Kṛ.U., 113, 136, 142, 152, 156, 199, 200, 201</p> <p>— <i>Bh. adhyātmayogādhipgamah</i>, 153</p> <p>— <i>Bh.</i>, <i>ātmā</i> is apparently concealed by the features of <i>adhyasta</i> things, 149</p> <p>— <i>Brahmajñāna</i> liberates, 113</p> <p>— <i>jñānī</i> is not reborn, 113</p> <p>— nature of <i>ātmā</i>, 109</p> <p><i>kūpe patet</i>, 245</p> <p><i>kūṭasthaḥ</i>, 308</p> <p><i>kūṭasthanīyam</i>, 266</p> <p><i>lakṣaṇa</i>, 54, 121, 165</p> <p>life, 125</p> <p><i>liñ</i>, 300</p> <p><i>liṅgam</i>, 179, 180, 187</p> <p><i>liṅgas</i>, 48</p> <p>loka, 48, 252</p> <p>— <i>-vyavahārah</i>, 48, 49, 51</p> <p><i>loṭ</i>, 300</p> <p><i>loukika</i>, 65</p>	<p>Madhusūdana Saraswatī, 86</p> <p><i>mādhyamika</i>, 58</p> <p><i>mahān</i>, 221, 259, 263</p> <p><i>mahāvākya</i>, 196</p> <p>Maitreyī, 302, 303</p> <p><i>Maitreyopaniṣat</i>, 201, 367</p> <p><i>mama</i>, 53</p> <p><i>manana</i>, 23, 179, 181, 183, 189, 303, 333, 334</p> <p><i>mānasam</i>, 257, 298</p> <p><i>Maṇḍalabrāhmaṇopaniṣat</i>, 137</p> <p><i>maṅgalācaraṇa</i> (salutations), 1</p> <p><i>maṅgalam</i>, 94, 95</p> <p><i>manodharma</i>, 200</p> <p><i>mantā</i>, 66</p> <p><i>mantavyaḥ</i>, 178</p> <p><i>mantra</i>, 181, 204</p> <p><i>māyā</i>, 85</p> <p>middle term, 184</p> <p><i>mīmāṃsā</i>, 6, 221</p> <p>mind cleansed by <i>samādhi</i>, 152</p> <p><i>mithunīkṛtya</i>, 50, 51</p> <p>mithyā, 44, 51, 53, 328, 329, 330</p> <p>— <i>-jñāna-nimittaḥ</i>, 51, 52, 85</p> <p>— <i>-jñānopādānaḥ</i>, 52</p> <p>— <i>-pratyyarūpaḥ</i>, 85</p> <p><i>mithyātmā</i>, 338, 340</p> <p>mokṣa (liberation), 3, 19, 65, 98, 211, 216</p> <p>— cannot co-exist with <i>dṛśya / tripuṭī</i> (<i>Yo. Vā.</i>), 147</p> <p>— definitions, 152</p> <p>— is <i>anubhavārūdhā</i>, 210</p> <p>— is <i>aśarīratvam</i>, 264</p> <p>— is <i>aīndriya</i> and <i>śokarahita</i>, 262</p> <p>— is <i>Brahmabhāvaḥ</i>, 292, 293, 294, 295</p> <p>— is everlasting, 265</p> <p>— is <i>svātmani avasthānam</i>, 210, 262</p> <p>— means to gain, <i>Kaī. U.</i>, 3</p>
--	--

- *sādhana* of, 19
 – *-śāstra*, 66
mokṣaśāstrīya, 66
Mu.U, 109
mukta, 157, 309
mukti, 92
Muktikopaniṣat, 137
mukhya, 328, 329, 340
mūlāvīdyā prakriyā, 380-382
mumuṣā, 114, 116
mumuṣu(tvam), 94, 113
Muṇḍakopaniṣat - a pramāṇa of
saptajñānabhūmikās, 370
na, 318
 – *hantavyaḥ*, 318
 Naciketa, 3
naisargikaḥ, 51, 63
naiyāyika, 57, 175
nāma, 170
 – *japa*, 100
 – *rūpādhyānātmādhyāropana-nivṛtti*, 140
 Nārada, 271, 272
navavidhā bhakti, 100
nididhyāsana, 24, 179, 181, 183, 189,
 303, 333, 334
Nihilists, 58, 171, 175
niḥśreyasam, 5
nimitta, 52, 222
 – *kāraṇa*, 166, 178
niravayava, 45, 289
nirdoṣa, 294
nirguṇa(h), 45, 166, 293, 294
 – Brahman, 199
nirṇāyaka-vākya, 216
niruddham, 198
nirukta, 221
nirupādhika, 196, 199
 – *adhyāsa*, 59, 60
nirvikalpa experience, 195, 196
nirvikārī, 311
nirviśaya, 196, 197
niścala, 197
niścayātmikā-vṛtti, 283, 285
niśedha, 187, 191, 229
 – *-vākya*, 317
niṣkriya, 66
niśvasitam, 222
nitya(h), 157, 169, 204, 308
 – *-buddha*, 311
 – *mukta*, 285, 311
nityānityaviveka, 22
nityatva, 182
nivṛtti, 249, 254, 304, 313
 – *dharmā*, 111
niyojya, 250, 255, 268, 298, 301
nyāya, 6, 221
 – *-nirṇaya*, 41
 – *-prasthānam*, 6
 – *-sūtra 1-1-2*, 272, 273
Om, 96
opaniṣadaḥ, 309, 312
Pā.Sū., 119, 120
padārthabhāvinī, 369
Padmapādācārya – *anubhava* and
 reasoning are indispensable, 190
 – on *anubhava* of *siddha vastu*, 184
 – *parokṣajñānam* takes place without
anubhava, 129, 130
paṅśāntara, 94, 97
Pañcadaśī, 306
 – *vṛtti-vyāpti* is necessary for
Brahmajñāna, but not *phala*, 132
Pañcāgni vidyā, 192, 299
pañcakhyāti, 56
Pañcapādikā, 184, 185, 189
 – *anubhava* and reasoning are
 indispensable, 190
 – on *anubhava* of *siddha vastu*, 184

<p>— on <i>avagati</i>, 143</p> <p>— <i>parokṣajñānam</i> takes place without <i>anubhava</i>, 129, 130</p> <p><i>Parabrahma</i>, 305</p> <p><i>parāk(tva)</i>, 41, 43</p> <p><i>pāramārthikam</i>, 266</p> <p><i>pariṇāminityam</i>, 264, 265</p> <p><i>pariśiṣṭa</i>, 336, 337</p> <p><i>pariniṣṭhita-vastu</i>, 231</p> <p>parokṣa, 183</p> <p>— cannot remove <i>aparokṣa</i> <i>bhrama</i>, 129, 150</p> <p>— <i>jñāna(m)</i>, 75, 183, 201, 207</p> <p><i>parokṣa jñānam</i>, 129, 130</p> <p><i>parokṣajñānasya aparokṣa-</i> <i>bhrāntyanivartakatvāt</i>, 76</p> <p><i>parokṣa jñāni</i>, 75</p> <p><i>paryagāt</i>, 293</p> <p><i>paryudāsa</i>, 319</p> <p><i>paśu ādibhiḥ ca aviśeṣāt</i>, 77, 207, 330</p> <p><i>paśuyāga</i>, 102</p> <p><i>Pātañjala Yogasūtra</i>, 95</p> <p>phala, 101, 129, 170, 239, 240</p> <p>— <i>-vyāpti</i>, 129</p> <p><i>phalādhyāya</i>, 14, 31</p> <p><i>phalavat</i>, 245</p> <p>Prābhākara, 180</p> <p>— <i>-mata</i>, 327</p> <p><i>Prābhākarāḥ</i>, 57</p> <p><i>pracāra</i>, 83</p> <p><i>Pradhāna</i>, 175, 219</p> <p><i>prādhānyena</i>, 312</p> <p><i>pradīpa</i>, 221</p> <p><i>Prajāpativṛta</i>, 318, 320</p> <p>prajñā (akhaṇḍākāra-vṛttī), 137, 206, 207</p> <p>— is the primary means to gain <i>Brahmajñāna (Yo. Vā.)</i>, 206, 207</p>	<p><i>prājñāḥ</i>, 199</p> <p><i>prakaraṇam</i>, 179, 180, 181</p> <p><i>Prakṛtyadhikaraṇa</i>, 166, 169, 216</p> <p><i>pramā</i>, 72, 126, 127, 205</p> <p>pramāṇa, 53, 54, 66, 123, 176, 182, 185, 194, 196, 205, 245, 296, 337, 338, 339</p> <p>— <i>bheda</i>, 106, 107, 108</p> <p>— <i>failure</i>, 205, 206, 207</p> <p>— of <i>saptajñānabhūmikās</i>, 367</p> <p>— <i>-phala</i>, 207</p> <p>— <i>-prameya-vyavahāra</i>, 65</p> <p>— <i>-vyāpāra</i>, 133</p> <p>— <i>-vyavahāra</i>, 73</p> <p><i>pramāṇajanya-vṛttī</i>, 195</p> <p><i>pramāṇam ca yathābhūtavastuviśayam</i>, 203, 296, 297</p> <p><i>pramāṇatantram</i>, 202</p> <p><i>pramātā</i>, 61, 181</p> <p><i>pramāṭṛtva</i>, 339</p> <p><i>prameya</i>, 66</p> <p><i>prāṇaḥ</i>, 331</p> <p><i>prapañca-pravilāpanārtham</i>, 199</p> <p><i>prapañcopaśama</i>, 196</p> <p><i>prārabdha karma</i>, 182</p> <p><i>prasajya pratiśedha</i>, 319</p> <p><i>prasiddhi</i>, 157</p> <p><i>prasthāna-trayam</i>, 4</p> <p><i>pratibandha</i>, 285</p> <p><i>Pratīkādihikaraṇa</i>, 148</p> <p><i>pratiniyata</i>, 171</p> <p><i>pratipatti</i>, 247</p> <p><i>pratiśedha</i>, 65, 186, 313</p> <p><i>pratīti</i>, 39</p> <p><i>pratīyate</i>, 42</p> <p><i>pratyabhijñā</i>, 125</p> <p><i>pratyagātmā</i>, 82, 84, 282</p>
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- pratyagātmaprasiddhēḥ*, 63
pratyagātma-samādhiḥ, 199
pratyak, 41, 61
pratyakṣa, 48, 176
 – *-jñāna*, 124, 128
pratyaktva, 43
pratyaya, 43, 85
pravṛtti, 247, 249, 254, 304, 313
 – *dharma*, 111
prayojana, 32
prema-tāratamya, 89
priya, 262
puṇya, 180
pūrāṇa on *ajñānanāśanam*, 143 (fn. 63)
pūrṇa, 288
Puruṣa, 223, 259, 307, 308, 312
 – *-cittavyāpāra*, 296
puruṣārtha(s), 154, 155, 228
puruṣatantra, 296, 299
pūrvadr̥ṣṭaḥ, 55
pūrvadr̥ṣṭāvabhāsaḥ, 56
pūrvamimāṃsā, 98, 179, 180, 314, 315, 319
pūrvapakṣa, 11, 54
pūrva-prakṛta, 96, 97
racanā, 171, 172
rājasūya, 278
regress ad infinitum, 61
 Rudra, 204
rūpa, 170, 283
Śābara bhāṣya, 117, 248, 249
Śabaraswāmī, 249
śabda, 204, 205
sādhanacatuṣṭaya-saṃpattī, 23, 108, 109, 111 to 113, 195, 197, 206, 207
sādhanādhyāya, 13, 30
sādhanam, 184
sādhyā, 183, 184, 190, 192
saguṇa Brahman, 198
saguṇeśvaropāsanā, 208
sāhacarya-niyamaḥ, 68
śajātīya difference, 236, 240
sakalaḥ, 82
Śākalya, 309
sākṣāt, 144, 181
 – *anubhava*, 144, 145
sākṣātkāra, 79, 80, 183, 190
sākṣī, 82, 293, 294, 308
 – *-draṣṭā*, 283
sākṣipratyakṣa, 65, 66, 73, 86
sākṣīsākṣyānvaya-vyatirekaḥ, 28
sākṣya, 294
śama, 112
sama(h), 308
 – *-buddhi*, 209
śama-damādi-sādhanasaṃpat, 111, 112
samādhāna, 112
samādhi, 198
 – *-parisuddhena antaḥkaraṇena*, 152, 198
 – (*pratyagātma-samādhi*), 153
sāmagrī(s), 52, 205, 207
samākhya, 179, 180, 181
sāmānādhikaraṇyam, 199
samanvaya, 216, 225, 234, 236, 238, 239
Samanvayādhikaraṇam, 19 topics discussed, 358
samanvayādhyāya, 12, 30
samāsa, 116
saṃbandha, 32
saṃbhāvanā, 54
saṃkṣepaśārīrakam, 25
saṃsāra, 3, 261, 262
saṃsarga, 50, 53, 84, 87
saṃsargādhyāsa, 53, 54
saṃsārī, 80, 196, 253, 254

<i>saṃśaya</i> , 11, 94	<i>saśarīratvam</i> , 324, 325, 331
<i>saṃskāra(s)</i> , 44, 286, 288, 289, 292, 295	<i>ṣaṣṭhī-tatpuruṣa samāsa</i> , 116
<i>saṃskārya</i> , 285, 286, 287, 288, 307	<i>śāstra</i> , 220
<i>samuccaya</i> , 94, 105	<i>sat</i> , 46
<i>sanātana-dharma</i> , 4	<i>ṣaṭ-līṅgas</i> , 239, 241
Sanatkumāra, 271, 272	<i>sattvāpattiḥ</i> , 368
Sandhyā , 296, 299	satyam , 170, 239
— <i>vandanam</i> , 291	— <i>jñānam anantam Brahma</i> , 216
saṅga , 52	<i>satyānṛte mithunīkṛtya</i> , 50
— <i>-buddhi</i> , 209	<i>sāvayava</i> , 289
<i>saṅgati</i> , 11, 15	<i>savijñānam jñānam</i> , 362
<i>saṅkalpa</i> , 82	scriptures are devised by <i>jīvanmuktas</i>
<i>śāṅkarīcidabhivyaktiḥ</i> , 143 (fn. 63)	(<i>Yo. Vā.</i>), 374
<i>Sāṅkhya</i> , 175	<i>śeṣa</i> , 102, 118, 228, 233, 237, 243, 252,
<i>sannanta</i> , 117	308, 310, 312
<i>sannyāsa</i> , 103, 104	<i>śeṣaśeṣitva</i> , 101, 102, 104
<i>śānta ātmā</i> , 200	<i>śeṣī</i> , 102
<i>śārīrakaḥ</i> , 91	<i>siddhānta</i> , 11
<i>śārīraka-mīmāṃsā</i> , 90, 91	<i>siddha-vastu (anubhava)</i> , 184
<i>śārīram</i> , 257,	<i>Siddhāntabindu</i> , 86
<i>sarvabhūtādhi-vāsaḥ</i> , 293	<i>siddhavastuśaṃsanāt śāstram</i> , 226
<i>sarvabhūtāntarātmā</i> , 292, 293	<i>śikṣā</i> , 221
<i>sarvabhūtaṣṭaḥ</i> , 308	six criteria, 225, 226, 239-241, 280
<i>sarvajña</i> , 157, 221	<i>smṛtiḥ</i> , 55
<i>sarvajñakalpa</i> , 221	<i>smṛtiprasthānam</i> , 6
<i>sarvakriyā-rahitam</i> , 266	<i>smṛtirūpaḥ</i> , 55
<i>sarvaloka-pratyakṣaḥ</i> , 85	<i>ṣoḍaṣī</i> , 186, 187
<i>sarvam Brahma</i> , 199	<i>śodhita tvam pada</i> , 196, 206
<i>sarvāntara</i> , 41, 42	<i>soma</i> , 315
<i>Sarvāpekṣādhikaraṇa</i> , 99, 100, 334	sopādhika , 201
<i>sarvaśaktimattva</i> , 157	— <i>adhyāsa</i> , 60
<i>sarvasaṅkalpa-sannyāsī</i> , 198	<i>sorodit</i> , 244, 255
<i>Sarvasāropaniṣat</i> , 155	<i>śraddhā</i> , 112, 189
<i>sarvasya</i> , 308	<i>śraddha-karma</i> , 172
<i>sarvataḥ nivārita-pracāram</i> , 198	<i>śravaṇa</i> , 23, 303, 334
<i>sarvavyāpī</i> , 199, 292	<i>śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana</i> , 4, 334, 335
śāsanāt , 221	<i>śreyaḥ</i> , 115
— <i>śāstram</i> , 226	<i>śrotā</i> , 66

- śrouṣaṭ*, 298
S.R.U., 156
śrutabrahma, 321, 322, 323
śrutī, 179, 180, 187
 — *-pramāṇa*, 174, 183
śrutiprasthānam, 5
sthānam, 179, 180, 181
sthitaprajñā, 137, 332
sthitī, 164, 168, 172, 238
sthūla-vṛtti(s), 125
śubhecchā, 368
śubhraḥ, 259, 263
 subjective knowledge, — true or false —
 is necessarily experiential. The
 incorrect experience of an entity can
 be corrected only by a correct
 experience. (*Yo.Vā*), 150, 151
śuddaḥ, 293
śuddha, 157, 158, 197, 293, 309
 — *-caitanya*, 127
śuddha śiṣyaprajñāiva, 207
śuddhacitta, 103
śukram, 293, 294
śuktirajata, 55
 summing-up, 342
śūnya, 171
śūnyatāvādī, 58
śūnyavāda, 50
superimposition, order of, 86
 — see *adhyāsa*, 38
Sureśvarācārya, *dīṣya-jagat* is not
 perceived in *jñānaniṣṭhā*, 147
 — on Vedāntic *prakriyā*, 379
sūtra(kāra), 7, 93
Śv.U., 156, 171
svabhāva, 175
svābhāvika, 204
svadhā, 298
svādhyāyaḥ adhyectavyaḥ, 229, 231
svagata difference, 236, 240
svāhā, 298
svapracāra, 83
svaparakaraṇasthaḥ, 307, 310
svaprakāśa(h), 45, 63, 125
svargakāmo yajeta, 255
svarūpa, 182
 — *-lakṣaṇa*, 164, 165, 170, 216, 351
 — *-pratiṣṭhaḥ*, 200
svataḥ-prāmāṇyam, 203, 205
svavākyagata, 229
svayamjyotī, 182, 332
tādātmya, 53
tādātmyādhyāsa, 53, 54
taddharmāṇām, 46
tadguṇasaṃvijñāna (bahuvrīhi), 167,
 168
Tai.U., 121, 122, 156, 164, 167, 169,
 214, 215
 — *bhāṣya* (1-12), 152
 — *Brahmajñānī* attains the highest, 115
tamaḥprakāśavat, 44
tanumānasā, 368
tarka, 183
 — *pāda*, 174
 — *śāstra*, 308
Tārkika, 57, 176
tat pada, 196
tat tvamasi, 196, 206
taṭastha-lakṣaṇa, 164, 216, 351
tathāpi, 47
tatkālaḥ, 78
tātparya, 236, 242
 — *-liṅgā*, 240
 — *-nirṇaya*, 238
tattadākāra-antaḥkaraṇa-vṛtti, 127, 202
tattvajñana, 248

— (there) desire cease, 111	vaidika , 65
<i>tatvataḥ</i> , 198	— - <i>vyavahāra</i> , 341
<i>tejaḥ</i> , 331	<i>vairāgya</i> , 100
<i>Tejobindūpaniṣat</i> , 137	<i>vaiśeṣika</i> , 57, 169, 175, 176
<i>tītikṣā</i> , 112	<i>Vaiśvānareṣṭi</i> , 172
<i>tripuṭī</i> , 134, 181, 196	<i>Vaiyāsikanyāyamālā</i> , 11
<i>ṛpti</i> , 266	<i>vākyam</i> , 179, 180
<i>turyagā</i> , 369	Vālmīki on <i>jīvanmukti</i> (<i>Yo. Vā</i>), 153
<i>tvam (pada)</i> (<i>śodhita/nirupādhika</i>), 196	<i>vānaprastha</i> , 103, 104
uniformity of the guru's teaching, correct understanding of Vedānta and own <i>Brahmānubhava</i> is a must for <i>Brahmajñāna</i> (<i>Yo. Vā</i>), 363	<i>Varāhopaniṣat</i> , 201
<i>upādāna</i> , 166, 178, 222	<i>varṇa</i> , 81
<i>upadeśaḥ</i> , 204	<i>varṇaka(s)</i> , 217, 225
<i>upadeśakramaḥ</i> , 207	<i>vaśaṭ</i> , 296, 298
<i>upādeyaḥ</i> , 308	<i>vastusvabhāva</i> , 39
<i>upādhi</i> , 52, 59, 184, 194, 244	<i>vastutantram</i> , 190, 202, 296
<i>upādhikṛta-vistarabhedāḥ</i> , 199	<i>vastvadhīnam</i> , 202
<i>upadiśa</i> , 215	<i>vat</i> , 59
<i>upakramopasaṃhāra</i> , 48, 239, 240, 241	<i>Ve.P.B.</i> , <i>viśayākāra-vṛtti</i> , 128
<i>upāmsu yāga</i> , 279, 283	<i>Ve.P.B.</i> , <i>parokṣajñānam</i> cannot remove <i>aparokṣa bhrama</i> , 129
Upaniṣads (extensively studied), 6	Veda, 217
<i>upapatti</i> , 239, 241	<i>Veda-prāmānya</i> , 230, 244
<i>uparati / uparama</i> , 112	<i>vedanā</i> , 282
upāsana , 91, 192, 197, 243	Vedānta <i>pramāṇa</i> , 201
— - <i>pratīka</i> , 276	<i>Vedānta-paribhāṣā</i> , 205
— - <i>saṃpat</i> , 275, 277, 278, 280	<i>Vedāntamīmāṃsā</i> , 93
— - <i>saṃvarga</i> , 276, 279	<i>Vedāntasāra</i> , 130, 131
— <i>vidhi</i> , 305	Vedāntavicāra , duration, 21
Upavaśa, 246	— eligible person, 21
<i>utpādyā</i> , 285, 286, 307	Vedāntic prakriyā , 374
<i>utpādyādi caturvidha-dravyavilakṣaṇaḥ</i> , 307, 310	— - Sureśvarācārya's dictum, 379
<i>utpatti</i> , 285, 295	Vedāntic pursuit, sequence of, 22
<i>utsarga</i> , 186, 187, 191	<i>Vedārtha</i> , 183
<i>uttarapakṣa</i> , 11	<i>veditā</i> , 282
<i>vācīkam</i> , 257	<i>vedya</i> , 282
	<i>vetti</i> , 361
	<i>vibhu</i> , 259, 263
	<i>vicāra</i> , 95

- vicāraṇā*, 368
vicikitsā, 82
vidhamukti, 182
vidheya, 250
vidhi, 65, 93, 186, 187, 191, 228, 229,
 230, 255, 300, 301, 304
 — *-niṣedha*, 339
 — *-śeṣa*, 311
vidhipraṭiṣedha, 66
vidhvasta-sarva-upādhibhedaḥ, 199
vidita, 283
vidyā, 64
 — *phalam anubhavārūḍam*, 211
Vidyāraṇya Muni, 306
 — *ajñānanāśanam*, 143 (fn. 63)
 — *anubhava* and reasoning are
 indispensable, 192
 — on *Brahmāvagatī*, 143
viḷātīya difference, 236, 240
viḷḷānavādi, 57
viḷḷānavādin, 311
vikalaḥ, 82
vikalpa, 94, 186, 187, 191
vikalpanā, 188
vikāra, 285, 295
vikārya, 285, 286, 307
vīṇā, 96
vipariṇāma, 172, 173
viparyayeṇa, 82
Virāgaḥ, 109, 110
virodha, 39
 Virūpa, a deity, 217
viśaya, 11
viśaya, 11, 32, 41, 45
viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛtti, 72, 127, 129
viśayatva, 43
viśaya-vaitṛṣṇya, 23
viśayaviśayiṇoḥ, 43
viśayī, 41
viśayitva, 43
viśeṣaḥ, 99
viśinoti, 45
Viśvedevāḥ, 275, 277
Vīvaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha, 189
 — *ajñānanāśanam*, 143 (fn. 63)
 — *anubhava* and reasoning are
 indispensable, 192, 193
Brahmaviḷḷāna, akhaṇḍākāravṛtti as
ḷḷāna-pramāṇa, 143
 — on *Brahmāvagatī*, 143
Vīvaraṇa-vṛtti as *ḷḷāna-pramāṇa*, 127 -
 fn. 46
viveka(h), 100, 109
vivikta, 49
Viyadadhikaraṇa, 169
vouṣaṭ, 298
vṛddha, 249
vṛddhi, 172, 173
vṛhi, 187
vṛtti, 125
 — as *ḷḷāna*, 127 - fn. 46
 — *pratyagbrahmaikyagocarā*, 143 (fn. 63)
 — *tattadākāra-vṛtti*, 127, 202
 — *-viśayatvam / -karmatvam*, 129
 — *-vyāpti*, 129
vṛttikāra, 246
vyākaraṇa, 221
vyākṛta, 170
vyāpti, 27, 68
 — *-ḷḷāna*, 70
Vyāsa, 96
 — himself received *Brahmasūtras* from
 Lord Śiva, 382
vyatireka, 68, 69
 — *-vyāpti*, 69
vyavahāra, 39, 48, 65, 66, 204

<p><i>yadyadvistarārtham</i>, 222</p> <p><i>yadyapi</i>, 47</p> <p><i>yah</i>, 198</p> <p><i>yajamāna</i>, 279, 283</p> <p>Yājñavalkya, 41</p> <p>Yama, 3</p> <p>Yāska, 173, 174</p> <p><i>yataḥ</i>, 167, 170</p> <p><i>yathābhūta-viṣayam (jñānam)</i>, 202</p> <p>yathārtha, 126</p> <p>— <i>-ātmānubhava</i>, 349</p> <p>yathārthānubhava, 194</p> <p>— is the cardinal essence of both direct perception and <i>aparokṣa-ātmajñāna</i>, 149</p> <p><i>yato vā imāni bhūtāni</i>, 214, 215, 216</p> <p>yava, 187</p> <p><i>yāvān</i>, 198</p> <p>Yo. Vā., Vālmiki on <i>jīvanmukti</i>, 153</p> <p>— <i>ātmajñāna</i> & desires cannot co-exist, 111</p> <p>— <i>-Brahmajñāna</i> and perception of <i>jagat</i> cannot co-exist, 374</p> <p>— <i>dvaita jagat</i> and <i>advaita</i> Brahman cannot be known simultaneously, 147</p> <p>— <i>-modus operandi</i> adopted by <i>jīvanmuktas</i> in revealing Brahman, 380</p> <p>— - on <i>avidyā</i>, 375 to 378</p> <p>— on <i>śiṣyaprajñā</i>, 206, 207</p> <p>— - scriptures are devised by <i>jīvanmuktas</i>, 374</p> <p>— subjective knowledge, — true or false — is necessarily experiential. The incorrect experience of an entity can be corrected only by a correct experience. 150, 151</p>	<p>— to quote scriptures out of context in the state of ignorance is untimely, premature and disastrous, 146</p> <p>— - uniformity of the guru's teaching, correct understanding of Vedānta and own <i>Brahmānubhava</i> is a must for <i>Brahmajñāna</i>, 363</p> <p><i>yogācāra</i>, 57</p> <p><i>Yogaśemam vahāmyaham</i>, 210</p> <p><i>yogārūḍhaḥ</i>, 198</p> <p><i>yoni</i>, 221, 224</p> <p>youktika, 75</p> <p>— <i>-jñāna</i>, 201, 207</p> <p><i>yukti</i>, 121</p> <p><i>yūpa</i>, 247, 248, 249</p> <p>yuṣmad, 40</p> <p>— <i>-asmad</i>, 41</p> <p><i>yuṣmatpratayayagocara</i>, 42</p>
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