

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**MASTER OF ARTS- PHILOSOPHY  
SEMESTER -IV**

**VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY**

**ELECTIVE 406**

**BLOCK-2**

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## **UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

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## **FOREWORD**

The Self-Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

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# VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

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Unit 1: Sankara: Niguna Brahman;

Unit 2: Adhyasa

Unit 3: Theory of causation

Unit 4: Nature of the jiva-jivanmukti

Unit 5: Criticism of other schools of philosophy

Unit 6: Post- sankara Advaita

Unit 7: The identification of avidya with maya

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## **BLOCK 2: VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY**

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### **Introduction to the Block**

Unit 8 deals with Avidya as cosmic as well as individual. Eventually the concepts of avidya will swim around in your awareness all the time, as it becomes a part of constant self-awareness.

Unit 9 deals with Vivartavada. Avacchedavada, abhasavada, ekajivabada, drstisrstivada and srstidrstivada.

Unit 10 deals with Advaita theory of knowledge. This unit is about Advaita Vedanta, its meaning and significance in Indian Philosophy.

Unit 11 deals with Theories of mithyatva and mithyatvamithyatva. Mithyatva means "false belief", and an important concept in Jainism and Hinduism.

Unit 12 deals with The concept of Jiva: dharmabhutajnana. Jiva is a Sanskrit term which translates as "an immortal living substance" or "an individual soul."

Unit 13 deals with Nature of Moksha. Moksha (/ˈmoʊkʃə/; Sanskrit: मोक्ष, mokṣa), also called vimoksha, vimukti and mukti, is a term in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism for various forms of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release.

Unit 14 deals with Concept of karma, bhakti and jnanayogas. The concept of Karma is India's unique contribution to the world. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, the major religions of the world which originated in India, all acknowledge the universality of the law of karma in their own individual ways.

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## **UNIT 8: AVIDYA AS COSMIC AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL**

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### **STRUCTURE**

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Avidya as cosmic as well as individual
- 8.3 Avidya : In Buddhist traditions
- 8.4 Acetanamaya as the material cause
- 8.5 Saguna Brahman (Isvara) as the efficient cause of the universe
- 8.6 Let us sum up
- 8.7 Key Words
- 8.8 Questions for Review
- 8.9 Suggested readings and references
- 8.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### **8.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about Avidya as cosmic as well as individual
- To discuss the Avidya : In Buddhist traditions
- To discuss the Acetanamaya as the material cause
- To describe Saguna Brahman (Isvara) as the efficient cause of the universe

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### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Avidya = the veil of spiritual forgetting, ignorance, or individual illusion

Avidya = first of the 5 kleshas (which means coloring or veil), it is the first veil that covers the non-dual formless Consciousness

kleshas: avidya, asmita, raga, dvesha, abhinivesha

Avidya = ignorance on microcosm level, individual ignorance or illusion

Maya = the veil on macrocosm level, the universal ignorance or illusion

According to the Yogasutras: avidya seems to appear in four different kinds: regarding that which is transient as eternal – mistaking the impure for pure – thinking that which brings misery to bring happiness, and taking that which is not-self to be self.

And also according to the Yogasutras: avidya seems to appear in four stages: 1) dormant or inactive, 2) attenuated or weakened, 3) interrupted or separated from temporarily, or 4) active and producing thoughts or actions to varying degrees.

Observe four kinds of avidya

This forgetting process called avidya happens in four different ways which is explained in yogasutra 2.5. These four different kinds of avidya are extremely practical and can be constantly observed in daily life. Therefore pick one avidya for a day or for week and observe how this avidya expresses itself in your daily life.

Impermanent → Eternal

This kind of avidya makes you forget that objects, situations, relationships, thoughts, emotions, and all other phenomena of the manifestation are temporary. We think that they will last forever, or are not mindful of their transitory nature. To remind yourself of the temporary nature of manifestation will allow you to enjoy the things of the world, without living in the illusion that these things are ever-lasting. Then when they fall away there is less suffering. A car will one day break down, a friend might move away, clothes will tear, bread after a while will grow moldy. By increasingly clearer discrimination about the true nature of manifestation in and around us, hence seeing their transitory nature, the pure non-dual Consciousness will come forward as the only existence that is truly Eternal.

Impure → Pure

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This kind of avidya makes you forget that some objects, situations, relationships, thoughts, emotions, or other phenomena of the manifestation are impure. We think that their nature is pure. Seeing this avidya will decrease your attraction to the external world, as you will come to see that some things you thought of as pure are actually impure, therefore unpleasant. For example, in a particular situations you thought you had pure intentions, but with some honesty you come to see that there was still some selfish desire in it, oops. You may thought the chocolate you ate was pure, but then you come to know that most chocolate still involves slavery, which is impure, oops. The water you drank looked pure, but was impure, as you became sick afterwards, oops. But actually, you could look at impure as something that is not pure consciousness, then anything that is manifested is impure, as it makes you forget your real nature; PURE non-dual Consciousness.

Misery → Happiness

This kind of avidya makes you forget that objects, situations, relationships, thoughts, emotions and other phenomena of the manifestation bring you misery. We think that they will bring us happiness. Observing this kind of avidya will bring you towards real happiness that is not related to the temporary ever-changing manifestation, but lies beyond all the movements of the mind-field. As you will less fall into the trap that movements in the manifestation will make you eternally happy. For example a relationship that made you happy can break up and results in pain. Going to a holiday vacation was suppose to make you very happy but when you arrive the place is crowded, stinky, and is not as pretty as the picture showed. Eating a lot of food may at first make you happy, but later the tummy aches. Anything that has attachment will one day lead to misery as it will protect itself with fear (abhinivesha), and when it is set aside a feeling of lost is experienced, therefore it always has a component of misery.

Not self → Self

This kind of avidya makes you forget that objects, situations, relationships, thoughts, emotions, and other phenomena of the



manifestation are not who you really are. We think that they are our true Self. Everything that is colored with avidya makes us forget that we are pure eternal Consciousness, and makes us fall into the trap we are our collection of coloring, our collection of false identities, desires, habits, likes, and dislikes. Constantly making yourself aware of this avidya, and constantly observing this avidya will strengthen your buddhi and will increase the discrimination between Self and non self.

### **DAILY OBSERVATION AND YOGIC SELF-AWARENESS ASSESSMENT**

Eventually the concepts of avidya will swim around in your awareness all the time, as it becomes a part of constant self-awareness. Also, becoming aware of avidya will have the effect that you will increase your use of this word in your daily vocabulary to express yourself and you will discover how avidya relates to other concepts, processes, or insights. For example, you may come to see that when you are in a state of kshipta you are more entangled in avidya than when mind is ekagra, or you come to understand the relationship between the gunas and avidya. Eventually you will discover how all these concepts dance together and coming to know this dance will guide you towards that which is beyond all the concepts. This is because as you increase your self-awareness, you will discover that everything you can observe is not who you truly are, you are not avidya, you are the One that is able to witness all these concepts. Therefore avidya itself have to be transcended, who you really are is beyond avidya. This will increase the non-attachment towards avidya itself, while you can be in awe of the beauty of the Divine dance of Consciousness that appears to play as avidya. Therefore practicing self-awareness is actually practicing not-self-awareness by which the True Self will eventually reveal itself.

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## **8.2 AVIDYA AS COSMIC AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL**

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Avidya explained by an ocean metaphor

There is only one non-dual Consciousness... If we look at this non-dual Consciousness as one unlimited unbounded ocean of existence we can

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use this metaphor to understand how duality seems to appear within non-dual Consciousness. Because it is obvious that duality seems to occur. Look around you, do you not see diversity? How to explain that non-dual Consciousness appears as dual? Using the metaphor of the ocean; it seems to forget it is an ocean and can thereby take on the identity of a wave. Now, it can play as a wave, because it appears as if it has disconnected itself from the whole by veiling itself, by forgetting its true nature. Therefore forgetting happens first and as a unavoidable result an individual appears to exist, which is asmita. This veiling of truth, this process of forgetting, this appearance of ignorance is called avidya. It is the first veiling of the Non-dual Consciousness. If you can imagine this ocean as formless and transparent you can maybe also imagine that this forgetting process is seen as a coloring, as if now a part of the ocean is colored with forgetting. Therefore, one way to hold avidya is as a coloring on top or within the non-dual Consciousness. Now a wave can experience the rest of the ocean as separate, and will see other waves around itself. These waves can be labeled as pleasant or not pleasant, which are raga and dvesha, both coloring of attachment. Having characteristics the wave will fear it will lose its identity and will therefore add a layer of fear to protect itself, this is the fifth and last klesha; abhinivesha.

### Freedom from avidya

There are three kinds of freedom; the first is freedom from karma, then comes freedom from thoughts and eventually freedom from avidya. On the journey to the direct realization of the Self, we move inward from gross to subtle to the most subtlest aspects of our being.

1) Freedom from karma: the first freedom we gain on our journey inward to the direct realization of the Self is the freedom of action. Our actions are performed by the karmendriyas (senses of actions: speaking, grasping, moving, procreating, and eliminating), they express the active desires that bubble up from the unconscious mind. Because samskaras constantly move into active desires, into thoughts, we learn to gradually master that we have a choice in which one we want to express. Simple

example, thoughts may drift into the mind-field, but they do not have to be immediately spoken aloud using the karmendriya of speech, you can remain silent. Or when the desire for a particular drink bubble up into the conscious mind field we do not have to get up and walk to the kitchen. Thus, this freedom of action means to have the freedom of not having to act upon active desires. We can choose. The thoughts are still there (they keep coming and going), but they do not necessarily have to lead to action—to karma.

2) Freedom from thoughts: when we continue doing all our practices of meditation, contemplation, introspection, and self-assessment by which the coloring of the attachment will gradually diminish, the freedom of thought comes. When the coloring of a samskaras is almost gone, it's not likely that, when this samskara becomes active, it will create an enormous disturbance in the mind-field as other heavily colored samskaras do. Therefore the more you un-color the samskaras the less they are distracting. Example, an episode happened at work where a colleague and you had a strong conversation about something that happened on a project. When this is strongly colored with aversion you might be engaged in this conversation for days, meaning you re-live this conversation over and over again, constantly repeating it in your mind, while re-analyzing it. If there was no coloring added during this conversation, you wouldn't even think about it again once. Therefore if coloring is reduced, troublesome thoughts also reduce, hence freedom from thoughts.

3) Freedom from avidya: and when almost all coloring is reduced and the discrimination of Self and not self becomes clear the final barrier will be removed; that of avidya itself. When there is freedom from avidya, the Seer rest in its true nature (yogasutra 1.3) and pure Consciousness is experienced.

karma-table-3freedoms-265x300.png

Avidya – Vidya

## Notes

In Sanskrit when an 'A' is placed in front of a word it means 'not' or 'without' that word. So 'A' in front of vidya means not vidya. Vidya is a word used for the highest Truth, Knowledge, or Knowing. When one truly experiences the non-dual formless Consciousness, one really knows, one lives in vidya, one lives in knowing the Absolute Reality. Therefore avidya is a state that means you are not living in vidya, the truth is forgotten, is veiled, and therefore is it a state of ignorance of ignoring truth. To remove everything that is not vidya will bring the experience of vidya. Therefore it is the avidya that we have to deal with, get to know and move beyond. We need to un-color this coloring in order to find vidya.

Avidya doesn't mean stupid or dumb

To say that we live in ignorance doesn't mean that we are dumb or stupid, it is merely a realization that we are ignoring our true Self (that we live unconsciously while our true nature is pure Consciousness) and that this avidya needs to be removed.

Avidya is not all "wrong"

When you look at all the descriptions on avidya, you hopefully see that dealing with avidya is an essential or fundamental part of our practice. But this doesn't mean avidya is all bad, because if the veil would be lifted all at once we would not be able to take it. There is so much unconscious movement underneath the veil that it would flood us if it would be presented to us at once, probably make us literally crazy. Therefore this veil is like a mother, who lovingly hides what we cannot take until we are ready to take the responsibility. When our responsibility grows we will be able to allow the unconscious movements to come forward and not get sucked into them. We would be able to know that these movements are not who we are and will be able to stay non-attached to them. Therefore, it appears as if avidya and vairagya are dancing together. In the beginning avidya has the lead, lovingly keeps us protected as a mother, but slowly with practice vairagya will take over this dance until the whole veil can be lifted and the Self rests in its own nature.

## Avidya – Maya

Virtually these two words mean the same, but one significant difference is that the word avidya is used when we speak of individual ignorance, and the word maya is used when we speak of cosmic ignorance, which is the same as cosmic illusion. The word maya is used in regard to Brahman, when the Absolute Reality seems to play as maya. Avidya is used when Atman, the individual soul, seems to play within maya as an individual appearing to have characteristics.

## Remember avidya and the infinite

As we are expanding our awareness of the apparent avidya and maya, it will help to remember the beautiful invocation of the Isha Upanishad. It seems that avidya and maya are able to ‘break’ up non-duality into duality, but infinite can never be divided as infinite minus infinite = still infinite. If you take a part from infinite, this separate appearing part is still infinite! That is why a drop of the ocean qualitatively contains the ocean, as microcosm is qualitatively the same as macrocosm.

Om Purnamadah Purnamidam

Purnat Purnamudachyate

Purnasya Purnamadaya

Purnameva Vashishyate

Om shanti, shanti, shanti

Om. That is infinite, this is infinite;

From That infinite this infinite comes.

From That infinite, this infinite removed or added;

Infinite remains infinite.

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!

## YOGASUTRAS ON AVIDYA

2.3 There are five kinds of coloring (kleshas): 1) forgetting, or ignorance about the true nature of things (avidya), 2) I-ness, individuality, or egoism (asmita), 3) attachment or addiction to mental impressions or objects (raga), 4) aversion to thought patterns or objects (dvesha), and 5)

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love of these as being life itself, as well as fear of their loss as being death (abhinivesha).

avidya asmita raga dvesha abhinivesha pancha klesha

read more on [www.swamij.com](http://www.swamij.com)

2.4 The root forgetting or ignorance of the nature of things (avidya) is the breeding ground for the other of the five colorings (kleshas), and each of these is in one of four states: 1) dormant or inactive, 2) attenuated or weakened, 3) interrupted or separated from temporarily, or 4) active and producing thoughts or actions to varying degrees.

avidya kshetram uttaresham prasupta tanu vicchinna udaranam

read more on [www.swamij.com](http://www.swamij.com)

2.5 Ignorance (avidya) is of four types: 1) regarding that which is transient as eternal, 2) mistaking the impure for pure, 3) thinking that which brings misery to bring happiness, and 4) taking that which is not-self to be self.

antiya ashuchi dukkha anatmasu nitya shuchi sukha atman khyatih  
avidya

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2.24 Avidya or ignorance (2.3-2.5), the condition of ignoring, is the underlying cause that allows this alliance to appear to exist.

tasya hetuh avidya

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2.25 By causing a lack of avidya, or ignorance there is then an absence of the alliance, and this leads to a freedom known as a state of liberation or enlightenment for the Seer.

tat abhavat samyogah abhavah hanam tat drishi kaivalyam

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### SWAMI RAMA ON AVIDYA

”Avidya means “ignorance, or lack of knowledge of reality.” A means “no”, vidya means “knowledge”. According to Patanjali, ignorance is

the root cause of all pain, misery and suffering. You are suffering not because someone wants you to suffer, or because a devil or something evil is making you suffer, but because of lack of knowledge and clarity of mind. A preliminary step on the path of enlightenment is to accept the premise that you are ignorant – to know that you do not know.

Another meaning of avidya is the failure to perceive the true nature of the objects of the world, to see them as they are. You don't see the universe as it really is because your perception of the universe is individual. You see things only partial through a little window of your eyes. This partial knowledge has nothing to do with the totality of experience and thus cannot be considered to be truth.”

~ Sadhana pg. 40

”Because of their clouded minds, ordinary human beings remain in doubt regarding the ultimate nature of things. But when doubt is dispelled, enlightenment dawns. The knot of ignorance and the knot of karma compose the nature of avidya, which has given pure atman the status of jivatman.”

~ Wisdom of the Ancient Sages pg. 112

“Jiva is endowed with all the same qualities as Brahman, but jiva, through its association with avidya, thinks itself to be limited. Here, the aspirant should understand that there is a vast difference between human creation and divine creation. Human creation is dependent on the existence of something different and separate from the doer. However, in relation to Brahman's creation, Brahman does not have to depend on any other force to manifest the universe. When the jiva, the individual soul, learns to be free from the strong clutches of avidya, he realizes his true Self and becomes one with Brahman.”

~ Book of Wisdom pg. 45

“You can remain in the bondage of avidya or you can release yourself. It is your choice. You are the way you are because you wanted to be this way. No one else has described for you or made any plans for you. This

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is your own planning and it will go on till eternity if you do not have any goal toward which you direct all your energy. Each individual creates avidya. Thus it is your own ignorance and superimpositions that are responsible for your suffering.”

~ Sadhana pg. 43

“Without eliminating attachment and passions, spiritual knowledge does not arise. The joys of the sensory gratification that one delights in are short-lived, and when the fruits of these actions are exhausted, one again falls back into the cruel clutches of avidya or ignorance.”

~ Wisdom of the Ancient Sages pg. 69

“When we say a human being should learn to perform his karma or action skillfully, this is a modern way of explain that any karma performed skillfully bears desired fruits for the doer. Here the aspirant sacrifices his lower knowledge, the ignorant nature that is enveloped by avidya, to the fire of knowledge.”

~ Wisdom of the Ancient Sages pg. 49

Swami Rama on avidya and maya:

“The term maya is closely related to with avidya. Maya can be described as apparent reality—that which does not exist though it appears to exist. Ma means “no”, ya means “that”. An example of maya is a mirage in the desert. Even though you think you see it, it doesn’t exist. Maya can cause you to have an accident, but it cannot enlighten you. Maya is the reason you see the one absolute truth as many. You can better understand the relationship among the individual soul, maya and the Absolute by the following analogy: Suppose a thick layer of ice covers the ocean, and in the layer of ice there are trillions of holes. All the individuals and creatures of the universe can be represented by the holes, the sheet of ice is maya, and the ocean that lies beneath symbolizes the absolute reality. When the sheet of ice melts, maya disappears along with all the holes and all individuality; the reality alone remains. Avidya and maya are the same, but avidya is individual and maya is cosmic. Maya is only an



instrument that Brahman uses to project the universe. Through maya Brahman projects Himself as many.”

~ Sadhana pg. 41

“The fifteenth mantra of the Ishopanishad [The face of truth is covered with a golden veil. Uncover that reality, Pushan to the glance of the one devoted to truth] gives a very beautiful description of the nature of maya. Avidya (illusion) is also beautiful, but its beauty is material, transient, subject to destruction and not capable of satisfying the intellect of man. There is attraction in it, but short-lived. When we act merely in order to satisfy the selfish appetites of this insignificant body, we develop the tendency of identifying ourselves with the body. It is this that is our avidya (ignorance). This avidya, according to Sankhya philosophy, is accompanied with five-fold miseries. This avidya (illusion) is like a black veil over the face of a beautiful damsel. This black veil, studded with five special stars of anguish is dear to all and charming to every mind; but only when it is removed can one see the true face of vidya, where beauty is hidden by the veil. A newly-wedded husband is charmed by the veil of his bride, but prefers what is more beautiful and worthy of his love—the person hidden behind the veil. Likewise we, though charmed by the veil called avidya, should put it aside in order to find what is more valuable, namely the underlying truth of vidya. Without obtaining the vidya (truth) which is overlaid with avidya (illusion) of man’s own making, we shall always remain restless.”

~ Book of Wisdom pg. 100

“Atman is the inmost dweller of all living beings. Therefore, the focal point of concentration and meditation is only on atman, not on the other finer forces or bright colors or lights flashing from the domain of atman. Many times during meditation, when one element becomes predominant, its influence on the mind creates illusory visions for the aspirant in different lights, colors, and forms. These illusory experiences should be discarded. They do not mean anything; they are not spiritual experiences. All the experiences from the psychic world are inferior compared to the experiences received from the spiritual level of life. These who strive

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sincerely to attain atman automatically give up the interest that relates to both avidya (ignorance) and lower knowledge.”

~ Wisdom of the Ancient Sages pg. 107

### SWAMI JNANESHVARA ON AVIDYA

Read the whole article “Witnessing” on [www.swamij.com](http://www.swamij.com)

Avidya means without Truth or without knowledge. It is the first form of forgetting the spiritual Reality. It is not just a thought pattern in the conventional sense of a thought pattern. Rather, it is the very ground of losing touch with the Reality of being the ocean of Oneness, of pure Consciousness. Avidya is usually translated as ignorance, which is a good word, so long as we keep in mind the subtlety of the meaning. It is not a matter of gaining more knowledge, like going to school, and having this add up to receiving a degree. Rather, ignorance is something that is removed, like removing clouds that obstruct the view. Then, with the ignorance (or clouds) removed, we see knowledge or Vidya clearly.

Read the whole article “Avidya and Adhyasa: Veiling and Projecting” on [www.swamij.com](http://www.swamij.com)

Once the basic principles of Avidya (Veiling, Ignorance) are understood, as well as how they progressively move awareness outward through Adhyasa (Projecting, Superimposition), it is easier to see the way in which these two are systematically reversed so as to attain the highest goals of traditional Yoga.

### OTHER TEXTS ON AVIDYA

Tripura Rahasya

Translated by Pandit Rajmani Tigunait

14.59: The first step of creation was darkness. This marks the first stage of manifestation and is called avidya or tamas. The appearance of the perfect as if it were limited or imperfect is avidya.

Vivekachoodamini, Adi Shankaracharya

Translated by Swami Madhavananda, Published by Advaita Ashram, Kolkatta

108. Avidya (Nescience) or Maya, called also the Undifferentiated, is the power of the Lord. She is without beginning, is made up of the three gunas and is superior to the effects (as their cause). She is to be inferred by one of clear intellect only from the effects She produces. It is She who brings forth this whole universe.

169. There is no Ignorance (Avidya) outside the mind. The mind alone is Avidya, the cause of the bondage of transmigration. When that is destroyed, all else is destroyed, and when it is manifested, everything else is manifested.

180. Hence sages who have fathomed its secret have designated the mind as Avidya or ignorance, by which alone the universe is moved to and fro, like masses of clouds by the wind.

198-199. Avidya or Nescience and its effects are likewise considered as beginningless. But with the rise of Vidya or realization, the entire effects of Avidya, even though beginningless, are destroyed together with their root – like dreams on waking up from sleep. It is clear that the phenomenal universe, even though without beginning, is not eternal – like previous non-existence.

346. The knowledge of the identity of the Jiva and Brahman entirely consumes the impenetrable forest of Avidya or Nescience. For one who has realized the state of Oneness, is there any seed left for future transmigration?

474. In the realization of the Atman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, through the breaking of one's connection with the bondage of Avidya or ignorance, the Scriptures, reasoning and the words of the Guru are the proofs, while one's own experience earned by concentrating the mind is another proof.

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476. The Gurus as well as the Shrutis instruct the disciple, standing aloof; while the man of realization crosses (Avidya) through Illumination alone, backed by the grace of God.

Panchadasi, Sri Vidyanaraya Swami

Translated by Swami Swahananda and Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai (Translation under Fair Use, and believed to be in the public domain.)

1.16. When the element of sattva is pure, Prakriti is known as Maya; when impure (being mixed up with rajas and tamas) it is called Avidya. Brahman, reflected in Maya, is known as the omniscient Isvara, who controls Maya.

1.17. But the other (i.e. the Jiva, which is Brahman reflected in Avidya) is subjected to Avidya (impure sattva). The Jiva is of different grades due to (degrees of) admixture (of rajas and tamas with sattva). The Avidya (nescience) is the causal body. When the Jiva identifies himself with this causal body he is called Prajna.

1.41. Avidya (manifested as the causal body of bliss sheath) is negated in the state of deep meditation (in which neither subject nor object is experienced), but the Self persists in that state; so it is the invariable factor. But the causal body is a variable factor, for though the Self persists, it does not.

1.45. When the supreme Brahman superimposes on Itself Avidya, that is, sattva mixed with rajas and tamas, creating desires and activities in It, then it is referred to as 'thou'. [thou form "thou art that"]

1.48. Similarly, when the adjuncts, Maya and Avidya (the conflicting connotations in the proposition 'That thou art') of Brahman, and Jiva, are negated, there remains the indivisible supreme Brahman, whose nature is existence, consciousness and bliss.

1.64. The direct realization of the knowledge of the Self obtained from the Guru's teaching of the great dictum, is like the scorching sun, that dispels the very darkness of Avidya, the root of all transmigratory existence.

3.37. Brahman who is existence, consciousness and infinity is the Reality. Its being Ishvara (the Omniscient Lord of the world) and Jiva (the individual soul) are (mere) superimpositions by the two illusory adjuncts (Maya and Avidya, respectively).

6.26. Nescience or Avidya has two functions: Avarana or the power to conceal and Viksepa or the power to project. The power of Avarana creates such ideas as 'Kutastha shines not nor exists'

6.46. Just as the conscious Jiva is created by illusion based on Kutastha, even so, on it the inanimate objects are created by Avidya.

7.278. Nescience (Avidya) and its effects (the realm of duality) cannot negate the knowledge of truth. The dawn of truth has already destroyed them for ever in the case of the knower.

15.2. The Shruti says that this is the supreme bliss which is indivisible and homogeneous, it is Brahman Himself and that other beings (individuated by Avidya) enjoy only a fraction of it.

Isha Upanishad

Translated and Commentated by Swami Paramananda

IX: They enter into blind darkness who worship Avidya (ignorance and delusion); they fall, as it were, into greater darkness who worship Vidya (knowledge).

X :By Vidya one end is attained; by Avidya, another. Thus we have heard from the wise men who taught this.

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XI: He who knows at the same time both Vidya and Avidya, crosses over death by Avidya and attains immortality through Vidya. Those who follow or “worship” the path of selfishness and pleasure (Avidya), without knowing anything higher, necessarily fall into darkness; but those who worship or cherish Vidya (knowledge) for mere intellectual pride and satisfaction, fall into greater darkness, because the opportunity which they misuse is greater.

### Katha Upanishad

Chapter 2 verse 4: The path that avidya (or ignorance) leads one to and the path that vidya (or knowledge) takes one through are extremely different ones and are very far from each other. O Naciketas! I understand that you are the one in search of knowledge since you are not interested in fulfilling all the worldly, material desires that I offered to grant you. Those desires did not move you even an inch from your strong focus (of attaining the knowledge).

### Yoga Vasishtha:

“When all things that have a beginning are ruled out, what remains is the truth – which is the cessation of avidya or ignorance. You may regard it as something or as no-thing: that is to be sought which is when ignorance has been dispelled. The sweetness one tastes is not experienced by another: listening to someone’s description of the cessation of avidya does not give you enlightenment. In short, avidya is the belief that there exists a reality which is not Brahman or cosmic consciousness. When there is the certain knowledge ‘This is indeed Brahman’, avidya ceases.”

~ Venkatesananda’s Supreme Yoga, November 30

“Avidyā is a Sanskrit word whose literal meaning is “ignorance”, “delusion”, “unlearned”, “unwise” and opposite of, Vidya (Knowledge). It is used extensively in Hindu texts, including the Upanishads, and also in Buddhism.

Avidyā, in all Dharmic systems, is a cognitive limitation to be overcome by each individual and does not imply a failure or transgression. The “entrenched misunderstanding of ourselves and the world” is avidyā

(false knowledge) which gives rise to several root causes of misery or kleshas, which include ruinous states of mind and addictive habits.”

### 8.2.1 History of Advaita Vedānta

It is possible that an Advaita tradition existed in the early part of the first millennium C.E., as indicated by Śaṅkara himself with his reference to tradition (sampradāya). But the only two names that could have some historical certainty are Gaudapāda and Govinda Bhagavadpāda, mentioned as Śaṅkara’s teacher’s teacher and the latter Śaṅkara’s teacher. The first complete Advaitic work is considered to be the Mandukya Kārikā, a commentary on the Mandukya Upanṣad, authored by Gaudapāda. Śaṅkara, as many scholars believe, lived in the eight century. His life, travel, and works, as we understand from the digvijaya texts are almost of a superhuman quality. Though he lived only for 32 years, Śaṅkara’s accomplishments included traveling from the south to the north of India, writing commentaries for the ten Upanṣads, the cryptic Brahma Sūtra, the Bhagavad Gītā, and authoring many other texts (though his authorship of only some is established), and founding four pīṭhas, or centers of (Advaitic) excellence, with his pupils in charge. Śaṅkara is supposed to have had four (prominent) pupils: Padmapāda, Sureśvara, Hastamalaka and Toṭaka. Padmapāda is said to be his earliest student. Panchapadika, by Padmapāda, is a lucid commentary on Śaṅkara’s commentary on the first verses of the Brahma Sūtra. Sureśvara is supposed to have written Naiṣkarmya Siddhi, an independent treatise on Advaita. Mandana Miśra (eight century), an earlier adherent of the rival school of Bhatta Mīmāṃsā, is responsible for a version of Advaita which focuses on the doctrine of sphota, a semantic theory held by the Indian philosopher of language Bhartṛhari. He also accepts to a greater extent the joint importance of knowledge and works as a means to liberation, when for Śaṅkara knowledge is the one and only means. Mandana Miśra’s Brahmasiddhi is a significant work, which also marks a distinct form of Advaita. Two major sub-schools of Advaita Vedānta arose after Śaṅkara: Bhamati and Vivarana. The Bhamati School owes its name to Vacaspati Miśra’s (ninth century) commentary on Śaṅkara’s Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya, while the Vivarana School is named after

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Prakashatman's (tenth century) commentary on Padmapāda's Pancapadika, which itself is a commentary on Śaṅkara's commentary on the Brahma Sūtra. The prominent names in the later Advaita tradition are Prakāśātman (tenth century), Vimuktātman (tenth century), Sarvajñātman (tenth century), Śrī Harṣa (twelfth century), Citsukha (twelfth century), ānandagiri (thirteenth century), Amalānandā (thirteenth century), Vidyāraṇya (fourteenth century), Śaṅkarānandā (fourteenth century), Sadānandā (fifteenth century), Prakāśānanda (sixteenth century), Nṛsiṃhāśrama (sixteenth century), Madhusūdhana Sarasvati (seventeenth century), Dharmarāja Advarindra (seventeenth century), Appaya Dīkṣita (seventeenth century), Sadaśiva Brahmendra (eighteenth century), Candraśekhara Bhārati (twentieth century), and Sacchidānandendra Sarasvati (twentieth century). Vivarana, which is a commentary on Padmapāda's Panchapadika, written by Vacaspati Mshra is a landmark work in the tradition. The Khandanakhandakhadya of Śrī Harṣa, Tattvapradipika of Citsukha, Pañcadasi of Vidyāraṇya, Vedāntasāra of Sadānandā, Advaitasiddhi of Madhusadana Sarasvati, and Vedāntaparibhasa of Dharmarāja Advarindra are some of the landmark works representing later Advaita tradition. Throughout the eighteenth century and until the twenty-first century, there are many saints and philosophers whose tradition is rooted primarily or largely in Advaita philosophy. Prominent among the saints are Bhagavan Ramana Maharṣi, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Tapovanam, Swami Chinmayānandā, and Swami Bodhānandā. Among the philosophers, KC Bhattacharya and TMP Mahadevan have contributed a great deal to the tradition.

### 8.2.2 Metaphysics and Philosophy

The classical Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara recognizes a unity in multiplicity, identity between individual and pure consciousness, and the experienced world as having no existence apart from Brahman. The major metaphysical concepts in Advaita Vedānta tradition, such as māyā, mithya (error in judgment), vivarta (illusion/whirlpool), have been subjected to a variety of interpretations. On some interpretations, Advaita Vedānta appears as a nihilistic philosophy that denounces the matters of the lived-world.



**a. Brahman, Jīva, īśvara, and Māyā**

For classical Advaita Vedānta, Brahman is the fundamental reality underlying all objects and experiences. Brahman is explained as pure existence, pure consciousness and pure bliss. All forms of existence presuppose a knowing self. Brahman or pure consciousness underlies the knowing self. Consciousness according to the Advaita School, unlike the positions held by other Vedānta schools, is not a property of Brahman but its very nature. Brahman is also one without a second, all-pervading and the immediate awareness. This absolute Brahman is known as nirguṇa Brahman, or Brahman “without qualities,” but is usually simply called “Brahman.” This Brahman is ever known to Itself and constitutes the reality in all individuals selves, while the appearance of our empirical individuality is credited to avidya (ignorance) and māyā (illusion). Brahman thus cannot be known as an individual object distinct from the individual self. However, it can be experienced indirectly in the natural world of experience as a personal God, known as saṅguṇa Brahman, or Brahman with qualities. It is usually referred to as īśvara (the Lord). The appearance of plurality arises from a natural state of confusion or ignorance (avidya), inherent in most biological entities. Given this natural state of ignorance, Advaita provisionally accepts the empirical reality of individual selves, mental ideas and physical objects as a cognitive construction of this natural state of ignorance. But from the absolute standpoint, none of these have independent existence but are founded on Brahman. From the standpoint of this fundamental reality, individual minds as well as physical objects are appearances and do not have abiding reality. Brahman appears as the manifold objects of experience because of its creative power, māyā. Māyā is that which appears to be real at the time of experience but which does not have ultimate existence. It is dependent on pure consciousness. Brahman appears as the manifold world without undergoing an intrinsic change or modification. At no point of time does Brahman change into the world. The world is but avivarta, a superimposition on Brahman. The world is neither totally real nor totally unreal. It is not totally unreal since it is experienced. It is not totally real since it is sublated by knowledge of Brahman. There are many examples given to illustrate the relation

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between the existence of the world and Brahman. The two famous examples are that of the space in a pot versus the space in the whole cosmos (undifferentiated in reality, though arbitrarily separated by the contingencies of the pot just as the world is in relation to Brahman), and the self versus the reflection of the self (the reflection having no substantial existence apart from the self just as the objects of the world rely upon Brahman for substantiality). The existence of an individuated *jīva* and the world are without a beginning. We cannot say when they began, or what the first cause is. But both are with an end, which is knowledge of Brahman. According to classical Advaita Vedānta, the existence of the empirical world cannot be conceived without a creator who is all-knowing and all-powerful. The creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the world are overseen by *īśvara*. *īśvara* is the purest manifestation of Brahman. Brahman with the creative power of *māyā* is *īśvara*. *Māyā* has both individual (*vyāṣṭi*) and cosmic (*samaṣṭi*) aspects. The cosmic aspect belongs to one *īśvara*, and the individual aspect, *avidya*, belongs to many *jīvas*. But the difference is that *īśvara* is not controlled by *māyā*, whereas the *jīva* is overpowered by *avidya*. *Māyā* is responsible for the creation of the world. *Avidya* is responsible for confounding the distinct existence between self and the not-self. With this confounding, *avidya* conceals Brahman and constructs the world. As a result the *jīva* functions as a doer (*karta*) and enjoyer (*bhokta*) of a limited world. The classical picture may be contrasted with two sub-schools of Advaita Vedānta that arose after Śaṅkara: Bhamati and Vivarana. The primary difference between these two sub-schools is based on the different interpretations for *avidya* and *māyā*. Śaṅkara described *avidya* as beginningless. He considered that to search the origin of *avidya* itself is a process founded on *avidya* and hence will be fruitless. But Śaṅkara's disciples gave greater attention to this concept, and thus originated the two sub-schools. The Bhamati School owes its name to Vacaspati Miśra's (ninth century) commentary on Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya, while the Vivarana School is named after Prakāśātman's (tenth century) commentary on Padmapāda's Pañcapadika, which itself is a commentary on Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya. The major issue that distinguishes Bhamati and Vivarana

schools is their position on the nature and locus of avidya. According to the Bhamati School, the jīva is the locus and object of avidya. According to the Vivarana School, Brahman is the locus of avidya. The Bhamati School holds that Brahman can never be the locus of avidya but is the controller of it as īśvara. Belonging to jīva, tula-avidya, or individual ignorance performs two functions – veils Brahman, and projects (vikṣepa) a separate world. Mula-avidya (“root ignorance”) is the universal ignorance that is equivalent to Māyā, and is controlled by īśvara. The Vivarana School holds that since Brahman alone exists, Brahman is the locus and object of avidya. With the help of epistemological discussions, the non-reality of the duality between Brahman and world is established. The Vivarana School responds to the question regarding Brahman’s existence as both “pure consciousness” and “universal ignorance” by claiming that valid cognition (prama) presumes avidya, in the everyday world, whereas pure consciousness is the essential nature of Brahman.

#### b. Three Planes of Existence

There are three planes of existence according to classical Advaita Vedānta: the plane of absolute existence (paramarthika satta), the plane of worldly existence (vyavaharika satta) which includes this world and the heavenly world, and the plane of illusory existence (pratibhāsika existence). The two latter planes of existence are a function of māyā and are thus illusory to some extent. A pratibhāsika existence, such as objects presented in a mirage, is less real than a worldly existence. Its corresponding unreality is, however, different from that which characterizes the absolutely nonexistent or the impossible, such as a sky-lotus (a lotus that grows in the sky) or the son of a barren woman. The independent existence of a mirage and the world, both of which are due to a certain causal condition, ceases once the causal condition change. The causal condition is avidya, or ignorance. The independent existence and experience of the world ceases to be with the gain of knowledge of Brahman. The nature of knowledge of Brahman is that “I am pure consciousness.” The self-ignorance of the jīva (individuated self) that “I am limited” is replaced by the Brahman-knowledge that “I am

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everything,” accompanied by a re-identification of the self with the transcendental Brahman. The knower of Brahman sees the one non-plural reality in everything. He or she no longer gives an absolute reality to independent and limited existence of the world, but experiences the world as a creative expression of pure consciousness. The states of waking (jāgrat), dreaming (svapna) and deep sleep (susupti) all point to the fourth nameless state turiya, pure consciousness, which is to be realized as the true self. Pure consciousness is not only pure existence but also the ultimate bliss which is experienced partially during deep sleep. Hence we wake up refreshed.

### 3. Epistemology

The Advaita tradition puts forward three lesser tests of truth: correspondence, coherence, and practical efficacy. These are followed by a fourth test of truth: epistemic-nonsublatability (abādhyatvam orbādhaṛāhityam). According to the Vedānta Paribhāṣa (a classical text of Advaita Vedānta) “that knowledge is valid which has for its object something that is nonsublated.” Nonsublatability is considered as the ultimate criterion for valid knowledge. The master test of epistemic-nonsublatability inspires a further constraint: foundationality (anadhigatatvam, lit. “of not known earlier”). This last criterion of truth is the highest standard that virtually all knowledge claims fail, and thus it is the standard for absolute, or unqualified, knowledge, while the former criteria are amenable to mundane, worldly knowledge claims. According to Advaita Vedānta, a judgment is true if it remains unsublated. The commonly used example that illustrates epistemic-nonsublatability is the rope that appears as a snake from a distance (a stock example in Indian philosophy). The belief that one sees a snake in this circumstance is erroneous according to Advaita Vedānta because the snake belief (and the visual presentation of a snake) is sublated into the judgment that what one is really seeing is a rope. Only wrong cognitions can be sublated. The condition of foundationality disqualifies memory as a means of knowledge. Memory is the recollection of something already known and is thus derivable and not foundational. Only genuine knowledge of the Self, according to Advaita Vedānta, passes the test of foundationality: it

is born of immediate knowledge (aparokṣa jñāna) and not memory (smṛti). Six natural ways of knowing are accepted as valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa) by Advaita Vedānta: perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumāna), verbal testimony (śabda), comparison (upamāna), postulation (arthapatti) and non-apprehension (anupalabdhi). The pramāṇas do not contradict each other and each of them presents a distinct kind of knowledge. Nonfoundational knowledge of Brahman cannot be had by any means but through Śruti, which is the supernaturally revealed text in the form of the Vedas (of which the Upaniṣads form the most philosophical portion). Inference and the other means of knowledge cannot determinately reveal the truth of Brahman on their own. However, Advaitins recognize that in addition to Śruti, one requires yukti (reason) and anubhava (personal experience) to actualize knowledge of Brahman. Mokṣa (liberation), which consists in the cessation of the cycle of life and death, governed by the karma of the individual self, is the result of knowledge of Brahman. As Brahman is identical with the universal Self, and this Self is always self-conscious, it would seem that knowledge of Brahman is Self-knowledge, and that this Self-knowledge is ever present. If so, it seems that ignorance is impossible. Moreover, in the adhyāsa bhāṣya (his preamble to the commentary on the Brahma Sūtra) Śaṅkara says that the pure subjectivity—the Self or Brahman—can never become the object of knowledge, just as the object can never be the subject. This would suggest that Self-knowledge that one gains in order to achieve liberation is impossible. Śaṅkara's response to this problem is to regard knowledge of Brahman that is necessary for liberation, derived from scripture, to be distinct from the Self-consciousness of Brahman, and rather a practical knowledge that removes ignorance, which is an obstacle to the luminance of the ever-present self-consciousness of Brahman that does pass the test of foundationality. Ignorance, in turn, is not a feature of the ultimate Self on his account, but a feature of the individual self that is ultimately unreal. Four factors are involved in an external perception: the physical object, the sense organ, the mind (antaḥkarana) and the cognizing self (pramata). The cognizing self alone is self-luminous and the rest of the three factors are not self-luminous being devoid of consciousness. It is

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the mind and the sense organ which relates the cognizing self to the object. The self alone is the knower and the rest are knowable as objects of knowledge. At the same time the existence of mind is indubitable. It is the mind that helps to distinguish between various perceptions. It is because of the self-luminous (svata-prakāṣa) nature of pure consciousness that the subject knows and the object is known. In his commentary to Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Śaṅkara says that “consciousness is the very nature of the Self and inseparable from It.” The cognizing self, the known object, the object-knowledge, and the valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa) are essentially the manifestations of one pure consciousness.

### a. Error, True Knowledge and Practical Teachings

Śaṅkara uses adhyāsa to indicate illusion – illusory objects of perception as well as illusory perception. Two other words which are used to denote the same are adhyāropa (superimposition) and avabhāsa (appearance). According to Śaṅkara the case of illusion involves both superimposition and appearance. Adhyāsa, as he says in his preamble to the Brahma Sūtra, is the apprehension of something as something else with two kinds of confounding such as the object and its properties. The concept of illusion, in Advaita Vedānta, is significant because it leads to the theory of a “real substratum.” The illusory object, like the real object, has a definite locus. According to Śaṅkara, adhyāsa is not possible without a substratum. Padmapāda says in Pañcapādika that adhyāsa without a substratum has never been experienced and is inconceivable. Vacaspati affirms that there cannot be a case of illusion where the substratum is fully apprehended or not apprehended at all. The Advaita theory of error (known as anirvacanīya khyāti, or the apprehension of the indefinable) holds that the perception of the illusory object is a product of the ignorance about the substratum. Śaṅkara characterizes illusion in two ways in his commentary on the Brahma Sūtra. The first is an appearance of something previously experienced—like memory—in something else (smṛtirupaḥ paratra pūrva dr̥ṣṭaḥ avabhāsaḥ). The second is a minimalist characterization—the appearance of one thing with the properties of another (anyasya anyadharma avabhāsatam. Śaṅkara devotes his

introduction to his commentary on the Brahma Sūtra, to the idea of adhyāsa to account for illusory perception relating to both everyday experience and also transcendent entities. This introduction, called the adhyāsa bhāṣya (commentary on illusion) presents a realistic position and a seemingly dualistic metaphysics: “Since it is an established fact that the object and subject which are presented as yusmad—‘you’ /the other, and asmad—‘me’ are by very nature contradictory, and their qualities also contradictory, as light and darkness they cannot be identical.” Plurality and illusion, on this account, are constructed out of the cognitive superimposition of the category of objects on pure subjectivity. While two conceptual categories are superimposed to create objects of illusion, the Advaita Vedānta view is that the only possible way of metaphysically describing the object of illusion is with the help of a characteristic, other than those of non-existence and existence, which is termed as the “indeterminate” (anirvacaniya) which also somehow connects the two usual possibilities of existence and non-existence. The object of illusion cannot be logically defined as real or unreal. Error is the apprehension of the indefinable. It is due to the “illegitimate transference” of the qualities of one order to another. Perceptual illusion forms the bridge between Advaita’s soteriology, on the one hand, and its theory of experience, on the other. The relationship between the experience of liberation in this life (mukti) and everyday experience is viewed as analogous to the relation between veridical and delusive sense perception. Śaṅkara formulates a theory of knowledge in accordance with his soteriological views. Śaṅkara’s interest is thus not to build a theory of error and leave it by itself but to connect it to his theory of the ultimate reality of Self-Consciousness which is the only state which can be true according to his twin criteria for truth (non-sublatibility and foundationality). The characteristic of indeterminacy that qualifies objects of illusion is that which is truly neither real nor unreal but appears as a real locus. It serves as a stark contrast to the soteriological goal of the Self, which is truly real and determinate. On the basis of his theory of knowledge, Śaṅkara elucidates the fourfold (mental and physical) practices or qualifications—sādāna catuṣṭaya—to aid in the achievement of liberation: (i) the discrimination (viveka) between the permanent (nitya)

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and the impermanent (anitya) objects of experience; (ii) dispassion towards the enjoyment of fruits of action here and in heaven; (iii) accomplishment of means of discipline such as calmness, mental control etc.; (iv) a longing for liberation. In his commentary to the Brahma Sūtra, Śaṅkara says that the inquiry into Brahman could start only after acquiring these fourfold qualifications. The concept of liberation (mokṣa) in Advaita is cashed out in terms of Brahman. The pathways to liberations are defined by the removal of self-ignorance that is brought about by the removal of mithyajñāna (erroneous knowledge claims). This is captured in the formula of one Advaitin: “[He] is never born again who knows that he is the only one in all beings like the ether and that all beings are in him” (Upadesa Sahasri XVII.69). Many thinkers in the history of Indian philosophy have held that there is an important connection between action and liberation. In contrast, Śaṅkara rejects the theory of jñāna-karma-samuccaya, the combination of karma (Vedic duties) with knowledge of Brahman leading to liberation. Knowledge of Brahman alone is the route to liberation for Śaṅkara. The role of action (karma) is to purify the mind (antaḥkaranasuddhi) and make it free from likes and dislikes (raga dveṣa vimuktaḥ). Such a mind will be instrumental to knowledge of Brahman.

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### 8.3 AVIDYA: IN BUDDHIST TRADITIONS

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Advaita Vedānta is one version of Vedānta. Vedānta is nominally a school of Indian philosophy, although in reality it is a label for any hermeneutics that attempts to provide a consistent interpretation of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads or, more formally, the canonical summary of the Upaniṣads, Bādarāyaṇa’s Brahma Sūtra. Advaita is often translated as “non-dualism” though it literally means “non-secondness.” Although Śaṅkara is regarded as the promoter of Advaita Vedānta as a distinct school of Indian philosophy, the origins of this school predate Śaṅkara. The existence of an Advaita tradition is acknowledged by Śaṅkara in his commentaries. The names of Upaniṣadic teachers such as Yajñavalkya, Uddalaka, and Bādarāyaṇa, the author of the Brahma Sūtra, could be considered as representing the thoughts of early Advaita. The essential



philosophy of Advaita is an idealist monism, and is considered to be presented first in the Upaniṣads and consolidated in the Brahma Sūtra by this tradition. According to Advaita metaphysics, Brahman—the ultimate, transcendent and immanent God of the latter Vedas—appears as the world because of its creative energy (māyā). The world has no separate existence apart from Brahman. The experiencing self (jīva) and the transcendental self of the Universe (ātman) are in reality identical (both are Brahman), though the individual self seems different as space within a container seems different from space as such. These cardinal doctrines are represented in the anonymous verse “brahma satyam jagan mithya; jīvo brahmaiva na aparah” (Brahman is alone True, and this world of plurality is an error; the individual self is not different from Brahman). Plurality is experienced because of error in judgments (mithya) and ignorance (avidya). Knowledge of Brahman removes these errors and causes liberation from the cycle of transmigration and worldly bondage.

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## 8.4 ACETANAMAYA AS THE MATERIAL CAUSE

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The "**four causes**" are elements of an influential principle in Aristotelian thought whereby explanations of change or movement are classified into four fundamental types of answer to the question "why?". Aristotle wrote that "we do not have knowledge of a thing until we have grasped its why, that is to say, its cause." While there are cases where identifying a "cause" is difficult, or in which "causes" might merge, Aristotle held that his four "causes" provided an analytical scheme of general applicability.

*Aitia*, from Greek αἰτία, was the word that Aristotle used to refer to the causal explanation that has traditionally been translated as "cause", but this peculiar specialized, technical, philosophical usage of the word "cause" does not correspond exactly to its most usual applications in everyday English language.<sup>[4]</sup> The translation of Aristotle's αἰτία that is nearest to current ordinary language could be "question" or "explanation". In this article, the traditional philosophical usage of the

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word "cause" will be employed, but the reader should not be misled by confusing this technical usage with current ordinary language.

Aristotle held that there were four kinds of answers to "why" questions (in *Physics* II, 3, and *Metaphysics* V, 2):

- **Matter:** a change or movement's **material cause** is the aspect of the change or movement which is determined by the material that composes the moving or changing things. For a table, that might be wood; for a statue, that might be bronze or marble.
- **Form:** a change or movement's **formal cause** is a change or movement caused by the arrangement, shape or appearance of the thing changing or moving. Aristotle says for example that the ratio 2:1, and number in general, is the cause of the octave.
- **Agent:** a change or movement's **efficient or moving cause** consists of things apart from the thing being changed or moved, which interact so as to be an agency of the change or movement. For example, the efficient cause of a table is a carpenter, or a person working as one, and according to Aristotle the efficient cause of a boy is a father.
- **End or purpose:** a change or movement's **final cause** is that for the sake of which a thing is what it is. For a seed, it might be an adult plant. For a sailboat, it might be sailing. For a ball at the top of a ramp, it might be coming to rest at the bottom.

The four "causes" are not mutually exclusive. For Aristotle, several answers to the question "why" have to be given to explain a phenomenon and especially the actual configuration of an object. For example, if asking why a table is such and such, a complete explanation, taking into account the four causes, would sound like this: This table is solid and brown because it is made of wood (matter), it does not collapse because it has four legs of equal length (form), it is as such because a carpenter made it starting from a tree (agent), it has these dimensions because it is to be used by men and women (end).

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## 8.5 SAGUNA BRAHMAN (ISVARA) AS THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE

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### THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The transcendent Brahman does not bear any relation to the universe. The nature of its existence is such that it cannot have distinctions within it or outside it. It is free from the threefold differentiation: Sajatiya, Vijatiya and Svagata. It is beyond the world in every sense of the term, and cannot be discovered in anything that we can hope to know. The perishable does not satisfy our quest for the eternal. Brahman is Nishprapancha, Prapanchopasama, a being which is free from the universe, and in which the universe ceases to be. But without holding allegiance to the existence of Brahman, the world cannot be. The world is dependent on Brahman. In this respect, the names and forms and activities of the world are directed by Brahman; the world automatically receives, in different degrees, inspiration and reality from the existence, consciousness and bliss of Brahman. Brahman envisaged thus by the individuals, as the supreme Cause and the Director of the universe, is Isvara, the Cosmic Being. Isvara is omnipresent, for He supports and animates every speck of creation by His immanence. He is omniscient, for He has a direct intuition of all things, manifest and unmanifest. He is also the Divine Self and the Inner Ruler of the cosmos. The knowledge which Isvara has of the universe is not relational, not brought about by a mental function, and does not labour under the limitations of space and time, but immediate in its essence and spirit. It is not any outside knowledge of an object, but knowledge as the being of the object itself. He is omnipotent, for He has the power to do, undo or transform the universe as a whole, for the universe is His Body. He is called the Creator of the universe, for it is He that initiates the appearance of all things by the activity of His consciousness. This work of Isvara never comes to a cessation until the universe is withdrawn into Him, and this process is felt and continues in different degrees, in every bit of His creation. He is the Preserver of the universe, as the sustenance of all life requires the operation of His Spirit. His existence and activity are felt by us wherever and whenever we think of Him intensely. He is the

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Destroyer or the final transformer of the universe, into whom the universe is withdrawn in the end, to whom all beings return on the completion of the working out of their deeds in the present cycle. Isvara is the natural and necessary counter-correlative of the world taken as an object of individualistic observation.

The characteristics of Isvara, as enumerated above, are the *Tatasthalakshanas* or the accidental attributes of Brahman. The appearance of Brahman as Isvara continues as long as there is the experience of the world and the individual. The fact that there is an observer implies that there is an external world. And the fact of the existence of an objective world, again, entails the recognition of a supreme Creator and Director of beings. If there is an individual, there ought to be a world, and if there is a world, there ought to be God. Isvara, Jagat and Jiva—God, the world and the individual—go together, one implying the others, and not being possible without the others. The three principles are the basic contents of all relative experience.

The concept of God involves certain unavoidable presuppositions, if it is to stand the test of reason. We are obliged to hold that God must be one, and not more than one. A perfect God ought to be self-dependent, and a plurality or even a duality of gods would introduce a kind of limitation and dependence. A universe with many gods cannot be governed harmoniously, for there would be conflict of purpose among them. The system and order in Nature demand that the Sovereign of the universe must be one. God ought to be an uncaused reality, and though everything of which God is the cause has to be in space and time, God, who is the causeless Cause, is above space and time. The sequence of effects which proceed from God is more logical than chronological. As the final goal of all beings, God directs all movements towards Himself by an upward pull, as it were, by being the determining destination of the entire creation. He is the fulfilment of all aspirations and needs, and the realisation of Him is the great blessedness of any mortal. God has a direct knowledge of the inner workings of Nature, in their completest detail. Though He transcends all individual values, He is the

conservation of all values, and constitutes their eternal home. In Him all values exist in their truest essence. Not only this, God Himself is the highest value and end of universal existence. To realise Him is to rise to the centre of the cosmos and to rule it with unlimited knowledge and suzerainty. Man realises his ideals more and more as and when his consciousness approximates, in greater and greater degree, the being of God. The deeper the realisation, the more inward is the manner in which the values are enjoyed in a condition which tends to advance towards infinitude, in which the remoteness of ideals gets expanded into a boundless Spirit, with neither inside nor outside. God is the be-all and the end-all of creation.

### **ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**

St. Thomas Aquinas advances five proofs for the existence of God. The first is the argument from motion, which holds that all motion presupposes the existence of something which is not itself subject to motion. Motion implies a motionless ground. The motion that characterises the world ought to be logically preceded by an unmoved Mover, an ultimate being who is not moved by anything else, who ought to be the basis of the motion of all things. The second is the causal argument that, as every effect has a cause, the causal chain would lead to an endless regress if a final uncaused Cause is not posited. Without the admission of such a Cause, the very concept of causality, which holds sway over the world, would lose its meaning. The final cause has, therefore, no other cause outside itself, it is the final form without matter in it. The third is the cosmological argument which points out that all contingent events necessarily imply an eternal substance which itself is not contingent. The very consciousness of finitude gives rise to the consciousness of the infinite. The fourth is the henological argument, according to which the concept of more and less in the things of this world signifies the existence of a maximum value whose manifestation in various degrees creates in us and in things the idea of more or less of value. The various grades of relative perfection and imperfection in the world indicate that there ought to be an absolute state whose partial revelations here give meaning to these relative expressions. The fifth is

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the teleological argument or the argument from design and adaptation, which infers the existence of God as the supreme intelligence, on the basis of the purposive adaptation seen in Nature and the ordered design for which it appears to be meant. The purpose that is discovered in Nature cannot be accounted for otherwise than by admitting the presence of a supremely intelligent Creator, a wise Architect of the universe. The different parts of the universe harmoniously fit in with one another's purposes, and adjust and adapt themselves for an end beyond themselves. All this shows that there ought to be a purposive Agent who has brought about all this adaptation, system and order in creation. God, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, is, therefore, One, the unmoved Mover, the causeless Cause, the eternal Substance, the highest Perfection, supreme Intelligence, and the Maximum of being.

In his treatise on divine government, given in his *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas says: "I answer that certain ancient philosophers denied the government of the world, saying that all things happened by chance. But such an opinion can be refuted as impossible in two ways. First, by the observation of things themselves. For we observe that in Nature things happen always or nearly always for the best; which would not be the case unless some sort of Providence directed Nature towards good as an end. And this is to govern. Therefore, the unfailing order we observe in things is the sign of their being governed. For instance, if we were to enter a well-ordered house, we would gather from the order manifested in the house the notion of a governor, as Cicero says, quoting Aristotle. Secondly, this is clear from a consideration of the divine goodness which, as we have said above, is the cause of the production of things in being. For, as it belongs to the best to produce the best, it is not fitting that the supreme goodness of God should produce things without giving them their perfection. Now a thing's ultimate perfection consists in the attainment of its end. Therefore, it belongs to the divine goodness, as it brought things into being, so to lead them to their end. And this is to govern." "Hence, as the movement of the arrow towards a definite end shows clearly that it is directed by someone with knowledge, so the unvarying course of natural things which are without knowledge shows clearly that the world is governed by some Reason."

St. Thomas argues that as the beginning of the universe is outside itself, the end of all things in the universe should be a transcendent good which is not to be sought within the universe. The highest good is the highest end of all beings. As the particular end of anything is a particular form of good, so the universal end of all things ought to be the universal good, which can only be one. And this good has to be identified with God, for it is the good of and for itself by virtue of its essence and existence, whereas a particular good is good only by participation. Every form of good that is conceivable in the universe is, according to Aquinas, a good only by sharing in a higher good. The good of the whole world cannot be within itself, but ought to transcend it. Everything under the sun, in the opinion of Aquinas, is generated and corrupted in accordance with the sun's movement. A certain amount of chance seems to characterise all that is mundane. And the very fact that an element of chance is discovered in things here on earth proves that they are subject to a government of a higher order. For, unless corruptible things were governed by a higher being, there would be no order but only chaos, no definiteness but only indeterminacy everywhere. Things lacking knowledge, naturally, get guided by a being endowed with knowledge. All activity in the universe is intentional and purposive, directed by the supreme decree of God.

Swami Sivananda, accepting the famous arguments for the existence of God,—the ontological, the cosmological and the theological,—would endorse the theological proofs of St. Thomas Aquinas. The feeling of the 'I', according to him, is rooted in an existence which cannot be doubted. The existence of the Self is existence in general, and is enjoyed by everyone. The Self of everyone bears testimony to the existence of the Self which comprehends the entire universe. This universal Self is God. Though one is encased in this finite body, one can think and feel: 'I am infinite', through an irresistible urge which tends to direct all thought towards the achievement of such being. Such an urge from within cannot possibly be, unless there is a reality to which it points. "You always feel: 'I exist.' You can never deny your existence. Existence is Brahman, your own inner immortal Self." "Though I am encased in this finite body, though I am imperfect and mortal on account of egoism, I can think of

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the infinite, the perfect, the immortal being. This idea of the infinite can arise only from an infinite being” (Wisdom Nectar, p. 188).

Swami Sivananda observes that the concept of the finite posits the infinite. “Everything is changing in this world. There must be a substratum that is unchanging. We cannot think of a changing thing without thinking of something which is unchanging. Forms are finite. You cannot think of a finite object without thinking of something beyond.” This has similarity to the argument for the existence of the infinite from the contingent nature of things. Further he adds: “There is beauty, intelligence, luminosity, law, order, harmony, in spite of apparent disorder and disharmony. There must be an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent being who governs and controls this vast universe” (Ibid. pp. 188-89). The world has the character of an effect, which is observable from the vicissitudes it constantly undergoes, and the effect always attempts to find rest in its cause. The human mind feels itself constrained to carry the causal argument to its logical limits and posit at one end of the series a cause of all things in the world of time, though it is itself outside all temporal events. Every visible cause has another higher cause which is more pervasive and enduring. God is the name we give to the highest cause. “In this world of phenomena, there is a cause for everything. The law of cause and effect operates. There is the cause, the father, for the effect which is the child. There is the cause, the seed, for the effect which is the tree. There is the cause, the potter, for the effect which is the pot.” “You see this world. There must be a cause for this world, which is an effect. That causeless cause is God or the creator” (Ibid. p. 189).

Udayana, the great Naiyayika, offers the following orthodox proofs for the existence of God:

The world of perception is of the nature of an effect, and every effect must have a cause. We have to infer the cause of the world, as the world has a tendency to reduce itself to its elements. The composite parts get disintegrated and return to their causes, and the ultimate cause of all composite substances should be one that is above all effected things. And



this cause must have a direct knowledge of the material causes of the world. Such an intelligent being must be God.

The conjunction of the causal elements into effects requires an intelligent operator. The combination of atoms into groups at the time of creation cannot but be the work of a purposive conscious being. The atoms do not combine pell-mell or at random. There is to be seen the hand of a wise organiser behind the systematic grouping of the ultimate atoms into dyads and molecules. That final organiser is God.

We observe that the things of the universe are well-supported; its parts, like the planets etc., are held together, so that they do not collapse. The holder of such different parts in balance, to constitute a system, must be God Himself, for nothing that is in the universe can support the universe. The world is observed to dissolve itself into subtler causes. The dissolution of the effect into its cause means that there is a source into which the effect returns. The ultimate source of the universe, then, should be beyond the universe, and it is God.

No knowledge can come to us of the different things here, unless there is a source of this knowledge. The origin of all knowledge should be omniscient, and, consequently, omnipotent. Such a being is not to be seen in this universe, and so it must be outside it. This being is God.

The Vedas are held to be valid and authoritative from time immemorial. Such authoritativeness of the Vedas as true and valid knowledge cannot be without an author behind them, who ought to be an all-knower. This all-knower is God.

The Vedas cannot have any human author, because they deal with truths which no human being knows. Hence the author of the Vedas ought to be a superhuman being, and this being is God.

A sentence, as it is known to us in the world, has a composer who joins the words together and frames it. In like manner, the sentences of the Vedas consisting of words should have a composer, and he cannot be anyone else than God.

The size of a dyad or a molecule depends on the number of the atoms that go to constitute it. This requisite number of the atoms that go to form a particular compound could not have been originally the object of the perception of any human being; so its contemplator must be God. The

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Naiyayikas also add that the fruit of an individual's actions does not always lie within the reach of the individual who is the agent. There ought to be, therefore, a dispenser of the fruits of actions, and this supreme dispenser is God.

The Yoga system of Patanjali considers God as the unsurpassed seed of omniscience. The possibility of the omniscience and the necessity to admit a source for it leads to the positing of a supreme Being who is unaffected by the changes characterised by affliction, action, fruition and the tendencies in keeping with such fruition. The knowledge which the different individuals are endowed with in this world is not of the same degree; there are grades in the manifestation of knowledge. There is an ascending degree of knowledge, power and happiness in accordance with the extent of the inclusiveness of the contents of knowledge. The greater the extent of the contents, the wider is the knowledge. The various degrees of knowledge in the world suggest a maximum ideal of knowledge, a state of omniscience which ought to be identified with eternal existence. Now this state of omniscience that is compatible with eternity cannot be found in any limited individual, for none here is seen to be all-wise. An omniscient being cannot be any individual, and he can be no other than God. God enjoys the highest perfection, being endowed with the greatest magnitude of knowledge and power. He alone can be omnipotent and be the Universal King.

The Nasadiya-Sukta of the Rig-Veda proclaims that at the beginning of things there was Tamas, darkness pervading everywhere, and in the midst of this universal darkness the Light of the One shone, all by itself. This glorious Intelligence is to be identified with the Self-born, Svayambhu, having no cause outside it. This Self-born emerged from the primordial Tamas, by means of its Tapas of untarnished knowledge, and projected this variegated world of individuals. "Darkness there was; in the beginning all this was a sea without light; the germ that lay covered by the husk, that One was born by the power of Tapas" (Rig-Veda, X. 129). The Rig-Veda extols the Hiranyagarbha as the first God of beings. "Hiranyagarbha was present in the beginning; when born, he was the sole lord of created beings; he upheld this earth and heaven,—to which God we offer worship with oblation. (To Him) who is the giver of soul-force,

the giver of strength, who is contemplated by everything, whom even the gods obey, whose shadow is immortality as well as death,—to which God we offer worship with oblation” (X. 121). “With eyes everywhere, with faces everywhere, with hands everywhere, with feet everywhere, He traverses with His arms and with His swift-moving (feet), and exists as the One God, generating heaven and earth” (X. 81). “He who is our parent, the creator, the ordainer, who knows our abodes and all beings, who is the name-giver to the gods,—He is One; Him other beings come to inquire” (X. 82). The Purusha-Sukta refers to the great Lord as encompassing everything. “Thousand-headed was the Purusha, thousand-eyed and thousand-legged. He, covering the earth on all sides, stretched Himself beyond it by ten fingers’ length. All this is the Purusha alone, whatever was and whatever shall be... One-fourth of Him all beings are, three-fourth of Him is immortal in the heaven” (X. 90). The Absolute itself appears as Isvara. “From Him Virat was born, and from Virat, again, Purusha.” Isvara is the body as well as the soul of the world.

Following this great theme of the Veda, Manu, at the commencement of his code of law, states: “In the beginning all this was covered over by darkness, unknowable, indefinable, unarguable, indeterminable; the universe appeared to be in a state of sleep, as it were. Then, the Self-originated Divine Being, Himself unmanifested, manifested this universe with its great elements etc., by tearing the veil of this darkness and revealing the forms of His creative energy. He, who is not to be beheld by the senses, who is subtle, the unmanifest, the everlasting, the unthinkable, the very embodiment of all beings,—He, of Himself, rose above this primordial darkness” (Manu-Smriti, I. 5-7). The Srimad Bhagavata records the spirit of this doctrine in the words of the Lord Himself: “I alone was in the beginning of things, the one beyond the manifest as well as the unmanifest, and there was nothing else. And I alone shall be at the end of things. I alone am all this that is manifest; and whatever remains other than this, that also is I Myself alone” (II. ix. 32). The Lord speaks in the Bhagavad Gita: “I am the Vedic rite, I the sacrifice, I the food offered to the manes, I am the herbs and the medicines, I am the sacred formula and the hymn; I am the clarified butter (offered in sacrifices); I am the consecrated fire, I the oblation. I

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am the Father of this world, the Mother, Supporter, the Grandfather; I am the object to be known, I the purifier (of all things), the syllable OM, and also the sacred lore of the Rik, the Sama and the Yajus; the Goal, the Sustainer, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the Dissolution, the Basis, the Storehouse, the Imperishable Seed. I give heat, I sent forth rain, and also withhold it; I am immortality and also death; I am being and also non-being, O Arjuna!” (IX. 16-19). Isvara is described in the Gita as having manifested Himself here as the all-destroying Time.

### **THE LIMITATIONS OF REASON**

The true nature of God and His creation cannot be intellectually comprehended, for logic is a proud child of the dualist prejudice. If God alone is all this world, the relation between Him and the world no mortal can hope to know. Man’s idea of God is highly defective, for God, as man understands Him, is relative to the appearance of the world. God is a pure subject opposed to a world of creation set before Him as an object cannot be absolute; and if He is not thus opposed, He ceases to have any external relation to the world. If God is a universal consciousness having the universe as His object, He cannot be connected with it except by a spatio-temporal knowledge. Such a knowing process, however, is inadmissible in the case of God, for He is said to be untouched by the vitiating divisions of space and time. But without this division, God cannot be distinguished from the Absolute which will not brook any objectivation of itself. The gulf between the infinite Purusha of the Sankhya and the Prakriti which vies with the former in almost every respect is an instance of the defeat which the human intellect has to suffer when it attempts to visualise a reality which is non-mediate related to the universe and yet is not the same as the universe. The God who is in man’s mind cannot be freed from the difficulty of having to melt down to undifferentiated being when His relation to the world is closely examined. Isvara’s existence happens to be relative to the demands of His self-manifesting work. He is, as long as the universe is. Further, we cannot say that God created the world at any period of time. If the creative act is not in time, it being the condition even of time, there

would be no creation of a temporal world. Creation is a process, and all process is in time. There is no process that can be dovetailed with eternity. To cause anything, God may have to descend into time, and a descent into time is a descent into finitude, change and a veritable self-destruction. If God is to bear any relation to phenomena, He has to shed His eternal nature first. But somehow He creates and sustains the world without losing His eternity. This the human intellect cannot understand. The Absolute sports in the relative. The individuals of the world arise as appearances participating in a relative interdependence of existence and nature. If there is no child, there is no parent, too. Isvara becomes an object of the notion of the Jiva, and a subject with the world as a predicate attached to it.

The logical character of truth and reality attributed to Isvara does not look consistent with our ascribing to Him the ethical character of goodness, the aesthetic character of beauty and the religious character of grace, all which carry an individualistic purport. If Isvara is the all, such values turn to be different from what they mean to us here in this world. And why has Isvara created the world? It cannot be for His satisfaction, for He has no wish or desire to fulfil. It cannot be with a view to dispensing justice or showing mercy to others, for there are no others, as all beings are subsequent to the creative act. It cannot be a play of Isvara, for play is normally supposed to be the result of a need felt within to direct outside the excess of energy in the psycho-physical organism, to overcome fatigue or boredom, or to replenish the system with fresh energy after an exhausting work. Isvara can have no such needs, for He is not an individual organism. If Isvara is only a witness of the sports of Prakriti which moves and acts at the inspiration received from His mere existence, He would have a determining element outside Him, which would prevent Him from being an absolute monarch. Isvara is Brahman envisaged by our experiential conditions in relation to a world of change. The question of creation is restricted to the world of the senses and the intellect, and the answer to it cannot but be empirically bound. There cannot be a correct answer to an erroneous question. That the world is, is a belief of ours, and the whole problem of creation hinges on how we react to our environment as dismembered bodies in a cosmic society.

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The futility of the logical methods in determining the nature of Isvara does not imply, however, that there is no Intelligence underlying the world and influencing it throughout. For a denial of such a being would entail a denial of the world, and, consequently, our own selves as individuals. Certain inherent defects in our faculties of knowing prevent us from comprehending transcendent truths in a proper manner. It does not follow that the invisible is always non-existent. If we are, the world is; and if the world is, Isvara also is. If Isvara is not, the world also is not; and we as individuals, too, cannot be. There is reciprocal dependence of the existence of these three principles always. Our concepts are relative; the absolutely real is only Brahman. But as long as we accept our own existence as diversified elements in a world, a sovereign being giving meaning to life cannot be doubted. Our own conscious powers within us urge us to accept that Isvara must be. The scriptures corroborate our inner spiritual aspirations and extol an Isvara who is the creator of this world. Swami Sivananda countenances the Lila theory of creation, not with a view to offering it as any final explanation of the world, but to bringing out the idea that the creative act of Isvara is free from any taint of selfishness or ulterior motive, and to suggest that it is beyond the purview of the human mind. It is the nature of Isvara to create, to manifest and unfold the world; there is no other reason for it that is humanly conceivable. To show that Isvara has no personal interest whatsoever, it is also added that He only helps creation, which is really a manifestation or expression of the dormant potencies of the individuals who, not being liberated at the end of the previous cycle, existed in a latent form during the dissolution of the universe after that cycle. Rain may help the growth of a plant, but the nature of the plant depends on the seed from which it grows. The sun may help the activities of the world, but he remains unaffected by the results of such activities.

The theory of the creation of the world by Isvara is not to be taken as any statement of ultimate fact, but is meant to serve as a working hypothesis introduced to bring out the idea of the non-difference of the world from Brahman. Srishti or creation, and Pravesa or the entrance of Isvara into the world in His immanence, are Arthavadas or eulogical concepts intended to bring home to the mind of man the fact of the secondlessness

of Brahman and the total dependence of the world on Brahman. No explanation of the why or the how of creation, and no concept of Isvara as the supreme Ruler of the world, can be finally satisfactory, for such statements and concepts are based on a false faith in the individuality of the self and the variety of the world of experience. But they are serviceable as a *modus operandi* in directing the individual from his ignorant prejudices of a bodily existence to the splendour of the Absolute. Isvara is sometimes said to be supreme Self-consciousness. But the Self-conscious Brahman would require something as an other-than-itself, at least space, to make such a condition possible. Brahman does not stand in need of knowing itself either as a subject or an object. But it has somehow to be related to the world. The result is Isvara. How such a relation is possible, the intellect is not fortunate enough to know. It calls this mystery 'Maya'.

#### **THE INNER RULER AND CONTROLLER**

The nature of Isvara as portrayed by Swami Sivananda in his *Philosophy and Teachings* (pp. 107-12) can be presented as follows: If we look at reality from the practical point of view or *Vyavaharika-Drishti*, Isvara may be regarded as the cause, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world, and therefore as an omnipotent and omniscient being. Reality here appears to be possessed of all qualities, is conceived to be *Saguna*, and in this aspect it is called Isvara. Swami Sivananda does not appear to make in his writings the usual technical distinction between *Saguna-Brahman* and *Isvara*, as emphasised in certain texts of the Vedanta. *Isvara* becomes the object of the adoration of pious devotees. He is endowed with all the good and glorious attributes that one can think of as raised to the degree of infinity. The *Saguna-Brahman* and the *Nirguna-Brahman* are not two Brahman, but one and the same reality looked at from two different standpoints, the lower or the *Vyavaharika* and the higher or the *Paramarthika*. *Isvara* is *Sarvajna* or all-knowing, and is the source of all powers. He is the Soul of all Nature, the animating breath of all beings. He is the cause from which appears the origin, the sustenance and the dissolution of the world. Brahman conceived as Cause is *Isvara*. He is

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above all evils and is the immanent Spirit or the Antaryamin pervading, maintaining and vibrating the whole universe as its very Self.

The Nirguna-Brahman is not the antithesis of Saguna-Brahman, but is the essence of the latter. Saguna-Brahman or Isvara is the material cause as well as the efficient cause of all things, associated differently with Tamas and Sattva. Brahman does not change itself into the universe, but the latter emerges from Isvara and exists in Him. Isvara becomes the Cause through His inscrutable power of self-expression. It is the principle of cosmic appearance that hides the real and manifests the unreal. By means of it Isvaratva is falsely superimposed on Brahman. But this superimposition is real to the Jivas, and so Isvara also is real to them. As the Jiva understands Him, Isvara is unproduced, has no cause, and is no effect. He Himself is the first Cause without any other origin. The Nirguna-Brahman becomes a personal God when it is viewed from the point of view of the universe. Isvara is consciousness defined by Maya (Maya-Visishtha-Chaitanya). Referring to the Antaryami-Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Swami Sivananda writes: “The Internal Ruler must be Brahman or the Supreme Self. Why so? Because His qualities are mentioned in the passage under discussion. Brahman is the cause of all created things. Universal Rulership is an appropriate attribute of the Supreme Self only. Omnipotence, Selfhood, immortality, etc. can be ascribed only to Brahman. The passage, ‘He whom the earth does not know’, etc., shows that the Inner Ruler is not known by the earth-deity. Therefore, it is obvious that the Inner Ruler is different from that deity. The attributes ‘unseen,’ ‘unheard,’ etc., also, refer to the Supreme Self only, which is destitute of shape and other sensible qualities. He is also described in the section as being all-pervading, as He is inside and is the Ruler within of everything, viz., the earth, the sun, water, fire, sky, ether, the senses, etc. This also can be true only of the highest Self or Brahman. For all the reasons, the Inner Ruler is no other than the Supreme Self or Brahman” (Brahmasutras, Vol. I, p. 110). Here the Supreme Self or Brahman refers to the Absolute regarded as the Lord of the universe,—Isvara.

“God is Truth. God is Love. God is the Light of lights. God is Knowledge. God is the embodiment of Bliss. God is Eternity. God is



Immortality. God is Infinity.” “That secondless Supreme Being; who resides in the chambers of your heart as the Inner Ruler or Controller, who has no beginning, middle or end, is God or Atman, or Brahman or Purusha or Chaitanya or Bhagavan or Purushottama.” “Nitya-Sukha (eternal bliss), Parama-Santi (supreme peace), Nitya-Tripti (eternal satisfaction), Akhanda-Sukha (unbroken joy), and infinite happiness can be had only in God.” “Srishti (creation), Sthiti (preservation), Samhara (destruction), Tirodhana (veiling) and Anugraha (blessing) are the five kinds of action (Pancha-kriya) of God.” “Bhagavan is a term synonymous with God. He who has the six attributes of Jnana (wisdom), Vairagya (dispassion), Yasas (fame), Aisvarya (divine powers), Sri (wealth) and Dharma (righteousness) in their fullest measure, is Bhagavan.” “Sarvajnatva (omniscience), Sarvesvaratva (supreme rulership), Sarvantaryamitva (inner control over all), Sarvakaranatva (causality in the creation, preservation and destruction of everything), Sarvaniyantritva (ability to bring restraint over all), Sarvakartritva (makership of all things), Sarvasaktimattva (omnipotence), Svatantratva (absolute independence) are the seven attributes of God” (Mind and Its Mysteries, pp. 163-64). Isvara does not occupy any region of space, for there is no Loka or world for Isvara. Siva has Kailasaloka, Brahma has Brahmaloaka and Vishnu has Vaikunthaloka. But Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat, as manifestations of Brahman, transcend all planes of existence, while including everything within them.

The apparent differences that we observe in the world among the ways in which the individuals are made to experience pleasure and pain are not to be attributed to Isvara as their Inner Ruler but to the Karmas of the individuals themselves. Injustice and cruelty cannot at any time be imputed to the universal Lord, who is the same to all beings. God, in the process of the dispensation of justice, takes into consideration the nature of the actions done by the different individuals in their previous births. The circumstances in which God places individuals are suited to the nature of their desires. God is not, strictly speaking, any arbitrary creator of the world but the primary principle responsible and necessary for the expression of an environment fitted to the manner in which the Karmas of the individuals have to fructify themselves in various ways. The life of

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an individual is determined, therefore, not by any caprice on the part of Isvara, but by its past deeds,—good, bad or mixed. The question of a first creation of the world by Isvara, where no individuals could have existed to account for the nature of the world to be manifested, cannot arise, for there is no such thing as first creation. The factor of time cannot be set prior to creation. Creation is just an appearance, and when objectively viewed, it can have neither a beginning nor an end. Creation, when it is correctly understood, is not a temporal act or a fiat of the will of any person, but an interrelated appearance in which the observer or the questioner has no right to consider all things except himself as an object to be known and himself as a subject of knowledge. This is the defect of all scientific methods of approach. Empirically viewed, every form of existence has a previous existence, so that manifestation is beginningless. Such an infinite regress is inevitable when the temporal intellect attempts to comprehend Eternity. How appearance is related to reality, the logical intellect cannot know; and when it tries to know that, it is landed in fallacies and absurdities.

The work of creation by Isvara is to be considered His supreme Yoga. His acts receive their significance not through any outward implement but by the self-manifestation of Himself by the immense powers that He possesses. Isvara does not need any instrument to project this universe, for it is in Himself. His Tapas or creative contemplation consists in the concentration of His omniscience, and His power is identical with His knowing and being. Though the limitations of the intellect compel us to conceive of Isvara as a personal God, he should not be compared to the human personality in any way. It is because one cannot say that Isvara creates the world by any outward compulsion or necessity that most philosophers are obliged to view creation as a Lila or sport. Even the Karmas of individuals cannot be any compelling factor forcing Isvara to create the world. His existence is a wonder, His ways are a mystery. Isvara has no desires, but without His primal wish the world cannot be explained. This wish, again, is not directed to the achievement of any purpose that is expected to bring Him personal satisfaction, for a cosmic being can have no motive, whatsoever. No sense of incompleteness on

the part of Isvara can be said to be the cause of the rise of His Will to create. Creation is His nature. God Himself is the universe.

Isvara possesses an innate intuition which grasps all things at once. He can have no prejudices, no presuppositions, no attachments and no aversions, for He has nothing outside Himself. Isvara, in the beginning, sends forth His humanly indeterminable Will to create, in order to provide a field for the working out of the unfructified Karmas of unliberated individuals, who, during the previous dissolution of the universe, were withdrawn into the primordial condition of Prakriti. The Will of Isvara to manifest phenomena sets the whole existence in vibration, and the unfulfilled potencies of the Karmas of individuals are set in motion, and these activated potencies attract towards their centres particles of matter that gravitate to form bodies in the manner required by each group of potencies. These bodies are the Bhogayatanas, receptacles for the enjoyment of pleasure and pain. One's body, senses, vital energy, mind, intellect, pleasure, pain, etc., are all determined by these forces of Karma. Isvara is the cosmic Director of this whole scheme; without His energy and will, no motion whatsoever is possible. Primary creation is the work of Isvara, and it begins with the rise of His Will and ends with the act of His entering into the bodies of all beings and animating their minds and intellects. There is also a secondary creation which is carried on by the individual, after the work of Isvara becomes complete, and this consists in the activity of experiencing the diverse conditions determining the states of waking, dream, sleep and the attainment of final liberation. In Isvara's creation there is freedom, while bondage is always implied in the projection of the individual.

In his Jnana-Yoga, Swami Sivananda confirms the following view: The primitive principle of appearance, which is essentially one, is called Maya when we take into account the predominance of its projecting power, and is called Avidya when we take into consideration the predominance of its enveloping power. Thus the objective principle, of which the projecting power is superior to the concealing power, is the limiting condition of Isvara; and the same principle with its concealing power predominant is the limiting condition of the Jiva (the individual). The Avidya which forms the limiting adjunct of the Jiva is otherwise

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called Ajnana. That the projecting power is predominant in Isvara follows from His being the creator of this great universe. He is always conscious of His free state, and hence is untouched by the concealing power. The Jiva, on the contrary, labours under the ignorance of its true nature, owing to the predominance of the concealing power and the absence of the projecting power, and feels incompetent to create the universe, as Isvara does (p. 98). Here the projecting power referred to is the cosmic power of Isvara and not the individualistic force of distraction which makes one perceive diversity of things. When the Jiva sheds its cramping individuality, it finds itself in an experience of the majestic Unity of beings.

### Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you know about Avidya as cosmic as well as individual?

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2. Discuss the Avidya : In Buddhist traditions.

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3. Discuss the Acetanamaya as the material cause

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4. Describe Saguna Brahman (Isvara) as the efficient cause of the universe

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## 8.6 LET US SUM UP

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According to Samkarā'arya, Brahman is the highest reality. Now a question arises, if Brahman is the highest reality, what is the status of God and what is the object of religious worship and devotion ? In the present chapter the answer of those questions will be discussed. 'The world is real from the empirical stand point. The world is merely a reflection of ultimate reality The world remains real for us until intuitive knowledge of Brahman dawns upon us. Therefore there must be a creator of the world. God is that creator. He is the creator of this world. From the question of creation it is merely a pragmatic problem and God has been brought in only to solve it otherwise there is neither a creation, nor a creator. Sankara's philosophy advocates Satkaryavada. Brahman is the only material and efficient cause. The world of name and form is merely an imposition on Brahman. This illusion is due to ignorance. The aim of Vedānta is to remove this ignorance or Mayā. God is also merely pragmatic postulate. Only truth is the Nirguna Brahman. He is pure, transcendental, free, eternal and unconditional. Brahman conditioned by Maya is Isvara. Isvara is the reflexion of Brahman. Brahman is impersonal, while Isvara is the ultimate person. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. He is the mediating link between the Brahman and the Universe. The world of name and form is present in Him in the seed form. The worship of Isvara leads to gradual liberation. Brahman is the object of immediate experience. Isvara is the object of worship. Brahman is the transcendental truth while Isvara is merely a pragmatic truth. On the transcendental level there is no distinction between Isvara and Brahman, since in it all dualisms of the individual, universe and God disappear.

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## **8.7 KEY WORDS**

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Avidya : the veil of spiritual forgetting, ignorance, or individual illusion

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## **8.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. What is Avidya? Discuss it.
2. Discuss about the creation of Isvara.

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## 8.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 8.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 8.2
2. See Section 8.3
3. See Section 8.4
4. See Section 8.5

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## UNIT 9: VIVARTAVADA

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### STRUCTURE

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Vivartavada

9.3 Three levels of reality (sattatraividhya)

9.4 The theory of sublation (badha)

9.5 Important differences between bhamatiprasthana and vivaranaprasthana

9.6 Avacchedavada, abhasavada, ekajivabada, drstisrstivada and srstidrstivada

9.7 Let us sum up

9.8 Key Words

9.9 Questions for Review

9.10 Suggested readings and references

9.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

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## 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about the Vivartavada
- To discuss the Three levels of reality (sattatraividhya)
- To discuss about the theory of sublation (badha)
- To know the Important differences between bhamatiprasthana and vivaranaprasthana
- To know Avacchedavada, abhasavada, ekajivabada, drstisrstivada and srstidrstivada

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## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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Philosophy in India includes not only morality but religion also. The most characteristic feature of religion is emotion or sentiment associated with a system of beliefs, and as such in the treatment of the dominant schools of philosophy that originated in South India one cannot help emphasizing the important pathological developments of the sentiment of

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devotion. The writer hopes, therefore, that he may be excused both by those who would not look for any emphasis on the aspect of bhakti or religious sentiment and also by those who demand an over-emphasis on the emotional aspect which forms the essence of the Vaisnava religion. He has tried to steer a middle course in the interest of philosophy, which, however, in the schools of thought treated herein is so intimately interwoven with religious sentiment. The writer has probably exceeded the scope of his treatment in dealing with the Arvars, whose writings are in Tamil, but there also he felt that without referring to the nature of the devotional philosophy of the Arvars the treatment of the philosophy of Ramanuja and his followers would be historically defective. But though the original materials for a study of the Arvars are in Tamil, yet fortunately Sanskrit translations of these writings either in manuscript or in published form are available, on which are almost wholly based the accounts given here of these Tamil writers. The treatment of the Pancaratra literature offered some difficulty, as most of these works are still unpublished; but fortunately a large volume of this literature was secured by the present writer in manuscript. Excepting Schrader's work, nothing of any importance has been written on the Pancaratra School. Though there are translations of the bhdsya of Ramanuja, there has been no treatment of his philosophy as a whole in relation to other great philosophers of his School. Practically nothing has appeared regarding the philosophy of the great thinkers of the Ramanuja School, such as Verikata, Meghanadari and others, most of whose works are still unpublished. Nothing has also been written regarding Vijnanabhiksu's philosophy, and though Nimbarka's bhdsya has been translated, no systematic account has yet appeared of Nimbarka in relation to his followers. The writer had thus to depend almost wholly on a very large mass of published and unpublished manuscript literature in his interpretation and chronological investigations, which are largely based upon internal evidence; though, of course, he has always tried to utilize whatever articles and papers appeared on the subject. The subjects treated are vast and it is for the scholarly reader to judge whether any success has been attained in spite of the imperfections which may have crept in. Though the monotheistic speculations and the importance of the



doctrine of devotion can be traced even to some of the Rg-veda hymns and the earlier religious literature such as the GIta and the Mahabharata and the Visnupurana, yet it is in the traditional songs of the Arvars and the later South Indian philosophical writers, beginning from Yamuna and Ramanuja, that we find a special emphasis on our emotional relation with God. This emotional relation of devotion or bhakti differentiated itself in many forms in the experiences and the writings of various Vaisnava authors and saints. It is mainly to the study of these forms as associated with their philosophical perspectives that the present and the succeeding volumes have been devoted. From this point of view, the present and the fourth volumes may be regarded as the philosophy of theism in India, and this will be partly continued in the treatment of Saiva and Sakta theism of various forms. The fourth volume will deal with the philosophy of Madhva and his followers in their bitter relation with the monistic thought of Sahkara and his followers. It will also deal with the theistic philosophy of the Bhagavatapurana and the theistic philosophy of Vallabha and the followers of Sri Caitanya. Among the theistic philosophers the followers of Madhva, Jayatirtha and Vyasatirtha occupied a great place as subtle thinkers and dialecticians. In the fifth volume, apart from the different schools of Saiva and Sakta thinkers, the Tantras, the philosophy, of grammar, of Hindu Aesthetics, and of Hindu Law will be dealt with. It is thus expected that with the completion of the fifth volume the writer will have completed his survey of Hindu thought so far as it appeared in the Sanskrit language and thus finish what was begun more than twenty years ago. A chapter on the Cdrvdka materialists has been added as an appendix, since their treatment in the first volume was practically neglected.

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## 9.2 VIVARTAVADA

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Vivartavada is the Vedantic theory of causation; it is the method of asserting this doctrine.

The Sanskrit word vivarta (विवर्त) means alteration, modification, change of form, altered condition or state. According to Advaita Vedanta, vivarta involves vikara or modification but only apparent modification (of the real which does not change). Therefore, the world is vivarta of the sole

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real entity Brahman, and merely an illusion. The term, Vivartavada is derived from the word vivarta and refers to the Theory of Causation that was proposed by Adi Sankara to explain the world-appearance or is the method to assert the Vedanta doctrine.

### Connotation

Vivartavada is a philosophical term that refers to 'the origin of the universe from the manifestation or appearance of the unique Brahman' or in other words it refers to the material causehood of Brahman; it is juxtaposed to the term parinamvada. It denotes the Advaita theory of Superimposition (adhyasa) which is in concurrence with the statements of the Upanishads to the effect that when ignorance is ended by right knowledge the true nature of an object becomes known. The relation that obtains between Brahman and the world as between the creator and the created has in its background the general theory of Satkaryavada, the theory which is based on the premise that the effect pre-exists in its cause, and vivartavada according to which theory the effect, this world, is merely an unreal (vivarta) transformation of its cause, Brahman. Advaita Vedanta holds Creation to be only an apparent change and not a modification of Brahman in reality. Brahman is reality and reality is non-dual, for which reason Sankara in his Vivekachudamani Sloka 261 reiterates - एकमेव सद्नेककारणं – That which exists as one only, is the cause of multiplicity, superimposed.

### Buddhist view

Buddhist thinkers and teachers have expressed their views on the concept of Duality developed by the Vedic thinkers and teachers. Zen teaches that we should be free from dualities in order to be what we are meant to be, and that duality is due to ego which veils reality from its true essence (explained by Buddhists in terms of non-essence); ego, which is an artificial condition not having a true identity because it is a creation of the mind, and distorts reality in an attempt to perceive what it wants to perceive and not what it is. Taoism teaches that reality is like the uncarved block (the symbol of Tao), one must not carve the block lest Tao is changed. Sankara considers Maya as a temporary or phenomenal

reality and Brahman as the Ultimate reality; and that living in Maya the Jiva (the 'ego-self') superimposes its own interpretation of reality onto reality, and thus Brahman remains hidden or concealed and Maya is viewed as the ultimate reality.

### **Basics of Advaita Vedanta**

There are broadly seven basics of the Advaita philosophy advocated by Adi Shankara, and they are:

There are three levels of Satya (Truth) – a) the 'Transcendental' or the Paramarthika level, in which Brahman is the only reality and nothing else exists apart from Brahman, b) the 'Pragmatic' or the Vyavaharika level, in which both Jiva and Ishwara are true, and c) the 'Apparent' or the Prathibhasika level, in which even the material world is false, an illusion. Brahman (Nirguna) due to ignorance (avidya) is visible as the material world and its objects.

Maya is the complex illusionary power of Brahman that causes Brahman to be seen in many forms.

Ishvara or the Saguna Brahman is the reflection of the Self falling upon the mirror of Maya, it is ignorance which is the cause of unhappiness and sin in the mortal world.

Atman is the soul or the self that is identical with Brahman, it is not part of Brahman that ultimately dissolves into Brahman but the whole Brahman itself; Atman is alone, when its reflection falls on Avidya it becomes the Jiva and experiences the world existence through the senses. Moksha or Liberation results when Maya is removed when there ultimately exists no difference between the Jiva and the Atman.

Creation – Though the karana named Brahman, due to vivarta, appears as the karya named jagat, there is actually no separate karya in reality – Brahman is the only reality and jagat is mithya ('illusion').

Advaita denies real creation from the level of the highest truth, at ordinary level it accepts the world just as it appears to common sense. Ajativada (the theory of no origination of Gaudapada) is associated with Vivartavada (the theory of manifestation of Sankara), they are the same teaching at the paramartha basis but from two different angles viz. a) when the focus is kept on the changeless Brahman, and as a consequence

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of that perspective the world is seen to be merely an unreal appearance, the teaching is ajativada; and b) when the focus shifts to the empirical fact of the world-appearance, and specifically onto the relation between the world-appearance and Brahman, the teaching is vivartavada, the former finds the world to be a dream and a magic, whereas to the latter, the world existence is illusory. Aurobindo considers Vivartavada to be the denial of causation and the assertion of identity presupposing parinama or 'effectual transformation'.

### Opposition

The 'Theory of Manifestation' propounded by the Advaita Vedanta is not without its opponents. Vijñānabhikṣu portrays casual relation as having three terms – unchangeable locus cause, changeable locus cause and effect – the locus cause is inseparable from and does not inhere in the changeable cause and the effect. and, the Pratyabhijñā philosophy of Somananda refutes the Arambhāvada (the 'Realistic view' of the Nyaya-Vaisesika), the Parināmavada (the theory of Transformation of the Sankhya-Yoga) and the Vivartavada (the theory of Manifestation of the Advaita), by postulating the theory of Svatantryavada (the 'Universal voluntarism') which states that it is due to the sovereignty of God's Will that Effect evolves from Cause. Whereas Ramanuja accepts Prakṛti as the material cause but Madhava rejects this contention since material cause does not mean that which controls and superintends; Madhava also rejects the Vivartavada because it does not accept any effect that has got to be accounted for. In his philosophy of pure non-dualism (Shuddhadvaita), Vallabhacharya also does not support 'vivartavada' and propounds that Maya (or the 'Jagat') is real and is only a power of Brahman who himself manifests, of his own will, as Jiva and the world and there is no transformation of Brahman in doing so, just as a gold ornament still remains gold only. Shuddhadvaita is also therefore known as 'Avikṛta Pariṇāmavāda' (Unmodified transformation).

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## 9.3 THREE LEVELS OF REALITY (SATTATRAIVIDHYA)

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Normally Māya of Advaita Vedānta is believed to be representing a non-existent thing, by the easy readers of Vedanta. In fact, its meaning is different. Māya in Advaita Vedanta denotes the 'indescribable nature of phenomenal world'. Phenomenal world is not a 'non-existing' thing in Advaita Vedanta. But it is a reality; a relative reality for the one who realized Brahman, and Ultimate Reality for the one who did not realize Brahman.

The common man thinks that the phenomenal world is real and ultimate and there is nothing to acquire or know after that. But when he acquires Brahma-Vidya, he realizes that phenomenal world is not ultimately real, but dependent of the Brahman and so only relatively real. Brahman only is ultimately real. Brahman exists independently. So for an Advaitin, phenomenal world is not 'non-existent', but it is relatively real. Unless he attained the Brahma-vidya he will continue to think that the phenomenal world is real in itself.

What is meant by 'relatively real'?

If we say that something is only 'relatively real/relative reality', that means that thing depends on another thing for its existence and sustenance. As an example, we know that, our body contains consciousness, and body needs oxygen, food, etc from outside to sustain the consciousness. Also, according to the environmental conditions we may lose our consciousness. So human do not have independent or ultimate existence. We depends on other things for our existence. That is, we have only a dependent or relative existence.

Thus relative is the one, which depend on another thing for its existence. Every Relative, assumes an Ultimate. This Ultimate can exist by itself without any outside support. That is why it is known as Ultimate. Theologically, a thing which has independent existence is known as God and philosophically it is known as 'Absolute or Ultimate reality or supreme Reality'. According to Advaita Vedanta, only Nirguna Brahman is Absolute. Everything else is relative.

As per Advaita Vedanta, phenomenal world is only relatively Real. Everything in the phenomenal world depends on each other and thus is

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essence-less and indescribable or Maya. Phenomenal world is not ultimately real, but only relatively real. Brahman only is ultimate real.

Three levels of reality:-

There are three levels in Advaita Vedanta regarding reality. They are 'Pratibhasika', 'Vyavaharika' and 'Paramarthika'.

Of these Pratibhasika is the most unreal. Dream is in Pratibhasika level. In dream we perceive different things. But in a strict sense, dream is not completely unreal because those things, which we see, in dream, have external substratum in the phenomenal world. Take the example of a sky-flower. Even though, no sky-flower exists in the world and thus it is unreal, yet, sky and flower, taken separately, are real things, that we have seen in the external world prior to dreaming. That is, we can dream of only those things which we have seen in the phenomenal world. But in dream, these real things get combined in strange and different proportions, making quite new unreal objects, in dream.

Thus what we call as dream is not the opposite of the Ultimate Reality because even in dream, elements, which have substratum outside the dream, are present. To say that the dream is unreal, we should be in waking state. We can know the unreality of dream only from the waking state. As long as we are dreaming, we won't understand that dream is unreal. I.e., when we get a 'higher waking knowledge' we will understand that dream is not real and is a little below the common waking experience. But to conclude thus, we must have waking experience. As long as we remain in the dream state, we cannot comprehend the unreality of dream. While being in dream we will continue to think it as real and ultimate. But waking experience will shatter this conclusion.

In the same way, in waking state we will consider the external, phenomenal world as Real and ultimate. But when we get the 'higher knowledge about Brahman' (Brahma-vidya) we will realize that the phenomenal world is not ultimately real.

Vyavaharika is the relative plane of reality. This is the realm of cause-effect and human intellect works here. Phenomenal world is in this level. Everything that exists in this level depends on each other and we cannot

say what their essence is. The things in vyavaharika world can be said to exist by itself from the phenomenal, relative point of view. However when a person gets Brahma-vidya, the higher knowledge, then phenomenal world things are said to be an appearance. In this condition, we can say that phenomenal world exist because we see them. It can also said to be non-existing because it has no essence and it depends on Brahman for existence. Thus, since, the phenomenal objects exist and non-exist, from the ultimate viewpoint, their state of existence is said to be 'indescribable or maya'.

In short for the one who have realized Brahman, external world is indescribable or Maya. And for those who had not realized Brahman (because of Avidya in them), external world is real, existing and ultimate; i.e., not indescribable or Maya. Dream world and phenomenal world are not in the same level of reality in Advaita Vedanta. The phenomenal world has more reality. We can comprehend the relative nature of phenomenal world only when we reach Paramartika level. Else we will continue to think, phenomenal world is the ultimate and real.

Paramarthika is the ultimate truth level. It only is ultimately real. It can exist by itself without depending on anything. This is spiritual in experience and subject – object duality, cause-effect formula, etc are not here. This is beyond the realm of human intellect. Human intellect cannot comprehend this ultimate level of reality. This can be realized only by direct experience with the help of Brahma-vidya.

The Upanishads states that the nature of the Ultimate Reality, paramartha satya, can be expressed only by the word 'Neti, Neti'. This is an attempt to define something by rejecting all other possibilities on what it can be. Since the ultimate should be beyond human intellect, we can speak about it only by negation statements. When we negate a particular thing, telling it is not akin to Brahman, then we are a step advanced in our attempt to define Brahman. This is almost same manner, when we negate all non-blue colors to reach to the Blue color. i.e., every negation inherits an affirmation.

Paramarthika is the Ultimate level that everyone can realize. There is no higher level than this. In this level, all plurality vanishes. Only pure monism exists. It is one without a second.

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Bhattoj Diksita also, in his Tattva-viveka-tlk-d-vivarana, speaks of Bhatta Bhaskara as holding the doctrine of difference and non-difference (bheddbheddf . It is certain, however, that he flourished after Saiikara, for, though he does not mention him by name, yet the way in which he refers to him makes it almost certain that he wrote his commentary with the express purpose of refuting some of the cardinal doctrines of Sarikara s commentary on the Brahma-sutra. Thus, at the very beginning of his commentary, he says that it aims at refuting those who, hiding the real sense of the sutra, have only expressed their own opinions, and in other places also he speaks in very strong terms against the commentator who holds the mdyd doctrine and is a Buddhist in his views. But, though he was opposed to Sarikara, it was only so far as Sahrara had introduced the mdyd doctrine, and only so far as he thought the world had sprung forth not as a real modification of Brahman, but only through mdyd. For both Sarikara and Bhaskara would agree in holding that the Brahman was both the material cause and the instrumental cause (updddna and nimitta) Sarikara would maintain that this was so only because there was no other real category which existed; but he would strongly urge, as has been explained before, that mdyd, the category of the indefinite and the unreal, was associated with Brahman in such a transformation, and that, though the Brahman was substantially the same identical entity as the world, yet the world as it appears was a mdyd transformation with Brahman inside as the kernel of truth. But Bhaskara maintained that there was no mdyd, and that it was the Brahman which, by its own powers, underwent a real modification; and, as the Pancaratras also held the same doctrine in so far as they believed that Vasudeva was both the material and the instrumental cause of the world, he was in agreement with the Bhagavatas, and he says that he does not find any thing to be refuted in the Paricaratra doctrine 1 . But he differs from them in regard to their doctrine of the individual souls having been produced from Brahman.

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## 9.4 THE THEORY OF SUBLIMATION (BADHA)

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In philosophy, sublimation is a mature type of defense mechanism, in which socially unacceptable impulses or idealizations are transformed



into socially acceptable actions or behavior, possibly resulting in a long-term conversion of the initial impulse.

Sigmund Freud believed that sublimation was a sign of maturity and civilization, allowing people to function normally in culturally acceptable ways. He defined sublimation as the process of deflecting sexual instincts into acts of higher social valuation, being "an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychological activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an "important" part in civilized life". Wade and Travis present a similar view, stating that sublimation occurs when displacement "serves a higher cultural or socially useful purpose, as in the creation of art or inventions". There is, strictly speaking, neither unselfish conduct, nor a wholly disinterested point of view. Both are simply sublimations in which the basic element seems almost evaporated and betrays its presence only to the keenest observation. All that we need and that could possibly be given us in the present state of development of the sciences, is a chemistry of the moral, religious, aesthetic conceptions and feeling, as well as of those emotions which we experience in the affairs, great and small, of society and civilization, and which we are sensible of even in solitude. But what if this chemistry established the fact that, even in its domain, the most magnificent results were attained with the basest and most despised ingredients? Would many feel disposed to continue such investigations? Mankind loves to put by the questions of its origin and beginning: must one not be almost inhuman in order to follow the opposite course?

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## **9.5 IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BHAMATIPRASTHANA AND VIVARANAPRASTHANA**

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In his works, SankarAcArya takes a direct approach to the problem of human liberation, and declares that moksha consists in realizing the identity of Atman with the One brahman. This brahman is in fact, all that really IS, and there is no change or multiplicity in It. As for the question, how does the perception of multiplicity arise in the first place, Sankara points to avidyA and mAyA. He does not attempt to explicate avidyA too

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much, and tells the student not to worry about the logical status of this avidyA, except to recognize that it is responsible for desires (kAma) and action (karma) which lead to bondage (bandha). Therefore, getting rid of the avidyA leads to moksha, which is really not different from the brahman itself.

After his time, avidyA and mAyA became a tough problem for his followers. Sankara described avidyA as anAdi - beginningless. His approach was informed by the well considered notion that searching for the roots of avidyA was itself a manifestation of the very avidyA one was seeking to remove. However, in order to work out the logical implications of various advaitic doctrines, his followers had to pay greater attention to this issue. In course of time, two sub-schools, known as the bhAmatI and the vivaraNa schools emerged within advaita vedAnta. The bhAmatI school takes its name after vAcaspati miSra's commentary on Sankara's brahmasUtra-bhAshya, while the vivaraNa school takes its name after prakASAtman's commentary on padmapAda's pancapAdikA, which is itself a commentary on Sankara's brahmasUtra-bhashya.

The most important commentaries and sub-commentaries that define the bhAmatI school are the following.

SankarAcArya - brahmasUtra bhAshya

vAcaspati miSra - bhAmatI

amalAnanda - kalpataru

appayya dIkshita - parimala

lakshmiInRsimha - Abhoga

allAla sUrI - bhAmatI tilaka

SrIranganAtha - bhAmatI vyAkhyA

There are a large number of texts in the vivaraNa school. The important commentaries are:

SankarAcArya - brahmasUtra bhAshya

padmapAda - pancapAdikA

prakASAtman - vivaraNa

akhaNDAnanda - tattvadIpana

citsukha - tAtparyadIpikA

AnandapUrNa vidyAsAgara - vivaraNa TikA

sarvajnavishNu - RjuvivaraNa

rangarAja dIkshita - darpaNa

nRsimhASrama - bhAvaprakASikA

yajnanArAyaNa dIkshita - ujjIvinI

amalAnanda - darpaNa

nRsimhASrama - vedAntaratnakoSa

dharmarAja adhvarIndra - padayojana

The vivaraNaprameya sangraha of bhAraTI tIrtha and vidyAraNya, the vedAnta paribhAshA of dharmarAja adhvarIndra and the vivaraNopanyAsa of rAmAnanda sarasvatI are independent works that are philosophically allied to the vivaraNa school of thought.

The major features which differentiate these two sub-schools are two. vAcaspati miSra's bhAmatI attempts to harmonize Sankara's thought with that of maNDana miSra. Following this line of reasoning, later authors in the bhAmatI school describe the individual jIva as the locus of avidyA, i.e. avidyA is ignorance or false knowledge, but it pertains to the individual, who is subject to it. brahman is never subject to avidyA, but controls it in its capacity as ISvara. This school describes two functions of avidyA - one is its capacity to veil the Truth, and the second is its capacity to project an illusion. This school also describes avidyA in terms of a root avidyA (mUlAvidyA), which is universal, and is equivalent to mAyA, and an individual avidyA (tulAvidyA), which vanishes when brahmajnAna arises. Thus, this school develops its theses primarily along ontological lines. However, if the individual jIva is the locus of avidyA, and the individual jIva is also a product of avidyA, this would lead to an infinite regress, which the bhAmatI school avoids by positing an infinite series of beginningless jIvas and avidyA-s.

The vivaraNa school concentrates on epistemological approaches to establishing advaita. Thus, these authors hold that since there is only the One brahman, that brahman Itself is both the locus of avidyA and the object of avidyA. A keen analysis of perception and inference is done, through which the non-reality of difference is established. In this approach, the later authors share company with both padmapAda and

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sureSvara. The one problem which critics have against this school of thought is that since brahman is of the nature of pure consciousness, to describe brahman as the locus of avidyA would go against the omniscience of brahman. It would also attribute contradictory qualities, namely knowledge and ignorance, to the same brahman. The vivaraNa authors get around this problem by distinguishing between pure consciousness and valid knowledge (pramAjnAna). Pure consciousness is cit, the real essence of brahman, but valid cognition at the vyAvahArika level presumes an avidyA. The ultimate substratum of all cognition, and therefore also of this avidyA, is brahman.

It should be clear that the basic problem is still that of reconciling the upanishadic dictum of One changeless brahman with the evidence of the senses, which imply a mani-fold universe full of change. The bhAmatI and the vivaraNa schools are therefore only varying approaches towards the same basic problem. There are some other authors who share both lines of thought. An early example is amalAnanda, and a later example is appayya dIkshita, whose siddhAntaleSa-sangraha is an encyclopedic compilation of various views. appayya points out that the differences among the authors of the bhAmatI school and the vivaraNa school are not fundamental philosophical ones, but rather a result of differing emphases and style of argumentation. Taken alone, each school has its own logical problems. However, each is a way of describing a logical/philosophical approach to the insight of Oneness that cuts through all language and logic.

Finally, there are authors who cannot be classified under either school. These typically tend to be the earlier authors in the post-Sankaran advaita tradition. Thus, we have early teachers like jnAnaghana, jnAnottama, vimuktAtman and slightly later ones like sarvajnAtman, SrIharsha and citsukha. The last two named authors strike an independent route, and demolish all non-duality through examining the premises of the nyAya logical system, while most of the others develop on the arguments first seen in sureSvara's works.

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## 9.6 AVACCHEDAVADA, ABHASAVADA, EKAJIVABADA, DRSTISRSTIVADA AND SRSTIDRSTIVADA

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It is not clear exactly when the distinction between pratibimbaviida and avacchedaviida was established in Advaitavedanta. These two theories have usually been explained as they are described in the Siddhantabindu and the Siddhantalelasamgraha. I shall therefore first sketch the essentials of pratibimbaveida and avacchedavada as found in the Siddhantabindu and the Siddhantaleslamgraha.

1. Pratibimbavada and Avacchedavada in the Siddhiintabindu According to the Siddheintabindu of Madhusildhana Sarasvati (about AD 1500), there are three major theories in Advaitavedanta, namely, abkasavada, pratibimbavada and avacchedavada, and each theory has an ontological aspect as well as an epistemological aspect.

1. 1 Ontological Aspect of the Three Theories In their ontological aspect, these three theories are regarded as three different explanations of the relationship among Pure Consciousness (caitanya=atman=Brahman), rivara (the Lord) and jivas (individual souls). According to the eibhasaveida attributed to Surevara, livara is a semblance (abhasa) of Pure Consciousness conditioned by One Ignorance (ajnana), whereas jivas are semblances of Pure Consciousness conditioned by many intellects (buddhis) which are themselves products of Ignorance; and since a semblance is unreal, both \_livara and jivas are unreal [Siddhantabindu: 26-28]. (rivara and jivas are unreal.) Two types of pratibimbaviida are mentioned in the Siddhantabindu. According to the pratibimbaveida attributed to Prakaatman, rivara is the prototype of Pure Consciousness (bimba-caitanya) conditioned by One Ignorance whereas jivas are reflections (pratibimbas) of Pure Consciousness in One Ignorance as limited by many inner organs and impressions thereon.) (rivara is the prototype and jivas are reflections.) According to the pratibimbaveida attributed to Sarvajfiatman, livara is the reflection of Pure Consciousness in One Ignorance and jivas are the reflections of Pure Consciousness in many intellects, but the prototype of Pure

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Consciousness conditioned by One Ignorance is pure.) (Both Isvara and jivas are reflections and Pure Consciousness alone is the prototype.) Although these two pratibimbaviidas differ as to what are the prototype and the reflections, they both state that Ignorance is one (therefore Isvara is also one) and that jivas are many in accordance with the difference of their intellects. Both also agree that not only the prototype but also its reflections (Isvara and jivas) are real. (Isvara and jivas are real. Ignorance is one, but jivas are many in accordance with the difference of their intellects.) According to the avacchedaviida of Vacaspatimigra, Isvara is Pure Consciousness which has become the object of ignorance, and jivas are Pure Consciousness which has become the support of ignorance.) This means that ignorances limit Pure Consciousness, that Pure Consciousness as limited by ignorances is Isvara, and that the subject of ignorance is jiva. According to this theory there are as many ignorances as there are jivas.) The phenomenal world is different for each jiva, because each jiva is the material cause of its own phenomenal world by virtue of being conditioned by its own ignorance.<sup>8</sup> (Each jiva has its own ignorance which acts as the material cause of its own phenomenal world.) It is noteworthy that the Siddhantabindu does not mention the avaccheda-relationship between Pure Consciousness and intellects in describing avacchedaviida. After having described avacchedavada the Siddhantabindu proceeds to a discussion of ekafrvavdda (the theory of one jiva) , drstisrstivada (the theory of world-creation by perception) and anakajrvavada (the theory of many ji-vas). This order of description , beginning with dbhasaveida and ending in drstisrstivitda or anakajTvavdda, is exactly the same as that followed by J. Simha [1971: 221ff], which shows that Simha mostly follows the description of the Siddhantabindu in his discussion of abheisaviida, pratibimbaveida and avacchedaveida, and so forth .

### 1.2 Epistemological Aspect of the Three Theories

In their epistemological aspect these three theories are three ways of explaining how Isvara's knowledge differs from that of jivas, and what the function is of the transformation (vrtti) of the intellects of jivas. Because ignorance has acquired an identity with Pure Consciousness through semblance with it, all its products become necessarily permeated by Pure Consciousness through semblance with it. Accordingly, Pure

Consciousness as the cause of the universe (Iivara) makes everything manifest at all times without the need of any means of knowledge, because Pure Consciousness possesses the quality of making manifest everything connected with it. Thus Iivara is omniscient. jivas, on the other hand, are limited by their intellects and can therefore know only the objects that are connected with their intellects. Their intellect consists of three parts: the part within the body, the part which permeates the object and the part between the body and the object. In each of three parts Pure Consciousness manifests itself. Pure Consciousness as manifested in the part of the intellect within the body is called the knower. As manifested in the part of the intellect between the body and the object, it is called the means of knowledge. And as manifested in the part of the intellect which permeates the object, it is called the object of knowledge. This object of knowledge is Pure Consciousness as not yet known. When it is known, it is called the result of knowledge. [Siddhantabindu: 31-33] According to both the dbheisavada and the pratibimbavada, the purpose of the transformation of the intellect is to forge a connection of Pure Consciousness in the object with Pure Consciousness in the knower, and to remove the veil over Pure Consciousness inside the object. This view differs from that of the avacchedaveida according to which the purpose of the transformation of the intellect is only to remove the veil, because the jiva, being the material cause of the universe, is connected with everything. This is the distinction. [Siddhantabindu: 34] 1.3 Attitude of the Siddhantabindu- Reconciliatory The description in the Siddhantabindu clarifies the difference among eibhlisavada, praibimbavada and avacchedaveida, but gives us no clue as to why these different theories came to be established. In fact, the Siddhantabindu does not mention any point of mutual criticism among those three theories, which would be useful for us to understand the historical development of those theories. The reason for this non-critical approach is to be sought in the fundamental attitude of this work to those three theories. In that respect, an opponent raises the following question: Since divergent views with respect to the real are impossible, how can [all] these mutually inconsistent views be authoritative? Therefore, [it should be determined] which [of these three views] is to be discarded and which

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is to be accepted.9) The author replies: The distinction between jiva and the Lord [of the Universe] and so forth, though it is mere product of the human intellect, is nevertheless alluded to in the Scriptures, because ideas like that are a helpful means to lead us to the knowledge of the truth.10) Thus, according to the Siddhantabindu, the three theories are equally helpful in imparting a knowledge of the truth. Considering this reconcil- iatory attitude of the Siddhantabindu, it is quite natural that no treatment of these mutual criticisms among the three theories is found in it. Let us now proceed to the Siddhantalelasamgraha. 2. Pratibimbavada and Avacchedavdda in the Siddhiintaleiasartgraha According to the Siddhiintales'asamgraha of Appaya Diksita (about AD 1550), there are two major theories, namely, pratibimbavada and avacchedavada, and each theory has only an ontological aspect. 2.1 Description of Pratibimbavada and Avacchedavada In the Siddhantabindu only two types of pratibimbaveidas were described, but from the Siddhantalelasamgraha we learn that there existed various types of pratibimbavada. The works which hold pratibimbavada are: Prakatharthavivarana, Tattvaviveka, Samksepariraka of Sarvajilatman, Citradipa, Brahmeinanda, Drgdriyaviveka and Vivarana of Prakagatman.11) Although the pratibimbavada set forth in these works are mutually different, the Siddhantalelasamgraha classifies them into three types. The first is the pratibimbavada of the Prakatharthavivarana, Tattvaviveka, Samksepariraka, which holds that Pure Consciousness is the prototype and both fivara and jivas are reflections of it. The second is the pratibimbavada of the Citradipa, Brahmananda, Drgdriyaviveka, which also holds that livara is the reflection of Pure Consciousness.12) The third is the pratibimbavada of the Vivarana of Prakasdtman, which is described as follows: The followers of the Vivarana, however, say thus:...Since it is taught that only a single Ignorance is the adjuncts [which causes] the difference between the jiva and the Lord, the difference between the jiva and the Lord is through their being reflection and prototype, not through both of them being reflections, because it is impossible for both to be reflections, in the absence of two [different] adjuncts....Of the jiva that is a reflection of Ignorance, the particular transformation of Ignorance, which is of the form of the internal organ, is



the place of distinctive manifestation, as the mirror is for all-pervasive light of the sun. Hence too is the empirical usage of that (gva) as having that (internal organ) for adjunct.<sup>13</sup>) The above description of the pratibimbavada of the Vivarana has the following two points in common with the corresponding description in the Siddhantabindu. (1) livara is the prototype and jivas are reflections, (2) Ignorance is one, but Jivas are many in accordance with the difference of their internal organs. Thus, both texts have an identical understanding of the pratibimbavada of the Vivarana. The description of avacchedavada in the Siddhantalelasamgraha, on the other hand, is quite different from that in the Siddhantabindu. The avacchedavada attributed to some (anye) is there described as follows: Therefore, Pure Consciousness, which is limited (avacchinna) by the internal organ like the ether, is the jrva; what is not so limited is the Lord.<sup>14</sup>) The avacchedavada is here described in terms of the avaccheda-relationship between Pure Consciousness and the internal organ. No mention is made of the object and the support of ignorance, which were essential points in the description of avacchedavada in the Siddhantabindu. Such a difference in the ways of description of avacchedavada between the two texts looks a bit puzzling to me.<sup>15</sup>)

### 2.2 Mutual Criticism between Pratibimbaviida and Avacchedaviida

In the description in the Siddhantaldasamgraha we find many points of mutual criticism which are not found at all in the Siddhantabindu. In this mutual criticism we find many points of criticism of avacchedavada by pratibimbavada, but criticism of the latter by the former is very rare. The main point of criticism of pratibimbavada by avacchedavada is as follows: The reflection of what is not conditioned by colour-form does not stand to reason; much more is this so in the case of what is color-formless (i. e., Pure Consciousness.) Among the many points of criticism of avacchedavada by pratibimbavada I cite only one example which contains the same points of criticism found in the Vivarana itself.

### **Abhasavada**

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While comparing the descriptions of pratibimbavada and avacchedaviida in the Siddhantabindu and the Siddhantalelasamgraha, we found some noteworthy points. These can be summarized as follows:

1. Abhasaviida is described in the Siddhantabindu but is not mentioned in the Siddhantalelasamgraha which contains much more extensive descriptions than the Siddhantabindu.

2. An epistemological aspect is described in the Siddhantabindu but is not mentioned under the topic of pratibimbavada and avacche daviida in the Siddhantalesasamgraha. 3. The way of description of avacchedavada differs in both texts. 4. There existed various pratibimbavadas but only one type of avacchedavada, namely, that of Vdcaspatimigra.

5. As far as the pratibimbaveida of the Vivarana is concerned, both texts understand it in the same way. In the light of the above findings, the following assumptions can be made:

1. It seems that there was no common understanding of abhasavada in late Advaitavedanta.

2. There seems to have been a common understanding of pratibimbavdda in late Advaitavedanta.

3. Whether there was a common understanding of avacchedavada or not is not sure. These assumptions lead me to the following doubts: 1. Is the difference between pratibimbaveida and avacchedavada really one of the most basic differences between the Vivarana school and the Bhamati school in late Advaitavedanta, as has generally been thought? 2. Is this view a mere reproduction of the views of the Siddheintabindu and the Siddhantalelasamgraha through the views of famous Indian scholars like S. Dasgupta, J. Simha and so on?

## Ekajivabada

t sounds quite innocuous but barely conceals the explosive depths of its profundity.

It's a cleverly worded question on the very origins of you and me, of the world, nay, of the "creation" itself, pregnant with implications on what comes first – the 'witnessed' or the 'witnessor.'

The answer would inevitably be a replay of the classic debate on perception-based-creation (*dRshTi-sRshTi-vAda*) vs. creation-based-perception (*sRshTi-dRshTi-vAda*). But Advaita holds, contrary to either view, quite counterintuitively, that nothing has ever originated (*ajAti vAda*).

Some Pundits interpret *sRshTi-dRshTi-vAda* and *dRshTi-sRshTi-vAda* as the steps by which the seeker reaches the final Non-dual position of *ajAti vAda*, thus sublimating the sting of debate within these various doctrines of creation.

Drawing upon *dRshTi-sRshTi-vAda*, we have the doctrine of *eka jIva vAda*, developed by Vimuktatman, considered by many to be a *prakriya* par excellence in arriving at Pure Knowing of who Really I am. Others think that we have the shades of *eka jIva vAda* in the Mandukya karika in its 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter, *alAtashanti*.

With regard to the Question # 340, Swamini Atmaprakashananda rightly brought back the focus of the 'spotlight' onto where it should really belong, vide Peter's Comment of 9th March 2013 (in the words of Peter): "When you say 'witness', know that there is no witness apart from consciousness. The term is used to indicate the knower of the knower. .... though they are superficially similar, understanding the subtle difference is profound."

*(I would have preferred to capitalize the two words — Consciousness and the first Knower — to indicate that they imply Brahman).*

And so, we should take a closer look at the three terms – witness, Witness-Consciousness and Consciousness – the respective Sanskrit equivalents being: sAkshi, sAkshi-chaitanya and Brahman.

sAkshi implicitly means not merely a beholder, an onlooker. (S)he has to satisfy, as in legal requirements, at least two criteria: (i) Uninvolvement in the scene, event, activity being witnessed and (ii) Disinterest in the final outcome of the scene, event, activity.

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sAkshi-chaitanya refers to ‘that’ undefinable ability, sensing quality, in a detector probe – something like the ‘ability’ of a TV antenna which can detect a programme, irrespective of the language, content, quality, mood etc. It is totally non-objectifiable.

Brahman is the ineffable Beingness-Knowingness-Happiness.

So if one talks of ‘witnessing’, there has to be something to be witnessed. In the absence of anything to be witnessed, there cannot be a ‘witnessor.’

You cannot brand me a ‘murderer’ when it is clearly known that I am alone and that there is none else around to be murdered.

Obviously then, to talk of a ‘witness’, the world must have pre-existed to be witnessed!

The question then is : Am I born into an already existing world or have I created the world along with myself, my I-consciousness.

That is the reason why I said in the beginning that Q # 340 is a question on “creation” itself.

Vimuktatman in his *Istasiddhi* says:

brahmaiva avidyayA ekam ced  
badhyate mucyate dhiyA  
eka muktau jagan mukteh  
na mukta anya vyavasthitiH

“Brahman alone gets entangled in one avidya and is liberated through knowledge. When a single person gets liberated, the world itself is liberated. There is no other explanation of liberation and bondage.”

Anand Hudli explains *eka jIva vAda* very clearly: “Some say that the lone jIva is HiraNyagarbha, some say it is the inquirer who is this jIva. For example, if I am the inquirer, I am this jIva. If you are the inquirer, you indeed are this jIva. What this amounts to is that for me, you are not an independent jIva but part of my dream, where I have created this universe, and Ishvara Himself. (Note that in this eka-jIva vAda, it is the jIva that creates the world and Ishvara as part of his dream.) And you can say the same about me. But then the question arises: who is correct? This is an irrelevant question because the ekajIvavAda holds for the person who is the inquirer and does not admit more than one inquirer. I can hold that you are part of my dream and you can hold that I am only a

part of your dream. For me, even when you say to me, “You are part of my dream, not a real jIva.”, I can dismiss it as being part of \*my\* dream. It so happens that a so-called jIva who is no different from a dream object is making a statement in my dream that I belong to his dream! And it does not matter even if the rest of 7 billion people in the world tell me that I am part of each person’s dream. I can dismiss all these statements as coming from people in \*my\* own dream. They are not different from any other dream object. All this seems to border on absurdity, but as the siddhAnta-lesha saMgraha says about the eka-jIva vAda:

“atra ca sambhAvitasakalashaMkApaMka prakShAlanaM svapnadR^iShTAntasaliladhArayaiva kartavyamiti “.

Any doubts that arise (in the ekajIvavAda) should be washed away with the water of the dream analogy!

He adds in a later post: “I must also add that the dRshTi-sRshTi-vAda is as logically unassailable as it is absurd. The sRshTi-dRshTi view is, in this respect, less absurd, and fits well with commonsense notions of God, jIvas, and the world.”

### **Drstisrstivada**

Pure consciousness which is the original (which is what is reflected), with nescience as its limiting adjunct is Isvara. The reflection of consciousness in nescience is the jiva. Or, pure consciousness not limited by nescience is Isvara. Consciousness limited by nescience is the jiva. This is the main Vedanta theory, known as the theory of a single jiva This itself is called dRiShTi-sRiShTi vAda. In this view the jiva himself is the material and efficient cause of the universe through his own nescience. All the objects perceived are illusory (like things seen in dream).

The delusion that there are many jivas is only due to there being many bodies. Liberation is attained by the single jiva on realization of the self as a result of the perfection of hearing, reflection, etc, with the help of the Guru and the scriptures which are all conjured up by him. The statements about Suka and others having attained liberation are only by way of eulogy.

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It is thus seen that dRiShTi-sRiShTi vAda is the same as eka-jIva vAda. In this view everything except the one jIva has only prAtibhAsika reality. Even the guru is only imagined. Though MS says that this is the main Vedanta theory, what we are following is not this, but the aneka-jIva vAda in which there are three levels of reality. According to this vAda vyAyahArika objects exist even before they are known. The consciousness on which they are superimposed is veiled by ajnAna. These objects have therefore ajnAta satta, i.e., they exist even when they are not cognized. A mental state (vRitti) caused by a pramANa such as the visual organ is necessary to remove the veil of ajnAna. But prAtibhAsika objects like rope-snake come into existence only when they are cognized by some one. They are not known through any of the sense organs because the eye, etc have no contact with them. They are known by the witness consciousness through an avidya-vRitti.

Thus there is a clear difference  
between vyAvahArika and prAtibhAsika objects.

All objects in the world derive  
their existence (satta) from brahman or pure consciousness. So it is correct to say that they are dependent on consciousness. But this is not the same thing as saying that their existence depends on the observer or knower. The knower is the mind with the reflection of consciousness in it and not pure consciousness. Of course we say that everything is a creation of the mind. But that only means that we react to objects in the world according to our mental make-up. Even after realization, when there is no mind in the sense that there is no mind of the kind we the unenlightened have, the jnAni still sees the world of objects, though he does not react to them and consider them to be good or bad.

Panchadasi makes a distinction between Ishvara sRiShTi and jIva sRiShTi. It is only the latter that is created by the mind. As pointed out there, a gem is the creation of God, but different people react to it differently. One person is eager to have it, another person is indifferent. A spiritual aspirant avoids even the thought of it. These reactions are jIva

sRiShTi and these alone are created by the mind. The gem exists even before any one sees it.

### **Srstidrstivada**

According to the Quantum Theory, at the fundamental level, the concept of a particle becomes blurred with the concept of a wave, or rather a probability wave. Ervin Schrödinger, the creator of the mathematics of Quantum Mechanics, calls the Vedantic identity of Brahman and Atman “the quintessence of deepest insight into the happenings of the world”. His famous thought experiment of the “Schrödinger’s Cat” illustrates the basic probabilistic nature at the quantum level. A cat is sealed in a closed box/chamber with a flask of poison, a Geiger counter and a radioactive source. In an hour, there is a 50% chance that the source will emit radiation. If it does, the Geiger counter will detect it and cause the flask to break, releasing the poison and killing the cat. If not, the cat will still be alive. At this point, since the box is sealed, we don’t really know the state of the cat – the probability of the cat being alive or dead of 50%. It only becomes 100% alive or dead when the conscious entity, i.e. an observer, interferes with the experiment by opening the chamber for examination. Please note: It is not that the cat died or lived when the observer observed or that the observer observed the dead or alive cat, but rather the state of the cat got defined as “the cat died when the radiation was emitted releasing the poison” or “the cat lived as the radiation was not emitted” when the observer observed. The whole basis of the Quantum Theory is this unpredictability or a quasi-state of existence (or non-existence) at the basic fundamental level and the effect of ‘observation’ defining the ‘observed’. These have been discussed mathematically and in physics starting with the scientists like Schrödinger and Heisenberg (the latter in his uncertainty theorem). At that fundamental level, the boundary between pure science and philosophy starts to blur. The philosophy behind this observer or ‘seer’ defining the observed or the ‘seen’ has been explained in the Drishti-Srishti Vada as well as the commentaries by Sri Gaudapada (Sri Shankaracharya’s guru) on the Mandukya Upanishad known today as the Gaudapada Karika. Our dream

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state is one of the finest example of the possibility of the proposition of Drishti-Srishti Vada. While dreaming, the world within the dream seems real and separate from you the dreamer. But when you wake up from the dream you realize that the world in the dream was just a projection of your mind and it existed because of you the dreamer or the 'seer' or the observer existed. 'Waking up' from the waking state to state beyond will let you realize that the world in your waking state also existed because your awareness existed; and you perceived it through your individual you, your attributes present over the pure consciousness or the absolute awareness.

### Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you know about the Vivartavada?

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.....  
.....

2. Discuss the Three levels of reality (sattatraividhya).

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.....  
.....

3. Discuss about the theory of sublation (badha).

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## 9.7 LET US SUM UP

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Sanskrit word विवर्त means transformation, more precisely apparent form in Vedanta philosophy. Vivartavada means the doctrine of apparent transformation.

According to Adi Shankaracharya Jagat (word) is actually apparent transformation of Brahman under the effect of illusion. That means the transformation is only apparent (illusory/virtual) i.e unreal.



Just like snake appeared in rope in dark is due to ajnana or avidya i.e ignorance/illusion, world appears in Brahman due to ignorance/illusion but as the real thing - rope doesn't change/transform into the snake, Brahman doesn't change. The similar example is of gold and ornaments  
Note that Vivarta is different from Vikara (विकार). Vikar stands for real transformation but Vivart stands for apparent transformation as explained.

It is the doctrine of Adi Shankaracharya for karya-karan (cause and effect) relation/law.

Thus, Vivartavada is a doctrine of Vedanta which explains Jagat (world) as apparent transformation of Brahman (which doesn't change) because of ajnana or avidya which has two Shakti 1.Aavaranshakti

2.Vikshepsakti.

(Refer Adi Shankaracharya's prakaran-grantha like Vivekachudamani, Aparokshanubhuti etc. for clear understanding of his doctrine)

Quoting some verses from Vivekachudamani that say Jagat is nothing but Brahman:- All this universe which through ignorance appears as of diverse forms, is nothing else but Brahman which is absolutely free from all the limitations of human thought.

A jar, though a modification of clay, is not different from it; everywhere the jar is essentially the same as the clay. Why then call it a jar ? It is fictitious, a fancied name merely.

None can demonstrate that the essence of a jar is something other than the clay (of which it is made). Hence the jar is merely imagined (as separate) through delusion, and the component clay alone is the abiding reality in respect of it.

Similarly, the whole universe, being the effect of the real Brahman, is in reality nothing but Brahman. Its essence is That, and it does not exist apart from It. He who says it does is still under delusion – he babbles like one asleep.

This universe is verily Brahman – such is the august pronouncement of the Atharva Veda. Therefore this universe is nothing but Brahman, for that which is superimposed (on something) has no separate existence from its substratum.

## Notes

If the universe, as it is, be real, there would be no cessation of the dualistic element, the scriptures would be falsified, and the Lord Himself would be guilty of an untruth. None of these three is considered either desirable or wholesome by the noble-minded.

The Lord, who knows the secret of all things has supported this view in the words: "But I am not in them" ... "nor are the beings in Me".

If the universe be true, let it then be perceived in the state of deep sleep also. As it is not at all perceived, it must be unreal and false, like dreams. Therefore the universe does not exist apart from the Supreme Self; and the perception of its separateness is false like the qualities (of blueness etc., in the sky). Has a superimposed attribute any meaning apart from its substratum ? It is the substratum which appears like that through delusion.

2. Ajatavada:

Sanskrit word जात means originate or create/born and अजात means no-origination or no-creation/unborn. Ajatavada means the doctrine of no-origination or non-creation.

According to Gaudapada there is no creation and delusion. The supreme truth is not subject to creation, transformation and delusion.

This is also called paramarth satya.

Quoting some verse from Gaudapada Karika on Mandukya Upanishad:

2-32 There is neither dissolution nor creation, none in bondage and none practicing disciplines. There is none seeking Liberation and none liberated. This is the absolute truth.

3-2 Therefore I shall now describe Brahman, which is unborn, the same throughout and free from narrowness. From this one can understand that Brahman does not in reality pass into birth even in the slightest degree, though It appears to be manifest everywhere.

3-15 The scriptural statements regarding the creation, using the examples of earth, iron and sparks, are for the purpose of clarifying the mind. Multiplicity does not really exist in any manner.

3-26 On account of the incomprehensible nature of Atman, the scriptural passage "Not this, not this" negates all dualistic ideas attributed to Atman. Therefore the birthless Atman alone exists.

3-36 Brahman is birthless, sleepless, dreamless, nameless and formless. It is ever effulgent and omniscient. No duty, in any sense, can ever be associated with It.

3-48 No jiva ever comes into existence. There exists no cause that can produce it. The supreme truth is that nothing ever is born.

4-13 There is no illustration to support the view that the effect is born from an unborn cause. Again, if it is said that the effect is produced from a cause which itself is born, then this leads to an infinite regress.

4-14 How can they who assert that the effect is the cause of the cause and the cause is the cause of the effect, maintain the beginninglessness of both cause and effect?

4-15 Those who say that the effect is the cause of the cause and that the cause is the cause of the effect maintain, actually, that the creation takes place after the manner of the birth of father from son.

4-22 Nothing whatsoever is born, either of itself or of another entity. Nothing is ever produced, whether it be being or non—being or both being and non—being.

4-28 Therefore neither the mind nor the objects perceived by the mind are ever born. To see their birth is like seeing the footprints of birds in the sky.

4-30-31 If, as the dualists contend, the world is beginningless, then it cannot be non—eternal. Moksha (Liberation) cannot have a beginning and be eternal. If a thing is non—existent in the beginning and in the end, it is necessarily non—existent in the present.

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4-58 Birth is ascribed to the jivas; but such birth is not possible from the standpoint of Reality. Their birth is like that of an illusory object. That illusion, again, does not exist.

4-71 No jiva ever comes into existence. There exists no cause that can produce it. The supreme truth is that nothing ever is born.

Thus, Ajatavada rejects the blame of Avidya, Maya, Jagat, Jiva, Samsara etc. on Aatman.

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### 9.8 KEY WORDS

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Vivartavada : Vivartavada is the Vedantic theory of causation; it is the method of asserting this doctrine.

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### 9.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. What do you know the important differences between bhamatiprasthana and vivaranaprasthana?
2. What do you know Avacchedavada, abhasavada, ekajivabada, drstisrstivada and srstidrstivada?

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## 9.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 9.2
2. See Section 9.3
3. See Section 9.4

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# **UNIT 10: ADVAITA THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE**

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## **STRUCTURE**

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Advaita theory of knowledge
- 10.3 Svatahpramanyavada
- 10.4 Pramanas
- 10.5 Anumana
- 10.6 Sabda
- 10.7 Upamana
- 10.8 Arthapatti
- 10.9 Anuplabdhi
- 10.10 Let us sum up
- 10.11 Key Words
- 10.12 Questions for Review
- 10.13 Suggested readings and references
- 10.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

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## **10.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know the Advaita theory of knowledge
- To discuss the Svatahpramanyavada
- To know about the Pramanas
- To know the Anumana
- To discuss Sabda
- To discuss the Upamana
- To discuss Arthapatti
- To discuss Anuplabdhi

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## **10.1 INTRODUCTION**

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This unit is about Advaita Vedanta, its meaning and significance in Indian Philosophy. The word Advaita according to the dictionary is non-

dualism, especially in relation to identifying Brahman with the Universal, or with Soul or the spirit and matter. It also means peerless and unique. Literal meaning of Vedanta is the end of Veda. Upanishads came at the end of Veda, they are the Jnana Kandas. They teach knowledge of Brahman or the universal Spirit, who is described as both - Creator and Creation, Actor and Act, Existence, Knowledge, and Joy. Upanishad's Major Teachings are – the Self exists, it is immortal without a beginning or an end, essentially non – material, and the self is identical with Brahman, the highest Reality, and the Absolute. The main feature of Advaita Vedanta is to understand Brahman, the Supreme Soul. To understand Brahman one has to attain knowledge, overcome ignorance, and be liberated and be in vigilant state at the conscious level. Advaita Vedanta teaches three stages of truth. The first stage is the transcendental or Paramarthika in which Brahman is the only reality and nothing else. The second stage is the pragmatic or Vyavaharika in which both Jiva (living creatures and individual souls) and God are true, and the material world is also true. The third and the last stage is the apparent or Prathibhasika in which material world reality is actually false, like mistaking a rope for a snake. To comprehend the essence of Advaita philosophy one has to understand these topics: Brahman and Atman, Avidya and Maya (Ignorance and illusion), Karya and karana (effect and cause), Knowledge, Attaining Liberation through Knowledge.

Around 7th century Gaudapada, the author of Mandukya Karika, a commentary on Mandukya Upanishad discussed that there was no duality, awake or dream, the mind moves through illusion (Maya) and only nonduality (Advaita) is the final truth. The truth is difficult to know because of ignorance or illusion. There is no becoming of the thing by itself or from some other thing. There is only Atman, 'all –soul', there is no individual soul. An individual soul is temporarily delineated, as the space that a jar contains is delineated from the main space; once the jar is broken the space within the jar merges with the vast space. Sankara built further on Gaudapada's foundation and gave more strength to the Advaita Vedanta. His three major commentaries are on Brahmasutras, Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita. Sankara while propounding his philosophy does not start from the empirical world with logical analysis

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but, rather, directly from the Absolute, Brahman. Sankara's metaphysics stands on the criterion that the Real is that whose negation is impossible. Building his argument that the Upanishads teach the nature of Brahman, he develops a complete epistemology to account for the human error in taking the world as real. He justifies that Brahman is outside time, space, and causality, which are simply forms of empirical experience; no distinction in Brahman or from Brahman is possible. Sankara strongly supporting that the world is not real but illusion, logically analyses his statement:

1. Whatever remains eternal is true, and whatsoever is destroyed is non-eternal and is untrue. As the world is created and destroyed, it is not real.
2. Truth is unchanging. Since the world is changing, it is not real.
3. Things that are independent of time and space are real, and whatever is in space and time is unreal.
4. Just as one sees the dream in sleep, one sees a kind of dream even when one is awake. The world is compared to this conscious dream.
5. The world is superimposition of Brahman. Superimposition cannot be real.

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## 10.2 ADVAITA THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

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According to dictionary meaning, Brahman is sacred learning, a divine source. Brahman is considered as the Supreme, all-pervading spirit and the Soul of the Universe, the divine essence and source of all being from which all created things emanate and to which they return. Brahman as supreme Spirit is not an object of worship in the usual sense of the term, but Brahman is meditated upon by the devout with profound veneration. Mandana Misra accepting Bhartrhari's thesis says that Brahman is language (Sabdadvaita). Brahman is consciousness, and consciousness is the power of speech, so Brahman is speech of the whole Universe



manifestation of Vivarta (speech). Brahman was the center theme in Upanishads, Jnana Kanda. In Chandogya Upanishad, Tat tvam asi, (that thou art), Jiva is identified with Brahman. Brahman and the Self are the one and the same. According to Advaita there is no duality. One and many, infinite and finite, the subject and the object etc. are the limitation of consciousness that cannot comprehend the Brahman due to ignorance or Avidya. There is no language to describe Brahman, it is like 'neti, neti', 'not this, not this.' Understanding Brahman is beyond the senses, He is the purest Knowledge and illuminates like the source of light. Brahman is self-existent, He is described as 'Sachidananda' – meaning Sat infinite truth, cit infinite Consciousness, ananda infinite Bliss. Sankara sketches Him as "Satyam Jnanam anantam brahma" (Taittiriya Up. II.1), Brahman is the Truth, Knowledge and Endless. Brahman is free from any kind of differences or differentiation. Brahman is neither Sajatiya (homogeneous) because there is no second to Him nor Vijatiya (heterogeneous) because none other than Him exist; Ekamevadvitiyam, it is one without a second (Chandogya Upanishad). Advaita philosophy is built on the strong hold of Upanishads and Brahmasutra. Upanishads give various incidences where it is highlighted that Brahman = Atman; Prajanam brahma, consciousness is Brahman (Aitareya Upanishad), Aham bramasmī, I am Brahman (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Ayamātma brahma, this Atman is Brahman (Mandukya Upanishad). Brahmasutra starts with -"athato brahma jignasa" (chapter 1 Samanvaya: harmony 1.1). Taking these as examples, the philosophy puts forth the unique theory that Brahman is the One, the Whole and only reality. Other than Brahman everything else, including the Universe, material objects and individual are false. Brahman is infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent, incorporeal, impersonal transcendent reality; that is the divine ground for all Being. There is no separation or distinction between Brahman and others in the Universe. That is how when one achieves the turiya state, one experiences that one's soul becomes one with everything else. Atman: Atman exactly means breath but according to some it is connected with aham (I) and according to others contrast of avatman. From Vedic period Atman is interpreted as breath, soul, the principle of life and sensation. After the Vedic period, in Indian philosophy, Atman is

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described as the eternal core of the personality which survives after death and transmigrates to a new life or is released from the bond of existence. Upanishads define Atman as part of the universal Brahman, with which it can commune or even fuse. So Atman is deemed to be the central circle identified with Brahma. Advaita Vedanta understands Atman not as a part of Brahman that ultimately dissolves into Brahman, but as the whole of Brahman itself. One has to understand how the individual soul, which is limited and one in each body can be same as Brahman. The philosophy argues that Self is not an individual concept, Atman is only one and unique. It is like the same moon that appears as several moons on its reflections on the surface of the water covered with bubbles; Atman appears as different Atman in different bodies. Atman is the silent witness of all the life happening and free from and beyond sin and merit. It is incorporeal and independent. When the reflection of Atman leads to avidya (ignorance), Atman becomes jiva – a living being with a body and senses. Each jiva feels that he has his own, unique and distinct Atman called jivatman. The concept of jiva is true in pragmatic level. In the transcendental level, the Atman is equal to Brahman. The Advaita Vedanta explains the relative and the unreal nature of the objective world; it propounds the Advaita (one without a second) and states three levels of experience of the Atman – waking (vaishvanara), dreaming (taijasa) and deep sleep (prajna).

True Knowledge is attained by eagerness to learn. The ambition to know the ultimate 'Truth' leads to wisdom. When snake is superimposed on the rope, correct information that it is only a rope not a snake must be clarified. The person who has mistaken the rope for a snake must understand the object rope as the existing thing and snake as an illusion. Before deciding to perceive an object right or wrong one has to know how the things are perceived in the first place. Advaita philosophy states that there are six different ways of learning –

- Pratyaksha – the knowledge gained by the senses
- Anumana - the knowledge gained by inference

- Upamana – the knowledge gained by analogy
- Sabda or agama – knowledge gained by testimony
- Arthapatti – the knowledge gained by superimposing the known knowledge on an appearing knowledge that does not occur with the known knowledge.
- Anupalabdhi – the knowledge gained by negation Among all these the importance is given to verbal testimony (sabda or agama).

To acquire knowledge pramatr (the subject), the knower of the knowledge, pramana (the cause or the means) of knowledge and the prameya (the object) of knowledge are very essential. Knowledge is achieved by mediate or immediate, the difference is that while in the first, only 'that' of the object is known, in the second, 'what' is also understood. Both are alike vritti (behaviour) of the internal organ in which the sakshin (what is present) is imminent. In some cases to obtain knowledge, it does not involve sensory perception. The empirical self is understood immediately but it is not presented to any senses. So, the word 'pratyaksa' (present to the sense) is replaced with 'aparoksa' (not immediate). Knowledge is immediate whether it is by the senses or not. The object must be such that one can comprehend directly (yogya). For example, a chair is understood by looking at it but not kindness. Other condition is that the object must be present at the time. Finally there must be an intimate relationship between the subject and the object in question. For the external object the vritti flows out to understand where as internal, it originates inside; like understanding happiness or sorrow. Accomplishment of knowledge happens when subject and object come together and by hypothesis they are removed from each other and occupy a different place in space; the vritti relates these two and brings about for the time being identical ground for the two. Describing how the understanding takes place M. Hiriyanna writes, "When an organ is brought in contact with an object, the antahkarana, like a search light as it were, goes out towards it and gets itself determined by it or assumes the 'form' of the object. The existence of knowledge is thus necessary so that

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psychologically, the theory is realistic. When the vritti coincides with the object the perceptual knowledge arises.” Vritti is internal so it coincides with jiva. This brings about the connection between the knower and the known. As these stages of knowing are internal, M. Hiriyanna says that the object is ‘felt’ rather known. The same thing happens to the internal also like happiness and sorrow, the condition is that at the time of knowing it must be present. In some situation like religious merits ‘punya’ and demerits ‘papa’ the antahkarana cannot understand because of the lack of condition ‘yogyatva’ or ‘felness’. They are understood by verbal testimony. Going back to the mistaking rope for a snake, the antahkarana understand the object by arthapatti. This wrong understanding can be rectified if the subject is made to realize by sabda. Once anumana is cleared then it makes way to the True Knowledge.

### **Liberation through Knowledge**

Almost all Indian philosophical systems give importance to ‘Liberation’ and looks at it as the main aim of the mankind and Advaita is no exception. Advaita Vedanta looks at Liberation as Being, Knowing and Experiencing one’s True Self. Pure knowledge is not under other’s control nor is it under any control, it is something one has. All it needs is a quest to know the Truth and Reality, once one has the thrust to know immediately the pure knowledge surfaces to understanding. According to Sankara there are four outstanding characteristic of a person who is in quest of the Pure Knowledge. He is able to distinguish between what is eternal and what is not. He will be non attached to present and future actions. He acquires moral virtues like tranquility, restraint etc. He desires liberation, Advaita says that liberation is free from differentiation and identifies only with ‘True Self’, which is without beginning and end and without any change of any sort. Sankara disputes the idea of the Mimamsas that Liberation is a result of action. Firstly, he says that liberation is identical with ‘True Self; the true self does not have a commencement or finish, whereas the result of an action, has a starting and comes to existence when an act is performed. So, the Liberation cannot be the result of an action. Secondly, there are four kinds of actions – Utpatti, (the origination), for example, a potter making a pot; Apati,

(the attainment) of a state, like arriving at a place; Samskara (the purification), performing rituals; Vikara (the modification), change taking place like milk turning to curds. To attain Liberation these actions are not necessary. The only entity of Liberation is to cognize Brahman, this is the heart of Advaita epistemology and philosophy of language. Liberation is not a product. Liberation does not change a person; the liberated need not have to become someone or something else. Liberation is not to reach a place (heaven) as a result of an action. The liberated will not die and be born again. Gaudapada says, “There is no liberation.” Liberation is similar to the difference in light reflections from a stained mirror to a spotless mirror. Sankara propounds that liberation is not a future state or goal, but it exists in the present, past and the future without any time bound. The Self realization brings about the awareness that Brahman is pure consciousness (Cit), awareness (Jnana) and witness (saksin), Brahman is self luminous, by His light everything shines out. While such an understanding is reached then the relationship between knower and the known merges. There will be no subject and object relationship. Sankara is of the opinion that even the state of Bliss (ananda) is not cognized or experienced by the Liberated Soul. Gaudapada in his work Mandukya Katika, book 3, commenting on non duality (Karika 37 – 48) states that Liberation is, “Rather the awareness (of the mind), Samadhi (concentration), which is beyond language and thought, very calm and unwavering, full of light and without fear. Since there are no thoughts about objects, the awareness rests in itself and attains equanimity.” He further argues that it is not easy to reach this state because we are grounded by fear. This is difficult even for the Yogis. When one reaches this state, one is free from all pain or pleasure because there will be no distinction or awareness of the emotional attachment due to physical senses. The mind will be immersed in the divine light of understanding the Absolute. There is oneness with the whole of the Universe. The liberated man functions like a burnt seed, he will be inactive. It is like liberation in living, the behaviour is to live his life to complete his present life’s Prarabdhakarma.

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### **10.3 SVATAHPRAMANYAVADA**

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## Notes

The doctrine of the self-validity of knowledge (svataḥprāmānya) forms the cornerstone on which the whole structure of the Mīmāṃsā philosophy is based. Validity means the certitude of truth. The Mīmāṃsā philosophy asserts that all knowledge excepting the action of remembering (smṛti) or memory is valid in itself, for it itself certifies its own truth, and neither depends on any other extraneous condition nor on any other knowledge for its validity. But Nyāya holds that this selfvalidity of knowledge is a question which requires an explanation. It is true that under certain conditions a piece of knowledge is produced in us, but what is meant by saying that this knowledge is a proof of its own truth ? When we perceive anything as blue, it is the direct result of visual contact, and this visual contact cannot certify that the knowledge generated is true, as the visual contact is not in any touch with the knowledge it has conditioned.

Moreover, knowledge is a mental affair and how can it certify the objective truth of its representation ? In other words, how can my perception “a blue thing” guarantee that what is subjectively perceived as blue is really so objectively as well ? After my perception of anything as blue we do not have any such perception that what I have perceived as blue is really so. So this so-called self-validity of knowledge cannot be testified or justified by any perception. We can only be certain that knowledge has been produced by the perceptual act, but there is nothing in this knowledge or its revelation of its object from which we can infer that the perception is also objectively valid or true.

If the production of any knowledge should certify its validity then there would be no invalidity, no illusory knowledge, and following our perception of even a mirage we should never come to grief. But we are disappointed often in our perceptions, and this proves that when we practically follow the directions of our perception we are undecided as to its validity, which can only be ascertained by the correspondence of the perception with what we find later on in practical experience. Again, every piece of knowledge is the result of certain causal collocations, and as such depends upon them for its production, and hence cannot be said to rise without depending on anything else. It is meaningless to speak of the validity of knowledge, for validity always refers to objective

realization of our desires and attempts proceeding in accordance with our knowledge. People only declare their knowledge invalid when proceeding practically in accordance with it they are disappointed.

The perception of a mirage is called invalid when proceeding in accordance with our perception we do not find anything that can serve the purposes of water (e.g. drinking, bathing). The validity or truth of knowledge is thus the attainment by practical experience of the object and the fulfilment of all our purposes from it (arthakriyājñāna or phalajñāna) just as perception or knowledge represented them to the perceiver. There is thus no self-validity of knowledge (svataḥprāmānya), but validity is ascertained by samvāda or agreement with the objective facts of experience [1].

It is easy to see that this Nyāya objection is based on the supposition that knowledge is generated by certain objective collocations of conditions, and that knowledge so produced can only be tested by its agreement with objective facts. But this theory of knowledge is merely an hypothesis; for it can never be experienced that knowledge is the product of any collocations; we have a perception and immediately we become aware of certain objective things; knowledge reveals to us the facts of the objective world and this is experienced by us always. But that the objective world generates knowledge in us is only an hypothesis which can hardly be demonstrated by experience. It is the supreme prerogative of knowledge that it reveals all other things. It is not a phenomenon like any other phenomenon of the world. When we say that knowledge has been produced in us by the external collocations, we just take a perverse point of view which is unwarranted by experience; knowledge only photographs the objective phenomena for us; but there is nothing to show that knowledge has been generated by these phenomena. This is only a theory which applies the ordinary conceptions of causation to knowledge and this is evidently unwarrantable.

Knowledge is not like any other phenomena for it stands above them and interprets or illumines them all. There can be no validity in things, for truth applies to knowledge and knowledge alone. What we call agreement with facts by practical experience is but the agreement of previous knowledge with later knowledge; for objective facts never come

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to us directly, they are always taken on the evidence of knowledge, and they have no other certainty than what is bestowed on them by knowledge. There arise indeed different kinds of knowledge revealing different things, but these latter do not on that account generate the former, for this is never experienced; we are never aware of any objective fact before it is revealed by knowledge. Why knowledge makes different kinds of revelations is indeed more than we can say, for experience only shows that knowledge reveals objective facts and not why it does so.

The rise of knowledge is never perceived by us to be dependent on any objective fact, for all objective facts are dependent on it for its revelation or illumination. This is what is said to be the self-validity (svataḥprāmāṇya) of knowledge in its production (utpatti). As soon as knowledge is produced, objects are revealed to us; there is no intermediate link between the rise of knowledge and the revelation of objects on which knowledge depends for producing its action of revealing or illuminating them. Thus knowledge is not only independent of anything else in its own rise but in its own action as well (svakāryakarane svataḥ prāmāṇyam jñānasya). Whenever there is any knowledge it carries with it the impression that it is certain and valid, and we are naturally thus prompted to work (pravṛtti) according to its direction.

There is no indecision in our mind at the time of the rise of knowledge as to the correctness of knowledge; but just as knowledge rises, it carries with it the certainty of its revelation, presence, or action. But in cases of illusory perception other perceptions or cognitions dawn which carry with them the notion that our original knowledge was not valid. Thus though the invalidity of any knowledge may appear to us by later experience, and in accordance with which we reject our former knowledge, yet when the knowledge first revealed itself to us it carried with it the conviction of certainty which goaded us on to work according to its indication. Whenever a man works according to his knowledge, he does so with the conviction that his knowledge is valid, and not in a passive or uncertain temper of mind. This is what Mīmāṃsā means when it says that the validity of knowledge appears immediately with its rise,



though its invalidity may be derived from later experience or some other data (jñānasya prāmāṇyam svataḥ aprāmāṇyavi parataḥ).

Knowledge attained is proved invalid when later on a contradictory experience (bādhakajñāna) comes in or when our organs etc. are known to be faulty and defective (karaṇadoṣajñāna). It is from these that knowledge appearing as valid is invalidated; when we take all necessary care to look for these and yet find them not, we must think that they do not exist. Thus the validity of knowledge certified at the moment of its production need not be doubted unnecessarily when even after enquiry we do not find any defect in sense or any contradiction in later experience. All knowledge except memory is thus regarded as valid independently by itself as a general rule, unless it is invalidated later on. Memory is excluded because the phenomenon of memory depends upon a previous experience, and its existing latent impressions, and cannot thus be regarded as arising independently by itself.

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## 10.4 PRAMANAS

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Pramana (Sanskrit: प्रामाण्य, Pramāṇa) literally means "proof" and "means of knowledge". It refers to epistemology in Indian philosophies, and is one of the key, much debated fields of study in Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, since ancient times. It is a theory of knowledge, and encompasses one or more reliable and valid means by which human beings gain accurate, true knowledge. The focus of Pramana is how correct knowledge can be acquired, how one knows, how one doesn't, and to what extent knowledge pertinent about someone or something can be acquired.

Ancient and medieval Indian texts identify six pramanas as correct means of accurate knowledge and to truths: perception (Sanskrit pratyakṣa), inference (anumāna), comparison and analogy (upamāna), postulation, derivation from circumstances (arthāpatti), non-perception, negative/cognitive proof (anupalabdhi) and word, testimony of past or present reliable experts (Śabda). Each of these are further categorized in terms of conditionality, completeness, confidence and possibility of error, by each school of Indian philosophies.

## Notes

The various schools of Indian philosophies vary on how many of these six are epistemically reliable and valid means to knowledge. For example, Carvaka school of Hinduism holds that only one (perception) is a reliable source of knowledge, Buddhism holds two (perception, inference) are valid means, Jainism holds three (perception, inference and testimony), while Mimamsa and Advaita Vedanta schools of Hinduism hold all six are useful and can be reliable means to knowledge. The various schools of Indian philosophy have debated whether one of the six forms of pramana can be derived from other, and the relative uniqueness of each. For example, Buddhism considers Buddha and other "valid persons", "valid scriptures" and "valid minds" as indisputable, but that such testimony is a form of perception and inference pramanas.

### **The science and study of Pramanas is called Nyaya.**

Pramāṇa literally means "proof" and is also a concept and field of Indian philosophy. The concept is derived from the Sanskrit roots, pra (प्र), a preposition meaning "outward" or "forth", and mā (मा) which means "measurement". Pramā means "correct notion, true knowledge, basis, foundation, understand", with pramāṇa being a further nominalization of the word. Thus, the concept Pramāṇa implies that which is a "means of acquiring prama or certain, correct, true knowledge".

Pramāṇa forms one part of a trio of concepts, which describe the ancient Indian view on how knowledge is gained. The other two concepts are knower and knowable, each discussed in how they influence the knowledge, by their own characteristic and the process of knowing. The two are called Pramātṛ (प्रमातृ, the subject, the knower) and Prameya (प्रमेय, the object, the knowable).

The term Pramana is commonly found in various schools of Hinduism. In Buddhist literature, Pramana is referred to as Pramāṇavāda. Pramana is also related to the Indian concept of Yukti (युक्ति) which means active application of epistemology or what one already knows, innovation, clever expedients or connections, methodological or reasoning trick, joining together, application of contrivance, means, method, novelty or device to more efficiently achieve a purpose. Yukti and Pramana are discussed together in some Indian texts, with Yukti described as active

process of gaining knowledge in contrast to passive process of gaining knowledge through observation/perception. The texts on Pramana, particularly by Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Advaita Vedanta schools of Hinduism, include in their meaning and scope "Theories of Errors", that is why human beings make error and reach incorrect knowledge, how can one know if one is wrong, and if so, how can one discover whether one's epistemic method was flawed, or one's conclusion (truth) was flawed, in order to revise oneself and reach correct knowledge.

Hinduism identifies six *pramanas* as correct means of accurate knowledge and to

truths: *Pratyakṣa* (perception), *Anumāna* (inference), *Upamāna* (comparison and analogy), *Arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances), *Anupalabdhi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and *Śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts).

In verse 1.2.1 of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (c. 9th–6th centuries BCE), "four means of attaining correct knowledge" are listed: *smṛti* ("scripture, tradition"), *pratyakṣa* ("perception"), *aitihya* ("expert testimony, historical tradition"), and *anumāna* ("inference").

In some texts such as by Vedvyasa, ten *pramanas* are discussed, Kṛtakoti discusses eight epistemically reliable means to correct knowledge. The most widely discussed *pramanas* are

- ***Pratyakṣa*** (प्रत्यक्ष) means perception. It is of two types in Hindu texts: external and internal. External perception is described as that arising from the interaction of five senses and worldly objects, while internal perception is described by this school as that of inner sense, the mind. The ancient and medieval Indian texts identify four requirements for correct perception:<sup>[31]</sup> *Indriyarthasannikarsa* (direct experience by one's sensory organ(s) with the object, whatever is being studied), *Avyapadesya* (non-verbal; correct perception is not through hearsay, according to ancient Indian scholars, where one's sensory organ relies on accepting or rejecting someone else's perception), *Avyabhicara* (does not wander; correct perception does not change, nor is it the result of deception because one's sensory

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organ or means of observation is drifting, defective, suspect) and *Vyavasayatmaka* (definite; correct perception excludes judgments of doubt, either because of one's failure to observe all the details, or because one is mixing inference with observation and observing what one wants to observe, or not observing what one does not want to observe). Some ancient scholars proposed "unusual perception" as *pramana* and called it internal perception, a proposal contested by other Indian scholars. The internal perception concepts included *pratibha* (intuition), *samanyalaksanapratyaksa* (a form of induction from perceived specifics to a universal), and *jnanalaksanapratyaksa* (a form of perception of prior processes and previous states of a 'topic of study' by observing its current state).<sup>[32]</sup> Further, some schools of Hinduism considered and refined rules of accepting uncertain knowledge from *Pratyakṣa-pramana*, so as to contrast *nirnaya* (definite judgment, conclusion) from *anadhyavasaya* (indefinite judgment).

- ***Anumāna*** (अनुमान) means inference. It is described as reaching a new conclusion and truth from one or more observations and previous truths by applying reason. Observing smoke and inferring fire is an example of *Anumana*. In all except one Hindu philosophies, this is a valid and useful means to knowledge. The method of inference is explained by Indian texts as consisting of three parts: *pratijna* (hypothesis), *hetu* (a reason), and *drshtanta* (examples). The hypothesis must further be broken down into two parts, state the ancient Indian scholars: *sadhya* (that idea which needs to be proven or disproven) and *paksha* (the object on which the *sadhya* is predicated). The inference is conditionally true if *sapaksha* (positive examples as evidence) are present, and if *vipaksha* (negative examples as counter-evidence) are absent. For rigor, the Indian philosophies also state further epistemic steps. For example, they demand *Vyapti* - the requirement that the *hetu* (reason) must necessarily and separately account for the inference in "all" cases, in both *sapaksha* and *vipaksha*. A conditionally proven hypothesis is called a *nigamana* (conclusion).

- **Upamāna** (उपमान) means comparison and analogy.<sup>[4][6]</sup> Some Hindu schools consider it as a proper means of knowledge.<sup>[39]</sup> *Upamana*, states Lochtefeld,<sup>[40]</sup> may be explained with the example of a traveller who has never visited lands or islands with endemic population of wildlife. He or she is told, by someone who has been there, that in those lands you see an animal that sort of looks like a cow, grazes like cow but is different from a cow in such and such way. Such use of analogy and comparison is, state the Indian epistemologists, a valid means of conditional knowledge, as it helps the traveller identify the new animal later.<sup>[40]</sup> The subject of comparison is formally called *upameyam*, the object of comparison is called *upamanam*, while the attribute(s) are identified as *samanya*.<sup>[41]</sup> Thus, explains Monier Williams, if a boy says "her face is like the moon in charmingness", "her face" is *upameyam*, the moon is *upamanam*, and charmingness is *samanya*. The 7th century text Bhattikāvya in verses 10.28 through 10.63 discusses many types of comparisons and analogies, identifying when this epistemic method is more useful and reliable, and when it is not.<sup>[41]</sup> In various ancient and medieval texts of Hinduism, 32 types of *Upanama* and their value in epistemology are debated.
- **Arthāpatti** (अर्थपत्ति) means postulation, derivation from circumstances. In contemporary logic, this *pramana* is similar to circumstantial implication. As example, if a person left in a boat on river earlier, and the time is now past the expected time of arrival, then the circumstances support the truth postulate that the person has arrived. Many Indian scholars considered this *pramana* as invalid or at best weak, because the boat may have gotten delayed or diverted. However, in cases such as deriving the time of a future sunrise or sunset, this method was asserted by the proponents to be reliable. Another common example for *arthapatti* in ancient Hindu texts is, that if "Devadatta is fat" and "Devadatta does not eat in day", then the following must be true: "Devadatta eats in the night". This form of postulation and deriving from circumstances is, claim the Indian scholars, a means to discovery, proper insight and

## Notes

knowledge. The Hindu schools that accept this means of knowledge state that this method is a valid means to conditional knowledge and truths about a subject and object in original premises or different premises. The schools that do not accept this method, state that postulation, extrapolation and circumstantial implication is either derivable from other *pramanas* or flawed means to correct knowledge, instead one must rely on direct perception or proper inference.

- **Anupalabdi** (अनुपलब्धि) means non-perception, negative/cognitive proof.<sup>[11]</sup> *Anupalabdhi pramana* suggests that knowing a negative, such as "there is no jug in this room" is a form of valid knowledge. If something can be observed or inferred or proven as non-existent or impossible, then one knows more than what one did without such means.<sup>[46]</sup> In the two schools of Hinduism that consider *Anupalabdhi* as epistemically valuable, a valid conclusion is either *sadrupa* (positive) or *asadrupa* (negative) relation - both correct and valuable. Like other *pramana*, Indian scholars refined *Anupalabdi* to four types: non-perception of the cause, non-perception of the effect, non-perception of object, and non-perception of contradiction. Only two schools of Hinduism accepted and developed the concept "non-perception" as a *pramana*. The schools that endorsed *Anupalabdi* affirmed that it as valid and useful when the other five *pramanas* fail in one's pursuit of knowledge and truth.

**Abhava** (अभाव) means non-existence. Some scholars consider *Anupalabdi* to be same as *Abhava*, while others consider *Anupalabdi* and *Abhava* as different.<sup>[9][47]</sup> *Abhava-pramana* has been discussed in ancient Hindu texts in the context of *Padārtha* (पदार्थ, referent of a term). A *Padartha* is defined as that which is simultaneously *Astitva* (existent), *Jneyatva* (knowable) and *Abhidheyatva* (nameable). Specific examples of *padartha*, states Bartley, include *dravya* (substance), *guna* (quality), *karma* (activity/motion), *sam anya/jati* (universal/class property), *samavaya* (inherence)

and *visheshha* (individuality). *Abhava* is then explained as "referents of negative expression" in contrast to "referents of positive expression" in *Padartha*. An absence, state the ancient scholars, is also "existent, knowable and nameable", giving the example of negative numbers, silence as a form of testimony, *asatkaryavada* theory of causation, and analysis of deficit as real and valuable. *Abhava* was further refined in four types, by the schools of Hinduism that accepted it as a useful method of epistemology: *dhvamsa* (termination of what existed), *atyanta-abhava* (impossibility, absolute non-existence, contradiction), *anyonya-abhava* (mutual negation, reciprocal absence) and *pragavasa* (prior, antecedent non-existence).

- *Śabda* (शब्द) means relying on word, testimony of past or present reliable experts.<sup>[4][11]</sup> Hiriyanna explains *Sabda-pramana* as a concept which means reliable expert testimony. The schools of Hinduism which consider it epistemically valid suggest that a human being needs to know numerous facts, and with the limited time and energy available, he can learn only a fraction of those facts and truths directly.<sup>[50]</sup> He must rely on others, his parent, family, friends, teachers, ancestors and kindred members of society to rapidly acquire and share knowledge and thereby enrich each other's lives. This means of gaining proper knowledge is either spoken or written, but through *Sabda* (words). The reliability of the source is important, and legitimate knowledge can only come from the *Sabda* of reliable sources. The disagreement between the schools of Hinduism has been on how to establish reliability. Some schools, such as Carvaka, state that this is never possible, and therefore *Sabda* is not a proper *pramana*. Other schools debate means to establish reliability.

Different schools of Hindu philosophy accept one or more of above *pramanas* as valid epistemology

*Pramana*, (Sanskrit: "measure") in Indian philosophy, the means by which one obtains accurate and valid knowledge (*prama*, *pramiti*) about the world. The accepted number of *pramana* varies, according to the philosophical system or school; the exegetic system of *Mimamsa* accepts five, whereas *Vedanta* as a whole proposes three.

## Notes

The three principal means of knowledge are (1) perception, (2) inference, and (3) word. Perception (pratyaksha) is of two kinds, direct sensory perception (anubhava) and such perception remembered (smriti). Inference (anumana) is based on perception but is able to conclude something that may not be open to perception. The word (shabda) is, in the first place, the Veda, the validity of which is self-authenticated. Some philosophers broaden the concept of shabda to include the statement of a reliable person (apta-vakya). To these, two additional means of knowledge have been added: (4) analogy (upamana), which enables one to grasp the meaning of a word by analogy of the meaning of a similar word, and (5) presumption or postulation (arthapatti), which appeals to common sense (e.g., one does not see the sun move from minute to minute, but, as it is in a different place at different times of day, one must conclude that it has moved).

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### 10.5 ANUMANA

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Anumana, (Sanskrit: “measuring along some other thing” or “inference”) in Indian philosophy, the second of the pramanas, or the five means of knowledge. Inference occupies a central place in the Hindu school of logic (Nyaya). This school worked out a syllogism in the form of an argument that goes through five stages: (1) the proposition (pratijna, literally “promise”), (2) the ground (hetu), (3) the illustration (udaharana), (4) the application (upanaya), and (5) the conclusion (nigamana). A syllogism is vitiated by a fallacious ground; this is called hetvabhasa (“the mere appearance of a ground”). A number of types of invalid grounds are distinguished: simple error, contradiction, tautology, lack of proof for the ground, and inopportunity.

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### 10.6 SABDA

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Shabda, (Sanskrit: “sound”) in Indian philosophy, verbal testimony as a means of obtaining knowledge. In the philosophical systems (darshans), shabda is equated with the authority of the Vedas (the most-ancient sacred scriptures) as the only infallible testimony, since the Vedas are



deemed to be eternal, authorless, and absolutely infallible. Shabda is of particular importance to the exegetic Mimamsa school. Mimamsa defines the authoritativeness as applying bindingly only to scriptural statements that exhort to purposive action and whose efficacy would not be known by any other means of knowledge. The Vedanta school extends this authoritativeness to suprasensual objects—e.g., to brahman, the ultimate reality. The school of logic, Nyaya, accepts verbal testimony, both human and divine, as a valid means of knowledge but notes that only the divine knowledge of the Vedas is infallible.

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## **10.7 UPAMANA**

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Upamana, (Sanskrit: “comparison”) in Indian philosophy, the fourth of the five means (pramanas) by which one can have valid cognitions of the world. Upamana describes knowledge imparted by means of analogy. For example, when the meaning of the word gavaya (Sanskrit: “wild ox”) is unknown, the similarity of the name to the word gaus (“cow”) will provide knowledge that gavaya is in the bovine family.

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## **10.8 ARTHAPATTI**

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Arthapatti, (Sanskrit: “the incidence of a case”) in Indian philosophy, the fifth of the five means of knowledge (pramana) by which one obtains accurate knowledge of the world. Arthapatti is knowledge arrived at through presumption or postulation.

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## **10.9 ANUPLABDHI**

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Anupalabdhi is a Sanskrit term meaning “non-perception.” In the yogic and Hindu philosophy of the Advaita Vedanta system and the Bhatta school of Purva-Mimamsa, it is said to be one of the six pramanas, or means of obtaining knowledge. Anupalabdhi is the last of the six pramanas.

Anupalabdhi refers to the way in which an absence of something is perceived. It is a way of apprehending that absence. Something that does not exist cannot be perceived through the senses; instead, another source

## Notes

of knowledge is needed. Anupalabdhi is when the non-perception of an object gives information as to its non-existence.

### Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you know the Advaita theory of knowledge?

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2. Discuss the Svatahpramanyavada.

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3. What do you know about the Pramanas?

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4. What do you know the Anumana?

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5. Discuss Sabda

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6. Discuss the Upamana

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## 10.10 LET US SUM UP

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It is through pure consciousness (vijnana) one understands the 'Truth'. Thrust for the 'Truth' does not have a beginning or end. It is always present inside, only one needs to recognize it. When one understands the

greatest truth of the Absolute, Brahman that the effect of the world is illuminating like a source of infinite light then he is liberated from the ignorance (Avidya) and released from illusion (Maya). It is said, “The manifold universe is, in truth, a single Reality. There is only one Great Being, which the sages call Brahman, in which all countless forms of existence reside. That Great Being is utter consciousness, and it is the very essence, or self (Atman) of all being.” Advaita upholds that a person can be liberated while still living in the body. The identification of the Self with the Highest Self is the liberation. According to Advaita, “There is neither dissolution nor creation, neither a person in bondage nor any spiritual aspirant neither any seeker after liberation nor one that is liberated this realization is the highest truth.” The ethics of the Advaita philosophy stress that the liberated understands the Absolute, Brahman and lead a life and do what they have to do in their life time like a dew drop on a leaf to merge in the Sun light.

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## **10.11 KEY WORDS**

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Consciousness: awareness (in philosophy) the power of the mind, whether rational or not, to be aware of acts, sensations or emotions

Manifestation: that act or process of showing, making manifest

Perception: the act of perceiving, understanding that is the result of perceiving

Prajnanam Brahma: Consciousness is Brahman (Aitareya Upanishad, Rig Veda)

Aham Brahmasmi: I am Brahman (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Yajur Veda)

Tat tvam asi: That thou art (Chandogya Upanishad, Sama Veda)

Ayamatma Brahma: This Atman is Brahman (Mandukya Upanishad, Atharva Veda)

Athato Brahma jignasa: now therefore the inquiry into the nature of Brahman (Brahmasutra, Chapter one Samanvaya: harmony, 1. 1. 1.)

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### **10.12 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Discuss Arthapatti.
2. Discuss Anuplabdhi.

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### **10.13 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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### **10.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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#### **Check Your Progress 1**

1. See Section 10.2
2. See Section 10.3
3. See Section 10.4
4. See Section 10.5
5. See Section 10.6
6. See Section 10.7

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# UNIT 11: THEORIES OF MITHYATVA AND MITHYATVAMITHYATVA

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## STRUCTURE

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Theories of mithyatva and mithyatvamithyatva
- 11.3 Mithyatva in Upanisads
- 11.4 Mithyatva in Bhagavadgita
- 11.5 Mithyatva in Brahmasutra
- 11.6 Mithyatva in pre-Sahkara Advaitins
- 11.7 Mithyatva in Sarikara's works
- 11.8 Mithyatva in post Sarikara Advaitins
- 11.9 Mithyatva According to Madhusudana
- 11.10 Anirvacaniyakhyati
- 11.11 Let us sum up
- 11.12 Key Words
- 11.13 Questions for Review
- 11.14 Suggested readings and references
- 11.15 Answers to Check Your Progress

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## 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know the Theories of mithyatva and mithyatvamithyatva
- To discuss about the Mithyatva in Upanisads
- To discuss the Mithyatva in Bhagavadgita
- To discuss about the Mithyatva in Brahmasutra
- To describe Mithyatva in pre-Sahkara Advaitins
- To describe Mithyatva in Sarikara's works
- To know about the Mithyatva in post Sarikara Advaitins
- To know about Mithyatva According to Madhusudana

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## 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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## Notes

Mithyatva means "false belief", and an important concept in Jainism and Hinduism. Disappearance (nivr̥tti) is the necessary presupposition of mithyatva because what is falsely perceived ceases to exist with the dawn of right knowledge. Mithyatva, states Jayatirtha, cannot be easily defined as 'indefinable', 'non-existent', 'something other than real', 'which cannot be proved, produced by avidya or as its effect', or as 'the nature of being perceived in the same locus along with its own absolute non-existence'.

Mithyatva is a concept in Jainism distinguishing right knowledge from false knowledge, and parallels the concepts of Avidya in the Vedanta school of Hinduism, Aviveka in its Samkhya school, and Maya in Buddhism.

### **The opposite of Mithyatva (false belief) is Samyaktva (right belief).**

In the perception of a snake where there is actually a rope, it is not that I see a snake on top of the rope or as part of rope. I see the snake where the rope is. Thus, I do not see snake and rope together. This error is called adhyAsa or error of superimposition. The error arises only because I do not see the rope as rope. I do not see the rope as a rope because of some adventitious cause (such as poor illumination). I am unable to perceive all the attributes of the object that define it precisely as a rope and not as a snake. In the case of nacre also, I am unable to see all its attributes but only see its partial attribute of silvery shininess.

In the case of Brahman, being infiniteness, there is nothing other than Brahman to differentiate it from. Hence, Brahman cannot have any attributes, since attributes are what differentiate one object from another. vedAnta says that Brahman is pure existence-consciousness-limitlessness. These are not attributes but are its very nature or svarUpam, looking from the point of view of the attributive universe. When we say that Brahman is the material cause of the universe, it becomes the substantive for all objects in the universe. Since Brahman cannot be seen or known as an object (adreshyam), the substantive of the universe cannot be known or seen; we only see the universe of objects.

We can now use the vyApti that: whenever the substantive is not seen, whatever is seen will be unreal (the unreal gets sublated when one sees or knows the substantive). The example we have discussed is that of seeing

silver on nacre. When once we know the substantive nacre, the silver that we saw is recognized as not real. Similarly, once I know Brahman as the substantive of the universe, I recognize that the universe that I see is not real. But, since things are seen, they are not non-existent either since non-existent things cannot be seen. With this background let us examine the VP statements.

VP says we can prove the unreality of the universe, which appears to be other than Brahman. This is because Brahman, though infinite and the substantive of the universe, is not itself seen. Whatever is seen is unreal and this is like seeing unreal silver in nacre. The nature of this error has already been discussed and established before when we were discussing the topic of errors in perception. How can we prove the universe is unreal? How can we prove that silver is unreal when we see it in the nacre? How can we prove the snake is unreal where there is actually only a rope? It is very simple: the fact that what we see is not what is actually there proves that what we see is in error. Similarly, Brahman is the substantive for the whole universe. We are not seeing Brahman but a universe with names and forms. That means, we are seeing something other than what is actually there. It is obvious then that the universe that we see is not real since we are seeing something different from what it is. VP says this argument is simpler than any other.

VP now provides a definition for unreal (mithyA). Unreality is something opposite to absolute non-existence. It appears to abide in whatever is supposed to be its substratum. VP says that the term 'supposed to be' is used to guard against absence of any true substratum, and the term 'whatever' is used to protect any coexistence of the object and the substantive as two entities. When I see silver where nacre is, 'silver is supposed to abide in whatever substantive is actually there (nacre)', as I have no knowledge of the nacre when I am seeing the silver. Similarly, the silver that I see is not separate from nacre so that it can be said to 'co-exist' with nacre. Here, there are not two objects – silver and nacre – when I see the silver. It is silver alone that I see where the nacre is. Hence, the silver is mithyA, since what is there is not what I see. Hence, VP uses the definition provided by chitsukhAchArya in chitsukhii (I-7-39) that: mithyA is that which is counter positive

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(opposite) to the absolute non-existence and abides (or appear to exist) in whatever is supposed to be its substratum. In simple terms, it is sat asat vilakShaNam – since it is seen, it is not absolute non-existence (asat) but neither is it real (sat), since it is abiding in something other than itself (like silver in nacre).

In the case of seeing a snake where there is a rope, we have adhyAsa or the error of taking something to be other than what it is due to incomplete perception of attributive content because of adventitious defects (such as inadequate lighting). Here, the inference involves the vyApti that: whatever (object) is seen is mithyA, if we do not know the substantive of what is seen. Since Brahman, the substantive of the universe is not seen or known, the universe that we see is mithyA. VP next uses another vyApti or concomitant relation to establish by inference that the universe that we see is mithyA. This involves establishing that whatever object has parts is mithyA, since the substantive Brahman has no parts and therefore cannot be broken into parts.

Let us examine the example of a cloth. When we say it is a cloth, it appears to be real, since transactionally (at the empirical level) we use it as a cloth. But, on closer examination, what is actually present are lots of cotton threads, which are together seen as a cloth. The cloth can be separated into the threads from which it is made. Hence, cloth is not a non-existent entity but an entity that ‘abides in the threads’. The cloth is there for us to experience but the truth of the cloth-experience is that it is nothing other than threads, which form the substantive for the cloth. If the threads are removed, the cloth cannot exist independently, whereas the threads can exist independently of the cloth. Thus, by anvaya logic we have: ‘cloth is, thread is’. By vyatireka logic we have: ‘cloth is not’ but ‘thread is’. Thus, the cloth becomes an entity dependent on the threads whereas the threads exist independently of being a cloth.

This is true for all objects that are made of up of parts. They can all be parted or dis-assembled into their constituent entities, which are more real than the assembled objects. All the qualities of objects also come under the same category – they are not absolutely non-existent but exist as abiding in something other than themselves. We cannot say that color



abides in color; it abides in the cloth, while cloth itself abides in threads. One can continue this process. The threads themselves are not non-existent but they abide in something other than themselves, the finer molecules, etc. Ultimately, all objects in the universe can be parted since they are made up of parts. That which abides in something other than itself is mithyA. The only 'thing' that is part-less and abides in itself is Brahman. Here, we are using a laukika anumAna or worldly inference to say that 'whatever has parts is mithyA', since it is not absolutely non-existent but exists abiding in something other than itself. Thus, using inference or anumAna we can establish using worldly examples that the universe is mithyA or apparently real but not really real.

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## 11.2 THEORIES OF MITHYATVA AND MITHYATVAMITHYATVA

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Mithya is an important concept of the Advaita system. It differentiates the Advaita system from all other systems. According to Advaita Vedanta the chief aim of every one is the attainment of moksa.

Mithyātva means "false belief", and an important concept in Jainism and Hinduism. Disappearance (nivr̥tti) is the necessary presupposition of mithyatva because what is falsely perceived ceases to exist with the dawn of right knowledge. Mithyātva, states Jayatirtha, cannot be easily defined as 'indefinable', 'non-existent', 'something other than real', 'which cannot be proved, produced by avidya or as its effect', or as 'the nature of being perceived in the same locus along with its own absolute non-existence'.

Mithyātva is a concept in Jainism distinguishing right knowledge from false knowledge, and parallels the concepts of Avidya in the Vedanta school of Hinduism, Aviveka in its Samkhya school, and Maya in Buddhism.

The opposite of mithyātva (false belief) is samyaktva (right belief).

### **Hinduism**

Mithyātva is a concept found in some schools of Hinduism. Other concepts in Hinduism, similar in meaning to mithyātva, include the concepts of *Avidya* in the Vedanta school of Hinduism, *Aviveka* in its Samkhya school.

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Ignorance begets *aviveka* (lack of correct, discriminative knowledge) states Samkhya school of Hinduism. One engages in deeds, good and bad, due to *aviveka*, earns *punya* or becomes a victim of sin and is reborn. *Aviveka* also means lack of reason or imprudence or indiscretion. *Avidya* is related concept in Vedanta school of Hinduism. *Avidya* and *aviveka* give *dukkha* i.e. suffering.

Madhusudanah in his *Advaita-siddhi* gives five definitions of *mithyātvā* which term is derived from *mithya* meaning false or indeterminable. False is something that appears and is later negated or contradicted; the unreal is never an object of experience, the concept of unreal is self-contradictory. Falsity is defined as – not being the locus of either reality or unreality, it is distinct from both reality and unreality. In practice, *mithyātvā* has three means, – a) that which does not exist in three divisions of time, past, present and future; b) that which is removable by knowledge; and c) that which is identical with the object of sublation. Whereas *mithya* is other than real but not real, *mithyātvā* is identical with sublatability. *Mithyatva* may also be understood as that which is negated even where it is found to exist. The followers of the Advaita School contend that the world-appearance is negated by Brahman-knowledge and hence it is illusory. To the followers of Vishishtadvaitavada, *mithya* is the apprehension of an object as different from its own nature.

The Advaita School considers *mithyātvā* to mean falsity of the world. Disappearance (*nivṛtti*) is the necessary presupposition of *mithyātvā* because what is falsely perceived ceases to exist with the dawn of right knowledge. But, *mithya* or falsity, or *mithyātvā* or falsity of the world, cannot be easily defined as indefinable or non-existent or something other than real or which cannot be proved or produced by *avidya* (or as its effect) or as the nature of being perceived in the same locus along with its own absolute non-existence. The opponents of the *Advaita* do not accept the contention that Atman is simply consciousness and cannot be the substratum of knowledge, and they insist that existence as the logical concomitant of the absence of non-existence and vice versa, with these two being mutually exclusive predicates, must be admitted. The opposite of unreality must be reality.

According to *Advaita* anything which is both cognized and sublated is *mithya*. *Mithyātva* is negated even where it is found. The illusoriness of the world is itself illusory. Once Brahman-knowledge arises both the cognizer and the cognized disappear.

The proof of unreality is impermanence, the permanent one is the Sole Reality. *Mithyātva* is apparent reality; at the level of ultimate truth, when, through the understanding of the *mithyātva* of all limiting adjuncts (upadhis) of name and form i.e., those that pertain to the individual body-mind (*tvam*) and as well to the lordship of Brahman (*tat*), everything is seen to be not an other to pure Awareness, the distinctions of Jiva and Ishvara no longer apply, and it is the *param Brahman*, the very essential of the Lord Itself, that is the final reality. In *Advaita* the method to reveal the unreality (*mithyātva*) of things involves the idea of change and permanence i.e. what deviates and what persists.

*Mithyātva* means 'illusoriness'. *Advaita* maintains that Brahman alone is real, the plurality of the universe is because the universe is illusory, the universe can be cognized; whatever that is cognized is illusory. The universe is different from the real as well as the real, the universe is indeterminable. *Vedanta Desika* refutes this contention because there is no such entity which is neither real nor unreal. The universe which is different from Brahman is inseparably related to Brahman. Badarayana (Brahma Sutra III.ii.28) declares that between the *Jiva* and Brahman there is difference as well as non-difference like the relation of light to its substratum or source on account of both being luminous, one being limited and the other all-pervading, the all-pervading is real and immortal. Rishi Damano Yamayana (Rig Veda X.xvi.4) insists that all should know about that part of the body which is immortal; the immortal part of the body is the Atman or Brahman, it is called a part because without it there cannot be life in one's body. Vacaspati of the *Bhamati* school states that whereas illusion conceals, *mithyātva* signifies 'concealment', the real nature of the cognized object is concealed resulting in non-apprehension of difference between the real and the unreal objects. Padmapada of the *Vivarna* school adds to the sense of concealment the sense of

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inexpressibility, thus hinting at the sublatability of illusion. If the term *anirvacaniya* is defined by the *Advaita* as the nature of being different from *sat* and *asat* in essence, which is the nature of *mithyātva*, then the element of difference must be real. Even though Jayatirtha states that there is no bar on the validity of the experience of difference, but the fact remains that difference cannot be an attribute of objects. Madhavacharya concludes that difference is not something that falls outside the content of an object or what is generally considered to constitute its essence which in perception is the sum total of its distinction from others. The perception of an object is the same as the perception of its difference from all others.

### **Buddhism**

*Mithyātva* is not a common term in Buddhism, but where mentioned implies deceit. The more common term used is *Maya*. *Mithyātva*, according to *Abhidharmakosa*, means rebirth in the hells or as an animal or as a *preta*. *Ratnagoṭravibhagha* terms *mithyātva* as the state of evil.

### **Jainism**

*Mithyātva* is an important concept on false knowledge in Jainism. The Jaina scholar Hemachandra defined *mithyātva* as "belief in false divinities, false gurus and false scriptures".

Jainism describes seven types of beliefs - *mithyātva*, *sasvadana-samyaktva*, *mishra-mithyatva*, *kashopashmika-samyaktva*, *aupshamika-samyaktva*, *vedak-samyaktva* and *kshayik-samyaktva*. *Mithyātva*, meaning false or wrong belief, is the soul's original and beginning less state of deluded world-view, at which stage the soul is in a spiritual slumber, unaware of its own bondage.<sup>[18]</sup>

*Mithyātva* or "false belief, delusion" are of five kinds in Jainism, according to one classification:

1. *Ekanta* (one sided belief, not considering other sides or aspects for truth),
2. *Viparita* (belief in the opposite of what is right),
3. *Vinaya* (universally accepting all right or wrong belief/religion without examining them, attending only to conduct),

4. *Samsaya* (when there is doubt whether a course is right or wrong, unsettled belief, skepticism), and
5. *Ajnana* (indifference to right or wrong belief).

Svetambara Jains classify categories of false belief under *mithyātva* differently: *Abhigrahika* (belief limited to their own scriptures that they can defend, but refusing to study and analyse other scriptures); *Anabhigrahika* (belief that equal respect must be shown to all gods, teachers, scriptures); *Abhiniviseka* (belief of those who can discern but refuse to do so from preconceptions); *Samsayika* (state of hesitation or uncertainty between various conflicting, inconsistent beliefs); and *Anabhogika* (innate, default beliefs that a person has not thought through on one's own).

Digambara Jains classify categories of false belief under *mithyātva* into seven: *Ekantika* (absolute, one sided belief), *Samsayika* (uncertainty, doubt whether a course is right or wrong, unsettled belief, skepticism), *Vainayika* (belief that all gods, gurus and scriptures are alike), *Grhita* (belief derived purely from habits or default, no self analysis), *Viparita* (belief that true is false, false is true, everything is relative or acceptable), *Naisargika* (belief that living beings are devoid of consciousness and cannot discern right from wrong), *Mudha-drsti* (belief that violence and anger can tarnish or damage thoughts, divine, guru or dharma).

Mithyātva is one of three things, in Jainism, that are harmful stimuli and that distract a person from attaining right belief and correct knowledge. The other two things that distract, are *Maya* (deceit), and *Nidana* (hankering after fame and worldly pleasures).

One Jaina text lists 28 kinds of *mohaniya* (deluding) *karmas* that prevent the true perception of reality and the purity of the soul, the *darsana mohaniya karman* which function to prevent a soul's insight into its own nature and therefore, deemed destructive, are *mithyātva karman*. The term, *mithyātva*, meaning 'perversity', is generally used to denote the idea of *avidya* along with *mithyadarsana* or *mithyadrsti* (wrong view), *darsanamoha* (delusion of vision), *moha* (delusion) etc.:. The state of *mithyatva* is manifested as a fundamental tendency to see things other

than as they really are (Tattva Sutra 8:9).<sup>[23]</sup> Passions such as Aversion (dvesa) and Attachment (raga), which are also called pursuers from the limitless past (anantanubandhi), operate in conjunction with mithyatva.<sup>[24]</sup> *Mithyātvā* is the one-sided or perverted world-view which generates new layers of *karma* and considered in Jainism as the root of human arrogance.

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### 11.3 MITHYATVA IN UPANISADS

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Q: For the last few years I have been trying to develop a manuscript detailing a working model which marries the teachings of Advaita Vedanta with contemporary research on NDE or “Near Death Experience” and similar fields of inquiry. There are several questions I have, but for now I will only bother you with one: Is it possible the *Atman* does possess a “spiritual ego”?

Clearly the culprit for the ignorance of our real self as the Self is the wrongful identification with the body-mind. Shankara explains the identification with the *kosha*-s perpetuates the illusion, which is nothing more than a superimposition of the *kosha*(s) on *brahman* helped by *mAyA*.

The way I see it, our greatest enemy is the ego, the human ego. This ego comes from the mind and is maintained alive by desires. But I have many reasons to suspect there is also a “spiritual ego” present in the *Atman*, which similarly perpetuates the ignorance of the wrongful identification by the so-called discarnate “spirit soul”.

The metaphor I have used is this: there is an actor in the “spiritual world” (the *Atman*) which wrongfully identifies with a spiritual ego preventing it from realizing *brahman*. This actor goes through an induced amnesia, after agreeing to play the role of a character in the Grand Stage of the world. This is the incarnation stage. The human ego is the combination of the spiritual ego – which carries the *saMskAra*-s and the *vAsanA*-s – plus particular influences on the personality traits caused by internal factors such as the brain/mind of the new body, as well as external factors such as family, society, education, etc. This is the embodied *Atman* as the *jIva*.

Eventually the actor leaves the stage (discarnation) and finds himself/herself in a special setting with others. This new setting is a transitional stage which I call the In-Between World, where familiar and relaxing settings are chosen through a process of affinity or attraction. Eventually there is a “second death” or the death of the human ego. Here the actor as *Atman* awakens and remembers he/she is the actor who has played many roles in different human bodies. This new setting is what I call the Spiritual World. The *Atman* does possess a spiritual ego (ultimately an illusion) which in reality is much more than just the accumulation of all the human personalities it has lived (the characters portrayed). The reason for venturing back to the phenomenal world (Earth or the “grand stage”) is in my opinion straightforward: only in the phenomenal or material world changes to the ego (both human and spiritual) can happen. Here the *Atman* can learn its real nature as the Self or *brahman* and become liberated with the end of *saMsAra* or the need to play additional roles as human characters with more human egos.

A: You probably haven't read 'How to Meet Yourself' (not many have!) In there, I mention NDE briefly and agree with Susan Blackmore that it is induced by chemical activity and has nothing whatsoever to do with glimpses into other worlds.

Your basic question does not have any real meaning. The key tenet of Advaita is that there is only *brahman* or *Atman* (or, if you prefer, Consciousness). There is nothing else – reality is non-dual. So, if you are wanting to speak as if from the vantage point of absolute reality, *Atman* cannot contain anything – there is only *Atman*.

All explanations for how there seems to be a separate world are, like that world itself, *mithyA*. There is only *brahman*. The explanations are intended to be interim only, in order to satisfy the intellect until such time as you realize the truth. They are like the pole vault and have to be discarded before you can ‘pass over’ the bar of ignorance. This includes the explanations of Shankara, as he would be the first to admit.

It would certainly be possible to put forward alternative theories and maybe the one you outline could work to provide such an interim explanation for someone (other than yourself!) But, to be frank, why bother? The various explanations provided in the shruti have worked for

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innumerable people for several thousand years. You can read about and hear them presented in slightly different ways in many books and from many teachers until they finally work their magic and the Self-ignorance is dispelled. But then you throw them away just like all ideas about the truth. It is simply not possible to speak about the ultimate truth. Attempting to devise some alternative approach to do the same thing would seem somewhat ambitious and entirely a waste of time. (Sorry to be blunt!)

Q: Most certainly, I wholly agree with the main tenet of Advaita Vedanta that the only reality or truth (*satyam*) is *brahman* and everything else is just *mithyA*. Also *Atman* is *brahman*. But we live in a world where ignorance rules. The identification with the non-self (ego) is too powerful. The mind and the intellect get in the way of realizing this truth. My reply to “Why bother?” is: Why not? As *brahman*, I (the Self) as well as the I as the non-self or ego, want to enjoy the *III*. To me it is just irresistible to relish the position of knowing all this is an illusion, or more appropriately, *mithyA*.

I truly appreciate your straightforwardness. But I feel I need to explain the role of a model. As you stated, any model is after all just a tool, a pointer, to be eventually discarded as Vedanta explicitly says. A model is not supposed to explain reality (and much less the Absolute Reality), but to help visualize a concept. It acknowledges it is just an approximation which takes into account our limitations. For as long as we are identified with the non-self as the human ego, the intellect will always be there. With both faith and logical personal conviction someone could strongly asseverate a belief in the tenets of Advaita (which I do), but I would be fooling myself to claim that by just doing so this would somehow stop the influence of *mAyA*. In other words, I may believe I have attained God-realization in the form of *brahma-vidyA* and hence *mokSha*, but this would be arrogant and wishful thinking. The way *mAyA* is meant to act is for us mere mortals (the illusion of being a human being) to only experience *mithyA*. So for serious students of Advaita, there exist a dichotomy or disconnect between what we believe or know to be *satya* and what we experience at all times (away from meditation)



as *mithyA*. On one hand, I (the ego/intellect) can accept what reality (*satyam*) is, but on the other hand, I only experience *mithyA*.

So please do not spoil the *IIIA*. Let us assume there is only *IIIA* for as long as *avydiA* (nescience) or *mAyA* or the “undifferentiated” becomes differentiated as the illusion of *mithyA*. So for now let us play the game.

My intellect (I know I am not this intellect) accepts the concept of reincarnation. The way I see it, there are two possible scenarios. We either reincarnate in all the human beings that ever existed and will exist, or there are individual egos which transcend death and carry over the lessons learned to the next incarnation. So if there is a continuity of relative existence (*mithyA*) of the non-self (ego) there must be a way to carry over to the next life this ignorance of the Self. The *shruti* recommends performing *sAdhana* in order to remove ignorance, thereby achieving *mokSha* which then stops *saMsAra*. If we accept this then, logically, there must exist some kind of school or grading system by which the individual soul (*Atman*) can advance up the spiritual ladder. Therefore, it would be inevitable to conclude that there is (in the ignorant plane of existence) a perpetuation of this non-self (the ego) which creates the illusion of individuality. Otherwise, whatever progress achieved in one lifetime would be wasted.

These models, in my humble opinion, do not take away anything from Advaita Vedanta. Actually, I feel it is quite the opposite. It is a validation of our ignorance and our condition of *mithyA*.

A: You clearly have a good understanding of many of the key concepts in Advaita and argue well. But you seem to have a mental block regarding the value of them.

You must have come across the metaphor of the sunrise. Having read some of my books, you will know it is one of my favorites. To utilize and extend this metaphor, it seems that you prefer to try to explain the mechanism for the sun’s orbiting of the earth rather than admit that it does not take place at all.

All of the theories used to ‘explain’ why there is a separate creation or what happens when we die are mistaken (or, in the context of Advaita, *adhyAropa-apavAda*). They are mistakes consequent upon the fundamental ignorance in thinking that there is separation to begin with.

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Since there has never been any creation, there is no need to look for an explanation for it. Since we have never been born in the first place, there is no need to try to explain reincarnation.

Yes, these aspects are dealt with by the scriptures but their value in explaining life, death, heaven and rebirth etc is analogous to the dreamer trying to explain why the elephant in his dream has just turned into a chair. *prAtibhAsika* is real from the standpoint of the dream and *vyAvahArika* from the waking standpoint. When the dreamer wakes up, there is no longer any meaning in trying to explain the elephant transformation. (And it is not relevant to bring Freud in here, because he was trying to explain the dream from the waking, not the dreaming standpoint. It was not the waker who was having the dream!) These explanations are of value only to the interim seeker who needs explanations for things that will later be realized to be unreal.

There cannot be any *lIa* because *brahman* has no desires, does not act and does not enjoy. Advaita takes you all the way; don't allow yourself to be diverted by the distractions along the way. And don't try to discover whether or not the rope-snake is poisonous!

Jainism is one of the major ancient religions of the world. Scholars believe that it originated as a reaction to the cumbersome ritualism (karma kanda) and as revolt against animal sacrifices in the name of religion, which were prevalent in Hinduism. We get evidence of this protest against killing animals in sacrifices (yajnas) in the mythological stories of Jainism. Other Jainologists, however, consider Jainism as old as Hinduism, if not older. It was prevalent then as one of the popular religions. These scholars believe that in India, from times immemorial, there were two parallel streams of culture: the Vedic or brahman culture, and the shramana or Magadhana culture. The former originated and flourished in the Indus valley or Sarasvati Valley according to modern scholars, and the latter had its birth and growth in Magadha, the present state of Bihar, India. There are certain fundamental differences between these two cultures, which have persisted in some form or other till to day.

### Some Basic Differences

The Vedic culture emphasizes the concept of a Brahmana or brahmanahood, whereas the Shramana culture has its basis in the concept of an all-renouncing Monk, a bhikkhu or shramana. The Vedic culture sets before us the concept of a Jivanmukta, a person liberated in life. A jivanmukta can even be a householder. He is also called a Rishi (mantra-drasts), a person who has realized the scriptural truths. There are many references to such householder rishis in the Hindu scriptures. King Janaka and the sages Yajnavalkya, Vasistha, Atri and many other rishis were all householders.

Shramana culture, on the other hand, considers formal sannyasa or total renunciation of all possessions desires and even activities essential for attaining liberation. The word Arhat refers to a person who has gained perfect control over all his activities. An arhat, without any activity, is projected as the ideal. Of the four purusarthas, or goals of life, the brahmana culture stresses dharma or righteous conduct, whereas the shramana culture emphasizes moksha or freedom more than dharma. One must keep in mind these few basic facts while trying to undertake a comparative study of Vedanta and Jainism. It must also be borne in mind that Brahmanism or Hinduism is not the same as Vedanta. Likewise Shramanism and Jainism are not identical. Besides, both Vedanta and Jainism have various aspects: philosophical, ethical, social and practical. There are some similarities between the two as well as some dissimilarities. One must be careful not to draw simplistic conclusions.

Etymologically, Vedanta means the end or the conclusion of the Vedas. Thus the last portions of the Vedas-the Upanishads and the principles or philosophy propounded in them-are called Vedanta. In fact, Vedanta is a system of philosophy, which forms the basis of Hinduism. There are different interpretations of the Upanishads based on which there are various schools of Vedanta like Dvaita, Visistadvaita and Advaita. Generally, the Advaita philosophy as propounded by Sankaracarya is equated with Vedanta.

### **Principles of Jainism and Vedanta**

Now, if we believe that only the ritualistic aspect of Hinduism and Brahmanism is repugnant to Jainism, there should not be any antagonism

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between Jainism and the spiritual aspect of the Upanishads. Even the Upanishads have decried Vedic ritualism characterized by excessive activity and sacrificial paraphernalia, and have preached the conscious principle the Atman the realization of which they advocated as the ultimate goal of life. There cannot be any contradiction between Jainism and Vedanta on this score.

Both Jainism and Vedanta accept the Atman as the real nature of all living beings-a reality that is different from the body, the pranas, the mind and the intellect which are inert (jada) Jainism calls them pudgala. Vedanta propounds that the individual soul forgets its real nature and identifies with the unreal (body and mind) due to ignorance (avidya). Jainism also considers mithyatva or wrong knowledge-ignorance-as the chief cause of bondage between the conscious principle, Atman and the insentient pudgala. It however, postulates a few more causes of bondage: the absence of dispassion for sense enjoyment (avirati) carelessness (pramada), attachment (kasaya) and the activities of body mind and speech (yoga).

Both Vedanta and Jainism believe in the theory of karma and transmigration. In Jainism the philosophy of karma is discussed in great detail. To get rid of the bondage caused by past karma Jainism recommends two means: samvara and nirjara. Samvara means prevention of new karmic bondages-prevention of the influx of fresh karma. Nirjara deals with the methods by which the already formed bondages could be severed-the purgation of karma. This is done by Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. These three together are called tri-ratna ('triples jewels') and are very basis of Jainism Besides these tapas (austerity) is so greatly stressed in Jainism that it may be considered the fourth jewel.

When we try to study these basic principles in the light of Swami Vivekananda's Practical Vedanta we find certain similarities. Swamiji too greatly emphasized faith as one of the most important virtues. While in Jainism Right Faith means having faith in the true and pure guru (suddha guru), pure deity or prophet (suddha deva) and true and pure religion (suddha dharma) Swamiji stressed faith in oneself. He went to the extent of proclaiming: The old religions said that he was an atheist

who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself.

It is not that Jainism does not preach faith in oneself. In fact Jainism does not believe in a God who creates sustains and destroys the universe. Likewise it does not advocate the concept of grace of a superhuman divine being. Although Jainism adores tirthankaras or prophets it also believes that anyone can attain to that exalted state by one's own self-effort. Adoration of the tirthankaras is more a reminder of the state of perfection than worship. This does not contradict Swamiji's Practical Vedant which preaches the potential divinity in every human being. Swamiji repeatedly exhorted his disciples to become Rishis-even greater than himself.

Jainism lays the greatest stress on the necessity of character and purity of conduct (samyak caritra). So does Swamiji:

'Money does not pay nor name; fame does not pay nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves through the adamant walls of difficulties'. (4.367)

In fact character building was the very basis of all his practical plans of action. He defined education as the man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. (3.302)

Observance of the five Yamas – truth, non-violence, non-stealing, chastity and non-possessiveness-wholly or partially as vows is the basis of Right Conduct. According to the great sage Patanjali the author of the Yoga Sutras these five values must be practiced by everyone everywhere and at all times without exception. Sri Ramakrishna was fully established in these virtues. Swami Vivekananda too advocated them. Hence there can be no dispute in this matter. The only difference is that whereas in Jainism the greatest stress is laid on Ahimsa or non-injury, Swamiji has emphasized truth and chastity.

Right Knowledge is greatly emphasized in Vedanta because ignorance can be destroyed only by knowledge. The chief means of acquiring this

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knowledge is called jnana yoga, which aims at attaining the highest spiritual knowledge. However there is an important difference between Vedanta and Jainism. According to Advaita Vedanta the individual soul and the Cosmic Soul or Brahman are essentially one and non-different. But Jainism believes that individual souls are innumerable and separate, and that this differentiation remains even after emancipation. But one thing is certain: both Jainism and Vedanta believe that the soul in its real nature is pure free blissful and of the nature of consciousness.

Jainism is basically a religion that strongly emphasizes renunciation and meditation and the giving up of all activity. It is a renunciation-dominant religion (nivr̥tti-pradhana dharma). In Jain temples we often find images of Jain prophets and saints sitting-or even standing-in meditation. Swami Vivekananda too assigned the prime place for concentration of mind and meditation in his scheme of Practical Vedanta. He was himself an adept in meditation and considered concentration of mind to be the secret of success in all spheres of life. In Jainism several meditation techniques are described, starting from such simple and preliminary techniques of collecting the dispersed mind as ananupurvi to the most advanced sukla-dhyana.

Anekantavada and syadvada are two inter-related theories, which demonstrate the catholicity of Jainism. An object or phenomenon can be viewed from various viewpoints and these various views can all be true though only partially. To explain this Jains give the famous example of several blind men feeling various parts of an elephant and deriving their own conclusions about it, which are all only partially true. This principle resembles Sri Ramakrishna's saying: 'As many faiths so many paths.' God can have various forms according to the conceptions of different devotees, and at the same time can be formless too. And there could be various paths to reach Him all of which can be equally valid.

### Practical Vedanta in Light of Jainism

We have thus far seen some basic tenets of Jainism in the light of Practical Vedanta. Let us now try to evaluate some of the principles of Practical Vedanta as preached by Swami Vivekananda in the light of Jainism. Let us to begin with take up Swami Vivekananda's definition of religion:

Each soul is potentially divine.

The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control or philosophy-by one, or more or all of these-and be free.

This is whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details. (1.124).

Does Jainism accept this definition? Let us see. We have already seen that Jainism believes the soul to be a conscious entity and considers its freedom from karmic bondage the goal of life. We have also seen that in Jainism greater stress is laid on raja. However devotion worship or bhakti is not neglected. Worship of images in temples and chanting of hymns and praises form an integral part of Jain religious practice. Jain devotees derive immense spiritual benefit from such observances. Nor are philosophical studies neglected. There is enough scope for scholarship and the exercise of reason in Jainism and there is a vast mass of Jain philosophical texts. However the path of action or karma yoga has not been extolled in Jainism as it has been done in the Bhagavad gita. Service to man is service to God is the very basis of Swami Vivekananda's Practical Vedanta. In Jainism service is considered one of the six kinds of internal tapas or austerity. But here too service only means service of saints and monastics. Although charity is considered meritorious for householders according to Jainism all activities ultimately lead to greater bondage. Hence karma is not considered a means of purification. Instead tapas is advocated as a means of cleansing oneself of karmic impurity.

Swami Vivekananda considers external details like rituals forms and temples of secondary importance. Jainism also emphasizes mental attitude more than the external act. This subject is discussed in Jainism under the subject of naya meaning outlook. If a meritorious act is performed with an evil intention it cannot be considered meritorious. This is akin to the karma yoga of Vedanta according to which the fruits of an action performed without attachment cannot affect the doer. There are two types of violence according to Jainism: actual violence and mental

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or intentional violence-dravya himsa and bhava himsa. Of the two, intentional violence is considered worse than actual violence.

Self-enquiry is greatly emphasized in Vedanta where it is called tvam-pada-sodhana. When one asks the questions, Who am I? What is my real nature? And seeks answers to such questions one ultimately realizes one's real pure conscious nature-the Atman free from adjuncts like body mind ego and intellect. There is no difference between Vedanta and Jainism as far as the process of inquiry is concerned.

Swami Vivekananda based his scheme of Practical Vedanta on the foundation of Advaita Vedanta. We must serve others because in serving them we really serve ourselves; because there are no two beings there is only one Cosmic Soul. Your soul and others soul are the same. To harm others is only to harm one self. The Jain prophet Mahavira speaks in almost the same vein: Whom you want to kill is none but you; whom you want to bind is none other than you. To kill anyone is to kill oneself; compassion towards creatures is compassion towards oneself. In this teaching of Lord Mahavira we find an echo of Advaita Vedanta.

### **Conclusion**

Vedanta is as old as the Vedas and is the basis of the various Indian philosophical systems. Although Vedanta had always been a practical scheme of life as well for modern times Swami Vivekananda has given it a new interpretation called Practical Vedanta. From the above analysis it will also be evident that although Jainism may differ philosophically and empirically from traditional Hinduism there are more similarities than differences between Jainism and Vedanta especially Swamiji's Practical Vedanta. Besides, Swamiji's definition of Vedanta is very wide all comprehensive and all-inclusive. According to it Religion is Vedanta, which includes all the different religions like Jainism Buddhism and Hinduism Even if one may not accept this definition of Vedanta one would find a lot of similarities between Jainism and Vedanta. Not only this, the two systems can help and enrich each other-as it should be. Vedanta can gain something from Jainism and Jainism too can benefit from Vedanta without in any way compromising their special features or originality.



For example the practice of serving man as God (siva jnane jiva seva) can easily become a part of the Jain way of life, since it accepts every soul as a pure free conscious entity. It is gratifying to note that a number of Jain organizations have nowadays undertaken philanthropic activities. On the other hand the followers of Practical Vedanta can gain much by learning to lay greater stress on tapas as done in Jainism Vedantins can also make use of the universal navakara mantra of Jainism and its practice of forgiveness. Navakara mantra is an extremely liberal and effective mantra where in salutations are offered to the acaryas teachers perfected souls saints and prophets of all religions. None can begrudge the acceptance of such a liberal non-sectarian mantras as a part of their religions practice.

Jains seek forgiveness from all creatures of the world chanting the following verse: I forgive all creatures may all creatures forgive me. I have friendship with everyone and enmity towards none.

No true religion preaches hatred separation or conflict. It bring people together and spreads goodwill. This has been the aim of both Jainism and Vedanta, which is why both Jainism and Vedanta have flourished in India. There has always been a cordial relationship between the Jains and the Vedantins and it continues to grow stronger every day.

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## 11.4 MITHYATVA IN BHAGAVADGITA

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In the sequel is a translation of the Sanskrit essay on the above topic. The Sanskrit and the English portions appear sequentially and help a reader conversant with Sanskrit to read those portions and also appreciate the translation. Those not conversant with Sanskrit could skip those portions and read just the English version. The translation is also an elaborate explanation of the Sanskrit essay.

अत्रद्वितीयाध्यायेषोडशोऽर्तमश्लोकएवंपठ्यते—Here, in the Second Chapter, is the verse -

नासतोवद्यतेभावोनाभावोवद्यतेसतः।उभयोरवपदृष्टोऽन्तस्तत्वनयोःतत्त्वदर्शम  
भः ॥इतत॥[2.16 Of the unreal there is no being; the real has no  
nonexistence. But the nature of both these, indeed, has been realized by  
the seers of Truth.]श्लोकेऽस्तमन्‘नाभावोवद्यतेसतः’

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इत्यंरेब्रह्मणस्तसत्यत्वममभहितंभगवता, तैविरीयश्रुत्युक्त‘सत्यंज्ञानंअनन्तंब्रह्म’  
इततब्रह्मस्तवरूपलक्षणानुरोधेन।‘त्रत्रकालाबाध्यत्वंसत्यत्वलक्षणं’  
इततपररष्वृतलक्षणंभगवत्पादैःतैविरीयभाष्येअततगिनार्शबोधकतयाएवमुक्तम्—  
यद्रूपेणयस्त्रस्त्रतंतद्रूपंनव्यमभचरतत,  
तत्सत्यम्।यद्रूपेणयस्त्रस्त्रतंतत्तद्रूपंनव्यमभचरतत,  
तदनृतममत्युच्यते।अतोवकारोऽनृतम्,  
‘वाचारंभणंवकारोनामधेयंमृविकेत्येवसत्यम्’,  
एवंसदेवसत्यम्इत्यवधारणात्।इतत।गीतागतब्रह्मलक्षणस्तयव्याख्यानतयाववराजते  
भाष्यवाक्यममदंभगवत्पादीयम्।In this verse, in the portion ‘the real has no  
nonexistence’ the Absolute Reality of Brahman is stated by the Lord.  
This is in accordance with the Taittiriya Upanishad definition of the  
intrinsic nature of Brahman in the terms: ‘Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam  
Brahma’ [Brahman is Existence, Consciousness and Infinite]. The nature  
of Brahman concisely stated as ‘that which is not sublatale in all the  
three periods of time’ has been elucidated in a very deeply insightful  
statement in the commentary to the Taittiriya Upanishad ://As for  
satyam, a thing is said to be satyam, true, when it does not change the  
nature that is ascertained to be its own; and a thing is said to be unreal  
when it changes the nature that is ascertained to be its own.Hence a  
mutable thing is unreal, for in the text, ‘All transformation has speech as  
its basis, and it is name only. Clay as such is the reality.’ (Chandogya  
Up. 6.1.4), it has been emphasized that, that alone is true that Exists  
(Ch.Up. 6.2.1)//‘ब्रह्मसत्यम्’इत्यंस्तयप्रततपादनंपूर्वंदृष्टम्, इदानीं‘जगस्मथ्या’  
इत्यस्तयतनरूपणं‘नासतोववद्यतेभावः’  
इत्यनेनक्रियते।ननुअसतःकरंममथ्यार्दार्शिकत्वं,  
सदसद्वलक्षणस्तयैवतर्त्वात्।ननुअसच्छब्दस्तय  
अत्यन्तासद्द्योतकत्वमेवलोकेदृष्टं, र्ववषाणगगनकुसुमप्रभृततषु,  
तेनचकरंमथ्यार्शिकत्वमसद्धः? इततचेत्, र्णुतत्रसमाधानम्।In the  
foregoing, the aspect ‘Brahman is the Reality’ (Brahma Satyam) has  
been established. In the sequel the aspect ‘the world is unreal’ (Jagan  
mithyaa) is taken up by analyzing the portion ‘Of the unreal there is no  
being’ of the verse 2.16. Objection: How do you say that the word ‘asat’  
(non-existent) connotes the sense of being ‘unreal’, ‘mithyA’, since only

that which is 'sad-asad-vilakShaNam', distinct from both existent and non-existent, can qualify to be termed unreal, mithyA? Further, the word 'non-existent' denotes only that which is absolutely non-existent such as the hare's horn and a sky-flower. Hence how does the idea of unreality, mithyAtvam, become conveyed by the term 'asat' of the verse? Reply: For such an objection, the reply is stated as follows:

श्लोकस्तयउिराधेतत्त्वदमर्शनांज्ञानंपूवाशधोक्तसदसतोरुभयोरवपतनणशयरूपमु  
क्तम्।यहद'असत्' इत्यस्तयर्'ववषाणाहदकंगृह्येत,

तत्पामरैरवपअसत्त्वेनतनप्रत्युिं'गृह्यमाणत्वात्,

तत्त्वदमर्शववषयकत्वंतस्तयअततपेर्लस्तयात्।प्रत्युतपस्डडतपामरसामान्येनसवैरव  
पस्तवाभाववक्याअववद्ययासंसाररत्वंप्रपञ्चपारमार्शकतयागृह्यमाणेसतत,

तस्त्रवारकतयार्'स्तत्रप्रवृविररततमसद्धे, भगवता'ब्रह्मसत्यं, जगस्मथ्या'

इत्युपदेर्:सार्शकत्वंसामञ्जस्तयंचप्राप्नुयात्।In the second half of the verse, the

knowledge/realization of the Knowers-of-Truthis being stated as that which constitutes the accurate understanding of the nature of both the

'sat and asat', real and the unreal. If 'asat', unreal, is to be taken to mean 'non-existent', like the hare's horn, it would be very trivial to mention it

as the realization of the Knower-of-Truth, for even those who are most ill-informed of the higher things of the world would deem the hare's horn

and the like as something absolutely non-existent; they do not have to be taught about this. On the contrary, if we admit that the Scriptural teaching

is aimed at removing the ignorance-caused nature-driven notion held by all learned and the lay that the samsara, bondage, is absolutely real, then

we can appreciate that the Lord's teaching of 'Brahman is the Real and the world is unreal' is purposeful and quite in order. 'यत्रहिद्वैतममभवतत'

(बृिदारडयक२.४.१४, ४.५.१५), 'नेिनानास्ततक्रकञ्चन'

(बृिदारडयक४.४.१९), 'मृत्योस्तसमृत्युंगच्छततयडिनानेवपश्यतत' (कठ२.१.११)

इत्याहदबह्व्य:श्रुतय:इवर्द्धप्रयोगेणद्वैतस्तयममथ्यात्वंप्रततपादयस्त, आमनस्त,

बोधयस्तच।'भूतप्रकृततमोक्षंच' (१३.३४)

इततभगवतावपसकारणस्तयजगत:ममथ्यात्वंज्ञावपतम्।त्रयोदर्'ाध्यायगतश्लोकेऽ

स्तमन्तत्त्वदमर्शनोलक्षणमेवमुक्तम्—

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरंज्ञानचक्षुषा।भूतप्रकृततमोक्षंचयेववदुयाशस्ततेपरम्॥१३.३४॥

इतत।Numerous Upanishadic passages such as - 'where there is dvaita as

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it were'(Brihadaranyaka Up. 2.4.24, 4.5.15), 'there is no diversity here whatsoever' (Br.Up. 4.4.19), 'whoever has the wrong vision of diversity goes from death to death' (Kathopanishad 2.1.11) –by the use of the particle 'iva' ('as though') establish, proclaim and teach the unreality of dvaita, duality. The Lord too, through the words 'bhUta-prakRti-moksham cha' (Bhagavad Gita 13.34), teaches the unreality, mithyAtva, of the world. In this verse the marks that signify knowledge of the Truth are specified –1.The discriminatory knowledge that differentiates the kshetra, prakriti, the inert principle and the kshetrajna, the Conscious Being and 2. The knowledge of the unreality/nonexistence of the causal and manifested universe. (अ)‘नासतोवद्यते’ इत्यत्रभाष्यम्–नासतो=अवद्यमानस्तयर्ीतोष्णादेःसकारणस्तयनवद्यतेनास्ततभावोभवनम्अस्ततता।(अत्रर्ीतोष्णादेःइततप्रकरणात्–२.१४गृीतम्, सकारणस्तयइतर्ीतोष्णादेःकारणंयस्कस्त्रदवपवस्ततुअस्नसूयाशहदहिमवा ताहदकंगृह्यते।)नहिर्ीतोष्णाहदसकारणंप्रमाणैतनशरूप्यमाणंवस्ततुसद्भवतत। ववकारोहिसः, ववकारश्चव्यमभचरतत।यर्ाघटाहदसंस्त्रानंचक्षुषातनरूप्यमाणंमृद्व्यततरेकेण अनुपलब्धेरसत्, तर्ासवोवकारःकारणव्यततरेकेणअनुपलब्धेःअसन्। 3जन्मप्रधवंसाभ्यांप्रागूध्वंचानुपलब्धेःकायशस्तयघटादेःमृदाहदकारणस्तयचतत्कार णव्यततरेकेणअनुपलब्धेःअसत्त्वम्।तदसत्त्वेसवाशभावप्रसङ्गइततचेन्न, सवशत्रबुद्धद्वयोपलब्धेःसद्बुद्धरसद्बुद्धररतत।यद्ववषयाबुद्धनशव्यम भचरततत्सत्, यद्ववषयाव्यमभचरततदसत्इततसदसद्ववभागेबुद्धतन्त्वेस्तर्तेसवशत्रद्वेबुद्धीस वैरुपलभ्येतेसमानाधकरणे।...सन्घटःसन्घटःसन्िस्ततीतत।एवंसवशत्र।तयोबुश ध्योघशटाहदबुद्धव्यशमभचरतत।तर्ाचदमर्शतम्।नतुसद्बुद्धः।तस्तमात्य टाहदबुद्धववषयोऽसन्व्यमभचारात्, नतुसद्बुद्धववषयोऽव्यमभचारात्।(पूवशप्रदमर्शततैविरियकभाष्यपङ्क्तयोऽत्र स्तमतशव्याः).....एवमात्मानात्मनोःसदसतोरुभयोरवपदृष्टुपलब्धोऽन्तोतनणश यःसत्सदेव, असदसदेवेततत्वनयोयशर्ोक्तयोस्ततत्त्वदमर्शमभः।तहदततसवशनामसवंचब्रह्म तस्तयनामतहदततद्भावस्ततत्त्वंब्रह्मणोयार्ात्त्यंतद्वष्टुंरीलयेषांतेतत्त्वदमर्शनः ।इतत।Reproduced hereunder is a portion from Shankaracharya's



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concordant manner in the portion ‘the non-existence of the Prakriti’ (13.34). The word ‘(knowing that Prakriti is) non-existent’ of the Bhashya (13.34) is as if it is referring to the word ‘a-bhAvaH’ of the verse 2.16. In this manner the Bhashya brings to the fore the intent of the Lord with respect to both the verses.

4२. असत्त्वाभूतप्रकृततः इतत्तद्व्यसमानार्शकम् । तर्ैव अभावः एवमोक्षणं इतत्पदौ समानार्शकौ मन्तव्यौ । द्वितीयश्लोकभाष्यगतपरमार्शितत्वं इतत्पदं पूवशश्लोकगत-तत्त्वदर्शमभः इत्यनेन तनकटं स्वध्यते । The words ‘asat’, non-existent, unreal, and ‘bhUtaprakRti’, the Causal Energy principle, mean the same. So also, the words ‘abhAvaH’ and ‘mokShaNam’ are to be seen to mean ‘non-existent’.

३. अत्रास्तमन्द्वितीयश्लोके मोक्षोपयोगज्ञानस्तयलक्षणद्वयं स्तफुटंप्रतीयते-१.

प्रकृत्यपरपयाशयक्षेत्रं, दृश्यं, जडं, ववषयं, क्षेत्रज्ञाद्द्रष्टुः, चैतन्यात्, ववषतयणो, ववलक्षणतया गुरुर्ास्तत्रोपदेर्मनुवववच्यद्रष्टव्यमर्ार.

एतन्मात्रववेकेन पारमार्शिकाद्वैतमसद्धनशस्तया हदतत भगवान्प्रकृत्याख्यक्षेत्रस्तयावपकायशकारणरूपेण संपूणशतया अभावत्वमवद्यमानत्वज्ञानमवपक्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञववेकज्ञानस्तयपूरकतया उपाहदत् । एतेन नासतो वद्यते इत्यत्रोक्तां द्वयं श्लोके ऽस्तमन्नवप अवधाररतं स्तपष्टमुपलभामि । पूवशत्रां द्वयं-

सतः ब्रह्मात्मनो ऽप्रतिततया सत्यत्वम्,

असतः देिाहदप्रपञ्चस्तयसवशर्ावप अवद्यमानत्वम्वइतत । एवञ्च प्रपञ्चमर्ा त्वसाधने भगवतो तात्पयशसद्भावे संर्यलेर्ो ऽवपनास्ततीतस्तफुटम् । In this second verse (13.34) the two-fold aspect of the liberating Knowledge is clearly spelt out -1. The PrakRti, also known as kshetram, dRshyam (perceived), inert, objectified being, is quite distinct from the Conscious Seer, the Kshetrajna, the Apprehender as is known from the teaching of the Guru and the Scripture and 2. Since by this much discrimination the pAramaarthika Non-dual Truth does not get established, the Lord teaches the non-existence of the Prakriti as another indispensable aspect of the liberating Knowledge. Thus, the two-aspect knowledge characterising the realization of Truth taught in 2.16 is found mentioned, specified, in this 13.34 as well. The two aspects seen in 2.16 are: 1. the absolute Reality of the Brahman and 2. the absolute unreality, non-existence, of the world characterized by the body, etc. By such reiteration by the Lord

we conclude that the Lord's intention is in teaching 'Brahma Satyam, jagan mithya'.

४. असद्ब्रह्मस्तयव्याख्यानतयावतशतेभूतप्रकृततर्द्धः। असहदतसकारणद्वैतस्तयप  
रामर्शः। भूतानांप्रकृततः अववद्यालक्षणाव्यक्ताख्याइततव्याख्यानकायशकारणा  
त्मकसमस्ततद्वैतस्तयद्योतकम्। ('अववद्यमानस्तयर्ीतोष्णादेः सकारणस्तयनव  
द्यतेनास्ततभावोभवनम् अस्ततता' इततर.१६भाष्ये।)

कायशमात्रस्तयअभावस्ततुसुषुप्त्यादाववपमसद्ब्रह्मत्वात्,

कारणस्तयप्रकृतेः अभावः तत्त्वज्ञानादेवसंभवततइततस्तपष्टीकतुंभूतप्रकृततमोक्षणं  
र्द्धतउक्तंश्लोके,

तर्ाववधंव्याख्यातंचभाष्ये। कारणोक्तेः कायशस्तयाप्युक्तप्रायएव। The word  
'bhUtaprakRti' of 13.34 looks like a commentary of the word 'asat' of  
2.16. The word 'asat' is indicative of the dvaita along with its cause  
(parakRti). The elucidation of the Bhashyam for the word  
'bhUtaprakRti-mokSham' in 13.34 as 'the cause of the beings,  
characterized by avidyA, ignorance, termed 'un-manifest', 'avyakta' ' is  
indicative of the entire cause-effect universal duality. 'नासतो..'

इत्यस्यभाष्यगतप्रपञ्चमिथ्यात्वप्रततपादकहेतुचतुष्टयप्रदर्शनि- Presenting the  
four-fold reason that establishes the unreality, mithyAtvam, of the world,  
as stated in the Bhashyam for the verse 2.16 -

५१. 'नहिर्ीतोष्णाहदसकारणंप्रमाणैतनशरूप्यमाणंवस्ततुसद्ब्रह्मतत।' इत्यस्तम  
न्वाक्येवस्ततुनोऽसत्त्वेतस्त्ररूपणेप्रमाणापेक्षतांितूक्रियते। अत्रेयंव्यास्तः-

यद्यद्वस्ततुस्तवात्मगोचरे, स्तवात्मलाभाय,

स्तवमभन्नप्रमातृगतप्रमाणमपेक्षतेतिस्मथ्या। अन्याधीनत्वात्,

स्तवाप्रप्रमाणगृीतस्तवाप्रवस्ततुवत्। प्रमाणानांतर्ातद्वषयाणांप्रकृत्यपरपयाश

यक्षेत्रान्तगशतत्वं भगवतैवोक्तत्वात्-

इन्द्रयाणदर्रैकंचपञ्चचेन्द्रयगोचराः इततक्षेत्रववरणावसरे (१३.५)

। 'भूतप्रकृततमोक्षंच' (१३.३४)

इततक्षेत्रज्ञयार्ात्यज्ञानबाध्यमानक्षेत्रकुक्षपतततेन्द्रयैः ग्राह्यमाणववषयाः कर्ंव  
स्ततुभूततांअिशस्त?

अन्याधीनत्वेऽपरोऽयंदृष्टान्तः-

रज्ज्ज्वामारोवपतसपशवत्इतत। यर्ाआरोवपतसपशस्तयअधष्ठानरज्ज्जुंववना

नस्तवतन्त्रसत्त्वंतर्ा। अर्वायद्यद्वस्ततुपरप्रकाश्यंसस्तवप्रकार्िीनंतिममथ्याभव

वतुमिशतत, व्यततरेकेणब्रह्मवत्। िेतुरयंमाडदूक्यकाररकाभाष्योक्त(२.५)





very exposition that we are considering now. २. 'वकारो हि सः, वकारश्च व्यमभचरतत।' सत्यं वस्तु अव्यमभचारतया सत्यत्वलक्षणभानभवतत। तदव्यमभचारं प्राप्य सदैव व्यमभचरद्वमथ्यात्वलक्षणतामेतत। ननु वकारवद्वस्तु अतनत्यं भवतत इत्येव सवैरभ्युपगतं, तत्करं मथ्यात्वतनणशयः क्रियते? इतत चेदुच्यते—

पूर्वबीजत्वेन तनस्त्वतं यत्तत् इदानीं अङ्कुरत्वेन गृह्यते, पश्चात्सस्तयत्वेन, अनन्तरं वृक्षत्वेन इतत प्रत्येककक्षायामवपपूवशदृष्टवस्तु अगोचरतामेत्यसवशत्रनाम मात्रतावसानमेतत। तर्बीजाहदसवाशवस्त्रासु ६ क्रमवपवस्तु नमसद्भ्यतत, केवलं नामरूपद्वयमेव वस्तु भ्रान्त्या व्यवहियते। िेतुरयं उिरद्वयित्वोः नातत व्याप्यते। समनन्तरितौ कारणव्यततरेकेण कायशस्तयानुपलब्धत्वं तर्तादनन्तरितौ जन्मप्रधवंसाभ्यां प्रागूध्वंचानुपलब्धत्वममततनाततव्यास्तप्रसङ्गः। 2. This is the second reason:// For they are changeful and whatever is changeful is inconstant. // The 'Real' entity, being free from any changes, qualifies to be called 'Satyam', Real. That which is other than this, however, being invariably subject to changes like birth/origin, decay and death/destruction, deserves to be called 'unreal', mithyaa. Objection: The changeful/changing entity, being ephemeral, is regarded by all as only anitya, short-lived. Hence, how is it that you label it as 'mithyA', unreal? Reply: What was earlier admitted as a seed, for example, is now comprehended as a sprout, later a plant and a tree and so on. In each of these stages of transformations, the earlier admitted object is no longer available for our experience; it vanishes. It has to be recalled only as a 'name' with a 'form'; the substance being unavailable. Take the case of 'this morning'. I woke up this morning, recognized it as morning, did all things pertaining to the morning. Now I am in the noon time. At this time, where is the 'morning'? I did experience it no doubt, yet where is it now? Let me apply the rule Bhagavan specifies in 2.16: 'The Real has no nonexistence'. When I apply this rule to test 'morning', if it was real, it should have been available to me now, existing. It should not have become non-existent. So, how can I consider the 'morning' real? But why can't I take the 'morning' as anitya, ephemeral? Krishna says in the same verse: 'The unreal has no being/existence'. To explain, if something has no being, existence, it is unreal. This leaves us with the

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only choice of concluding that the ‘morning’, even when it was experienced, did not have ‘being’, ‘existence’; it was just an appearance. And that is called ‘mithyA’. Therefore even during the various states of a seed-sprout-tree, etc. and morning-noon-evening-night, etc. there was nothing substantial existing; only some names and forms were handled in the delusion that they are substantial entities. This second reason, stated by Bhagavatpada, does not overpervade, ativyApti, to the subsequent two reasons mentioned below. For, in the next reason, the non-availability of the effect in the absence of its cause is cited and in the final reason the non-availability of the effect prior to its creation and after its destruction is taken up.

३. यर्ाघटाहदसंस्त्रानंचक्षुषातनरूप्यमाणंमृद्वततरेकेणअनुपलब्धेरसत्,  
तर्ासवोवकारःकारणव्यततरेकेणअनुपलब्धेःअसन्।’इततभाष्यवाक्यम्।अत्रव  
वकारत्वं(ववकायशत्वं) ममथ्यात्वेितूक्रियते।दृष्टान्तःवाक्यएवदिः।(छान्दोनये)  
वाचार्षणश्रुतौएवमेवव्याख्यातम्।तैविरीयभाष्येऽवप‘वकारोऽनृतम्’  
इत्युक्तम्।कारणमेवपश्यन्‘इदंकायंसत्यम्’

इततमत्वासवोजनःमुह्यतत।मृदेवपश्यन्घटबुद्ध्यात्म्ब्यमुह्यतत।मृद्वयततरेकेणघ  
टइततवस्ततुनास्ततीततबोधानन्तरमेवघटसत्यत्वबुद्ध्यजतत।नामरूपमात्रात्म  
कंवकारजातंममथ्यात्तदुपादानभूतकारणवस्ततुमात्रंसत्यम्।कारणमेवकाया  
शकारेणनूतननाचव्यवहियते।3. The third reason given by Shankara is://all  
changeable things, such as pots, are unreal because they are not perceived  
to be different from their (material) causes//Here, transformation,  
vikAratvam, is held out as a reason for their unreality. The example is  
given in the sentence itself. While commenting on the VaachArambhaNa  
shruti in the Chandogya Upanishad VI Chapter too, this same  
observation is made. Even in the Taittiriya Upanishad Bhashyam, the  
Acharya has said: ‘anything that is subject to transformation is unreal’.  
All people erroneously hold the cause itself as ‘a real effect’. Even while  
perceiving the clay, people are deluded into thinking/concluding that it is  
a pot. Only when the realization dawns that ‘there is no pot as apart from  
clay’ does one give up the reality wrongly attributed to the pot. Names  
and

7 forms that are what is ‘produced’ are unreal, mithya, and the material  
cause alone is real. The Chandogya Shruti there says: mRttika iti yeva

satyam. This means: The effect, pot, etc. is real only as clay. This is the meaning of the word 'iti' in the passage. The cause alone is transacted in the form of an effect and with a new name.

४. 'जन्मप्रध्वंसाभ्यांप्रागूध्वंचानुपलब्धेः कायशस्तयघटादेः मृदाहदकारणस्तयचत  
त्कारणव्यततरेकेण अनुपलब्धेः असत्त्वम्।' अत्रापमाडडूक्यकाररकोक्तः आदावन्ते  
चयन्नस्ततवतशमानेऽवपतिर्ा। ववर्तेः सदृर्ा एव अववतर्ा इवलक्षिताः' (२.६)  
इततन्यायएवभाष्येप्रदमर्शतः। भगवतावपद्वतीयाध्याये (२.२८)

एव 'अव्यक्तादीतनभूतातनव्यक्तमध्यातनभारत। अव्यक्ततनधनान्येवतत्रकापररदे  
वना'

इततअयमेवार्शः बोधतः। अत्रभाष्ये 'अदर्शनादापतततः पुनश्चादर्शनंगतः। नासौतवनत  
स्तयत्वंवर्ाकापररदेवना॥' इततमिभारतश्लोक (स्तत्रीपवश. २.१३)

उदाहृतः। यत्पूर्वपश्चादप्यदृष्टं, मध्यएवदृष्टं, तन्मध्येऽवपनास्ततीत्येवमन्तवयः;  
मध्येतदुपलब्धराभासमात्रममत्यर्शः। 4. The fourth reason stated by Shankara

is://and also because they are not perceived before (their) origination and after destruction.// Here too, the famous maxim given out in the Mandukya Karika 2.6 namely: //If a thing is non-existent both in the beginning and in the end, it is necessarily non-existent in the present. The objects that we see are really like illusions; still they are regarded as real.// is alone presented by Shankara. The Lord too has expressed this very idea in the verse Bh.Gita 2.28: //O descendant of Bharata, all beings remain unmanifest in the beginning; they become manifest in the middle. After death they certainly become unmanifest. What lamentation can there be with regard to them? // Here, while commenting, Shankara has cited a Mahabharata (Stree parva 2.13) verse: //They emerged from invisibility, and have gone back to invisibility. They are not yours, nor are you theirs. What is this fruitless lamentation!// The idea is this: Any object/person is perceived to be so only during the manifested state. Only in this state it is possible to have any emotions like joy or grief. In the unmanifest state no object or person can be loved, hated, lamented upon, etc. When the Lord and Bhagavan Veda Vyasa are stating that persons/objects do not qualify for lamentation, etc., what they mean is that apart from the manifest state, there is no entity called a person/object. In the unmanifest state, all persons/objects become one with the avyakta, prakRti. The full import of this verse can be

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appreciated by looking into the Bhagavadgita verse 2.11: अर्ोच्यानन्वर्ोचस्तत्त्वंप्रज्ञावादांश्चभाषसे।गतासूनगतासूंश्चनानुर्ोचस्तपस्डड ताः॥[You grieve for those who are not to be grieved for; and you speak words of wisdom! The learned do not grieve for the departed and those who have not departed.] Here Shankara remarks://Because, panditah, the learned, the knowers of the Self--panda means wisdom about the Self; those indeed who have this are panditaah, one the authority of the Upanisadic text, '...the knowers of Brahman, having known all about scholarship,....' (Br. 3.5.1).... The idea is, 'You are sorrowing for those who are eternal in the real sense, and who are not to be grieved for. Hence you are a fool!.'// Now, juxtaposing this verse and the Acharya's commentary with the verse 2.16 and its commentary where the definition of Satya and Mithya are stated, one gets the complete picture: What is visible, perceivable to the senses is not real; it is not just anitya, it is mithya. Knowers of Brahman are endowed with the certitude pertaining to 1. The Real, sat, and 2. The unreal, asat. ननुव्यमभचाररत्वंकरंममथात्वेितुःस्तयात्, तस्तयअतनत्यत्वाशकमेवमसद्धत्वात्इततपुनशराङ्गजायते।तत्रसमाधानम्- भगवताश्लोकेसदसद्द्वयववभागएवकृतः।तत्रसच्छब्दःसत्यब्रह्मबोधकइत्यत्रनास्त तसंर्यः, 8तस्तयअभावप्रसङ्गोनास्तत्येव।तदपर-अस्तत्- र्दस्तयअतनत्याशकत्वंनैवसंभवतत।अतोसद्मभन्नमसत्ब्रह्ममभन्न(ववलक्षण)ममथा भूतजगतएवसूचकइततनात्रमसद्भान्तेदोषः।Objection:How can changefulness be cited as a ground for unreality since it conveys only the sense of ephemerality, anityatvam? When such an objection is re-stated, the reply is: The Lord, in 2.16 has shown only two classes: sat and asat. Here, Sat undoubtedly refers to Brahman as its going out of existence is out of the question. The other entity 'asat' can never be held to mean 'anitya', ephemeral. This is because the Lord denies existence, bhAva, to asat. Surely, everyone 'experiences' bhAva, existence, with respect to things anitya, ephemeral. Putting these together we conclude, per force, that the Lord is saying that the 'asat' is mithya'; there is no such category called anitya, ephemeral, other than Sat and asat. Therefore the asat that is other than Sat, Brahman, has to mean only the universe that is mithyaa.

Hence there is no defect of any manner in the elucidation provided in the Bhashyam. Objection: The changefulness of the material world is not a sufficient ground to hold that it is mithyA. All transformation ends in destruction and lapses into its cause, the mUla prakRti. Hence, as a routine sriShTi-sthiti-laya (creation-sustenance-resolution), the material world inheres, upon destruction, in the causal state, avyakta or simply put, the Shakti. Thus it would be incorrect to say that the material world is mithyA, unreal. Reply: There is no error in holding the material world mithyA on the said grounds. Even in the pralaya state, the unmanifest or Shakti, is an inert principle, having to depend upon the Consciousness Principle, Brahman/Iswara. No dependent principle, paratantra, can exist, be real, on its own; its dependence on Consciousness, Swatantra, Brahman, for its very reality, makes it an independently-non-existing entity, asat. The Lord has categorically stated in the verse 2.16 that 'asat' has no existence. The Lord has said in the most explicit terms that PrakRti has no existence from the Jnani's realized standpoint in the verse 13.34 as already stated earlier--// The Lord too, through the words 'bhUta-prakRti-moksham cha' (Bhagavad Gita 13.34), teaches the unreality, mithyAtva, of the world. In this verse the marks that signify knowledge of the Truth are specified –1. The discriminatory knowledge that differentiates the kshetra, prakriti, the inert principle and the kshetrajna, the Conscious Being and 2. The unreality/non-existence of the causal and manifested universe. // Thus, the paratantra prakRti, whether in manifest, variegated or unmanifest Shakti/energy form has no existence independent of Brahman, the Swatantra, Consciousness, Observer. Consciousness is required to validate energy. Energy is concomitant upon Consciousness only when Consciousness 'wills' to take its 'services' in the jagad-vyApAra of creation, etc. The Mandukya Upanishad after describing the realm of PrakRti in the first three pAda-s categorically negates PrakRti in the Turiya, Brahman, by the word: prapanchopashamam. The Absolute Swatantratva of Brahman cannot be established unless It is shown to be completely free of the paratantra prakRti. Any kind of reality attributed to prakRti will entail a compromise on the Absolute Independent nature of Brahman. That is the reason for the Lord to make that statement in 13.34 of the Bhagavadgita.

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It is pertinent to note the word 'वदुः', 'viduH', which means 'know' in the plural, transitive. The non-existence, mithyAtva, of prakRiti is a matter of knowledge, in the manner of a correction of an ignorance that persisted earlier. In the state of bondage, the world has to be sustained. The jiva has to be provided a material world for his experiencing the samsara born of ignorance. In such a state it is essential that the creation-sustenance-destruction cycle is maintained and an 'Energy' state admitted in order to account for the material world. However, when knowledge dawns about the true nature of the jiva that it is in truth Pure Consciousness, the kShetrajna, the conscious observer and not the inert observed kshetram, prakRti, the knowledge of the non-existence of prakRiti becomes inevitable. That is precisely the reason why the Lord makes the verse 13.34 so

9perfectly fitting: In the first half of the verse He states that the Jnani is the one who has the clear discriminatory knowledge that separates the observer from the observed. Since this much would not constitute complete knowledge, the explicit mention of the non-existence, mithyAtva, of the prakRti, the observed, is also made. The Jnani not only realizes his distinctness from prakrti (The Lord had stated that the cause of bondage is the erroneous identification of consciousness with prakRti in verse:13.26) but also that there is no real prakRti as apart from the observer. It is this knowledge alone that will render him free from samsara. It is like knowing that there is no real sun-rise and sun-set although such an illusion persists. For those who do not know that it is only the earth's revolution that causes the sun's appearance and disappearance cyclically there is a 'sun-rise-and-set' phenomenon. On the other hand, those who know the truth are no longer under the delusion. An unreal sun-set-and-rise is happily spoken of in all circles, of the lay and the learned, as an event to be watched, looked forward to, enjoyed, etc. Nobody says 'the sun appearsto rise at 6.05 AM'. Newspapers publish the timings for sun/moon rise and set every day. People, knowing full well that the sun does not really rise or set, flock to celebrated spots like Kanyakumari and stay overnight to watch the glorious event. They do not report 'I watched and photographed the appearanceof the sun setting/rising'. That it is actually unreal does not

prevent people from making it an event for all kinds of transactions, both scriptural and worldly. The Tattiriya Upanishad says: Out of fear for the Lord, Brahman, Vayu, air, blows, fearing Brahman rises Surya'. It is to be noted that the Upanishad does not say 'the Sun appears to rise'. In the same vein the Bhagavadgita too talks about PrakRti as if it is a real entity, without using expressions like 'appears/seems to/ apparently'. But when the Paramarthika state has to be taught, the Gita does not make any concessions and says in the most unambiguous terms: the 'asat'(prakRti)has no existence' (2.16) and 'the Jnani 'knows' the non-existence of PrakRti' (13.34). The importance of the word 'वदुः' can be appreciated when we recognize that in the world all acquisition of knowledge is aimed at dispelling the corresponding ignorance. Knowledge-gaining or knowledge-giving presupposes ignorance on the part of the recipient. When the Lord says the person fit for Moksha 'knows' the non-existence of PrakRti, the implication is that hitherto such a knowledge was not there and, on the other hand, there was the erroneous conception that prakRti really exists. The word 'वदुः' shows us that the knowledge of the Kshetrajna, the Observer, as free and distinct from the kshetram, prakRti and that the prakRti is non-existent is what is conducive for Moksha. The conjunction 'च' confirms this. The term 'ज्ञानचक्षुषा' 'through/by the eye of wisdom' is most significant in this verse. It is only when one has mistaken a rope for a snake there is a need for gaining the right knowledge of the rope there with the 'eye of wisdom'. Here Bhagavan uses this term to signify that the samsara is caused by ignorance, adhyAsa, of a mix-up of prakRti and puruSha, inert energy/matter and the conscious observer. Incidentally, this verse, 13.34 of the Gita, could be seen as Bhagavan Veda Vyasa's authentication of Shankara's adhyAsa bhAshya. The AdhyAsa BhAshya is positioned just before even the first Brahma sutra: 'अतो ब्रह्मस्य ज्ञासा' 'Thereafter, hence, a deliberation on Brahman' commences. 'स्य ज्ञासा' means 'ज्ञातुं इच्छा' or 'desire to know'. There arises a desire to know Brahman only where there is a recognition that Brahman is not already known. And Brahman-knowledge is sought with the aim of eradicating samsara, bondage. If Brahman-knowledge is the panacea for bondage, it is evident that such a samsara is ignorance-caused; ignorance

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of one's Brahman-nature. For, only where there is ignorance, the remedy is knowledge. In the Bhagavadgita analysis that was undertaken in the foregoing we appreciate the aptness of Shankara's positioning the AdhyAsa BhAShya and how the entire Brahma Sutra has come to eradicate this adhyAsa which has caused samsara. Bhagavan Vyasa confirms this in the Bhagavadgita verse 13.21 and 13.26 as well. In 13.23 too the 'knowledge' is emphasized by the word वेवि(knows) –of the jiva's true nature and the state/status of prakRti along with its guNa-s. Everywhere knowledge is shown as the means of liberation thereby highlighting and confirming that it is ignorance that is at the root of samsara. And anything based on ignorance has to be unreal. For, it ceases to be once knowledge of the truth arises. The 13th Chapter verse 33 is also a confirmation of the ViShaya-viShayI concept of the adhyAsa BhAShya. In this verse the Lord says: यर्ाप्रकार्यत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमममं रवः । क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तर्ा कृत्स्नं प्रकार्यत तभारत ॥ [As the one sun illumines all this world, so does the Paramatman, O bharata, illumine all the bodies.] In this way it could be seen as Veda Vyasa's 'commentary' on the AdhyAsa BhAShya. एवं श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतागतश्लोकद्वये जगन्मथ्यात्वलक्षणं स्तपष्टमुपलभ्यते । In this manner, one can clearly comprehend the characteristic of unreality, mithyAtva, of the universe by studying the two verses of the Bhagavadgita (2.16 and 13.35). (अस्तयलेखनस्तय आङ्गलभाषारूपं अत्रैव प्रकामर्तम्) श्रीसद्गुरुचरणारव वन्दापशणमस्तत

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## 11.5 MITHYATVA IN BRAHMASUTRA

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Sarikara used Mithya as a main concept. He used this concept to show the unreality of the world. Sahkara's commentary on BrahmaSutra XEWS about the characteristics of the individual soul, the existence in the world as Brahman, the difference between Brahman and individual soul and distinctions attributed to Brahman are Mithya. These are caused by maya or avidya. In adhyasabhasya Sahkara said that adhyasa and Mithya are the same. It presents a realistic position and seemingly dualistic metaphysics. The object and subject which are presented as 'yusmad and



^ asmad are of very contradictory nature and their qualities also are of contradictory nature as light and darkness, they cannot be identical. Plurality and illusion is constructed out of the cognitive superimpositions of the category and by the objection of pure subjectivity. The cause of this ignorance is of such a superior position. The cause of the ignorance is want of discrimination that is adhyasa. The well studied people say that avidya ond. adhyasa axe the same. It is as a pair, so it can be understood that in Sahkara's opinion, avidya, adhyasa, M/thyaare same. He also said adhyasa\s 'Mithyapratyayarupah." Sahkara gives tinree types of definitions to adhyasa. That is 'Atasmin tadbuddhih', 'smrtirupah paratra purvadrstavabhasah' and "anyatra anyadharmavabhasah."^^ TInis superimposition is anad/and anantah also. Sahkara accepts three types of sattas svapna, jagratav\6 paramarthika. The si/apA7/A'things sublated in the jagrat, and the jagrat things sublated in the paramarthika. If it is said a thing is real, the Anubhuti\s not real. The things which are not anubhOtiaxe not real. Eg. Vandhyasutah. It comes to our mind because; to this anubhut/ Xhere is no want of any j'nana. For example if there is no rope, the sarpa cognition will not happen. The definitions of one thing seemed to be another thing and it is called adhyaropa. In the rope there was the laksana of sarpa that is the cause of adhyaropa. This adhyaropa is caused by the sarpabhrama. This unsuitable promotion is called adhyasa. In the Brahmasutra commentary Sahkara established the identity of individual soul and Brahman. The reflection of the sun in the water is like the individual's soul reflected in Brahman. It is not Brahman as such, nor is it a new entity. The lokavyavahara is possible for this adhyasa or superlmposition. The BrahmasOtra commentary of Sahkara showed illusion in two ways. 1. Appearance of something previously experienced in something else like memory. 2. The minimalist characterization the appearance of one thing with the properties of another. The upanisads like Cchandogya and Taittiriya shows that Brahman source, support the end of the world. In the sutra the janmad/means srsti, sth/t/an6 vinasa. These happen in the respect of Brahman. Here the Taittiriyasruti \s mainly discussed, "yato va imani bhutani jayantS^ It is said that the causality of the birth and the causality of being, in respect of Brahman. This Taittiriya text states about the definition of Brahman. Brahman is the

## Notes

material and efficient cause of the world. The opponents said, how can it be said the srsti, sth/t/an6 laya of the world are from Brahman, because it is supposed to have no second thing besides it. Then Sahkara said the Lord has name and form because of his power of mayasakti. Here the Cchandogya text states that the effect exists only in name, the cause alone is real. That means whatever has origination that is unreal. The world is originated so it is unreal. The knowledge of Brahman leads the knowledge of everything. Sahkara calls the bijasakti avidyatmikaXhdX means avidyab^/ nature the other term parallel is maya. May/made of maya. Mayals not an effect of Brahman. Apart from Brahman maya has no independent existence. Through maya the world is an illusory projection in Brahman. Mayais neither the effect of Brahman Wke the world, nor is identical with Brahman like the individual soul. It is dependent upon Brahman, and as such it does not have any independent existence apart from Brahman. Thus it is Mithya. Maya\s nothing more than illusion. It is illusive like a dream. Sarikara in his commentaries calls maya the power of Isvara. Maya is the creative power and unmanifest ignorance. Brahman is its locus. By this power of ignorance all deluded being are aware of their real nature. The commentary on the Brahmasutra Sahkara shows some upan/sadtexts to prove the Mithyatva of the world. 'In that all this has its Self; it is the True; it is the Self; you are that.' This sruti states that the world referred to be an expression 'all this' derives its existence from Brahman and thereby reiterates the view the world has no independent existence apart from Brahman. The world therefore is Mithya. 'All this is Brahman ouly^^' 'In Brahman there is no duality whatsoever.' These texts states that the expression 'all this' and the word 'Self or "Brahman"' are in co-ordinate relation to each other. The really exists is Brahman, or the self, though it is perceived as the world. Brahman auses by sublating the perception of the world. The world, which gets sublated is Mithya.

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## 11.6 MITHYATVA IN PRE-SAHKARA ADVAITINS

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Badarayana was a famous pre-Sahkara Advaitin. When discuss the BrahmasOtra, the writing of the discussion of Badarayana is over. Here

the concept about Mithyatva in the writings of Gaudapada is discussed. Gaudapada<sup>aril</sup> In the Gaudapadakarika<sup>st</sup> <sup>ii</sup> maya's used times. In it maya<sup>\^</sup> used to:- With our own maya, atman is supposed to be different. Through this maya, atman \s kartrtvd and bhoktrtva Brahman appears in the form of maya because of maya. The world is vrtt/'ol mind. Here maya is discussed as maya, atma and citta. But among this maya is very important. He also said that maya which is anadi, is the cause of dvaita. Through this seed of mayamayi the origin of sruti was happen. In the Gaudapadakarika says that the unchanging non-dual 'one' is the ordained. The Lord is the matter of eradicating all sorrows. The effulgent Turiya is held to be all pervasive sources of all objects. Here Gaudapada says that "He is Advaitah, non-dual on account of the falsity of all objects like the snake rope." Advaita means non-dual, that is no dvaita. It is on account of the Mithyatva of all objects like snake rope. To prove Advaita, the dvaita Mitiiyatva must be proved. He also said ^mayamatramidam dvaitam advaitam paramartatalp'. This duality is nothing but maya and is called phenomenal world. Maya and Mithyadxe synonyms. The second chapter of Gaudapadakarika is based on Vaitathya. So it is called vaitathyaprakarana. Vaitathya means unreal. That is Mithya. Gaudapada maintains that 'plurality' is only the appearance of Brahman through maya. Through the support of some grounds Gaudapada maintained that the dream objects are unreal. Firstly the elephants and other objects seen in a dream are confined in the limited space i.e. within the body. Secondly "The one who experiences the objects in a dream do not go out of the body to perceive them because of the shortness of time; also, the one who experiences a dream, when awakened, does not remain in that place of deram." Thirdly - the srutiXexX declares the non-existence of chariots, etc. perceived in dream. He proceeds to pointout that the dream objects are unreal on the ground that they are perceived. Like a mirage these characteristic belongs to the objects perceived in the waking state too. So the waking state objects are not real, therefore it is Mithya.

Gaudapada stated that the world is Mithya. It is Vaitathya\\ke dream world because it is seeing. He used vaitathya in the same meaning of Mithya. The world is maya and kalpanika, so It is Mithya. According to him the creation of the world does not happen through the satf Anything

## Notes

that was born from sat, became sat. Sat is not born from any cause. So the cause of the originated thing is called maya. Against this supposition Sahkara gave another supposition called vivartavada. According to Sahkara the cause and the effect are same. The whole world is the vivarta of Brahman and the parinama of maya. Like this maya is also Brahmapvivarta. Maya is trigunatmika. So prakrti is trigunatmika. In the Vivekacudamani Sankaradi describes the mayasvarupa. "There is one - undifferentiated and undivided. Nobody can define what it is, but it has the power of God. Beginningless and; yet also called ignorance (avidya). It has three qualities. Sattva, rajas and tamas. It cannot be understood except by its action and that can be only by the illumined ones. It has created this entire universe and produced it all is maya. This s/c/ra reveals that maya and avidya are same. This/77aKa is created in this universe. So the universe is mayakarya. Thus it is Mithya.

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## 11.7 MITHYATVA IN SARIKARA'S WORKS

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Sarikara used Mithya as to show the unreality of world. He used maya into paramesvarasatt,^^ avidya,^^ the magic of Indra.^^ Sahkara's commentary on Brahmasutra and the major upanisad has been discussed the unreality of the world. 'Sahkara establishes that Brahman is the sole reality without any difference whatsoever. It means that the characteristics of the individual soul, the difference between the individual soul and Brahman, the existence of the world in Brahman, and the distinctions attributed to Brahman are Mithya due to the work of maya.' In the Vivekacudamani ^onVsixa described the mayasvarupa. "There is one undifferentiated and undivided. Anybody can define what it is, but it has the power of God. Beginning less and, yet also called ignorance. It has three qualities sattva, rajas and tamas. It cannot be understood except by its action and can only be by the illumined ones. It has created this entire universe, produced it all that is mayas.

Sahkara took forward the concept Mithya and gave a suitable position to this in Advaita Vedanta. Through this concept Sahkara showed that the world is unreal, the Brahman is the only real thing. Sankara in his Vivekacudamani has described the mayasvarupa. Maya is named as

avyakta. It is the power of Paramesvara. It is anadi, trigunatmika, karyanumeya and it is the cause of Jagat. In the Bhajagovinda Sahkara points out that this samsara is strange. Here it is seen that avidya is indescribable so the effect of avidya, that is the world, is strange so the worldly things are also the effect of avidya. So it is Mithya. The people gained Jivatva because of avidya. People did not know the reality of Brhman and the world is only Mithya. The other text teaches that after the removal of avidya led to the removal of the world. This Sahkara explains through the example of laukJka. He also said that the reflecting with discretion about these transient things one should enter the eternal truth. In the 13\*\*^ sioka Sahkara teaches that this world is like the svapnamayasamanam. The dream objects are Mithya, like this the worldly objects are also Mithya. These have the pratibhasikasatta only. In the Atmabodha Sahkara says that Brahman is different from this universe. There is no thing other than Brahman. If anything shines other than Brahman it is false {Mithy^ like the mirage. In his prakaranagranthas. he also indicates the unreality of the world. In the mayasiddhiprakarana of the prabodhasudhakara states that the world is the effect of maya so it is Mithya. This also said to Svatmaprakasika. In the mayapancaka Sahkara elaborately discusses the maya. The praudhanubhuti Sahkara states the Mithya. Svapna and the Jagrat are Mithya. Sahkara also accepts the anirvacaniyakhyati From this basis it is said that maya\s anirvacaniya. Sahkara's works entirely discuss maya, avidya, ajnana and Mithya. These are all more or less cor-related. For further discussion on mithya / maya advaitic analogues' illustration- see below. I Non-super imposition analogy (sympathy, magnet) II Superimposition analogy - A. Nirupadhika (without adjunct) 1. Sadrsya (with similarity) Rajju Sarpa (Rope / snake) Suktikarajatham (shell / silver) Sthanurvapurusova (post / man) etc. 2. Sadrsyabhava {\N\Xhou\ similarity) Mayavi (Hypnotist) Svapna (dream) Namarupa analogies Jalatarahga (sea / waves) Mft, khadam (clay / pot) Natahadi {acXo^ I etc ) B. Sopadhika (with adjuncts) Ahgahinata (organ defect) Dvicandrah (double moon) Pitasahkh (yellow conch) 2. Pravrti dosah { action defect) Dasamsatvamasii^enXh man) KandecamJkaranyaya (lost necklace) 3.

Svabhavikaniyama (Natural law) Akasa antariksa (sky or surface)  
Sphatika - lohita. (Crystal / colour)

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### 11.8 MITHYATVA IN POST SARIKARA ADVAITINS

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In Mandana's opinion the false appearance is avidya or JT. maya Avidya is not a characteristic of Brahman, but it is different from Brahman. It is neither existent nor non-existent. Avidya is anyathagrahana (misapprehension) or avidya is agrahana (non-apprehension). According to Suresvara, maya is the mediate cause of the world. From the standpoint of the experience maya and world exist. Maya is same as avidya. It veils the true nature of Brahman and makes it appear as the world. The world appearance is a product of ajnana. In his opinion maya is only one instrument in which Brahman appears many. The Mithyatva discussion is based on the Chandogyaopanisadic text "In the beginning 'This' was sat {Brahmar} alone". Advaitins considered on the basis of this upanisadic text that the world is Mithya or anirvacaniya. The basis of expedient Advaitins gave five definitions of maya. In these definitions they used the Mitiiya instead of maya because they agree that the meaning of maya is Mitliya.

Padmapada said that Mithya is different from sat and asat. Mitiiya is not sat because Brahman is only sat Mitiiya is not asat because the sky flower is asaf because it is not perceived. So Mitiiya is different from sat and asat that is anirvacaniya. According to Padmapada Mitiiyatva is a simple negation, Mitiiya is indescribable. His opinion is that maya, avyaya.

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### 11.9 MITHYATVA ACCORDING TO MADHUSUDANA

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Madhusudhana has taken these definitions and logically proved that they are the suitable definition of Mithyatva. In some places he added more words and modified the definitions. The careful study of these five definitions reveals that the fourth definition is same as the second definition. The first and last definition that is sadvilaksana and sat

viviktatva reveals that the worldly objects are sublated. So it is unreal. These details are discussed in the next chapter.

In the vadavali o\ Jayatirtha also Mithyatva \s discussed. The detailed discussion of vipratipattivakya is in it. This chapter concludes that the word maya is used before Mithya. Sankara used the word Mithya io'^ maya. He used maya also. After Sankara, Mithya was developed and some authors defined Maya variously. Maya, ajhana, Mithya QXC are synonyms but there are some differences too. It is said that these are correlated.

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## 11.10 ANIRVACANIYAKHYATI

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Mithyatva is a very important concept in Advaita Vedanta. Saiikara used avidya, ajnana, aksara, akasa, avyakta, avyakrta, anavabodha, adhyasa, pradhana etc. instead of Mithya. The world is indicated through Mithya. So the world is Mithya. The usage sag una Brahman and nirguna Brahman is based on maya. Sahkara said in his VivekacOdamani that this avidya is avyaktanama trigunatmika, paramesvarasaktie\c. Sahkara's works mayasvarupa is seen in the name of avidya and ajnana. Sahkara used maya to state the Mithyatva of the world. The indescribability of the world Is the cause of maya. Indescribability means Mithya. Mithyajhana is sublated when the Brahmajhana is born. According to Gaudapada jagat\s mayamaya. Mithya's like a dream world. Sahkara shows in the pancavayava anumanavakyd that the Mandukyakarika has stated the jaganmithyatva. Avidya s used in the Upanisads in the meaning of ajnana. Sahkara said in the Bhasya.

The Advaitins. hold that the 'snake' or the 'silver' seen in illusion is anirvacaniya\* ^ The Advaitins define the anirvacaniya in various ways\* We shall however discuss only one of them here. The Sanskrit word 'anirvacaniya' is usually translated as 'indeterminate\*' or as 'indeterminable'\* We shall, however, sometimes use the Sanskrit word in original and may sometimes use the word 'indeterminable\*' and also the word 'indeterminate'\*

- How, when can we call something anirvacaniya ? Should we call something anirvacaniya or indeterminable when it is only a subjective

## Notes

failure for us to determine its nature or kind? The Advaitins do not call the snake' indeterminable for that reason\* They hold that the 'snake\*' is in its nature such that it is not determinable.

### Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you know the Theories of mithyatva and mithyatvamithyatva?

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.....  
.....

2. Discuss about the Mithyatva in Upanisads.

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3. Discuss the Mithyatva in Bhagavadgita.

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4. Discuss about the Mithyatva in Brahmasutra.

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5. Describe Mithyatva in pre-Sahkara Advaitins.

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## 11.12 LET US SUM UP

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In Hinduism

General definition (in Hinduism)

Mithyatva in Hinduism glossary... « previous · [M] · next »



Mithyātva: Sanskrit for 'illusory character'. A term used in Advaita Vedānta.

Source: Wisdom Library: Hinduism

Mithyātva (मिथ्यात्व, “falsity”).—Two among the five definitions of falsity (mithyātva) presented by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (MS) in his magnum opus, the Advaitasiddhi:

1) The second definition (dvtīya-mithyātva) of falsity examined is Prakāśātman’s: “falsity is the property of being the counter-positive of the absolute absence of an entity in the [same] locus in which it is perceived.”

2) The fourth definition (caturtha-mithyātva) investigated was first given by Citsukha (Citsukhācārya, XIII century): “falsity is the property of being the counter-positive of the absolute absence residing in its own locus.”

Source: Springer: Analysis of the Second and Fourth Definitions of Mithyātva

In Jainism

General definition (in Jainism)

Mithyatva in Jainism glossary... « previous · [M] · next »

Mithyātva (मिथ्यात्व, “wrong faith”) refers to “the urges that lead to deluded” and is one of the twenty-four activities (kriyā) of sāmparāyika (transmigration-extending influx). Sāmparāyika is one two types of āsrava (influx) which represents the flow of karma particles towards the soul, which is due to the three activities: manoyoga ( activities of mind), kāyayoga ( activities of body) and vacanayoga (activities of speech).

Kriyā (‘activities’, such as mithyātva) is a Sanskrit technical term defined in the Tattvārthasūtra (ancient authoritative Jain scripture) from the 2nd century, which contains aphorisms dealing with philosophy and the nature of reality.

Source: Wisdom Library: Jainism

## Notes

1) Mithyātva (मिथ्यात्व) refers to the direct opposite of samyaktva, and is defined by Hemacandra (Yogaśāstra verse 2.17) as belief in false divinities, false gurus, and false scriptures.

For the Śvetāmbaras mithyātva may be of five types (see the Nava-pada-prakarāṇa by Devagupta with Laghu-vṛtti):

ābhigrahika,  
anābhigrahika,  
ābhiniveśika,  
sāṃśayika,  
anābhogika.

The Digambaras prefer a division into three types (see Sāgāra-dharmāmṛta by Āśādhara):

agr̥hīta,  
gr̥hīta,  
sāṃśayika.

Or else a sevenfold category (see the Śrāvakācāra by Amitagati):

ekāntika,  
sāṃśayika,  
vainayika,  
gr̥hīta,  
viparīta,  
naisargika,  
mūḍha-dṛṣṭi.

2) Mithyātva (मिथ्यात्व, “false belief”) refers to a subclass of the interal (abhyantara) division of parigraha (attachment) and is related to the Aparigraha-vrata (vow of non-attachment). Amṛtacandra (in his Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya 116), Somadeva, and Āśādhara among the Digambaras and Siddhasena Gaṇin (in his commentary on the Tattvārthasūtra 7.24) among the Śvetāmbaras mention fourteen varieties of abhyantara-parigraha (for example, mithyātva).

Mithyātva (मिथ्यात्व).—One of the activities (kriyā) of transmigression-extending influx (sāmparāyika).—Activities like worshipping the false omniscient, scriptures and teachers which weaken the right faith are called mithyātva-kriyā.

Source: Encyclopedia of Jainism: Tattvartha Sutra 6: Influx of karmas

Mithyātva (मिथ्यात्व) refers to “wrong belief” and is classified as one of the three types of Darśanamohanīya (“faith deluding”) karmas according to the 2nd-century Tattvārthasūtra chapter 8. This Darśanamohanīya represents one of the two main divisions of the Mohanīya (“deluding”) karmas, which is one of the eight types of Prakṛti-bandha (species bondage), which in turn is one of the four kinds of bondage (bandha). What is meant by wrong belief karmas (mithyātva)? The karma which rise of which turns a living being believer of reality and its nature as described by the omniscient are called wrong belief karma.

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## 11.13 KEY WORDS

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Mithyatva : Mithyatva is a concept in Jainism distinguishing right knowledge from false knowledge, and parallels the concepts of Avidya in the Vedanta school of Hinduism, Aviveka in its Samkhya school, and Maya in Buddhism.

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## 11.14 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. Describe Mithyatva in Sarikara's works.
2. What do you know about the Mithyatva in post Sarikara Advaitins?
3. What do you know about Mithyatva According to Madhusudana?

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## 11.15 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 11.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 11.2
2. See Section 11.3
3. See Section 11.4
4. See Section 11.5
5. See Section 11.6

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## UNIT 12: THE CONCEPT OF JIVA

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### STRUCTURE

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 The concept of Jiva
- 12.3 Dharmabhutajnana
- 12.4 Let us sum up
- 12.5 Key Words
- 12.6 Questions for Review
- 12.7 Suggested readings and references
- 12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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Jiva is a Sanskrit term which translates as "an immortal living substance" or "an individual soul." In Hinduism, it is believed that jiva can survive physical death and find a new body afterward. The ancient Hindu text, the Bhagavad Gita, describes jiva as unchanging, eternal, infinite and indestructible. Jiva is not an element of prakriti, or the material world, but is of a high spiritual nature.

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know the concept of Jiva
- To discuss the Dharmabhutajnana

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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Jiva or Jeeva means any living being, a human, animal, insect, bird, or a microorganism. He also goes by the name the embodied soul (jivatma). Jiv means to live or to be alive and jeeva means he who has life or who is alive. The jivas are specific to the mortal world, just as the gods are to the heaven and the demons to the demonic worlds. The gods are pure beings. The demons personify evil nature, while the jivas are a mixture of both. In them all the three gunas are active.

## Notes

The jivas are also vulnerable to the influence of both good and evil. They may possess divine or demonic qualities or a mixture of both according to their predominant nature. Hence, they are considered ideal choice for the battles between the good and evil forces. Depending upon their constitution, the jivas are of numerous types and reflect the diversity of Nature. Tradition classifies them according to the number of senses they possess and their level of intelligence. In the Vedas they are classified according to how they give birth to their progeny namely those that are born from eggs, those that are born from the wombs, those that are born from the air, etc.

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## 12.2 THE CONCEPT OF JIVA

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### **Significance of human life**

According to Hinduism, although the jivas are specific to the mortal world and inferior to gods, they still play an important role in the order and regularity of the worlds. Mortal life facilitates the journey of the souls from the state of bondage and ignorance to liberation through successive stages of self-purification, enlightenment and spiritual transformation. It is not possible in any other world. The culmination of that progress is the birth of an embodied soul in a human body. The scriptures affirm that human birth is very which only after a jiva undergoes innumerable births and deaths and accumulates enough merit. Thus, humans are more advanced jivas, who have special duties and responsibilities in creation as the upholders of God's Dharma upon earth. Just as animals serve humans upon earth, humans serve gods through their sacrifices. Animals nourish humans through acts of self-sacrifice by becoming their food or by providing them with food and wealth, whereas humans nourish gods through sacrificial offerings and by becoming their food in the ancestral world. Thus, human beings occupy a central place in God's creation as the upholders of Dharma and nourishers of gods. Through their spiritual effort they also enjoy the unique opportunity to work for their liberation, which is not possible to any other being in the higher or the lower worlds. As stated before, in the mortal world, only humans can achieve liberation through self-directed, conscious effort.

Other beings have to attain the human birth before they can do the same. Only humans have duties, obligations and aims, which require the exercise of will and discretion. Their fate is determined by their actions (karma).

Even gods have to take birth in the moral world if they desire to attain liberation or ascend to still higher planes of existence. The Puranas suggest that God does not excessively interfere with the progress of creation. He facilitates the process and provides the framework for the manifestation of the worlds. He intervenes only if there is a severe decline of Dharma. Everything else happens through individual effort. The spiritual progress and transformation of the souls are not confined to one birth or even one cycle of creation. The souls keep returning to the mortal world, birth after birth and cycle after cycle, until they achieve liberation.

It seems that even the godhood is earned, but not conferred. The place of Indra is not permanent. Anyone can become the king of heaven and replace Indra through spiritual effort. Hence, he is always in conflict with the mortal beings who want to achieve liberation through austerities. It is also said that the triple gods (Thrimurthis) namely Brahma, Vishnu and Siva have attained their supreme status in the current time cycle because of their good deeds in the previous cycles of creation.

### **The state of Jiva**

In the mortal world the jivas are in a state of bondage to the cycle of births and deaths, which is known as Samsara. Apart from it, they are also subject to the following.

- Dharma or a set of obligatory duties which are vital to the order and regularity of the world.
- Karma or the fruit of desire-ridden actions which results in births and rebirths.
- Modifications of Nature such as impermanence, aging, sickness and death.
- Physical and mental afflictions
- The duality of subject and object or the knower and the known.

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- Egoism or identification with name and form which creates the feeling of separation.
- Longing for life and fear of mortality.
- Attraction and aversion to the pairs of opposites such as pain and pleasure, heat and cold.
- Delusion due to the influence of Maya whereby one mistakes the untrue for true.
- Ignorance about God and the Self.
- Attachments due to the frequent interaction with sense objects.
- Desires and passions due to the play of the gunas.
- Modifications of the mind and body which keep beings unstable and restless.

The law of karma is inexorable, mechanical and impartial. The wheel of dharma knows no discrimination. All beings, who manifest, irrespective of their cosmic status, are subject to the same eternal laws of God which influence their being and becoming. Only the supreme Brahman in His formless and unqualified state (nirguna) is and changeless and free from corporeality, beingness and the finite realities of Nature. In His formless and transcendental state, he is not only immutable but also incomprehensible, indescribable and beyond the whole existence.

### **The divine nature of jiva**

A jiva may have impurities, but he is not devoid of divinity and spiritual possibilities. A Jiva is but Shiva in the embodied form. Although he is subject to the triple impurities of egoism, delusion and attachments, he is still god in human form who contains within himself both Purusha and Prakriti. In him Purusha is passive, while Nature is active. His body is made up of the 23 Tattvas (finite realities) of Nature namely the five basic elements (fire, water, earth, air, space), five organs of action, the five organs of perception, the five subtle senses, the mind, the ego and the intelligence. The eternal soul (atma) constitutes the 24th tattva. However, it is a pure (shuddha) tattva, and free from the impurities of Nature, although it is subject to transmigration in the embodied state due to the influence of the gunas.



TA jiva is thus a divine being who is caught in the rigmarole of Samsara. He is a sleeping god who is oblivious of his divinity and eternal nature. As a replica of the Cosmic being (Purusha), he represents the entire universe and houses all the divinities and worlds within himself. Hidden within each being (jiva) is a microcosm, designed in the manner of Saguna Brahman, consisting of all his integral aspects and manifestations.

Therefore, if you want to know God, you do not have to look far. You do not have to question the existence of God or look to others for answers. God is everywhere, and especially in you as your very Self. To doubt him or his existence, is to doubt yourself and your very existence. A devout Hindu is not supposed to worship ignorantly as if God exists in the image of a stone or in a temple of God only. He does not have to travel far to the Himalayas or to a place of pilgrimage to search for him or meet him.

He may indulge in such practices, but he must also look within himself by silencing his mind and body and reach that last point where he can find the eternal Self as his very silent witness. It is by looking into oneself, by knowing and understanding oneself and by honoring oneself with righteous conduct that one can experience the Truth of the Supreme Self in one's own being. In the Katha Upanishad, Lord Yama declares to Nachiketa that it is through self-contemplation (adhyatma-yogadhigamena) that a wise man realizes the Primal God and leaves behind him both joy and sorrow (the duality of mortal existence).

### **The embodied Self and the Supreme Self**

The mysteries of creation and of Supreme Being can be known only by knowing oneself and one's essential nature. The knowledge does not arise from the study of scripture, although they are essential for the purpose, but from the direct experience of oneness in which all distinctions and separation between the subject and object are obliterated. All the divinities that exist in the universe have their corresponding divinities in the human personality. Just as we have the body, the Saguna Brahman has the entire manifest universe as his material body.

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Therefore, there is no better temple than your mind and body to find God and experience oneness with him.

How we perceive ourselves is important to overcome our delusion and achieve liberation. If we consider our names and forms real, we will remain limited and bound to our limited identifies and impure consciousness. If you think you are divine and spiritual and live with that awareness, you increase your chances of finding God within yourself. However, before you merge into the identify of God and experience oneness with him, you have to accept the idea, believe in it and integrate it into your consciousness. That practice rests upon your faith, resolve and effort. If your faith is strong, you will withstand the rigors of your journey to reach the highest goal. Faith is the bridge by which we, the mortals, enter the world of immortality.

The creation and evolution of any jiva are the same as the creation and evolution of the entire universe. The essential structure or construction of Purusha and the Jiva (the Cosmic Being and the living being) is also the same. For example, the Virat (the manifested world) is the waking consciousness or the visible reality. He is the same as the Vaishwanara who is mentioned in the Mandukya Upanishad. Hiranyagarbha (the World Spirit) is Taijasa, the dream state. In him all the forms and ideas already exist in seed form and manifest in their own time. Isvara (the Creative Being) is Saguna Brahman. He is the first to manifest in the beginning of creation “when nothing existed. You may compare him to the deep sleep state or prajna. Finally, at the summit of existence is Brahman, the Absolute, Being, the One, who is without attributes. That state is above sleep. In the being, he is the Atman, the immortal and transcendental Self, who is hidden in each of us. The Upanishads also draw comparisons between a human being and the Cosmic being, identifying the organs in the body with various divinities and planes of existence and the Self with Brahman.

### **The state of the embodied Self, Jivatma, in the mortal world**

There are three primary aspects of creation, the Supreme Self, the jiva or the embodied selves, and Nature or Prakriti. Each jiva is a product of Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is the individual soul, and Prakriti is the

physical body including the mind. Purusha is eternal and immutable, while Prakriti is eternal but mutable. Prakriti is indestructible but she undergoes change and instability. She is responsible for the materiality and the corporeality, while Purusha resides in the body as the silent witness and the ultimate enjoyer. As long as the jiva is involved with Prakriti and its modifications, the soul or atman remains bound.

Although the soul is caught in Samsara and remains bound to the mind and body, by itself it is immutable and indestructible. It cannot be tainted by the impurities of Samsara. Even when it is involved with Prakriti it does not undergo any change. However, it remains covered by the impurities of gunas, delusion, desires and ignorance. When they are removed, the Self becomes free and returns to its boundless state as if he has woken from a long sleep. Removing the impurities is not an easy task. It may take place over a long time, and at end of innumerable births and deaths.

### **The five sheaths of an embodied Self**

The embodied Self or the jiva does not have a single body. What we see is but the outer sheath. Hidden beneath are four more sheaths. Each jiva is made up of five bodies or sheaths, and each has its own significance in the lives and liberation of the beings. It is believed that when a being dies, only the outer physical body is shed. The soul travels to the next world with the remaining four bodies. The following is a brief description of the five bodies which constitute a living being.

The physical body is the first. It is also known as the food body (annamaya kosa) since it is made up of food only. It is also the densest. Hence, it is called the gross body (sthula sarira), the seat of the darkest desires and passions. The Upanishads compare food to Brahman (annam Brahma). Since it houses the Self, it is compared to the sacrificial pit. As in case of a sacrificial ritual, the food offered to the body is distributed among the divinities (organs and senses) who are present in the body by their overlord, the Breath.

The second body is the breath body called the pranamaya kosa. It is made of prana or breath. Air or breath is the food for this body. Breath is the life of beings (prano hi bhutanam ayuh). It is called the soul of the

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physical body (sarira atma). Indeed, in some Upanishads, prana is equated to Self itself as the immortal lord of the body. Atman means the breathing one. Breath body is part of the subtle body (sukshma sarira) while the food body constitutes the gross body (sthula sarira). The autonomous nervous system is under its partial control.

The mental body (manomaya kosa) constitutes the third body. It is made up of thoughts, emotions, feelings, desires and memories. It also regulates both the breath body and the physical body including the senses. Mental body is the seat of thoughts, memories and latent impressions. It also part of the subtle body and subsists on food, breath and thoughts. Controlling, purifying and stabilizing the mind forms part of the spiritual practice in liberation. None can achieve liberation, without controlling and purifying the mental body.

Intelligence body (vijnanamay kosa) is the fourth body. It corresponds to buddhi or intelligence, which is responsible for reasoning, discernment and decision making. It is the reasoning and discerning aspect of our consciousness without which we will not be able to consciously exercise our will. It also plays an important role in our lives to make right decisions and avoid mistakes and problems. The scriptures declare that gods (sense organs) worship buddhi as the eldest deity (Brahma jyeshtam), the controller.

The fifth body is known as the bliss body. It is called the anandamaya kosa because it partakes the supreme bliss of the Self. The bliss body is not attained by the senses or the mind but experienced only in the state of self-absorption (Samadhi). It has no organs and no distinguishing marks. It is the very essence of our deepest consciousness. According to the Taittiriya Upanishad the Non-Being who was alone in the beginning produced the Being. He made for himself a soul, which was well made and whose body was bliss itself.

Beyond the five sheaths there is Atman, the eternal soul or Purusha in the microcosm. It is the first, eternal, immutable, indestructible and ever awake, who is also the lord, the witness and the ultimate enjoyer. It is also called the hidden Self, the true Self, the divine Self and the truth body. Our minds do not reach it. The Upanishads state that words return from it, not attaining it, along with the mind. He who attains it becomes

free from fear. After that, he is neither perplexed nor tormented by conflicting thoughts. His mind becomes tranquil. There are different views with regard to the status of the bliss body. Sankaracharya considered the bliss body different from the Self and part of the projection of the Self, while Ramanuja regarded them as one, indivisible, transcendental state.

### **The liberation of Jivas**

A jiva attains liberation by realizing his divine or spiritual nature and freeing himself desires and attachments. Liberation is achieved either by individual effort or divine help or both. There are many paths to liberation. However, they all require right effort, right knowledge, right attitude, self-restraint, renunciation, detachment, purity of the mind and body, and devotion. All these approaches are known by different names. They all lead to the highest state of Yoga or union, in which the seeker experiences oneness or union with the Self or the Supreme Self. Scriptures suggest that the grace and guidance of a guru or spiritual master is important on the path of liberation.

As stated before, as a rule human beings are better qualified to achieve liberation. However, there can be exceptions. Some animals may attain liberation due to the merit they earned in their past lives or if they die in the hands of pious people as part of their fate or destiny or to resolve some past karma. Animals which die in the service of God or as sacrificial offerings may also attain liberation or human birth. It is also believed that animals may earn merit if they are killed willfully by humans for entertainment or for food. Through their self-sacrifice they earn good karma while those who indulge in such actions may accrue sin and suffer from the consequences.

The scriptures suggest that those who achieve liberation go to the immortal world, never to return. They travel by the path of gods (devayana) and reach the world of Brahman, which is in the Sun, while those who do not achieve liberation but perform their obligatory duties go to the ancestral world in the moon, where they stay until their karma is exhausted and return to the earth to take birth again. Lastly, those who

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indulge in sinful actions with demonic qualities and commit mortal sins fall down into the subterranean hell and undergo intense punishment as part of their self-purification. They may return to the earth to take birth as animals, worms or insects.

1. Atman And Brahman : The doctrine of Atman or the Self is discussed elaborately in i e Upanisads, the Gita and the Puranas. The Upanisads generally use the te in Atman as a synonym of Brahman. Surendranath Dasgupta opines that "n e sum and substance of the Upanisadic teaching is involved in the equat;

i Atman= Brahman."

However, in the later Upanisads it is seen that word Brahman is generally used in the sense of the ultimate essence oft ic universe and the word Atman is used to denote the inmost essence of mm . Actually the idea of Atman is capable of different interpretations. Pi i.l Deussen has interpreted this word in three different ways. He says, "Thi expositions are here possible, according as by the Atman is understood ( ii The corporeal self, the body; (2) The individual soul, free from the hoc \ which as knowing subject is contrasted with and distinct from the objei t or (3) The supreme soul, in which subject and object are no longer distinguished from one another or which, according to the Indian conception, is the objectless knowing subject."

Different Theories about Atman :

The Indian philosophers differ among themselves about the nati v of the self. Excepting the Carvakas and the Bauddhas all the philosophic

i. systems of India believe in the existence of a permanent self. The Can ask to maintain that the conscious body itself is the self. Even consciousness ; according to them, material. Among the ndstika philosophers, .c Buddhists are the believers in the not self-theory. That is, they do ;o: believe in an eternal, permanent self. In their view, there is nothing series of momentary consciousness, which can be termed as a self.

- ii. If the Jainas accept a self which is different from the body, sense organs, mind, etc. and whose chief trait is consciousness. Among the astika philosophers, the Samkhya and Yoea philosophers regard Purusa as the self. It is the knower. Purusa is different from the body, sense organs, mind, ahamkara and buddhi. Consciousness is its essence. This self is only the witness and not the doer; it is time and space, beyond change and activity. The Samkhyas accept; plurality of the selves. The Nyaya and the Vaisesika systems propound almost identical a; theory of the self. According to them the self is a substance; consciousness is its distinctive quality. The individual self is a real substantive being, having for its qualities desire, aversion, violation, pleasure, pain and cognition. The Naiyayikas and the Vaisesikas also regard the self as distinct from the body, sense organs and mind. They also regard the self as partless, all-pervading and eternal, it has no beginning and no end. Birth and death are nothing but the connection of the self with the body and the separation from the body, respectively. Self-consciousness, without parts, unchanging, imperceptible and atomic in size.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that almost all the philosophers of India accept the existence of an eternal individual self, which is different from the mind-body complex. Samkaracarya regards self as one only and as non-different from the Absolute. Other philosophers do not conform to this view of Sankara. Now let us discuss what is the view of the Visnu Purana regarding the real nature of the individual self.

The Nature of the Self in the Visnu Purana :

- The word Atman is used in two different senses in the Visnu Purana
- In the sense of the individual self (jivatman) as well as the transcendental self (paramatman). And in many places the Visnu Purana identifies these two atmans (selves)

Jiva is an appellation given to consciousness defined by the principles constituting individuality. It denotes the embodied being limited to the

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psycho-physical states. The notion of the Jiva is the basis of all world-experience. The concept of reality is arrived at by the analysis of the implications of this experience. We can observe in the individual self-traces of the elements that go to form the universe as a whole. The delimited reflection of the eternal consciousness in the mind-stuff goes by the name of the Jiva. Understanding, feeling and willing are the primary functions of this reflected consciousness. The basis of the Jiva is Brahman, which is the substratum of all creation. But the arrogation of reality to itself by each form of the reflected consciousness becomes responsible for the notion of the 'I' in everyone. Though this 'I' has at its back the general reality of all things, it has reference to objectified conditions, and its reality is tremendously influenced by its perception of objects. Perception, inference and the other ways of valid knowledge, as well as wrong knowledge, doubt, sleep, memory, and the forms of error such as ignorance, egoism, likes, dislikes and the fear of death together with an intense love for life, are the principal psychological associations of the Jiva. Though the Jiva appears as a subject of knowledge in this world, it is not really the metaphysical subject, for its existence is not wholly independent of the appearance of objects; nay, its own body is part of the appearance. The organisation of individuality is relative to the framework of the contents of the consciousness operating through it. The empirical subject is itself an object from the point of view of the Atman, and when divested of its psychological cloggings, it gets down to the irreducible minimum of pure being. The ideas connected with doership and enjoyership are inseparable from the consciousness of duality. The Jiva is, in truth, not a being, but a becoming, a state of experience attempting to transcend itself every moment. Activity cannot be avoided as long as individuality persists. This world is a world of action, where struggle is the law, striving the rule. The mutations of the universe get erroneously identified with the self, and it is this that gives rise to the idea of agency and enjoyership. Birth and death are the consequences of such wrong identification, for it results in the rise of several desires which clamour for fulfilment, and the way of their fulfilment is the drudgery of transmigratory life. Agency, however, is not essential to the innermost essence of the Jiva, for, if it were so, there would be no



chances of achieving freedom at any time. All activity, when carefully viewed, is found to be of the nature of pain, but the essential Self is blissful by nature. The activities of the Jiva are not properties of the Atman, but are contingent features of the outward adjuncts that get confused with what they are not. The sense of agency and activity is attributable to the Upadhis which go to make up the Jiva.

It can be said that, in a sense, the Jiva is eternal, for its individuality is never destroyed in all the births and deaths it undergoes. But it is non-eternal in the sense that it is transfigured in the realisation of Brahman. The principle of individuality is active in the waking and the dreaming states, but potential in sleep, swoon and death. But for its continuance even in times of the cessation of all its functions, it could not rise again in a new birth. When objective consciousness is absent, the Jiva exists in a latent form, ready to manifest itself in action whenever suitable conditions arise. Jivahood is completely negated in Brahman. The Jiva is different from Brahman as long as it is confined to the body, the Pranas, the senses and the Antahkarana, but one with it in its fundamental nature which it realises in profound meditation. From the point of view of the body, the Jiva is a hack working under the oppressive yoke of the laws of Nature; as a limited soul, it is a part of God; and as pure consciousness, it is identical with Brahman. From the structure of Jivahood as such, its relation to Brahman cannot be strictly determined. It cannot be said to be different from Brahman, for there is no second to Brahman. Nor is it a part of Brahman, for Brahman cannot be divided into elements. It cannot also be said to be the same as Brahman in its present form, for its limiting characters are incompatible with the perfection of Brahman. The Jiva passes for reality within the universe of its experience, but gets lifted up gradually in the different stages of self-transcendence, until it attains Brahman.

The Jiva is a limitation as well as a reflection, a Parichheda as well as an Abhasa of Brahman. It is inferior to Brahman not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. As restricted to the internal organ and the senses, it is Parichhinna or limited, and as an image of the highest consciousness, it is an Abhasa. As the defects of a reflected image do not sully the original in any way, the defects of the Jiva do not affect Brahman even in the least.

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As a reflection, the Jiva is not genuine being but a process, and, as limited to the internal organ, even this process is not universal but localised. The nature of the mind is transferred to consciousness, and so the experiences of the Jiva are nothing but the feelings and the modes of the mind. The possibility of Jivahood has to be traced to the presence of Brahman in the background, albeit in the form of a reflection; but the content of this reflected consciousness is organically related to the movements of the Upadhis. The Jivachaitanya, thus, partakes of the double nature of reality as well as appearance.

The Atman, as the Kutasthachaitanya or the witnessing Self, is the ground of the Jiva, though in itself it is absolutely free from the limitations of Jivahood. The Atman does not modify or transform itself into the Jiva but exists only as an unrelated witness. There is the same inexplicability about the relation of the Jiva to the Atman as of Maya to Brahman, or of appearance to Reality. When the limiting conditions are withdrawn, the Jiva turns back to its source, which is the light of eternity. The birth, growth and death of the individual have meaning only in relation to its accidental circumstances. As the limiting features are incidental, Jivahood is non-eternal. The whole history of the Jiva is but the procession of the activities of these external vestures,—nothing real to the Atman. The diversity of things is adventitious, their ultimate unity is essential. As long as there is a clinging to the conglomeration of the elements composing the individuality, there is bound to be the sorrow attending upon the pain of transformation and death. The salvation of the Jiva consists in the giving up of its fictitious conceit of doership and enjoyership in the world and recognising the absolute perfection of Brahman.

### **THE BODIES AND THE SHEATHS**

An analysis of the nature of the Jiva is virtually a study of the various vestments in which the empirical consciousness is shrouded and which principally constitute its existence. Swami Sivananda, in his *Jnana-Yoga* (pp. 112-136), details this fascinating theme, and conducts the enquiry as follows:

There are three bodies, viz. the gross, the subtle and the causal. Contained in these bodies are the five sheaths, viz. the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the blissful. That which is seen by the physical eyes, that which is composed of flesh, bones, fat, skin, nerves, hair, blood, etc. is the physical body, the outermost sheath covering the inner consciousness. This body undergoes six kinds of change,—empirical existence, birth, growth, change, decay and death. It grows in youth and decays in old age. It develops when nourishing food is given, and becomes weakened if food is withdrawn, or if it is overtaken by disease. This body is subject to decline and disintegration. The subtle body is composed of nineteen principles,—the five senses of knowledge, the five organs of action, the five vital forces, the Manas, the Chitta, the Buddhi and the Ahamkara. This body grows and develops through egoism, attachment, love and hatred, and breaks down when it is freed from these encumbrances. It is affected by three kinds of misery,—the psychological, the physical and the heaven-ordained. The essence of the subtle body consists in Avidya, Kama and Karma—ignorance, desire and action. The causal body develops through the ideas: ‘I am a Jiva,’ and falls off when this idea gets weakened in intensity or is annihilated in the unification of the real ‘I’ with Brahman. The subtle and the causal bodies get thickened in worldly-minded persons on account of lust, greed and anger, and get thinned out in earnest spiritual aspirants who are free from these impurities. The subtle body is also called the Lingadeha, or Lingasarira, for it is the symbol or mark (Linga) of one’s individuality. It is the subtle body that materialises itself as the physical body, and is itself an expression of a part of the potencies lying dormant in the causal body.

We can clearly see the physical body as an object of the senses. But the subtle body does not become an object in this way, for the instruments of objective knowledge are contained in the subtle body itself, and it is too subtle to be perceived physically. The existence of this finer body can, however, be inferred from the effects produced as the nineteen principles constituting it. It is this ethereal aggregate that really carries on all the functions of the individual personality and uses the physical body as its instrument of action. Fire cooks food and also does other kinds of work

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with the aid of fuel; it cannot work without the instrumentality of some material. Yes, it is not the fuel that cooks food but the fire that burns through it. The functions of seeing, hearing, etc. that are performed by the subtle body depend upon the gross body for their outward expression. The real doer and enjoyer is the Jivachaitanya, animating the subtle body. The physical body is inert, it cannot manifest intelligence, and so cannot be the real doer of anything. The Antahkarana or the internal organ in the subtle body is transparent owing to its being formed of the derivatives of Sattvaguna, and so it can reflect consciousness, though imperfectly, and keep up the busy life of the world.

The causal body is nothing but Ajnana or primitive ignorance. It is devoid of consciousness, for in it the Sattvaguna is subordinated to Rajas and Tamas. The causal body gets destroyed when the knowledge of the Atman dawns on the Jiva. The Atman is entirely different from the three bodies, the latter being external to consciousness. Their existence and intelligence are borrowed from another source which is infinite existence and intelligence.

The five sheaths are comprised in the three bodies, and the Atman is different from the sheaths. Just as clouds which are generated by the rays of the sun, and which exist on account of the sun, cover the sun itself; just as smoke which draws its existence from fire conceals fire itself; just as the snake which is erroneously perceived in a rope, and which owes its existence to the rope, hides the rope itself; just as a jar which exists on account of clay hides the perception of the clay in itself; just as ear-rings, etc., which owe their existence to gold, hide the incidence of the gold in them; so do the five sheaths, which owe their existence to the Atman, hide it from experience. It is the natural tendency of the mind to identify itself with the sheaths, and vice versa. This superimposition is mutual, and is caused by Avidya. One has to realise one's distinction from the five sheaths by the practice of the method of 'Neti, Neti', declared in the Vedanta.

The physical sheath is the densest of all the five, and is called the Annamaya-Kosa. It is originated by a combination of Sukla and Sonita, or the male and female reproductive seeds, and is thus made up of the essence of food. It does not exist prior to birth or posterior to death, and

so is non-eternal. It is preponderated by the quality of Tamas, and does not manifest consciousness. It is an effect of the combination of the five gross elements that go to make up this perceptible world. We do not see any consciousness in a dead body. If the gross body were to be the Atman, even the corpse ought to be conscious. In dream, the physical body remains immobile, as if deceased. On death, this body gets absorbed into the earth. Even when certain parts of the body are cut off, self-consciousness is observed to be intact. The physical sheath, therefore, cannot be the true knower.

The foolish man identifies himself with the mass of flesh, fat, skin, bones, etc., while a discerning person becomes aware that he is an intelligent principle. The Pandit who has only a theoretical knowledge identifies himself with a mixture of body, mind and soul, while the liberated sage regards the eternal consciousness as his Self. There cannot be a real connection between extended matter and unextended spirit. In Indian logic, two kinds of relationship are pointed out,—Samavaya or inherence, and Samyoga or contact. Samavaya-Sambandha is the inseparable relation that is seen between the whole and its parts, the class and the individual, the substance and its attribute, the actor and the action. Samyoga-Sambandha is the external relation that obtains between two objects, e.g., a drum and a stick. There cannot be the relation of inherence between the sheaths and the Atman, for the insentient and the ephemeral cannot be said to inhere in the sentient and the eternal. There cannot be a relation between entities possessing entirely dissimilar properties. There is not, again, between the sheaths and the Atman, any external contact, for the Atman is unlimited, while the sheaths are confined to spatial and temporal endurance. The two are not made of the same substance, and so there cannot be any contact between them. The apparent relation between the Atman and the sheaths is one of Adhyasa or erroneous imposition.

Superimposition can be of two kinds: partial and mutual. When we see a snake in a rope, the snake is superimposed on the rope, but there is no superimposition of the rope on the snake. This is an instance where the error is one-sided or partial. But the transference of attributes between the Atman and the sheaths is not thus overbalanced, but obtains on both

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sides; the superimposition is mutual. The essences of the Atman are projected on the sheaths and the defects of the sheaths are swung upon the Atman. This reciprocal superimposition is called Anyonya-Adhyasa. The nature of Satchidananda which belongs to the Atman is falsely attributed to the sheaths when one makes such statements as 'My body exists,' 'my body is intelligent,' 'my body is dear,' 'my life is precious,' etc. In statements like 'I am a man,' 'I am a male,' 'I live,' 'I grow,' 'I die,' 'I am hungry,' 'I am thirsty,' 'I am happy,' 'I am sorry,' etc., there is seen an interjection of the qualities of the sheaths on the Atman. It is this apparent relation that is brought about between the Atman and the sheaths that is the cause of one's bondage and suffering, and it is the aim of the Vedanta to enlighten the Jiva in its attempts to overcome this ignorance and to realise the Atman in this very life.

The vital sheath which lies next to the physical body consists of the five Pranas, actuating the five organs of action, and is called the Pranamaya-Kosa. When permeated by this sheath, the physical body engages itself in activity, as if it were living. There is a mutual superimposition, again, between the vital sheath and the Atman. The Prana is nothing but a force forming a link between the mind and the body. It is inert, is devoid of consciousness, and is an effect of Rajo-guna. It has no knowledge of itself, and it cannot know others. In the state of deep sleep it exhibits its real nature of unconsciousness and inability to undertake any deliberate initiative. The Prana is a subtle force from the active principles of the five Tanmatras. The Atman, obviously, is different from this sheath. The function of the Prana is motion, and in the Atman all activity has to be denied as extraneous to the character of eternality.

The five senses of knowledge, together with the mind, make up the mental sheath, called the Manomaya-Kosa. The mind is the cause of the diversity of concepts and notions like 'I' and 'mine.' It creates egoism and attachment in regard to objects, such as house, wife, son, etc. It moves outward through the avenues of the senses, in the act of perception. One generally feels: 'I think,' 'I fancy,' 'I am in grief,' 'I am happy,' 'I am deluded,' 'I am the seer, the hearer,' etc. Here the functions of the mental sheath are wrongly imputed to the Atman. Conversely, the stamp of the Atman is imprinted on the mental sheath.

This phenomenon is observed when one expresses such feelings as ‘My mind is,’ ‘my mind shines,’ ‘my mind is dear to me,’ etc. The inner conflicts, the pains and the pleasures of life are attributable to this reciprocal superimposition between the mental sheath and the Atman.

The mind is not the Atman, for it is different from consciousness. If it were identical with the Atman, it ought to continue to work even in deep sleep. The mind is seen to lose its light and even its balance on several occasions. It is a product of Avidya, and is inert by nature. It is the outcome of the Sattva property of Prakriti, and so has a beginning and an end. It is only an instrument in the act of knowing, and is subject to modifications of various kinds. The Atman shines even in deep sleep, while the mind does not. The mental sheath pervades the vital sheath and gives it vigour by means of the activation of Vrittis, which work due to the impetus given by a consciousness borrowed from the Atman.

The intellectual sheath consists of the intellect working in collaboration with the senses of knowledge, and is called the Vijnanamaya-Kosa. One’s predisposition to agency in action is attributed to this vesture of the soul. The intellect is the knower, which uses the mind as its instrument. One generally says: ‘I have done this,’ ‘I am the doer,’ ‘I am one of firm determination,’ ‘I am possessed of intelligence,’ etc. Here the functions of the intellectual sheath are falsely ascribed to the Atman. In turn, the attributes of the Atman are transfused into the intellect, as when one opines, for instance: ‘My intellect is,’ ‘my intellect shines,’ ‘my intellect is valuable.’ The intellect cannot be the self luminous Atman, for it is subject to change, and has a beginning and an end. In deep sleep it is involved in ignorance, along with the Chidabhasa or the intelligence reflected through it. It appears to have knowledge on account of its being possessed of an increased amount of Sattvaguna and its proximity to the Atman in subtlety. In fact, the intellect is insentient, being objective, dualistic and limited. It is not eternally present, and so cannot be taken for the highest Self.

The innermost sheath is made up of Avidya or ignorance, in which Sattva is completely overpowered by Tamas and Rajas, and is known as the Anandamaya-Kosa. The great activity of this sheath goes on in the state of dreamless sleep, though it functions in dream and waking, also. The

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pleasure that one experiences in life is the result of a modification of this sheath. Its essential properties are the Vrittis of Priya or the happiness that arises in one at the mere sight of a desired object, Moda or the happiness which is felt when one is in possession of this object, and Pramoda or the happiness which one obtains from its actual enjoyment. The Anandamaya-Kosa makes itself spontaneously felt during the fruition of one's virtuous deeds. Man is wont to say: 'I am the enjoyer,' 'I am happy,' 'I am peaceful,' 'I am contented,' etc. Here, obviously the qualities of the Anandamaya-Kosa are carried over to the Atman. And conversely, the nature of Satchidananda, which is the true Atman, is attributed to this Kosa in such feelings as: 'My happiness is,' 'my happiness is experienced,' 'my happiness is dear to me.'

The Anandamaya-Kosa cannot be the Atman, for it is affected by changeful qualities. It is a modification of Prakriti, and consists of the latent potencies of one's past actions. If the Anandamaya-Kosa were the Atman, one in deep sleep would enter into Samadhi and have an experience of the Absolute. Those who regard this sheath to be identical with the Atman forget that in sleep, when it has its fullest play, one does not have a knowledge of the Atman, but appears to be drowned in an ignorance from which he rises again to empirical activity, propelled by the forces hidden therein.

The five sheaths have, thus, no independent reality. Just as the mutations that take place in the body of a cow,—growth, decay, etc., do not in the least affect the owner of the cow, who is only a witness, so the changes that occur in the sheaths do not touch the Atman which is their witness. Just as one can distinguish the sound of one person from that of another through the power of discrimination; just as by this faculty one can feel: 'This is soft, this is hard, this is hot, this is cold,' etc.; just as one can, by looking at a mural picture on a wall, say: 'This is blue colour, this is red colour, this is the wall,' etc., with one's discerning capacity, although one is not able to separate the red colour from the blue, or the picture from the wall; just as one can know by tasting a drink: 'This is lemonade, this is orange,' etc., through the understanding faculty; just as one can know the odour in a cloth by the organ of smell, although the odour cannot really be separated from the cloth; so also one can clearly



differentiate the Atman from the sheaths by an analysis and study of their respective natures. It is impossible for ordinary people to separate water from milk when the two are mixed together, but it is possible for a swan to do so. In like manner, though it is impossible for persons of gross understanding to distinguish between the Atman and the sheaths, yet, it is within the capacity of an aspirant endowed with subtle discrimination to fulfil this difficult task.

A doubt is likely to arise as to the nature of the phenomenality of the sheaths as contradistinguished from the Atman, for it is seen that the former do not entirely vanish but manifest themselves even after one's attainment of spiritual insight. How, then, can they be said to be unreal? Well; we know that the water in a mirage appears to a person even after he becomes conscious that its water is illusory, and that a pot with its characteristic form, though it is nothing but clay in itself, continues to be seen, even if we know that there is no pot apart from clay. The five sheaths, thus, may be present to the sage even after he attains Self-knowledge, but this appearance will be like that of a burnt cloth—which has perceptibility but no substantiality. When the soul gets discriminated from the sheaths, it shines in its pristine glory of pure consciousness. It, then, does not require to be established by proof of any kind, for it knows itself as self-evident reality. The Atman is the presupposition of all proof. It is the unshakable and the final conclusion of the Vedanta that, as clay alone truly endures after the name and form of the jar disappear, the eternal Atman alone survives even after the five sheaths are shaken off with the saving knowledge. Whoever knows thus is a knower of Brahman.

### **STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

In his exposition of the Mandukya Upanishad, Swami Sivananda gives the following account of the Jiva as constituted of certain states of consciousness (Principal Upanishads, vol. I, pp. 420-32):

The Jiva is the supreme consciousness appearing to undergo the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Waking is the condition where the consciousness is associated with external objects having a pragmatic existence for the Jiva. The experiences of the waking individual are made

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possible by the operation of nineteen powers that form the subtle body within. The auditory, the tactile, the visual, the gustatory and the olfactory senses; the vocal, the prehensile, the locomotive, the generative and the excretory organs; the five vital breaths, called respectively the Prana or the central energy, Apana or the down-going energy, Vyana or the circulating energy, Udana or the up-going energy and Samana or the equalising energy; the four provinces of the psychological organ, viz. the mind, the intellect, the ego and the subconscious;—these together are the building-bricks, as it were, of individual experience. The distinguishing feature of the waking consciousness is that its contents are physical objects. The nineteen principles become for the Jiva the means of the enjoyment of objects, as well as of the suffering of mortal life. Swami Sivananda makes an opposite remark in regard to the waking condition of the Jiva: The Jagrat-Avastha or the wakeful state is the last in the evolution of the universe, but the first in the order of involution. The dreaming and the deep sleep states follow the wakeful one. This quarter (viz. the waking condition) is called the first with reference to experience, but not with reference to the order of evolution or creation. This is called the first, because all the other quarters are approached through this, and because from it the dream state and the deep sleep state are known. From a study of the waking state one will have to proceed to the study of dream and deep sleep. When we begin to analyse the universe for the sake of realising the Atman, we will have to deal with the wakeful state first, and understand the nature of the gross objects in the beginning. It is then that we can gradually enter the subtle and the causal nature of things (p. 422). The Jiva in the waking state goes by the names of Visva, Vijnanatma, Chidabhasa, Vyavaharika-Jiva, Karma-Purusha, etc.

Dream is the second quarter, where the Jiva is called the Taijasa, and where it is conscious of internal objects and works by means of similar nineteen avenues of knowledge and action. The objects of the dreaming consciousness are subtle in comparison with those of the waking state. The mind in dream creates various objects out of the impressions produced in it by the waking experiences. The mind can reproduce the whole of its waking life, through the force of Avidya, Kama and Karma.

In the dream world the mind is the perceiver as well as the perceived. It creates objects without the help of any external means. It is the condition during which the Taijasa-Atman, in association with the mind laden with the residual impressions of waking life, experiences sound and the other objects, created merely out of the impressions, for the time being. Here the external senses are at rest, there is only a manifestation of the knower and the known with affinities to things enjoyed in the waking condition. The Visva, its normal actions having ceased, reaches the state of Taijasa, which moves in the middle of the subtle nerves near the throat, and illumines by its lustre the heterogeneity of the dream world. The dream phenomena are nothing but the states of the mind alone, though the Jiva here considers the externality of experience as real. The dream world is objective only to the dreamer.

That is the state of deep sleep wherein the Jiva does not desire any object, nor see any dream. This third quarter of the Jiva is termed Prajna, whose sphere is ignorance, in which all experiences become one, which enjoys bliss and provides a key to the knowledge of the other two states. Sound and the other objects of sense are not felt here due to the cessation of the objectifying function of the mind. Even the ego is here at rest. There is only Avidya or the veil of nescience. The Visva and the Taijasa enter a temporary condition of oneness in Prajna. An analysis of dreamless sleep leads us to the recognition of the existence of the Atman in all the three states. The remembrance of sleep, when one returns to the wakeful state, indicates that the witness of the three states is one. This witness is the Atman. The bliss of sleep, however, is not to be confused with the bliss of the Atman. As the mind is in a state of quiescence, due to the absence of desire and activity, it is wound up in sleep into an unconscious condition of absence of all pain and an unwitting proximity to the Absolute. Our impassioned craving for sleep, even if it may mean the rejection of all other pleasures of life, gives us an inkling of there being a positive bliss underlying it. As the state of sleep, though a negative one, is the causal condition of empirical life, a knowledge of the seeds of experience hidden in it would throw an immense light on the whole life of the individual, whose essential characters get temporarily dissolved in the body of Prajna.

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As the soul in the state of waking, dream and sleep is called, respectively, Visva, Taijasa and Prajna, the Universal Soul animating the physical, the subtle and the causal universes is designated Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara. The Virat, having entered the microcosmic gross body and having the Buddhi as its vehicle, reaches the state of Visva. Hiranyagarbha, having entered the microcosmic subtle body and having the Manas as its vehicle, reaches the state of Taijasa. Isvara, who is coupled with the Avyakta, having entered the microcosmic causal body and having Avidya as His vehicle, reaches the state of Prajna. In the macrocosm, Virat is the last manifestation of Isvara, while in the microcosm, Visva is to be considered the first manifestation of the Jiva. In a sense, the waking state of the Jiva forms a link between itself and the manifestations of Isvara. Hence in the waking state the Jiva is supposed to be at its best.

Fill a pot with the water of the sea, tie a rope to the neck of the pot, and immerse it in the sea. Though the water of the pot is one with the water of the sea, it appears to be separate on account of the limiting adjunct, viz. the pot. When the pot is drawn out by means of the rope, the water of the pot gets differentiated. But the ether, which is contained in the pot and is also outside it, forms a single homogeneous whole, and cannot be distinguished thus. Even so, the pot of the subtle body which is filled with the water of ignorance and to which is tied the rope of the impetus of past good and evil deeds, gets involved, in deep sleep, in a collective causal state, which is the adjunct of Isvara in the cosmic plane. With the individual ignorance, which is its own adjunct, the Jiva in dreamless sleep gets immersed in this vast sea of stillness. It appears to be discrete due to its containing in itself, potentially, the subtle body. When the Antaryamin, or the Inner Ruler, draws the rope of Karma, it gets differentiated, and comes back to the waking state. But the Atman remains a silent witness of the three states, as a support for the pot of the subtle body, which is the vehicle of individual ignorance.

The waking state may be compared to a big city, the dream state to the rampart or the walls of the fort of the city, deep sleep to the central palace within the city, and the Jiva to the king enthroned therein. The king comes out of his palace and moves about in the city, enjoys various

objects and returns to his palace. The Jiva is subject to changes. It cannot be called the Witness-consciousness, because it dwindles in deep sleep. It is not real, for it is transcended in the Atman. It is only a reflection of Chaitanya in the Buddhi. The Atman is the real witness of the three states, even of the contingency of Jivahood. This witness-state is called the Turiya or the fourth state of consciousness.

It is said that, as sweetness, liquidity and coldness, which are characteristics of water, appear as inherent in the waves, and then also in the foam, of which the waves form the background; existence, consciousness and bliss, which are the natural essences of the Atman, seem to inhere in the wakeful Jiva on account of its relation with the Atman. Likewise, these facets of the Atman are felt also in the dreaming self, by way of the impressions of the waking consciousness. And just as, on the disappearance of the foam, their characteristics, such as liquidity, revert to the waves, and, again, as with the subsiding of the waves in the sea, these exist in the waters of the sea as before; so existence, consciousness and bliss manifest themselves and shine in the waking consciousness after the disappearance of the dreaming state; and then, again, on the dissolution of the waking phenomena in the Atman, these eternal natures are experienced in the Atman, which is the highest reality. In Moksha, or the final liberation of the soul, when all objective perception is overcome in the consciousness of Brahman, even the character of being a witness drops from the self, and it realises its majestic independence.

Sometimes the states of consciousness are regarded as being sixteen in number. "There are sixteen states of consciousness. They are made up as follows: There are the four primary states of consciousness, called Jagrat, Svapna, Sushupti and Turiya (waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the Witness-consciousness). These, by differentiation, multiply into sixteen states. These are Jagrat-Jagrat (waking in waking), Jagrat-Svapna (waking in dreaming), Jagrat-Sushupti (waking in sleep), Jagrat-Turiya (waking in super-consciousness), and so on with the remaining three other states. These sixteen states, by further differentiation, become two hundred and sixty-six states. These, again, by the differentiation of the phenomenal and the noumenal, become five hundred and twelve states.

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To realise these states of consciousness, it is very difficult, and is not possible for everyone.” “That is called Jagrat-Jagrat, in which there are no such ideas as ‘this’ or ‘mine’ regarding visible things. The great ones call that Jagrat-Svapna in which all ideas of name and form are given up. This is preceded by the realisation of the nature of Satchidananda. In the state of Jagrat-Sushupti, there is no idea but Self-knowledge. In Jagrat-Turiya the conviction becomes firm that the three states,—gross, subtle and causal—are false. In Svapna-Jagrat there comes the conviction that even the activities proceeding from the astral plane, owing to causes set in motion previously, do not bind the self, when the knowledge of the physical plane is destroyed. In Svapna-Svapna there is no seer, seen and sight, when the Karana-Ajnana (ignorance which is the root of all) is destroyed. It is Svapna-Sushupti where by means of increased subtle thinking, the modifications of one’s mind get merged in knowledge. That is Svapna-Turiya, in which the innate bliss (pertaining to the individual self) is transcended by the attainment of universal bliss. That state is called Sushupti-Jagrat in which the experience of Self-bliss takes the shape of universal intelligence through the rising of the corresponding mental modifications. In Sushupti-Svapna one identifies oneself with the modifications of the mind which has long been immersed in the experience of inward bliss. When one attains oneness of knowledge (Bodhaikya), which is above these mental modifications and above the realisation of any abstract condition, one is said to be in Sushupti-Sushupti. In Sushupti-Turiya, Akhandaikarasa (the one undivided essence of bliss) manifests itself, of its own accord. When the enjoyment of the Akhandaikarasa is natural in the waking state, one is said to be in Turiya-Jagrat. Turiya-Svapna is difficult of attainment; it is a state in which the enjoyment of Akhandaikarasa becomes natural even in one’s dreaming condition. The still higher state of Turiya-Sushupti is even more difficult of accomplishment. In this state, the one undivided essence of bliss manifests itself to the Yogi, even in deep sleep. The highest state is Turiya-Turiya, wherein Akhandaikarasa disappears like the dust of the clearing nut (Kataka) used for clearing water. This is the Arupa or the formless state and is beyond cognition” (Vedanta in Daily Life, pp. 211-14). The Kaivalyopanishad says that the states of

consciousness are appearances of one Brahman, and that one who knows this is freed from all bonds (Verse, 17).

### **ANALYSIS OF DREAM**

A study of dream is now generally regarded as essential in all investigations of the human personality, for dreams are known to form a kind of index to one's inner constitutions and also to indicate certain possibilities of experience. Usually, four classes of dream are distinguished: Dreams due to (1) physiological disorders, (2) psychological excitations and projection of desire and will, (3) contact of superhuman beings or astral spirits, and (4) the fruition of one's good and bad deeds. Another type of classification distinguishes between seven kinds of dream: (1) Dreams of objects seen, (2) dreams of objects heard of, (3) dreams of objects felt, (4) dreams of objects wished for, (5) dreams caused by imagination, (6) dreams which foreshadow future events, and (7) dreams which are caused by disordered bodily functions, such as those brought about by wind, bile, phlegm, indigestion, and other disturbed conditions of the body.

Dreams are regarded as phenomena caused when the mind functions in the Svapnavaha or Hita-Nadi. Though disconnected from external sense-perceptions, the mind is somewhat connected here with the tactile sense. When it withdraws itself from its connection even with the tactile sense, it enters the Puritat-Nadi, and experiences deep sleep. The stimulation of the Manovaha-Nadi, or the nerve-current through which the mind externalises itself, is said to cause dreams of a prognostic character, especially indicating diseases or death. The Manovaha-Nadi is the channel of the activation of the seat of the mind in the brain, by consciousness. The sensations received from outside are transferred to the seat of the mind in the brain, and from there these sensations receive the impact of consciousness by means of the Manovaha-Nadi. It is this enlivening of sensations by consciousness that makes possible any determinate perception. The Svapnavaha does the same function as the Manovaha, it being only a section of the latter.

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Swami Sivananda presents a detailed analysis of the dream phenomena and throws some light on certain questions raised by the modern theory of psychoanalysis (The Divine Life, vol. IX, pp. 127, 175):

According to Sigmund Freud, dreams indicate a process of wish-fulfilment. Dream is said to be caused by suppressed desires. The physical stimulus alone is not enough or responsible for the production of dreams. The dream mechanism is very intricate, and the wishes are of a complex nature. They clamour for satisfaction, and do not die before self-expression and fulfilment. They are revolting to the moral self, which seeks to exercise a control over their appearance and activity. The wishes, therefore, emerge in several disguised forms, by means of defence-mechanisms, to evade the moral censor. Very few dreams present the wishes as they really are. They provide a partial gratification of unfulfilled desires. Often, their function is to become safety valves to strong impulses, and relieve mental tension. The animal self is visualised in dream.

The Freudian theory of dreams is apt to associate almost every kind of dream with the sex-urge, try to interpret every dream-object in terms of the sex-impulse, and carry this process to a sort of extreme. This tendency is evidently the result of a failure to take into account many important factors, besides sex, in the make-up of the individual, and the direction of evolution through successive cycles to the present human state. To the Freudians, man is mainly a psychical creature formed of urges, instincts and wishes buried unfulfilled in the unconscious mind. As the need for a permanent self is not felt, the question of reincarnation does not arise. This is just the essence of the empirical view of life, that what is observed through the senses and the mental apparatus is considered to be ultimately real, and nothing beyond it is recognised to exist. The more considered view, however, is that man, in reality, is a spiritual being, expressing himself through the medium of a mind that has the physical body as its objective counterpart to function upon the gross plane of the senses. The true Self of man is devoid of sex, and even of personality and individuality. It is the body influenced by a state of mind that suffers under the tyranny of gender. The body is the least part of man as envisaged and defined by true philosophic wisdom. Sex is just



but one aspect, though a dominant one, perhaps, of a living being stationed in a sense-world.

That unconscious desires relating to sex appear as objects in dream is not the whole story. The waking experiences are often retained in the subconscious and unconscious minds in the form of a memory or impression. The unconscious is, in fact, the storehouse of such potentialities of memories and impressions formed in one's waking life, through aeons. It need not mean that the unconscious contains impressions of experiences which one has gathered in this life alone. The unconscious is the reservoir of unmanifested impressions of experiences undergone in several previous lives. Only a part of this store is expressed or given out for experience in a single bodily life.

The factors of sex-impulse, repressions and activities during waking hours are not exhaustive in their nature. Impulses arising out of the sum total of the impressions of experiences of previous incarnations also, at times, provide material for dreams. That portion of the results of one's actions allotted for being worked out in the present incarnation alone gets consciously expressed here in thought and action. Though, generally, the major part of this allotment is worked out in the form of pain and pleasure in one's waking life, it is not unusual for a measure of it to be repaired in the shape of dream experiences. The dream life is as vital and real, while it lasts, as the waking one. Many a time, certain serious and extremely painful experiences that one has to undergo in waking life become averted by being lightly undergone in dream. This is particularly so in the case of fortunate devotees and aspirants of truth, who have surrendered themselves to God, or taken shelter under a godly man as a preceptor, and have generated in themselves a tremendous Sadhana-Sakti, or a power of the spirit within, through self-restraint and meditation. The working of Grace and the power of Sadhana react upon the aspirant by shielding him from the too violent repercussions of his past deeds, by enabling him to pay off certain of his old debts in the form of some similar experiences in dream. This method is employed due to a mysterious peculiarity of the dream-consciousness, in which lengthy periods of time (in terms of the waking consciousness) can manage to get

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packed into the short space of a single night's, nay, a single hour's dream.

Thus, apart from the merely physical and the occult, deeper spiritual laws seem to have a part in the making of an individual's dream. The Sadhana performed by a person in past lives makes him qualified and destined to obtain the guidance of a certain saint in his present incarnation. Though separated by thousands of miles, or thousands of years, the aspirant may be enabled, when the appointed time for their spiritual union approaches, to find out, through a graphic and insistent dream, the whereabouts of his would-be teacher, and through this unmistakable dream-guidance, enable the aspirant to reach his hallowed feet. The dream consciousness plays, many times, a very important role in influencing, moulding and determining one's activities in the waking life. This shows that it is not always that dream is merely a reproduction or image of waking life. There are instances of Svapna-Siddhas, i.e., aspirants who were shown the way to perfection by means of dream. These phenomena go to prove that deeper forces and factors operate, than merely the suppressed or repressed animal instincts of the individual. But these phenomena can hardly be comprehended properly by the merely science-ridden mind wedded to an empirical observation of things that are truncated from the essential consciousness and its implications. The dream of a spiritual aspirant who has a genuine longing for the salvation of his soul, and who intensely strives in the right direction towards the achievement of that end, is of a unique character, and cannot be compared with the process of wish-fulfilment or even with a mere reproduction of waking events. Such dreams have a supermental significance.

There are some dreams that are definitely prophetic in their nature. They keep the dreamer forewarned of approaching diseases, calamities or bereavements. This feature of certain dreams has been established beyond doubt by countless concrete cases, a feature that has nothing whatsoever to do with sexual expressions or submerged anti-social elements. Again, besides forewarning, simple forecast is also effected, at times, in dream. The reason for this is that certain elements in the mental consciousness connected with the future event have begun to rise in that consciousness at the time of the dream. Cases are recorded where a

person dreams vividly of certain sceneries, places and objects as distinguishing landmarks in a place. Several years later, quite unexpectedly, the person happens to come across the actual place, which, to his astonishment, he finds tallying even in the minutest details with the scene observed by him in dream, years before. In addition to this, the countless millions of subtle ethereal records embedded in the vast scroll of elemental space operate, sometimes, as direct causative factors in dream. It is not uncommon for a person happening to spend a night at some sacred place of hoary religious tradition or some historical place marking the spot of great and stirring events in the dim past, to dream of objects, persons and occurrences connected with the place, though he may be totally unaware of any such thing as ever existent or possible. This comes about due to the impact of the powerful ethereal impressions teeming at that place upon the consciousness of the person sleeping there. We have to take special note of a phenomenon like this, for here we have a purely objective factor giving rise to dream, demonstrating the error of laying too much emphasis upon a purely subjective causation of the dream process.

It is possible, again, for close friends, relatives or twins to influence the dreams of each other. It is quite common for a person to have a dream of any extreme danger or pain that his friend or relative or twin is undergoing at that time. We have instances where a person upon death bed appears in dream to a friend at a great distance, apprises him of his departure, and bids him farewell. There are also cases where a person long dead appears in dream to someone connected with him when alive, and urges him to do some particular work. This astral being keeps on appearing in successive dreams until the person thus visited accomplishes satisfactorily the purpose indicated. All these are irrespective of the dreamer's temperament, predisposition, personal sexual life, early impressions, repressed desires, etc. (Vide, *Ibid.* pp. 175-77).

Certain kinds of external sounds, such as the ringing of a bell, the noise of alarm clocks, knocks on the door or the wall, the blowing of wind, the drizzling of rain, the rustling of leaves, the sound of the horn of a motor car, the creaking of the window, etc., may produce in the mind of the

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dreamer a variety of imagination. These generate certain sensations which increase in intensity according to the sensitiveness of the mind of the dreamer. The sounds may cause very elaborate dreams. If one touches the dreamer's chest with the point of a pin, he may dream that someone has given him a severe blow on his body, or stabbed him with a dagger (Ibid. p. 128). Medical men opine that an organic disturbance in the system, especially in the stomach, can cause dreams, and even indicate the coming of a disease. Indigestion also becomes often a cause for several kinds of dream. A patient suffering from heart disease may dream of death under painful conditions. One who has lung disease may dream of suffocation. Intense pain in the teeth may cause the dream of dropping of teeth. It is not also quite unusual for a person whose system in the state of sleep feels a necessity to micturate to dream of swimming in a river or an ocean, or for one suffering from flatulence to dream of flying in the air.

Freud tries to establish his theory of wish-fulfilment in dreams by observation and analysis, which, he thinks, show that the dream content is not merely a translation of latent potency, but is reinforced by an unconscious wish, to fulfil which the content of the dream is transformed. He also advances an additional argument that the residuum of impressions of waking life cannot find expression in dream without the aid of the unconscious drive. Desires supply the impulse to manifest the impressions of waking. To what extent these assertions can be correct we have already noticed in our observations of the different phenomena that act as causes of dream. Freud often starts with what he wishes to prove. He is intent on discovering a wish behind dreams; and when one is not discovered there, the analysis is thought to be incomplete. Often, when we search for a thing in the mind, it is found there.

The mind in the waking state manifests only certain prominent aspects of the reservoir of the unconscious. The subconscious, too, is a partial manifestation of the deep unconscious. The waking and the dreaming states are regarded as expressions of the consequences of the deeds to be worked out in this particular life. In this respect, these states may be considered not as experiences of original conditions but of reflections of experience or reproductions of forces that are buried in the deepest

recesses of the unconscious. But what is the unconscious made of? It is constituted of unmanifest impressions and latent tendencies given rise to by past conscious acts. Thus the unconscious in the individual plays a double role: it is the result of past desires and actions, and also the cause of future desires and actions. Originally, it was caused by deliberate psychological acts and volitions, but in the course of countless lives which the individual undergoes, it continues doing newer and newer actions, due to fresh desires cropping up on account of attachment to individuality in every one of its incarnations, and thus adds fresh impressions to the old stock of the unconscious. The result is that the potential forces of the unconscious become so strong that they begin even to direct the course and determine the nature of future actions. This is the tragedy of individual life, that every new conscious action produces fresh impressions that are added on to the unconscious, thus enabling it to have a powerful hold on the destiny of the individual. The misery of bodily existence begins first with conscious acts, and then it becomes the consequence of the incessant surge of unconscious forces hidden behind visible causes. Man is, accordingly, free as well as bound. Dreams occur in the Manomaya-Kosa or the mental sheath. The functions of the mind are chiefly thoughts of objects. Emotions, feelings, desires, and the like, are natural to the mind, which works in coordination with the Pranamaya-Kosa or the vital sheath. During dreams, the mental sheath acts as a screen on which the pictures of forms are thrown by the impressions lying deep in the Annamaya-Kosa or the bliss-sheath, and the Vijnanamaya-Kosa or the intellectual sheath functions partially, and due to a hazy and dull manifestation of consciousness therein, it gets deprived of its power of volition and proper discrimination. The Atman is the witness of the play of the five sheaths, but the Jiva actually feels the vibrations and activities of the sheaths due to its self-identification with them. In waking, the whole of the intellectual sheath is lighted up and becomes active, but only a very weak part of it is active in dream, it being clouded by Tamas or inertia. A set of impulses which could not have free play in the waking life, because of the operation of the discriminative intelligence, is drawn out by a stimulus of a like character, when the power of discrimination fails and the mind begins to work

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independent of the senses by means of impressions of waking consciousness alone. The result is that we have a dream. Under these circumstances, there comes about a displacement of emphasis from the proper objective to an unimportant element. When dreams of a shocking nature are cast on the mental screen, the whole system, unable to bear them, awakes, and puts a stop to the dream.

Along with the projection of impressions, the rays of consciousness from the Atman, also, travel and illumine the play of the imagery in dream. These rays, while passing on to the mental sheath, have necessarily to pass through the intellectual sheath, but they are not strong enough to illumine the whole of the sheath on account of the intellect then being dominated by Tamas. This leads to the diminution of the dreamer's discriminative sense, and to experiences that are not in conformity with the characteristics of objects usually seen by the waking mind. But one does not dream anything that one has not placed in the Anandamaya-Kosa, sometime or the other, except, of course, in the case of dreams which are caused by factors outside the individual's mind.

It is also possible for a dreamer to remain cognisant, during his dream state, of the fact that he is dreaming. This phenomenon takes place very rarely, but, nevertheless, it is a fact. Philosophers and saints have compared this type of dream with the condition of a person in waking life, in whom the spiritual consciousness has risen to its heights and enables him to recognise the unreality of the waking world in the light of the Absolute Truth. By constant practice it is possible for one to remain a witness even of dream phenomena, as it is possible for the perfected ones to be witnesses of the long dream of world-existence. If one trains oneself to remain detached from one's thoughts in the waking state, it would also be possible for one to exercise this control over experiences even in dream. It is not impossible to be aware sometimes, even in dream, that the dream is only a dream. One can alter, stop or create one's thoughts independently, even in the dream state, provided the practice of such control in the waking state is sufficiently strong. Intense meditation on the independence of the conscious Self will enable one to keep awake even in dream. If there is perfect self-discipline in waking, it would be there in dream, too. The liberated soul or the Jivanmukta makes no

difference between the essential features of dream and waking. To the Yogi who has successfully risen above the three states, experience is a continuous process of consciousness, spiritual and indivisible. The Jnani, with his intuitive perception, identifies himself with the Atman that runs like a thread through all the states.

That the Freudian analysis of dream is defective has been pointed out by several psychologists and philosophers of note. Wilhelm Stekel of Vienna, after quoting a passage from Freud to the effect that dream is a sinking back of the person into the intrauterine state, remarks: "This one example from Freud's latest work is enough to show the one-sided character of his conception of dreams. The dream is and remains for him a wish-fulfilment. Into this Procrustean bed of wish he wedges in every dream. Thus he neglects altogether the telepathic dreams which do not happen to fit in with his theory. He does not believe in telepathic dreams. But he brushes aside also all other dreams, which we must recognise as denoting warning or anxiety, as well as the dreams which we may call 'instructive.' Anxiety is always for him the sign of a repressed wish. But knowing that the dream portrays the eternal warfare between craving and inhibition, the struggle of man with himself under his dual aspect as the heir of primordial instincts and as the representative of culture, we must look upon the dream as a picture of both sides of the combat, a dramatisation in which the cravings as well as the inhibitions find pictorial representation, and in which even foreign thoughts may crop out through telepathic means. If one sees only the cravings, one may be easily led to the erroneous conception which I myself have held for a time, that the dream is merely a wish-fulfilment. For, back of every wish there always stands some craving: the sexual instinct, the nutritional instinct, the craving for power, for self-aggrandisement, etc. But if we investigate the inhibitions, we find back of them also the influences of culture: warnings, preparations for the future, foreshadowings, religiosity and moral restrictions of every kind." Stekel concludes that sleep means re-experiencing one's past, forgetting one's present, and pre-feeling one's future.

Psychologists have also extended the features characterising dreams to fairy tales, folk stories and myths of the different races. The myth is

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considered to be a folk dream and to contain in a cryptic symbolic language an expression of the unconscious wish-excitations and fulfilment-hallucinations of the folk mind. Just as dreams disclose the secret thoughts and imaginations of the individual man, myths are supposed to disclose in unmistakable manner the ideals and wishes of the people. Carl Jung of Zurich posited a collective or racial unconscious, in addition to the personal unconscious. He discovered in this universal unconscious archetypes of experience which dream imagery and phantasy, myths and fables draw upon. He held that the presence of such a collective unconscious accounts for certain universally persistent symbols and modes of thought and imagination in the literature and practices, beliefs and behaviours of the people of several nations. He says: "The collective unconscious is the sediment of all the experience of the universe of all time, and is also an image of the universe that has been in the process of formation for untried ages." This, he thinks, explains the phenomenon that the matter and themes of legends are met with all the world over in identical forms. The impressions of the thoughts and feelings of different persons that have lived since ages are said to be potentially and partially present in the structure of the brains of those who live today. Certain fundamental processes of thinking and feeling are held to be remarkably similar to all nations in the world. Dreams and myths, fairy and folk tales are considered to present the same kind of psychic structure. Such arguments as these are advanced to establish a racial or collective unconscious. The dreams of the individual, therefore, are said to be much influenced by the contents of this collective unconscious, apart from other factors peculiar to the individual and its environment.

It is also held that certain objects seen in dream can be inhabitants and features of spheres different from the one in which the dreamer lives during his waking life. Gaudapada thinks that the phenomena experienced in dream are Sthani-Dharmas or conditions of a region which is subtler than the one in which the waking individual lives. There are others who opine that dream is a connecting link between two realms of being, the physical and the super-physical. The fact, however, seems to be that dreams, in general, are mental images less clear in the quality



of awareness, though in the framework in which they appear they are indistinguishable from waking life. The pattern of experience in waking and dream is the same. Space, time, objects and causal relation are common to both the states, though they belong to different orders when compared with each other. The 'seen' is always outside the seer, and the two are related to each other by an objective process of knowing. A study of the relation between dream and waking gives us a clue to the knowledge of the relation between man and God.

### **FREE WILL AND NECESSITY**

If Brahman is the only reality, if Isvara is universal being, the freedom of the Jiva can only be conditional, and not absolute. Freedom of choice in the Jiva is relegated to the appearances that constitute the world, and effort becomes a process of the transmission of the impetus of universal activity through an ego. The force of the universe, as the Will of God or Isvara, causes an all-round evolution of things in space and time. As the universal Will is supreme, it may be said that there is an eternal determinism of the scheme of creation, preservation and destruction. But this universal Will acts not merely in the objective physical universe, but also in the subjective mental states. When the mind is endowed with the consciousness of personality and individuality, it receives the vibration of the cosmic Will through the medium of the constituents of its personality. The light that passes through a coloured glass seems to acquire the colour of that glass. The unique nature of the individual is self-centredness. Limitation to body, desire for objects, and intense self-respect are certain traits of this notable state. The universal Will, when it passes through the prism of individuality, appears to imbibe these strange attributes which the mind arrogates to itself, of its own accord. In this process, the mind, instead of realising that the impulse for activity which it feels within itself is but the ingress of the universal into its individual processes, commits an error in yielding to the dictates of the ego and assuming for itself the role of a real agent, a doer and an enjoyer. When this impulse is deliberately associated with the ego, it goes by the name of effort actuated by a felt free will. Thus it becomes clear that free will and effort are names given to the manner in which the cosmic Will is

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erroneously received through the medium of the personal ego and attributed to it as a reality.

Effort, however, can be rightly directed,—as it is actually done by all spiritual aspirants,—when it is illumined by the light of the higher understanding. When the whole personality is lighted up by the higher knowledge, the ego begins to act by accepting its guidance. Here comes about the peculiar joint action of the ego, which assumes the role of agency, and the superior knowledge, which directs the individual beyond itself. As far as effort, as such, is concerned, it is to be considered as a result of mistaking the action of the universal impetus for individual power, but, when this effort moves in the direction of contemplation on the Divine Being, it becomes a process of self-purification and spiritual enlightenment. All other forms of effort are misdirected in different degrees, and lead to bondage and pain, ultimately. We have to distinguish between the lower effort of the ignorant Jiva and the higher one of the wise Sadhaka. The higher effort causes in the end a cessation of all personal initiative in the experience of Reality. Rightly directed effort aims at liberating the Jiva gradually from the false notion of its being an independent agent in the performance of actions. The solution of the problem of the relation of free will to necessity lies in our recognising that individual freedom is but the consciousness of the way in which the Absolute is envisaged by temporal processes.

The question of the freedom of the soul is an agelong one. “Spinoza thought that our actions and experiences are in actual fact determined by a sort of mathematical necessity, like that of a wheel in a machine, but that we feel ourselves free if we enjoy doing what actually we are doing under compulsion; a stone in the air, he said, would think itself free if it could forget the hand that had thrown it. Or, to take a more homely illustration which is not Spinoza’s, I know that I choose jam-roll because I like it and I feel myself free in so choosing because I do not stop to think that my liking is the inevitable result of my inheritance and upbringing, of the present state of my health and of my sugar metabolism, and of all sorts of things which it is quite beyond my power to change at the moment. Hegel and, at a later period, Alexander, held very similar opinions. Kant thought that we feel ourselves free just in so

far as our actions appear rational to us; if I rationally run downstairs to welcome a friend, my action seems free to me; but if I run downstairs irrationally because I am afraid of a ghost, it will seem to me that I acted under compulsion” (James Jeans: *Physics and Philosophy*, pp. 206). It is the condition of the mind that finally determines whether an action is done with freedom of will or under the stress of necessity and force. Freedom in this world is really the individual’s consciousness identified with a particular action or group of actions under consideration, with an unconsciousness of the fact that these actions are but bits of the process of the universe directed by the laws of the Absolute. When the impersonal law gets translated in terms of a conscious individuality which is inseparable from a sense of personal agency, it goes by the name of free will and self-effort.

What we call our freedom is, according to Plotinus, simply the power of obeying our true and essential nature. True freedom does not belong to the appetitive side of human nature, to our desires or to our passions, for it is seen that these impulses restrict the freedom of man in acting otherwise than as they direct. Plotinus holds that complete freedom is not given to us as long as our desires are prompted by finite needs. The connection of our consciousness with the material body makes us dependent on the general laws of the physical world, over which we, as individuals, have no control. The individual is a complex structure, it partakes of elements that are subjected to necessity and also a principle whose essential nature is freedom. We may be individuals, and, as such, under compulsion to obey Nature; but we are also, as persons, each of us a whole. Though as parts we are all determined, as wholes we are free. The highest freedom belongs to the Absolute, and we are ultimately not different from it, and thus enjoy freedom in the real sense. The whole is present in every part, and the part is free to the extent to which the whole is manifest in it. “We are, therefore, not merely cogs in a great machine; we are the machine itself, and the mind which directs it.” The soul which has perfectly realised its inner essential nature is perfectly free. “The imperfect man is pulled and pushed by forces which are external to himself, just because he is himself still external to his true Being.” Though the law of cause and effect operates everywhere inviolably and

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determines the movement of everything, we as self-conscious spirits are 'ourselves causative principles.' The principle of freedom in us is in the innermost Spirit that we all are, for the Spirit cannot be determined by any cause outside itself. Freedom is "the will of the higher Soul to return to its own Principle. The element of freedom in our practical activities is this underlying motive, the spiritual activity of the Soul." When the individual receives enlightenment, its will enjoys freedom. The will then becomes a good will, and the attainment of its desire is tantamount to spiritual perception, the perception of the glory of the Spirit which is absolutely free. Freedom is the principle of abiding by the laws of the Absolute, which is our own Self (Vide, W.R. Inge: *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. II, pp. 183-84).

The freedom that the ordinary man speaks of is an apparent freedom to will certain things and to act in certain ways, but he does not consider whether he has freedom to will what he will, or whether he has knowledge as to why he should will in a particular manner at all. That a man thinks he is free cannot be offered as a proof that he is really free, for it has been observed that a subject under hypnosis carries out a train of activity, suggested to him under hypnosis, and, after awakening from the hypnotic state, gives reasons of his own when asked to explain why he acted in that way. Since the hypnotist knows the real reason behind the subject's actions, and since this motive or reason differs from the one which the subject offers, it has been suggested that the reasons for our actions can be different from what we believe them to be, and that this indicates the existence and operation of unknown forces. We feel we are free because we are aware only of our present volitions and not of their real causes. It is our limitation to self-consciousness that makes us feel we are free. This has led psychologists to throw overboard free will altogether, and assume an unconscious realm of the psyche as the sole determinant of all conscious behaviour. Our thoughts and desires are said to be expressions of the unconscious, only certain aspects of which are allowed to enter the surface of consciousness. The so-called freedom of the individual is thus threatened by the control which the unconscious impulses have on the conscious life of man. "If, in short, consciousness is rightly regarded as a by-product of unconscious processes, it is clearly

determined by the processes which produce it. Conscious events are merely the smoke and flame given off by the workings of the subterranean psychological machinery of which we are unconscious” (C. E. M. Joad: *Guide to Philosophy*, p. 238). The instincts and impulses are held by psychoanalysts to be the mainspring of all individual action. Even the unselfish actions or desireless activities of man are supposed to be driven by instincts over which he has no control, and of which he has no knowledge. Even the intellect is dubbed as a mere rationalisation of inner urges. Intellectual activity and ratiocinative processes are classed as operations of irrational instincts in the plane of objective consciousness. Human life is depicted as a striving of the impulses to seek satisfaction in the achievement of their particular ends. These findings of Depth-psychology have, no doubt, an element of truth in them; but they do not give us the whole truth.

The human soul is a finite reproduction of God, and so it shares to some extent in the freedom of God. This freedom may be relative, as the individual is limited by the forces of Nature (physical laws), by its relations to the other souls (social laws), and by the absoluteness of God (Divine law). But man is free in proportion as his consciousness is in approximation to God, and is determined in proportion as he is finite and self-conscious in opposition to an object in space and time.

Swami Sivananda’s views on self-effort and necessity may be stated as follows (*The Divine Life*, Vol. XIV, pp. 36-38):

An animal that is tethered to a peg by a rope of a given length has freedom to move within the circle drawn by the radius of that rope. But it has no freedom beyond that limit; it is bound to move within that specified range. The position of man is somewhat like this. His reason and discrimination afford him a certain amount of freedom which is within their scope. But the reasoning faculty is like the rope with which the animal is tied. It is not unlimited, and is circumscribed by the nature of the forces which govern the body through which it functions. As long as man has consciousness of personality, or even individuality, and insofar as it is within his capacity to exercise the sense of selective

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discrimination, he is responsible for what he does; he is an agent or doer of the action, and such actions as these are fresh actions or Kriyamana-Karmas, for they are connected with the sense of doership. But if events occur when he is incapable of using this power of understanding, as, for example, when he is not in his body-consciousness, or when things happen without his conscious intervention in them, he is not to be held responsible for the same, for these are not fresh actions but only the fruition of a previous deed or deeds. Though every experience bears, to some extent, a relation to unknown forces, its connection with one's consciousness constitutes the meaning of a fresh action. Effort is nothing but consciousness of initiative as related to oneself, whatever be the thing that ultimately prompts one to do that action. It is not the action as such but the manner in which it is executed that determines whether it is a Kriyamana-Karma or not. A Jivanmukta's actions are not Kriyamana-Karmas, for they are not connected with any personal consciousness. They are spontaneous functions of the remaining momentum of past conscious efforts, which are now unconnected with the consciousness of agency. Experiences which are forced upon oneself or which come of their own accord, without the personal will of the experiencer involved in them as an agent, are not to be considered as real actions. An experience caused by mere Prarabdha does not cause another fresh result, but is exhausted thereby, while the Kriyamana-Karma tends to produce a fresh experience in the future, because it is attended by the sense of doership. Sometimes, the causative factors of actions may manifest themselves, not through the consciousness of the experiencer, but through an external agency or occurrences having causes beyond human understanding. Even when a person is goaded by another to do an action, it is only an aspect of his deserts, in relation to the others, that works. In the state of spiritual realisation, such incitations cease. Efforts are automatically stopped on the rise of Self-knowledge, which is the goal of all effort, and not before that. As long as there is body-consciousness and world-consciousness, man will not perforce continue exerting himself to achieve his desired end. The consciousness of effort is the natural concomitant of the consciousness of imperfection. Man, being what he is, continues, by his own nature, to put forth effort until he reaches his goal. The question of

free will and necessity is a relative one, and it loses its meaning on the dawn of the wisdom of the Self.

### **LIFE AFTER DEATH**

A study of the conditions of individuality enables us to ascertain the position of man in the universe. Jivahood is a state or phase, not permanent existence. It is a part of changing Nature. It is Avidya or ignorance that is the source of even logical knowledge. The highest power of the individual is Buddhi or the understanding, which is only a sprout rising from the hidden seed of Ajnana. The function of the Buddhi continues as long as Ajnana is not destroyed by Brahmajnana. Consciousness reflected in the Buddhi is the Jiva-Chaitanya, and this lasts even after the death of the physical body. The Jiva is the transmigrating soul passing through the states of waking, dream and deep sleep, in different planes of life, until it attains salvation. The connection of the self with the Buddhi is dormant in deep sleep and death, but becomes active in the state of waking. The death of the body is not the extinction of the Jiva, but the casting off of a vesture that has served its purpose in a particular state of becoming. It is a process of changing the instrument of experience, nothing more. Birth and death are not just two events in one's life, but form links in the unending chain of transformation going on in the universe, whether one is aware of it or not in one's attachment to specific conditions. "The Jiva leaves the physical body here, goes to heaven to enjoy the fruits of its various actions with the help of the astral body, and comes back to this Mrityuloka (mortal world) when the Karmas are exhausted" (Philosophy and Teachings, p. 52).

In the different births that the individual takes, its subtle body persists, though the tendencies that give rise to the different forms of individuality vary in different lives. The individuality of the Jiva does not cease as long as the store of the impressions of all its past actions does not get exhausted by experience, or is burnt up by the fire of knowledge. The peculiar features of the personality assumed in each birth are determined by the nature of previous actions. Future births are also determined by present actions which are expected to bear fruit as experiences in newer

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bodies. The form of the Jiva is its limiting adjunct with which the Atman appears to be associated. The Atman is untouched by the changes of Jivahood, which is rooted in the varying conditions of Avidya that gives rise to Kama and Karma. The subtle principles forming the subtle body continue to be associated with the Jiva, whatever be the nature of the birth it takes,—human, superhuman or subhuman. Only, in superhuman forms of birth there is a greater expansion and subtlety of the Antahkarana (internal organ) and the senses, while in lower births they get contracted in accordance with the nature of the body which the soul happens to enter. The Antahkarana is really the centre of individuality. It is in conjunction with the subtle body of the Jiva that the Atman puts on the fictitious role of doer, enjoyer and sufferer, though it is free from such contingent natures. The misery of Samsara continues as long as this Adhyasa or the superimposition of false characters lasts.

The doctrine of creation is based on the eternity of consciousness. As consciousness can never originate or end, so its existence throughout the past must be conceived as repeated embodiment like the present birth. As the ultimate destiny of man is identity with God, he passes from one life to another, from body to body, according to his desires and actions, until he exhausts all experiences resulting therefrom, and attains identity with God. Reincarnation cannot stop until Self-realisation is attained, for the immortal Atman asserts itself every moment, and the individual cannot find rest anywhere except in such realisation, which, again, is not possible unless all Karmas are destroyed. Without the fundamental acceptance of the eternal Atman, no experience can be explained or understood, and the law of Karma is only a corollary to this basic truth, which is the pivot and central theme of philosophy and religion. The function of the soul in evolution cannot be performed in one life alone. The mind has intimations of overstepping the limitations of space, time, causality and individuality. This cannot be realised now immediately. Memory of the past, anticipation of the future, conception of the remote and perception of the inner causes and relations of things beyond the ken of the senses show that the mind can transcend space, time and its concomitants. It cannot be bound to any single body, and so it flies from one to another in search of a perfected state of life.



In his work, *What Becomes of the Soul after Death*, Swami Sivananda states that life on earth is a halting place on the way to the achievement of the goal of life. Earthly life is transitory, for it is seen that everything born is doomed to die. But death is not the end of life, since without a continuation of life, the values of the deeds performed in this life would be rendered nugatory. There were births and deaths in the past, there will be births and deaths in the future, too, until Moksha is attained. Life is a long chain of which the recurring births, planary lives and deaths are links. Birth is caused by desires and actions. The present life is, therefore, meant to train the individual to qualify itself for a higher life, to stop birth and death ultimately. This life is not the goal or the end, even as the path is not the same as the destination. If earthly life were the final goal, none would have died here, there would not be mutation, pain and sorrow, and there would be no sense of imperfection anywhere, no further urge or aspiration to get beyond the present condition. Birth is inevitably followed by death, and death by rebirth. As a man casting off worn out garments takes new ones, so the dweller in the body, abandoning worn-out bodies, enters others that are new.

The word reincarnation literally means ‘coming again into a body’, while transmigration signifies passing from one plane to another in the process of reincarnation. The doctrine of rebirth follows from the law of Karma. The differences of disposition which are found among individuals are traced to their respective past actions. Past actions imply past births, for we cannot say that the actions of the present body can be its cause. All actions cannot bear fruit in one life alone, and so there must be others for undergoing the results of the remaining actions.

The individual souls build various bodies to display their activities and gain experience in different worlds. They enter bodies and leave them when found to be unfit for habitation. Life flows on to achieve its conquest in the universal. Rebirth is negated in eternal life. The process of transmigration emphasises the immortality of the soul. The causes of death are many and indefinite. Man is ever in the jaws of death, which overtakes him suddenly, often when he is the least prepared for it. He ever thinks that he will escape death, and even if he realises the certainty of death, he expects it only at a distant date. Just as a mango, fig or a fruit

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of the pipal tree is detached from its stalk, the soul of man, detaching itself from the parts of the body, goes, in the way it came, to other bodies. The self that is identified with the subtle body dissociates itself from it and withdraws the vital force into itself. As it detaches itself from the body and the organs while entering into deep sleep, it disconnects itself from the body at the time of death. As frequently as one moves from the dreaming state to the waking one, from the waking to the dreaming, and thence to deep sleep, does the soul transmigrate from one body to another. The Jiva adopts the whole universe as a means for the realisation of the fruits of its works and moves to different habitations for fulfilling this object. The universe implied by its works waits for it with the requisite means for this realisation of deeds made ripe for experience. Man is said to be born into the body that has been made for him by the shape and the constitution of the forces generated by his actions.

The fact of rebirth is also proved by the principle of the conservation of energy. Energy is either physical or it also includes the mental. If energy is only physical, the mind would ever remain distinct as something independent of matter, which would mean that it may continue after the death of the body. But if energy includes even mental energy, then, as physical energy is not absolutely lost but exists in some form or the other, so mental energy, too, cannot be lost even after the dissolution of the physical elements of the body. The soul is immortal. Further, if the universe is a perfect system of balanced forces and harmonious elements in it, it stands to reason that the individual, which is an essential factor in the evolution of the universe, and which forms an integral part of it, should exist as a centre of force, irrespective of the fact whether the body is visible or not. Moreover, our personal desires, ambitions and moral urges give us strong hints that we ought to exist even after the death of our body. The intellect which is limited to operations in space and time ever struggles to overcome its boundaries in a boundless knowledge. If this is to be possible at all, if there is any meaning in one's ceaseless attempts to overcome barriers, then the essence of man cannot die with the death of the body or the destruction of the world. The ideals of morality and the desires of man are ever in conflict with each other. That the moral ideal has to overcome personal desires and that there should be

a reconciliation of duty and desire, indicate that there is a future life, without which life would become meaningless.

The assertion of the 'I' in everyone is not confined to any particular individual, but is the eternal assertion of existence in common. This sense of the 'I' will exist as long as the universe lasts. It is the deathless will-to-live that affirms itself in this way in all beings. This 'I', again, is not a limited 'I', but a craving for the Infinite, associated with the I-consciousness. It has significance in the infinitude of the Self, in nothing short of the Absolute. Life can never end, and rebirth never stop, until Brahman is realised. The individuality of man is not his true nature but only an outward manifestation of it. It is phenomenon presented in the frame of time. The reality in man knows neither time, nor beginning, nor end, nor limitation. It is everywhere, in every individual, and no one can exist apart from it. When death comes, one is annihilated as a body; but there is continuance of life as a principle of individuality. The temporal man struggles to reach his eternal being.

Desire is the root-cause of transmigration. Being attached to desires, the soul obtains the results which its subtle body or mind contemplates. Exhausting whatever works it did in this life, it returns to this world or another, for fresh work. Thus does man who desires transmigrate continuously. Rebirth is put an end to only by the absence of all desires. He who is free from desires, the objects of whose desires have been attained, and to whom all objects of desire are but the Self,—his Pranas do not depart; being Brahman, he is merged in Brahman. To such a knower who has rooted out his desires, work will produce no baneful result. The scripture declares that for the one who has completely attained the objects of his desire in the realisation of the Self, all desires dissolve in this very life. But the man with desires prepares for his future birth by his present thoughts and feelings, and obtains whatever he thinks and feels at the moment of death. Therefore, in order to have freedom of action and thought at the time of departure from this world, aspirants who desire emancipation should be alert in the practice of Yoga and right knowledge, and in the acquisition of merits during their lifetime. By such practice the Jiva breaks through its bondage and attains supreme blessedness.

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## 12.3 DHARMABHUTAJNANA

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CHAPTER IV ‘Tongues in Trees, sermons in stones’ The Concept of Dharmabhutajnana or Attributive Consciousness CHAPTER IV ‘Tongues in trees, sermons in stones’ THE CONCEPT OF DHARMABHUTAJNANA OR ATTRIBUTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS Dharmabhutajnana or Attributive Consciousness posited by Ramanuja in his Visistadvaita can be considered as the genius stroke of the Acharya. By this Ramanuja identifies that all entities of creation possess the ‘I’ consciousness. He also notes that the cit possesses two types of consciousness namely Dharmi Jnana or Substantive consciousness and Dharmabhutajnana or Attributive consciousness. He further argues that the acit or prakriti also possesses dharmabhutajnana which interacts with the world of cit and makes itself known. This chapter will discuss dharmabhutajnana and how it functions in both cit and acit. By meriting it in an understandable way, its workings will be evaluated in some of the works of Shakespeare. The Sanskrit Jnana is a word with broad spectrum and means several things such as (1) Knowledge (2) Understanding (3) acquainted with (4) Proficiency (5) Learning (6) Consciousness (7) Cognizance (8) Sacred knowledge – especially that knowledge derived from meditation on the higher truths of religion and philosophy which teaches man how to understand his own nature and be united to the Supreme Spirit and the organ of intelligence, sense, intellect. The meaning ‘Sacred knowledge’ pertains to the knowledge about the ‘self’ and it forms the main core of all philosophical thinking. Knowledge is, to be aware of something or to have had the experience of something. This experience or awareness is also called the jnana about that particular thing. Every experience got through the senses, makes the object come into existence. Knowledge got through experience needs a ‘knower’ and a ‘known’. This ‘knower’ is the subject and the ‘known’ is the object. A knower cannot be a person without the awareness either of his external surroundings or of his own thoughts. This awareness called ‘consciousness’, plays a vital part in any created being. Ramanuja views that a person cannot even know himself except qualified by an activity or a state of consciousness, noted as ‘I’ Consciousness. He argues that even the Brahman cannot be known except as qualified by something; it can

be known only as a substance qualified by some attribute. There can be no knowledge of anything without its attributes. In this account Ramanuja differs from Sankara who asserts that the Brahman can be known without any qualities. P.T. Raju in his work *Structural Depths of Indian Thought* (1985) provides an explanation for substance and attribute. The categorization of Reality according to Ramanuja may then be made into substance (*visesidravya*) and attribute or quality (*visesana guna*). Everything in the world is either a substance or an attribute, and what is substance from one point of view can be an attribute from another. . . . we [then] come across the categorization of reality into the knower and the known (*drsta* and *drsya*) and the enjoyer and the enjoyed (*bhokta* and *bhogya*). The former categorization is epistemological and the latter ethical. The two categorizations are practically common to all the Indian Schools. But that into substance and attributive is peculiar to Ramanuja's school. (443) This knowledge can be acquired through perception, inference and scriptures, valid as sources of knowledge and also as affirmations of Reality. Ramanuja affirms that even an illusory perception has some perception of reality. Therefore all experiences have their validity. The integration and harmonization of all knowledge obtained through sense-perception, inference and revelation is the central idea of Visistadvaita as a philosophy of religion. Srisaila Chakravarti in *The Philosophy of Sri Ramanuja* talks about three kinds of souls, namely, embodied souls, liberated souls and eternally liberated souls. Of the three the consciousness of the eternally liberated souls is unlimited ever comprehending the being form, qualities and the glory of God. The consciousness of the liberated souls is limited before the liberation, but becomes comprehensive after the liberation. On the other hand, the consciousness of the embodied souls is liable to contraction and expansion according to their karma and so is limited. If this be so, then a question may arise whether consciousness is a substance or quality. P.T. Raju provides an apt answer: The conscious is of two kinds, the inward (*pratyak*) and the outward (*parak*) that is inwardly directed and outwardly directed. The inward is of two kinds – the atman and God. The atman is of three kinds – the bound, the liberated and the eternal. The outward consciousness is of two kinds – the eternal force (*nithya vibhuti*) and the

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attribute consciousness (dharmabhuta Jnana) (443) The study here is to be restricted to the examination of the consciousness of embodied souls, which are overpowered by the eclipse of karma and vary in degrees of intelligence. Therefore they are subjected to the miseries of material existence. According to Vishnu Purana (VI.7.61-66) as quoted by Srisaila Chakravarti; The intelligence or consciousness in stones, rocks and blocks of wood which have no breaths, is the lowest. It is great in vegetable kingdom, it is greater in reptiles or creeping creatures and, greater in human beings, and is greater still in gods of several grades. (120) None can refute the fact the subject; object and the consciousness in them are all creations of a Supreme Being which manifests itself in all beings. Hence, it must be logically accepted that the Supreme Being is Eternal Consciousness, and obviously all manifestations must possess consciousness. Vishnu Purana's explication, then, is valid. This consciousness exists as an attribute, an inseparable part of the soul and is graded in intelligence and knowledge, according to its level possessed by a being. But the consciousness can be known only through an attribute. P.N.Srinivasachari views: "Consciousness cannot be aware of itself, but presupposes a self of which it is the idea or attribute" (27). Jnana and self are separate but are not inseparable. For instance, the saltiness in salt is its essential nature, whereas being white or being in powdered form or in rock form is its attribute. In the same way the flame has its attribute of effulgence in it. They have to join together to make up the light in the lamp. There can be no effulgence without the flame. The category of consciousness is thus described under the title Dravya or substance in the sub-category of Ajada. This consciousness according to Visistadvaita being a quality that cannot exist by itself, it presupposes a substance of which it is a quality and hence an attribute of that substance. Swami Adidevananda in his translation of Srinivasadasa's Yatindramatadipika (1996) explains attributive consciousness: It consists in being the subject (visayin i.e. the objects are manifested by it) while it is a self-luminous, unconscious substance. It is of the nature of substance attribute (dravya-guna) like light while it is allpervasive. Consciousness is that which manifests the objects. These are the characteristics of the attributive consciousness. (86) When a substance as ajada or immaterial is

conceived as a conscious self, it is the subject of experience that has jnana as its inseparable attribute, the Atman being substantive intelligence but has attributive intelligence as well. “The two can be logically distinguished but cannot be divided”. (29) says P.N. Srinivasachari. This attribute is not only self-illuminated but also illumines objects. It can reveal itself and objects. Therefore the characteristics of this are only revelatory. On the other hand Atman is self-realized. Consciousness is put in midway between the cetana and jada as it manifests itself and is like the physical light that can only show but cannot know. Jnana or consciousness is like the light that reveals, being always for the other, only if the illumination its attribute is there. P.N.Srnivasachari provides yet another explication for dharmabhutajnana: Dharmabhutajnana not only illuminates itself and the objects of nature but is also substance–attribute (dravya-guna). At the same time, as the substratum of colour and the shades of colouration, it is a substance. Likewise the term jnana expresses an essential and eternal attribute that inheres in the self; but as it contracts and expands like a substance owing to the determining influence of karma, it is the substratum of change and may be defined as a substance as well. Eternal consciousness changes when it is caught up in the world of karma, but comes to itself in the state of mukti when it is freed from sense contact. Jnana is thus both changing and changeless and is both substance and quality. (33) Maruthi Ramanuja Das further exemplifies attributive consciousness in terms of lake water. The lake full of water is the swarupa and jiva is like the water. The jiva’s acquisition of knowledge and its transmission of that knowledge to others is akin to the water flowing into the lake and out of it. Just as the water’s attributes, the jiva’s attributes are the collection and transmission of the knowledge. The repository knowledge is its swarupa while the added and revealed are the attributive intelligence. This revelation acts according to the contraction or expansion of consciousness in any creation or jiva. The author compares the mukta jivas to the lake with a uniform flow of water which means it has no contraction. Those sattvik jivas are comparable to the lake dependent on rain since these jivas are reliant on God. Those who have knowledge but cannot impart it to others, can be compared to a

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lake from where the water flow is obstructed. The third type of jivas possess the most contracted form of knowledge like the water that cannot be transmitted. (www.ramanuja.org./sv/bhakthi/archives/apr/2002/0053.html). This explication points to the three kinds of souls categorized by Srisaila Chakravarthi indicated earlier. Swami Prabhavananda in his book *The Spiritual Heritage of India* adds a further dimension to the theory of dharmabhutajnana : Ramanuja does not admit a distinction between illusory perception and true perception, for he declares that even in illusory perception so-called, there is some perception of reality. Thus all experience has its validity. Ramanuja's theory of Dharma-Bhuta-Jnana, or consciousness as an attribute and not the thing itself, explains his conception of the threefold function of knowledge: it gives reality; it has the power to reveal the truth; and it can reveal the truth of Brahman. (308) The term 'Consciousness' comes under the category of substances which has modes or which undergo changes. The substance is further classified as Matter (Jada) and immaterial (ajada). This immaterial or ajada includes attributive consciousness in it because it has the capability of both expansion and contraction. When there is enlargement of consciousness to the fullest level, then that jiva attains salvation. As consciousness is invariably associated as the function of the self, it is its dharma and therefore known as dharmabhutajnana. Srinivasachari's cryptic explanation deserves mention: When substance is svaprakasa or self-illuminated, it is called ajada and is different from jada like the world of space and time. Ajada is consciousness with content classified into pratyak or conscious self existing by itself and its knowledge or parak (existing for another) which is its essential quality or dharmabhutajnana. Substance as ajada or the immaterial is thus conceived as a conscious self, finite or infinite. It is the subject of experience that has jnana as its inseparable attribute. Atman is and has consciousness. It is substantive intelligence and has attributive intelligence as well, which manifests its nature. The two can be logically distinguished but cannot be divided. Dharmabhutajnana is self-illuminated (svayam prakasa) and it also illumines objects (artha prakasaka). It is also called mati, prajna, semusi and samvit. (28-29) The concept of dharmabhutajnana seems to get



replicated in the western philosophy indicated by the term “thisness”, the principle being forwarded by Duns Scotus (1266-1308), one of the most important Franciscan theologians and the founder of Scotism, a philosopher and logician. He made important contributions to epistemology and undermined the concept of divine illumination of the intellect. He laid out a detailed explanation of how belief can be based on the knowledge of self-evident proposition, induction and awareness of one’s intellectual state. He proposed the concept of “intuitive cognition”, and existential awareness of intelligible objects, which later influenced the artistic world. To the medieval concept of “essence” and “existence”, Duns Scotus added a principle of individuation to the common nature of essence, “haecceitas” or “thisness” which defined the uniqueness of each being apart from its material existence. This concept opened the way for essences or common natures that are distinguished into unique entities by their actual existence, quantity and matter. He defined a principle of individuation, a further substantial difference added to the essence, an “individual difference” called “haecceitas” or “thisness” The concept of haecceity, or an entity’s “thisness” its particularity, can be contrasted to quiddity, the entity “whatness” or universality. Duns Scotus’ “haecceitas” is further exemplified by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), in his poetic theory of ‘inscape’ and ‘instress’. G.M. Hopkins, a Jesuit priest is the most original Victorian poet because of his technical innovations and of his ability to fuse form, language and feeling. With his acute power of observation, Hopkins stressed on ‘inscape’, “the Hopkinsian word for the specific inner form of an object, and ‘instress’, the peculiar poetic feeling which it evoked in him” (V.Sachithanandan, *Six English Poets* (1978) 217). ‘Inscape’ is a concept that asserts everything in the universe is characterized by inscape, the distinctive dynamic. Each being in the universe ‘selves’, that is, enacts its identity. And the human being, the most highly ‘selved’, the most individually distinctive being in the universe, recognizes the inscape of other beings in an act that Hopkins calls that enables one to realize specific distinctiveness. Ultimately, the ‘instress’ of ‘inscape’ leads one to Christ, for the individual identity of any object is the stamp of divine creation on it. W.A.M. Peters writes about the ‘inscape theory’ of Hopkins in his

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book *A Critical Essay towards the Understanding of His Poetry* (1970): The unified complex of those sensible qualities of the object of perception that strike us as inseparably belonging to and most typical of it, so that through the knowledge of this unified complex of sense- data we may gain an insight into the individual essence of the object. (5) This same concept has been described in a different way by Hazrat Inayat Khan in his work *The Sufi Message – Volume II* (1988) when he talks about the power of the word or the communication in every form in which the meaning of life wishes to express itself. Talking about enlightenment through inspiration that comes from within, he further says: There is another form of this which is attained by a greater enlightenment, by a greater awakening of the soul; and this form can be pictured as a person going through a large room where there are all kinds of things exhibited, and there is no light except a searchlight in his own hand. If he throws its light on music, on notes and rhythm, the music becomes clear to him; . . . This light may be thrown upon living beings and the living beings become like open books to him. It may be thrown open on objects, and the objects may reveal to him their nature and secret. (194) When a person focuses his inner energy on a specific object or idea, it reveals itself to him and informs him. Similarly, a word becomes attributive and provides more meaning in a given context to different hearers. This is true of Shakespeare. Dominique Enright in his book *The Wicked Wit of William Shakespeare* (2002) has culled out 427 quotes, excerpts and passages from Shakespeare's dramas and other works and explains how these witty statements serve as vehicles for a profound comment on the human condition. This seems to parallel Hopkins' 'instress'. Such 'word-attribute' is often found in Shakespeare's dialogues between a clown or fool or very innocent and simple persons. Subsequently, the concept of dharmabhutajnana can be well acknowledged in some of the works of Shakespeare. The dramatist easily identifies the inherent consciousness embedded in the objects and makes them known in lucid poetry through the mouth of the different characters. Such a revelation of the inherent consciousness brings in the "synthetic unity of a perception, apperception that is one's self consciousness" (P.N.Srinivasachari 25). It has already been said that the

'knowledge' is at its lowest ebb in materials like stones. They cannot express it explicitly. But, if they are perceived as objects by a person of higher consciousness they reveal their swarupa in quite different ways to such persons. Shakespeare, with his sensuous perception and spiritual intuition has been able to 'catch' up these revelations and transmit them to the world through his characters. Caroline Spurgeon observes that they are all "given at a moment of heightened feeling, of the furniture of his mind, the channels of his thought, the qualities of things, the objects and incidents he observes and remembers, and perhaps most significant of all, those of which he does not observe or remember" (4). This revelation can be understood and appreciated from the inanimate objects to men of high intelligence. The playwright skillfully presents this through the crestfallen Antony in the play *The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra*. Antony loses his sea-battle and flies away from the battlefield like a "doting mallard" (III.x.24) following Cleopatra. In a dejected mood Antony talks to Eros looking at the changing clouds that indicate the swift changes in man's life: Sometimes we see a cloud that is dragonish, A vapour sometime like a bear or lion, A towered citadel, a pendant rock, A forked mountain, or blue promontory, With trees upon it that nod unto the world And mock our eyes with air. (IV.xiv.3-8) To an ordinary person's eyes, the clouds seen everyday do not bring in any appreciation or awesomeness. But, in this striking dialogue the words actually convey the approaching dissolution of his greatness displayed through the rapidfire images. William Hazlitt calls the above lines as "one of the finest pieces of poetry in Shakespeare. The splendour of the imagery the semblance of reality, the lofty range of picturesque objects hanging over the world, their evanescent nature, the total uncertainty of what is left behind are just like the mouldering schemes of human greatness. It is finer than Cleopatra's lamentation over his fallen grandeur, but it is more dim, unstable, unsubstantial" (*Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* 101-102). Antony's description of the shapes of the clouds reveal the imminent disaster that is to happen due to the decision and infatuated determination of Antony to yield to Cleopatra's wishes to fight Caesar by sea instead of land. That the clouds change constantly is a phenomenon that everybody knows. It displays different shapes in a moment and thus

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entertains the seer. In spite of its nebulosity and its ever changing quality, the cloud remains a substance and reveals its dharmabhutajnana in myriad ways. In the Arden edition of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the editor M.R.Ridley (1968) forwards a succinct comment for these lines: “Several passages have been suggested as the source of this fancy, but its beautiful and striking use to illustrate man’s unstable hold of his very entity seems to occur here only” (171 -172). Sometimes the cloud looks like a dragon, sometimes like a bear or lion or a citadel, yet another time it looks like a jutting or over-hanging rock or a forked mountain or blue promontory. The quick succession of unconnected images throws one out of emotional balance because the person realizes that Antony is visualizing the impending tragedy in the shape of clouds. Harley Granville–Barker comments in *The plays construction-1930-Shakespeare* that “The fantasy that follows -- for all its beauty – is too much an intellectual conceit and too long drawn out” (*Antony and Cleopatra-A case book* 102). He further says, perhaps the playwright wants that “we should feel with Antony the relief this strange sense of dissolution brings from the antics of *Passion*” (102). Antony feels himself melting like the clouds as : That which is now a Horse, even with a thought The rack dislimns and makes it indistinct As water is in water (IV.xiv.11-13) The arresting word “dislimns” points to the mere dissolution and formation of clouds in various shapes, however provides a distinct meaning to the existing condition of Antony. Maurice Charney gives credit to Shakespeare as “creating his own vocabulary to establish the feeling of disintegration in the Roman world. The firm substance of life is being undone, things are losing their form, changing and fading with the indistinctness of water in water” (*Antony and Cleopatra - A case book* 150). Tom Paulin in his essay “One Impulse: Hazlitt, Wordsworth and The Principles of Human Action” included in the edition *Metaphysical Wit: Bicentenary Essays* (2005) discusses how De Quincey has interpreted this word ‘dislimns’ in his work *Suspiria*, drawing inspiration from Shakespeare and his opponent Hazlitt as well. He observes: He uses it both to display his knowledge of Shakespeare, and to create a phantasmagoric, magic-lantern effect. Although De Quincey knew Shakespeare well, I think he took the term ‘dislimn’ from Hazlitt’s citation of *Antony and Cleopatra*,

because it expressed a particularly English emotional concreteness, with a melting, insubstantial effect, which he needed in order to enforce a type of passive spectatorship in his readers. (106) The usage of the term 'dislimn' by different writers as a 'word-attribute' is a good illustration for the above said view of Hazrat Inayat Khan. This passage in the play can be said to be the essence of dissolution theme showing Antony's absolute resignation from all pleasures. The cloud-shapes soon merge into simple clouds; but the thoughts evoked in the mind of Antony make the reader understand that they not only specify the impending danger to him but also the philosophy of life that nothing is permanent. The swift string of cloud images effectively demonstrate the theory of attributive consciousness or the inherent dharmabhutajnana in them. Consequently, how the plants, the better creations than the nebulous clouds, reveal their 'attributive consciousness' has been well-assessed by Shakespeare in many instances. As a sample, Sonnet 54 can be taken for discussion. The poet declares that beauty becomes more beautiful because of its lovely ornament, 'truth'. "O! how much more doth beauty beauteous seem / By that sweet ornament which truth doth give". The poet aptly compares the two different roses – the scented one and the odourless rose. The scented rose becomes more precious as a result of 'truth' because it is respected not only for its looks but also for its scent. The 'scent' is its 'truth' or 'essence'. On the other hand, the canker blooms are similar to the rose in every other way except the scent. "The canker blooms have full as deep a dye / As the perfumed tincture of the roses, / Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly / When summer's breath their masked buds discloses". The only merit they have is simply their show. "They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade; / Die to themselves". On the contrary, sweet roses do not die alone, "of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made". As they fade, they emit their sweet scent and continue to live in their deaths. The poet actually distills the beauty of the rose as he extracts its 'truth', the 'scent' or its special character or attribute. Caroline Spurgeon observes: But it is suggestive that in his most sustained and exquisite appreciation of the rose, what chiefly appeals to him is the fact that, unlike other flowers, roses even when faded never smell badly but that "Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made".(80) The dissimilarity between

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these two flowers, however, is evident in lines 9 through 12 in which the poet notes that 'canker blooms' do not contain any inner beauty 'scent'. The 'scented rose' is loved for its attribute of odour. That inherent quality or consciousness helps the rose reveal itself as something special apart from its outward appearance. That 'scent' is its true nature because even after the death of such roses "are sweetest odors made". W.A.M. Peters reference to Hopkins' 'inscape theory' well-explicates Sonnet 54 also. The exclusive essence of the objects -- the 'inscape' of Hopkins, the 'thisness' of Duns Scotus and Shakespeare's point of view -- converge to isolate the 'individualism' of each thing, revealed through the inherent attributive consciousness or dharmabhuta jnana. The consciousness as an attribute in some supernatural things like elves (which the Shakespearean public very much believed to exist) has paved the way to the great dramatist to weave a drama like *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* based on the ancient figure 'Puck' also known as Robin Goodfellow. He has been portrayed as a clever, mischievous elf and personified as the charlatan or the wise knave. Puck is actually a mythological trickster figure. A force of nature and instinct, he has been characterized as a fairy of primitive nature, naive and even ignorant. Puck, though a trickster has been depicted as more annoyingly mischievous than doing evil. Shakespeare's Puck is presented as a capricious spirit with a magical fancy, fun loving, humorous and lovely -- the naughty emissary of Oberon, the Fairy King, who is always engaged in impish activities. Puck admits all the charges leveled against him when a complaint is made (II.i. 33-42). This merry night wanderer, by his mischievous pranks on human beings and others, makes his master Oberon cheerful. It is Puck's mistaken doings in *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* that provide the convolution of the plot. The unfortunate mistake of smearing the love potion on Lysander's eyelids instead of on the eyes of Demetrius reverses the direction of the play. Puck has been instructed by Oberon that the love potion be put on Demetrius' eyes. Oberon's intention to help Demetrius and Helena get reconciled fails because of Puck's silly mistake that drives Lysander to chase Helena, thus creating confusion among the lovers. Puck tries to rectify the mistake by anointing the love juice in the eye of Demetrius also, which hilariously aggravates the situation -- the ladies begin to

quarrel and the men begin to fight. Oberon also directs Puck to smear the love potion on his wife Titania's eyes. The naughty Puck commits another mischief, by providing an ass' head to Nick Bottom, a weaver and an amateur player of a company. The players have come to the wood to rehearse a play for the ensuing wedding festivities of Duke Theseus and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. Titania, the Queen of Oberon, falls in love with the ass-headed Bottom. In the end all mistakes are corrected by Puck himself and the play ends happily. At the end of the play, he makes a speech directly to the audience, apologizes to them for anything that might have offended them and also suggests to treat all happenings as a dream. That you have but slumbered here While these visions did appear, And this weak and idle theme, No more yielding but a dream. (V.i.393–396) Shakespeare has exploited well the Elizabethan audience's belief in supernatural happenings and created this shadow character in such a way that 'it' reveals its presence throughout the play by its mischievousness, ignorance, foolishness, and above all its individualistic way of doing things. In other words, Shakespeare seems to confirm that even the elves, fairies and spirits are endowed with attributive consciousness or dharmabhutajnana. An immaterial thing could reveal so much by itself is the beauty of the creation of such a conscious character. Shakespeare has brought out the 'goodness' in Puck's 'foolishness' and 'mischievousness'. He always tries to fix something correctly which he has disrupted and hence the name 'Robin Good fellow' to him. Everything is a game to him. He creates problems out of his own consciousness though under instruction. Yet, once he realizes the consequence, he rectifies it to the best of his ability and power. Shakespeare has incorporated his high level of consciousness into the spirit as its attribute thereby making it reveal its presence in the play. ("The Role of Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream". [www.123HelpMe.com](http://www.123HelpMe.com)). This point of view corroborates Ramanuja's scrutiny of 'dreams' in his philosophy. Srisaila Chakravarti based on his study of Ramanuja's Sri Bhasya states: "There is consciousness in dreams. . . . The prima facie view according to Sri Ramanuja is . . . that the creations of dreams are the work of the individual soul" (49). This explains Puck's address to the audience in the 'Epilogue' of the play requesting them to

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treat all the incidents as a dream. According to Ramanuja there is consciousness in dreams but at different levels -- dormant in deep sleep and active in disturbed ordinary sleep. P.N.Srinivaschari explains this state: "When the self suffers from fatigue, it seeks relaxation and retires into the condition of sleep for recuperation of energy. The sleeping self puts of the instruments of action and refreshes itself; but even in that state, consciousness persists as a potentiality like masculinity in a male child" (293-94). The scholar's references are from Sri Bhasya (II.III, 31) and the Sacred Books of the East (XLVIII, 551). He also explicates the states of consciousness, which is "continuous, distinct and clear in the waking state, dim and confused in the subconscious and dream states, and divine in mukti. It is implied in sleep and stupor, and even in the abnormal states of dispersal and dissociation of personality" (32). Referring to inherent consciousness to creations in dreams, he observes: "In dreams the divinity creates specific objects suited to the specific merit or demerit of the jiva. The pleasure or pain experienced in that state is the result of the law of retribution and is as real as the moral life lived in the waking state" (51). The play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with its apt title has been presented to show that even shadow creations in dreams possess inherent consciousness or dharmabhutajnana and thereby proves Ramanuja's verdict. A common feature in the Shakespearean dramas is the presence of clowns, fools and some innocent characters of no importance as the most intriguing stage characters. Clown is the general term that has been originally intended to designate a rustic or otherwise uneducated individual. His dramatic purpose is to evoke laughter with his ignorance. In *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* Nick Bottom is classified as the clown, whose dream becomes significant as it not only provides a wholesome meaning to the play's fantasy but also exemplifies Ramanuja's 'dream-theory'. Act IV Scene 1 of the play resolves the confusions effected by Puck when all the characters come out of their charmed dreamy sleep to the actual waking state. Nick Bottom is released of his ass-head and comes out of his dream. The words of Bottom about his dream are also worth considering. As he wakes up Bottom thinks that he is rehearsing the play. . . . I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was:



man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. . . .but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what me thought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom . . . (IV.ii.197-205)

Waking from his dreamy adventures in the fairy realm, Bottom has trouble differentiating reality and illusion. In a moment of wisdom, Bottom realizes that his dream is past the "wit of man to say what dream it was" (204); dreams and visions are often untellable. Indeed, Bottom believes men are asses if they try to explain this dream — not every event of life is amenable to rational explanation, and some things exist most fully in the realm of the imagination. According to Bottom, such visionary experiences cannot be comprehended by any of the human senses: not eyes, not ears, not hands, not tongues, not hearts. Only art, literature, can capture these magical, visionary experiences, so Bottom will have Peter Quince write a ballad about his night with the fairies. The naïve Bottom seems to confirm the mysterious dynamics of the inherent consciousness that is, dharmabhutajnana. Dr. K.C. Varadachari has elaborately discussed this fact in his work *A Study of Dreams in the Philosophy of Sri Ramanuja*. Ramanuja affirms that the dream creations are initiated by the Supreme Person and continues to say: The supreme person, and not the individual soul, is the creator, for the individual is a creature and not a creator. He who is awake in those who sleep, He is the person who creates all. The dream is not illusory experience. It is a real experience; it has a meaning and an ethical purpose. . . . The general principle that no creation of the real experience ever happens without real power or creative power endowed with intelligence is absolutely correct. . . . Dreams are necessary links between several planes of consciousness and possess diverse qualities or phenomena. . . . The continuity of consciousness as a stream grants it the quality of being the substrate of these experiences of objects. Consciousness becomes an eternal and universal background of all phenomenal experiences. (Pujya Dr.KCV Works-Volume 6 – [http://www.imperience.org/Books/kcv6chap\\_0.htm](http://www.imperience.org/Books/kcv6chap_0.htm) )

The preceptor explains in detail, what is Consciousness. He says that

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consciousness has five fundamental features: Consciousness is an attribute belonging to a permanent subject. It is not a permanent but a transitory function, or rather it is present whenever the subject cognizes. It is not eternal in the sense that it is not always in action, for consciousness itself testifies to its absence as in the judgments. It is the function of a subject. Consciousness is neither agent nor subject but the act of cognition of a subject to whom it is related as an attribute of the conscious permanent self behind all changes, a quality – *visesana* - inseparable and intrinsic to the self itself. It is not the Absolute Brahman nor yet the *atman* the individual soul; it is like the light that reveals the object as well as itself to the substrate. It also reveals memories and recognizes past objects of experience. One of its major roles is memory, *smriti* emerges in the cognition on occasions and reveals the nature of the object to its substrate. In waking life it is always continuously operating. The self thus owns Consciousness; it is not the absolute but the personal attribute of a self, invariably associated as its function, *dharma*. Therefore it is known as *dharmabhuta jnana*. It is creative in its perfect state of expansion (*vikasa*), and in its lesser stages of perfection it is not creative of reality, but has inventiveness based on the real and thus is the source of illusions or dreams which however always betray the core of the real in them to a discriminative consciousness. Consciousness is a stream as long as it possesses an object. This objectivity might be physical or mental, as in dreams and in reflection. It is found that consciousness tends to be active in a mild or full form according to the state of tension of the individual in dream states. In other words, during the dream state, consciousness is operative reflecting images of reality. This synoptic presentation of Ramanuja's views on dream state elucidates the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which obviously can be further elaborated and discussed in these terms. Another notable fictional character is Touchstone in the play *As you like it*, usually referred as a 'wise fool'. Touchstone assumes the role of a courtier in his meeting with Corin, an innocent shepherd in the forest. Personally, he feels far superior to the pastoral shepherd; his criticism of pastoral life proceeds from his superior assumption of the sophisticated court life over country living. The old shepherd Corin an insignificant character

becomes significant with his simple way of life and philosophy. He counsels his friend Silvius in his love matter to which Silvius pays no heed. But it is Corin who pities Rosalind and Celia in their needy hour of hunger and readily comes forward to feed them from the farm bought by them. His speech reveals his true and innocent nature, his worldly-wisdom and also his limitations. His knowledge of his limited right over the flocks is to be appreciated and actually their meeting with Corin gives a safe settlement to Rosalind and Celia in the wood. Corin says: But I am shepherd to another man And do not shear the fleeces that I graze: My master is of churlish disposition And little recks to find the way to heaven By doing deeds of hospitality. . . . . and at our sheepcote now . . . there is nothing That you will feed on. But what is, come see, And in my voice most welcome shall you be. (II.iv.66–78)

Corin pronounces the best philosophy of life that a person, to be healthy, should have contentment with what he has. A person of Corin's status cannot be said to possess such a level of consciousness capable of transmitting a high flow of knowledge. But the swarupa of a jiva has in it the inseparable inherent consciousness which reveals itself even through the words of persons with a contracted form of knowledge. Here Corin's attributive consciousness makes him utter high philosophy: No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is: and that he that wants money, means and content is without three good friends: that the property of rain is to wet and fire to burn: that good pasture makes fat sheep: and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun: that he that hath learned no wit by nature nor art may complain of good breeding or comes of a very dull kindred. (III.ii.18-23) He talks of life's highest ideal of contentment in the first three lines of the passage but in the next lines his limited knowledge naturally takes him to his profession of grazing the sheep. His greatest happiness is to see his lamb sucking its mother and his enjoyment of life is to remain plainly as he is. He says: Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my harm, and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and lambs suck. (III.ii.53–56) Perhaps this is the highest wisdom taught by the world religions. Ewes grazing and lambs sucking are common sights in a

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village. The poet gets the revelation of beauty in ordinary things through the character of Corin. His inherent consciousness could easily gauge the inscaping aspect of the scene and of the subjects that is instressed through them. Corin does not need any scriptural training. His own dharmabhuta-jnana and of the object around him impart wisdom to him. It can be assumed that Shakespeare grasps the dharmabhutajanana of his imagined character, which is the reality at that moment. Thus, layers of dharmabhutajnana ripples out steadily in a given context and makes the readers / audience understand the meaning of Reality. On the contrary, how Duke Senior, a person of higher knowledge in the same play, shows it out can be seen. He has been banished by his younger brother Frederick who usurps the dukedom and drives him to the forest. He is now surrounded only by his well-wishers in the forest and not by the 'painted pomp' and the 'envious court' with false faces. His address to his companions reveals his happiness. He understands that "sweet are the faces of the adversity" (II.i.12) and has learnt the real meaning of life. And this our life exempt from public haunt Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones and good in everything. (II.i.15-17) This speech shows his high level of consciousness in seeing good in everything. He hears the 'speech' in trees, learns the lesson from the brooks and above all he is able to understand the 'sermon' in stones there. The 'speech', the lesson' and the 'sermon' are the revelations of the consciousness of the objects like trees, brooks and the stones that are able to communicate. The Duke alone seems to be able to understand them. One may ask what 'speech' trees can give. They invite everyone to enjoy their breeze and shade, to use their foliage, fruits and nuts and quench their hunger. The running brooks with their laughing sounds give life to the creatures living in it and provide greenery wherever they go. As a sculptor who is able to see the figure of God or woman or anything in the stone, the Duke Senior understands the sermon from the stone about patience. In short, the Duke, deprived of his position and opulence and reduced to the state of penury and simplicity, learns the real meaning of life – which he could not get in the pompous besiege of his castle -- in the Arden forest. Whereas the lowly, unpretentious Corin has learnt the lesson of humility from the natural pastoral surrounding devoid of

snobbery and affectedness. Such a disposition perhaps, helps the human beings to identify and react to dharmabhutajnana. Unless there is the capability of the individual subject of affirming itself or himself as a self-existent conscious being without any need of a sensory comprehension with an object, the understanding of this revelation is not possible. Consciousness acting as the attribute of any self or being emerges to the foreground on occasions of each cognition. As noted earlier, just as the light is of flame, consciousness is of the self. It is a function in a low knowledgeable things and in persons it is momentary, but a continuous flow in the case of persons of higher mental strata. When a person is able to know something, he “endures all the levels of experience including the perceptual, rational and revelational sides” says P.N.Srinivasachari (23). He opines that this unity gives him the knowability or jnana, which “is an act of inner necessity. It is the idea that has concourse with the thing and makes the world of nature intelligible and imparts meaning and value to buddhi and other mental states which are the modifications of jnana and not its creations. Reason and understanding, perception and sensation are illumined and explained by jnana, but jnana is selfexplanatory” (29). This explains the plain existence of Corin who seems to be the best illustration of jnana as explicated above. The Tempest is a play that validates attributive consciousness in the character of the superman, Prospero. The Tempest is considered as the summation of the master’s art and philosophy. Prospero is one of Shakespeare’s enigmatic protagonists, but to be sympathized because of his vigorous pursuit of knowledge that mainly gets him into trouble. His negligence to the everyday matters as a Duke provides a good opportunity for his brother to usurp his dukedom. He literally crosses the sea of miseries with his baby-daughter, lands in a lonely island and becomes the master of that place by his magic. He is the central figure and generates the plot of the play single handedly. Many shortcomings of his character are noted such as his merciless punishments meted out to Caliban, his autocratic nature towards Ariel, the helping spirit reminds him of his release, and his unpleasant treatment of Ferdinand. His various schemes, spells and manipulations work as part of his grand design to the happy ending of the comedy. He emerges as a more likeable and sensible figure in the final

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two acts of the play. He becomes an embodiment of mercy and supreme Wisdom Alan Hobson in his *Full Circle* (1972) observes about the epilogue of *Prospero*: Prospero's tone is that of one setting out into the unknown, not with eager anticipation, not in the full pride of energy and courage, but diffident and stripped of all his former power. Prospero thinks on death, but his last six lines are in the language that Christians use when they look through death, with a moderate hope, a deep humility, and a claim upon forgiving love. (221) The play opens with a tempestuous noise of thunder with all the enemies of Prospero struggling for survival in the ship on the 'wild waters' of the sea. The tempest is conjured by Prospero with the intention of bringing his usurping brother Antonio into repentance. He himself admits this to his daughter Miranda assuring her that no harm would be done to anybody and the motive of this action is only to bring new turn for good in her life. Prospero has been presented as a very scheming person with lot of forethought and pre-planning. His flow of consciousness is not momentary like that of Corin. It is a continuous one and his powers on nature reveal him as high above an ordinary soul. This is possible for the consciousness of a liberated soul, affirms *Yatindramatadipika* by Srinivasadasa. Swami Adidevananda in his English translation of the work presents the meaning of the sloka 10 (Avatara VII) on dharmabhutajnana : "The consciousness of the liberated can simultaneously contact infinite number of bodies like rays issuing from the eye, sun etc" ( 90). Prospero's high level of attributive consciousness helps him identify the good spirit Ariel in the island and he makes use of the spirit's services to the maximum. Puck, the mischievous elf in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* while performing the orders of King Oberon acts impishly according to his own consciousness. But, Ariel is highly disciplined and carries out Prospero's orders exactly as he wants them to be done. Prospero through his acquired intelligence and consciousness accomplishes what an ordinary man cannot. He plans correctly, rather his dharmabhutajnana directs him perfectly as the navigator's compass with which he achieves what he desires and becomes a mukta. As in *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* this play also suggests the dream aspect. When everything ends well, the Boatswain states that they were asleep after the

storm. He says: If I did think, sir, I were well awake, I'd strive to tell you. We were dead of sleep. And (how we know not) all clapped under hatches, Where but even now, with strange and several noises Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains, And no diversity of sounds, all horrible, We were awaked; straightaway, at liberty. (V.i.261-272) He thinks that he is at once awake and is awakened from sleep. He feels as though that every thing has happened in a dream. Just as A Midsummer Night's Dream can be declared as Bottom's dream, The Tempest may be termed as the Boatswain's dream. The play has been described as an insubstantial fantasy. Though the play definitely contains qualities of fantasy, "it hardly lacks substance. Simply because a piece of work is a fantasy does not mean that real substance can't be valued in the work. By placing The Tempest in a fantasy setting, Shakespeare is able to make a unique account of human nature and power and is able to ask the question of whether the ends justify the means" (<http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpaper/67907.html>). Barry Bryson finds biblical theme in the opening scene and writes in his article "The Mark that Precludes Drowning" by referring to Gonzalo's words: "I have great comfort from this fellow; methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good fate, to his hanging! Make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage! If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable." He says: Gonzalo, the good advisor of the Duke of Milan, takes heart in the midst of the storm because of a sign he thinks he sees. The Boatswain, a crude and blasphemous man, seems marked for hanging. If the boatswain will one day hang, then he will certainly not drown in this storm – thus the prayer "Make the rope of his destiny our cable." If the boatswain survives by being marked for a different fate, then they may all survive. (<http://manassaschurch.org/index.php/manassas-signal-mainmenu27/archives-mainmenu-31/1057>. Oct 1 2008). In other words, Gonzalo's dharmabhutajnana perfectly grasps the "thisness" of the Boatswain instressed by an unknown energy. Coming back to Boatswain's dream, The question here is whether the creations in a dream are real or not. Ramanuja avers that dreams "are the works of the individual soul" (Srisaila Chakravarthi 49). As consciousness is

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inseparable from the self, a question is likely to arise what happens to it during deep sleep. It is there but is dormant. This is explicit from the speech of the Boatswain (V.i) because he talks of his knowledge about various sounds and other things though he has been in deep sleep. His knowledge seems to prove that the consciousness as an attribute to the soul is also eternal though it works at different levels. Prospero also confirms the same idea in his explanation to Miranda and Ferdinand (IV.i). Like a spiritual Master, Prospero himself imparts the highest jnana to Ferdinand : ... We are such stuff As dreams are made on; and our little life Is rounded with a sleep. (IV.i.169–171) Prospero's philosophical answer to the question on life has been clearly indicated in the above lines. Alan Hobson comments. There are the images of dissolution and insubstantiality, but there is also a distinct shape. That shape is a globe. The globe is first mentioned as dissolving, but the mind's eye sees it and before the verbs 'dissolve' and 'faded' disperse it into cloud rack, the image of all that inherit the earth and all their architectural wonders arrange themselves upon and around the image of the globe. Human life, human achievement and the round earth are associated in one shifting image that has none the less a distinct geometry. What is that which surrounds both life and earth? Are associated in one shifting image that has none the less a distinct geometry. What is that which surrounds both life and earth? The expression Our little life / Is rounded with a sleep has finality: . . . For the visualiser it reshapes the circle that momentarily dislimned to less than a rack of cloud. (83) Prospero's vision is not a magical spell; they are the images created by an active dharmabhutajnana. The reader is reminded of Antony's words to Eros (IV.xiv) in Antony and Cleopatra. Prospero's speech to the audience in the epilogue reveals the substantive consciousness in him. P.N.Srinivasachari suitably observes: "Atman is and has consciousness. It is substantive intelligence and has attributive intelligence as well which manifests in nature. The two can be logically distinguished but cannot be divided" (28–29). Prospero announces that he has pardoned all his enemies, begs to be pardoned and freed from all the sins that he had committed. This realization and absolute surrender is the ultimate crux of the philosophy of Visistadvaita. It is quite strange that a superman like



Prospero becomes the model figure of Shakespeare's philosophy of realization, forgiving the wrong-doers and making an absolute surrender. The speech seems to sum up Ramanuja's philosophy which is at once jnana and bhakti, wisdom and prayer. In this final speech he likens himself to the playwright. Many critics have interpreted Prospero as a surrogate of Shakespeare. After his delineations of different protagonists, Shakespeare successfully devises a fully developed man of supreme consciousness. As a man of super intelligence he has been created packed with high level attributive consciousness of the great dramatist, who nonetheless performs well his roles as an affectionate father, as a strict ruler and a strategic disposer of events. He has been depicted as a demi-God who can make things happen as he wants only to constitute a harmonious order that leads to the happy ending of the play. Prospero's words in the epilogue show his maturity that a person is expected to achieve at that time of his life. This seems to be the philosophy of Shakespeare also. He has acquired the wisdom that Mercy and Prayer are the realities of life. Alan Hobson in the last chapter "With Undiscording Voice" of his book Full Circle comments on this realization especially on the last six lines of the Epilogue that at once reveal "a deep humility and a claim upon forgiving love": "Prospero's tone is that of one setting out into the unknown, not with eager anticipation, not in the full pride of energy and courage, but different and stripped of all his former power" (221). Hobson further adds that perhaps Shakespeare desires to pass on this message to the world: Shakespeare's last word is a moral injunction, the meaning of which he has explored for many years both through characters who affirm and characters who deny it. Even if the metaphysical context of the words be ignored, a reader who can translate the specialised language into his own idiom will recognize on the one hand Shakespeare's sense of causal necessity and of the darkness of man's heart, and on the other hand his affirmation of the saving bonds of love. The moral implications are not merely fore the adherents of a particular religious group, or for those who have beliefs about personal immortality. (221) The great dramatist has rightly identified the dynamics of dharmabhutajnana, explores the inscape in multifarious ways and acknowledges that the instress of "thisness" is the total

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surrender of the self to the Creator. This could be achieved, as Prospero affirms, through Mercy and Prayer only. The ensuing chapter, obviously takes up the discussion on Daya or Mercy and how the dramatist appends it in his plays. Prayer gets a further dimension in terms of Ramanuja's philosophy as prapatti and will be elaborated in Chapter six.

### Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you know the concept of Jiva?

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.....  
.....

2. Discuss the Dharmabhutajana.

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## 12.4 LET US SUM UP

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In Hinduism the jiva (Sanskrit: जीव, IAST: jīva) is a living being, or any entity imbued with a life force. The word itself originates from the Sanskrit verb-root jīv which translate to "to breathe or to live". The jiva, as a metaphysical entity, has been described in various scriptures, such as the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and the Vachanamrut (the teachings of Swaminarayan). Each sub-school of Vedanta (darshans) describes the role of the jiva with the other metaphysical entities in varying capacities.

### Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita contains verses describing the jiva. For example, the jiva is described as eternal and indestructible in Chapter 2, verse 20:

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्

नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे

"The soul is unborn and eternal, everlasting and primeval. It is not slain by the slaying of the body."

— Bhagavad Gita 2.20, "

Upanishadas

बालाग्रशतभागस्य शतधा कल्पितस्य च । भागो जीवः स विज्ञेयः स चानन्त्याय कल्पते ॥ ९ ॥

"If the tip of the hair were to be divided in to one hundred parts and each part was divided into 100 more parts, that would be the dimension of the Jiva (soul)". Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (5.9)

The Shvetashvatara Upanishad compares the jiva and the Paramatma to two friendly birds sitting on the same tree.

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः । जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥ ७ ॥

"Two birds sitting in the tree (the body). One bird, the jiva is enjoying the fruits of the tree and the other the Paramatma is watching the jiva." Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.7)

Vachanamrut

Swaminarayan has described the nature of the jiva in his discourse in Vachanamrut Jetalpur 2:

The jiva is uncuttable, unpiercable, immortal, formed of consciousness, and the size of an atom. You may also ask, 'Where does the jiva reside?' Well, it resides within the space of the heart, and while staying there, it

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performs different functions. From there, when it wants to see, it does so through the eyes; when it wants to hear sounds, it does so through the ears; it smells all types of smells through the nose; it tastes through the tongue; and through the skin, it experiences the pleasures of all sensations. In addition, it thinks through the mind, contemplates through the citta [one of the inner faculties] and forms convictions through the intelligence [buddhi]. In this manner, through the ten senses and the four inner faculties, it perceives all the of sense-objects [i.e objects of sensorial perception'. It pervades the entire body from head to toe, yet is distinct from it. Such is the nature of the jiva.

— Vachanamrut Jetalpur

### **Vedanta**

Vedanta is one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy which contains sub-schools (darshans) that have derived their beliefs from the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita. The aforementioned three scriptures are commonly referred to as the Prasthantrayi.

### **Advaita Darshan**

The Advaita (non-dualist) Darshan posits the existence of only one entity, Brahman. It considers all distinctions ultimately false since differentiation requires more than one entity. Those distinctions empirically perceived, along with those expounded in the Prasthantrayi, are accounted for within this school by the recognition of a relative reality (vyavaharik satta). One such distinction is that between jivas, or souls, and Brahman. Understood through the paradigm of relative reality, jivas are cloaked by maya—avidya, or ignorance—a state in which they are not able to realize their oneness with Brahman.

### **Akshar-Purushottam Darshan**

The Akshar-Purushottam Darshan, the classical name given to the set of spiritual beliefs based on the teachings of Swaminarayan, centers around the existence of five eternal realities, as stated in two of Swaminarayan's

sermons documented in the Vachanamrut, Gadhada 1.7 and Gadhada 3.10:

Puruṣottama Bhagavān, Akṣarabrahman, māyā, īśvara and jīva – these five entities are eternal.

From all the Vedas, Purāṇas, Itihāsa and Smṛti scriptures, I have gleaned the principle that jīva, māyā, īśvara, Brahman and Parameśvara are all eternal.

The jiva is defined as a distinct, individual soul, i.e. a finite sentient being. Jivas are bound by maya, which hides their true self, which is characterized by eternal existence, consciousness, and bliss. There are an infinite number of jivas. They are extremely subtle, indivisible, unpierceable, ageless, and immortal. While residing within the heart, a jiva pervades the entire body by its capacity to know (gnānshakti), making it animate. It is the form of knowledge (gnānswarūp) as well as the knower (gnātā). The jiva is the performer of virtuous and immoral actions (karmas) and experiences the fruits of these actions. It has been eternally bound by maya; as a result, it roams within the cycle of birth and death. Birth is when a jiva acquires a new body, and death is when it departs from its body. Just as one abandons one's old clothes and wears new ones, the jiva renounces its old body and acquires a new one.

### **Bhedhabheda (Dvaitadvait) Darshan**

The Bhedhabheda Darshan, founded by Nimbark, maintains that jivas are at once distinct and part of Brahman, a middle ground of sorts between the extremes of Advaita, utter oneness, and Dvaita, utter distinctness. This notion of difference yet non-difference is commonly depicted through an analogy: just as rays originate from the sun but are spatio-temporally distinct from it, so too jivas are parts of the whole that is Brahman.

### **Dvaita Darshan**

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Founded by Madhva, the Dvaita (dualist) rejects the Advaita (non-dualist) notion of one ultimate reality. It propounds a duality of five kinds, the most fundamental of which is that between jivas and Isvara. A soul, or jiva, is differentiated from God, Isvara, due to the jiva's dependence on Isvara; this state is an indication of eternal, ontological distinction. Unique to this school is the idea of a hierarchy of souls, evocative of predestination. Within the system, some souls are inherently and eternally destined for liberation, others for hell, and still others for migration through the cycle of birth and death.

### **Vishishtadvaita Darshan**

The Vishishtadvaita Darshan, proposed by Ramanuja, maintains an ontological distinction between jivas and God. However, unlike in the Dvaita Darshan, the distinction is qualified. The jiva still remains dependent on God for its qualities and volition. Vishishtadvaita holds, like other darshanas, that the self is chetan, a conscious being that is made up of consciousness. The school offers many rebuttals against the Advaita conception, one of which addresses the way in which Advaita's jiva, Brahman, may be in a state of ignorance. The Vishishtadvaita Darshan argues, if ignorance is not a quality of Brahman, then the notion of non-duality is contradicted.

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## **12.5 KEY WORDS**

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jīva-bhūtām — comprising the living entities

jīva-loke — in the world of conditional life

jīva-bhūtaḥ — the conditioned living entity

jīva-lokasya — of the conditioned living beings

jīva — living being

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## **12.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Write about the Jiva.

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## **12.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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## 12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 12.2
2. See Section 12.3



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## UNIT 13: NATURE OF MOKSA

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### STRUCTURE

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Moksa: Introduction
- 13.3 Nature of Moksa (Liberation)
- 13.4 Moksa in Hinduism and Buddhism
- 13.5 Let us sum up
- 13.6 Key Words
- 13.7 Questions for Review
- 13.8 Suggested readings and references
- 13.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about Moksa.
- To discuss about the Nature of Moksa
- To discuss the Moksa in Hinduism
- To describe Moksa in Buddhism

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### 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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Moksha (/ˈmoʊkʃə/; Sanskrit: मोक्ष, mokṣa), also called vimoksha, vimukti and mukti, is a term in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism for various forms of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release. In its soteriological and eschatological senses, it refers to freedom from saṃsāra, the cycle of death and rebirth. In its epistemological and psychological senses, moksha is freedom from ignorance: self-realization, self-actualization and self-knowledge.

In Hindu traditions, moksha is a central concept and the utmost aim to be attained through three paths during human life; these three paths are dharma (virtuous, proper, moral life), artha (material prosperity, income security, means of life), and kama (pleasure, sensuality, emotional

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fulfillment). Together, these four concepts are called Puruṣārtha in Hinduism.

In some schools of Indian religions, moksha is considered equivalent to and used interchangeably with other terms such as vimoksha, vimukti, kaivalya, apavarga, mukti, nihsreyasa and nirvana. However, terms such as moksha and nirvana differ and mean different states between various schools of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The term nirvana is more common in Buddhism, while moksha is more prevalent in Hinduism.

The definition and meaning of *moksha* varies between various schools of Indian religions. *Moksha* means freedom, liberation; from what and how is where the schools differ. *Moksha* is also a concept that means liberation from rebirth or *samsāra*. This liberation can be attained while one is on earth (*jivanmukti*), or eschatologically (*karmamukti*, *videhamukti*). Some Indian traditions have emphasized liberation on concrete, ethical action within the world. This liberation is an epistemological transformation that permits one to see the truth and reality behind the fog of ignorance.

*Moksha* has been defined not merely as absence of suffering and release from bondage to *samsāra*, various schools of Hinduism also explain the concept as presence of the state of *paripurna-brahmanubhava* (the experience of oneness with Brahman, the One Supreme Self), a state of knowledge, peace and bliss. For example, Vivekachudamani - an ancient book on *moksha*, explains one of many meditative steps on the path to *moksha*, as:

जाति नीति कुल गोत्र दूरगं  
नाम रूप गुण दोष वर्जितम् ।  
देश काल विषया तिवर्ति यद्  
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भाव यात्मनि ॥२५४॥

Beyond caste, creed, family or lineage,  
That which is without name and form, beyond merit and demerit,  
That which is beyond space, time and sense-objects,  
You are that, God himself; Meditate this within yourself. ||Verse 254||

— *Vivekachudamani*, 8th Century AD

### Eschatological sense

*Moksha* is a concept associated with *samsāra* (birth-rebirth cycle). *Samsara* originated with religious movements in the first millennium BCE. These movements such as Buddhism, Jainism and new schools within Hinduism, saw human life as bondage to a repeated process of rebirth. This bondage to repeated rebirth and life, each life subject to injury, disease and aging, was seen as a cycle of suffering. By release from this cycle, the suffering involved in this cycle also ended. This release was called *moksha*, *nirvana*, *kaivalya*, *mukti* and other terms in various Indian religious traditions.

Eschatological ideas evolved in Hinduism. In earliest Vedic literature, heaven and hell sufficed soteriological curiosities. Over time, the ancient scholars observed that people vary in the quality of virtuous or sinful life they lead, and began questioning how differences in each person's *punya* (merit, good deeds) or *pāp* (demerit, sin) as human beings affected their afterlife. This question led to the conception of an afterlife where the person stayed in heaven or hell, in proportion to their merit or demerit, then returned to earth and were reborn, the cycle continuing indefinitely. The rebirth idea ultimately flowered into the ideas of *samsāra*, or transmigration - where one's balance sheet of *karma* determined one's rebirth. Along with this idea of *samsāra*, the ancient scholars developed the concept of *moksha*, as a state that released a person from the *samsāra* cycle. *Moksha* release in eschatological sense in these ancient literature of Hinduism, suggests van Buitenen, comes from self-knowledge and consciousness of oneness of supreme soul.

### Epistemological and psychological senses

Scholars provide various explanations of the meaning of *moksha* in epistemological and psychological senses. For example, Deutsche sees *moksha* as transcendental consciousness, the perfect state of being, of self-realization, of freedom and of "realizing the whole universe as the Self".

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*Moksha* in Hinduism, suggests Klaus Klostermaier, implies a setting-free of hitherto fettered faculties, a removing of obstacles to an unrestricted life, permitting a person to be more truly a person in the full sense; the concept presumes an unused human potential of creativity, compassion and understanding which had been blocked and shut out. *Moksha* is more than liberation from a life-rebirth cycle of suffering (*samsara*); the Vedantic school separates this into two: *jivanmukti* (liberation in this life) and *videhamukti* (liberation after death). *Moksha* in this life includes psychological liberation from *adhyasa* (fears besetting one's life) and *avidya* (ignorance or anything that is not true knowledge).

### As a state of perfection



Gajendra Moksha (pictured) is a symbolic tale in Vaishnavism. The elephant Gajendra enters a lake where a crocodile (Huhu) clutches his leg and becomes his suffering. Despite his pain, Gajendra constantly remembers Vishnu, who then liberates him. Gajendra symbolically represents human beings, Huhu represents sins, and the lake is *saṃsāra*.

Many schools of Hinduism according to Daniel Ingalls, see *moksha* as a state of perfection. The concept was seen as a natural goal beyond *dharma*. *Moksha*, in the epics and ancient literature of Hinduism, is seen as achievable by the same techniques necessary to practice *dharma*. Self-discipline is the path to *dharma*, *moksha* is self-

discipline that is so perfect that it becomes unconscious, second nature. *Dharma* is thus a means to *moksha*.

The Samkhya school of Hinduism, for example, suggests that one of the paths to *moksha* is to magnify one's *sattvam*. To magnify one's *sattvam*, one must develop oneself where one's *sattvam* becomes one's instinctive nature. Many schools of Hinduism thus understood *dharma* and *moksha* as two points of a single journey of life, a journey for which the *viaticum* was discipline and self-training. Over time, these ideas about *moksha* were challenged.

### **Nagarjuna's challenge**

*Dharma* and *moksha*, suggested Nagarjuna in the 2nd century, cannot be goals on the same journey. He pointed to the differences between the world we live in, and the freedom implied in the concept of *moksha*. They are so different that *dharma* and *moksha* could not be intellectually related. *Dharma* requires worldly thought, *moksha* is unworldly understanding, a state of bliss. How can the worldly thought-process lead to unworldly understanding? asked Nagarjuna. Karl Potter explains the answer to this challenge as one of context and framework, the emergence of broader general principles of understanding from thought processes that are limited in one framework.

### **Adi Shankara's challenge**

Adi Shankara in the 8th century AD, like Nagarjuna earlier, examined the difference between the world one lives in and *moksha*, a state of freedom and release one hopes for. Unlike Nagarjuna, Shankara considers the characteristics between the two. The world one lives in requires action as well as thought; our world, he suggests, is impossible without *vyavahara* (action and plurality). The world is interconnected, one object works on another, input is transformed into output, change is continuous and everywhere. *Moksha*, suggests Shankara, is that final perfect, blissful state where there can be no change, where there can be no plurality of states. It has to be a state of thought and consciousness that excludes action. How can action-oriented techniques by which we

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attain the first three goals of man (*kama*, *artha* and *dharma*) be useful to attain the last goal, namely *moksha*?

Scholars suggest Shankara's challenge to the concept of *moksha* parallels those of Plotinus against the Gnostics, with one important difference: Plotinus accused the Gnostics of exchanging an anthropocentric set of virtues with a theocentric set in pursuit of salvation; Shankara challenged that the concept of *moksha* implied an exchange of anthropocentric set of virtues (*dharma*) with a blissful state that has no need for values. Shankara goes on to suggest that anthropocentric virtues suffice.

### **The Vaisnavas' challenge**

Vaishnavism, one of the *bhakti* schools of Hinduism, is devoted to the worship of God, sings his name, anoints his image or idol, and has many sub-schools. Vaishnavas (followers of Vaishnavism) suggest that *dharma* and *moksha* cannot be two different or sequential goals or states of life. Instead, they suggest God should be kept in mind constantly to simultaneously achieve *dharma* and *moksha*, so constantly that one comes to feel one cannot live without God's loving presence. This school emphasized love and adoration of God as the path to "moksha" (salvation and release), rather than works and knowledge. Their focus became divine virtues, rather than anthropocentric virtues. Daniel Ingalls regards Vaishnavas' position on *moksha* as similar to the Christian position on salvation, and Vaishnavism as the school whose views on *dharma*, *karma* and *moksha* dominated the initial impressions and colonial-era literature on Hinduism, through the works of Thibaut, Max Müller and others.

Like all philosophical movements and traditions, the philosophy of liberation emerged out of both world historical and regional socio-historical contexts. In terms of the world historical background, World War II, and in particular the disclosures about the genocide of the Jews, the Cold War, and the South East Asian wars, created a world historical stage in which Europe and its intellectual and moral traditions stood discredited. Whereas before, all things European were regarded as the standard against which everything would have to be measured, Europe

had become suspect. Latin Americans had to look elsewhere for inspiration and intellectual guidance.

The regional socio-historical was framed on the one side by the Cuban revolution and the numerous military dictatorships that took place as a consequence of the Cold War and the failures of development in Latin America. The Cuban revolution, however, had a profound impact in the socio-political-cultural imagination throughout Latin America. In the iconic image of Che Guevara (1928–1967), the revolution promises a transformation of the Latin American human being—*el nuevo hombre*—as it also raised the possibility of political sovereignty for Latin American nations. The decade of the sixties in Latin America was a time of political turmoil, but above all of cultural renewal and utopian yearning.

The philosophy of liberation, however, was above all an intellectual and philosophical response and unquestionably synthesis of a series of intellectual and cultural movements that had been gestating for a decade throughout Latin America. The cultural context was so ripe with proclamations and thinking about “liberation” that if the philosophy of liberation had not been so named in the late sixties and early seventies, today we would have wondered whether philosophers had been abducted from this world and sequestered in some time capsule. The philosophy of liberation was both necessary and inevitable.

Drawing on the work of Carlos Beorlegui, a historian of Latin American philosophy, we can say that there are some identifiable “matrixes”, or intellectual sources, from which liberation philosophy emerged (Beorlegui 2004: 677–690). Here, they will be characterized as follows.

The Economic Matrix: The Theory of Dependence. After the end of World War II, the United States undertook to finance the “development” of Latin America on the model of industrialized and capitalist nations. This is what the Alliance for Progress (1961–1973) aimed to do this by granting loans that would help economically underdeveloped nations to ascend the ladder of economic development. This program was guided by the economic theory called “desarrollismo” or developmentalism. Yet, Latin American nations continue to lag behind both socially and economically.

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It is in the face of this failure that a series of economists began to develop “dependency theory”, or the “theory of the development of underdevelopment”, among who were: Theotonio dos Santos, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Enzo Falleto, Celso Furtado, and Anibal Quijano. The core of this theory was that the underdevelopment of the Latin American nation was not due to endogenous factors, but rather was a direct consequence of economic dependence on Europe and the United States. The model of development that reigned during the fifties and sixties, according to these theorists, had a double perverse effect: greater capital accumulation in the metropolises and lending nations, and greater indebtedness and impoverishment in the so-called underdeveloped nations. The economic underdevelopment of Latin America was now to be understood in terms of an economic theory that showed that underdevelopment is not a prior stage in the natural economic development of nations, but rather an integral dimension of the international economic order created by colonialism, imperialism, and neo-imperialism.

The Religious Matrix: The Theology of Liberation. The emergence of Liberation Theology has been amply documented and studied in the specialized literature. Yet, liberation theology is as much a phenomenon of global Catholicism as it is a unique Latin American development. The reforms began with Vatican II (1962–1965) and the Second Latin American Bishops congregation in Medellín, Colombia (1968), created the church context for the consolidation of what was in effect a social movement, namely the “comunidades de base” (base communities). The theology of liberation developed in response to a new understanding of the church’s relationship to the “people” and the role of the faith in a world of incredible poverty and social inequality.

The theology of liberation forged a whole new language: the “preferential option for the poor”, the “underside of history”, “the church of the people”, “orthopraxis is prior to orthodoxy” that influenced some philosophers of liberation. Still, two of the most important contributions of the theology of liberation to the philosophy of liberation were the imperative that critical reflection had to emerge out of committed praxis, and the problematization of the concept of “el pueblo”. The theology of



liberation may be understood as theological reflection on what constituted a people, a community of faith. In short, theology of liberation asks: who is the subject of God's soteriology. Most noteworthy is that Gustavo Gutierrez published his *Teología de la liberación. Perspectivas* (A Theology of Liberation) in 1971 in Peru, while Hugo Assmann published his *Opresión-Liberación: desafío a los cristianos* (Oppression-Liberation: Challenge to Christians) the same year in Chile. The Catholic Church also provided an institutional framework within which some of the work of philosophers of liberation could be pursued by hosting "jornadas", sponsoring congresses, and providing teaching opportunities in its affiliated universities for philosophers of liberation, many who had been expelled from public universities.

*The Educational Matrix: The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In 1970, after nearly two decades of literacy work in the Brazilian favelas and poor sectors of Brazil, Paulo Freire published his paradigm shifting text *Pedagogia del oprimido* (Pedagogy of the Oppressed) (1970), which was followed in 1972 by his *Education for the Praxis of Liberation*. At the core of Freire's work were three key ideas: if the people are to overcome their dependence, they can only do so through their own agency, by becoming the subject of their own liberation; to become a subject of one's own liberation means to engage in a process of *conscientização*, or consciousness raising, that takes place through a pedagogy that rejects the notion of the learner as a passive receptacle and instead departs from the fundamental realization that learning is a dynamic process. Two key notions of Freire's pedagogy of liberation were that (1) teaching requires listening to the people, and (2) schooling means life, that is, learning is both indispensable to life and it takes place in the midst of living. Freire's key phrase "*conscientização*" goes on to be appropriated by liberation philosophers as their own goal: philosophy is at the service of the raising of both individual and collective consciousness.

*The Literary-Artistic Matrix: The Boom and the Muralists*. It is often forgotten that the sixties were the time of the Latin American literary Boom. This is the decade when José M. Arguedas, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García-Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Octavio Paz, Juan Rulfo, Ernesto Sábato published their major works. During this

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decade there also emerged a genre that gave expression to the heavy consciousness of dependence and the spirit of rebellion and quest for emancipation, namely the *Novelas de Guerrilla*; among which are Julio de la Vega's *Matías, el apóstol suplente* (1971), Jesús Lara's *Ñaucahuazú, Sueños* (1969), Renato Prada Oropeza's *Los fundadores del alba* (1969), Gaby Vallejo de Bolívar's *Los Vulnerables* (1973), Oscar Uzin Fernández's, *La oscuridad radiante* (1976). Just as these writers demonstrated how a distinct Latin American literary tradition could be forged, the muralists demonstrated how standards of artistic beauty that celebrated proudly the aesthetic sensibility and creativity of the continent. The *estética indigenista* (indigeneous aesthetics) celebrated by muralists like Diego Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, and painters like Frida Kahlo, created a new iconic representation of the Latin American people that more ecumenically reflected the continent's *mestizaje*, or racial mixing and hybridity.

The Sociological Matrix: The Sociology of Liberation. The fifties and sixties, as was already noted, were decades of tremendous social-economic-political turmoil throughout Latin America. Latin American industrialization went in tandem with massive urbanization and de-ruralization. Extensive migrations from the countryside to the cities gave rise to the shantytowns that are so distinctly visible in most Latin American metropolises. Sociologists began to address the unique challenges of de-ruralization and urbanization. In Colombia, sociologist Orlando Fals Borda, who worked with Colombian peasants, began to develop what he called a "sociology of liberation" that meant to address the very unique situation of the urban and rural poor in contexts in which the state was nearly absent. Fals Borda studied in particular the ways in which the poor created their own institutions and norms of social interaction. Combined with the theory of dependence, the sociology of liberation, created an interdisciplinary matrix that sought to address the conditions of systemic inequity, while raising the norm that people could be the agents of their own liberation.

It is clear that both dependence and liberation were in the lips of economists, sociologists, theologians, and writers. The philosophy of

liberation gave expression in concepts what was clearly a lived historical reality.

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## 13.2 MOKSA: INTRODUCTION

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As was noted, the philosophy of Moksa (liberation) belongs to the “maturity” stage of the “contemporary” period of the history of Latin American philosophy (Gracia and Vargas 2013; Gracia 1988–89). As a philosophical movement that engages in the critical task of recovering what is distinctly “Latin American” thought, it has sought explicitly to unearth and rescue Amerindian thought, in its pre-Colombian and post-Conquest forms, as well as all the different philosophical tendencies and movements that emerged during the long history of colonialism, independence and projects of national formation. It is for this reason that the philosophy of liberation has as one of its goals a critical historiography of Latin American thought, in general, and philosophy, more specifically. Figures such as Enrique Dussel, Rodolfo Kusch, Arturo Roig, and Leopoldo Zea have articulated their versions of the philosophy of liberation in terms of a recovery of earlier stages in the formulation of a project of Latin American liberation. Yet, the philosophy of liberation as a self-conscious movement and current, emerged out of a very distinct convergence of geo-historical, cultural, intellectual and philosophical tendencies, conflicts and processes.

The philosophy of liberation, arguably, began in the late sixties when Leopoldo Zea and Augusto Salazar Bondy launched a debate with the question: “Is there a Latin American philosophy?” Whether the answer was affirmative or negative did not affect the fact that the movement would have to embark on the long path of the recovery of Latin American philosophy, at the very least in order to identify those moments of originality and authentically autochthonous Latin American thinking. It is for this reason that some philosophers liberation have argued that there are at least three antecedent historical stages that serve as the geological subsoil of liberation philosophy. Following Dussel, they could be sketched as follows (Dussel 2005: 374–5):

First Period. This is the period of the beginning of the critique of the conquest and the development of a discourse that engages Amerindian

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thought. An important inaugural date is 1511 when Antón de Montesinos critiques the way evangelization is taking place in the Americas. This is the period when a distinct continental awareness of the injustice that is being committed against the indigenous populations of the so-called New World emerges. The debate between Ginés de Sepúlveda and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas at Valladolid in 1550 marks the clear emergence of a liberation discourse and consciousness. In this debate Sepúlveda articulated a moment in the emergent imperial and colonizing modern consciousness of Europe when he argued that Amerindians were naturally born slaves and that therefore they were to be subjugated. Sepúlveda questioned the humanity of Amerindians. In contrast, de las Casas affirmed the rational humanity of Amerindians, while acknowledging their distinctiveness. In fact, de las Casas affirms their rationality and treats appeals to their reason as a theological and evangelical norm. The only true way for evangelization is the path of rational deliberation and not violent religious usurpation and imposition.

Second Period. This epoch is defined by the process of what might be called the first emancipation, from 1750 until the end of the nineteenth century. Defining figures are Benito Díaz de Gamarra, who published in 1774 his *Elementa Recientioris Philosophiae*, Carlos de Singüenza y Góngora, and Francisco Xavier Clavigero, who articulated an anti-colonial and anti-absolutist political philosophy that launched a critique of the Spanish monarchy. Some of the notable figures of this epoch include Fray Servando Teresa de Mier (1763–1827), Manuel M. Moreno (in La Plata, what would become Argentina, 1778–1811), Simón Rodríguez (in Venezuela, 1751–1854), Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), Francisco de Miranda (1750–1816), Juan Germán Roscio (1763–1821). In the eighteenth century, these thinkers and many other “patriotas” articulated a political discourse of emancipation from the Spanish crown. They called for continental independence, as well as the development of a distinct “American” identity. Because of her blend of poetry, theological speculation, praise of Amerindian traditions, and nascent feminist awareness, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–1695) can also be considered a contributor to this first discourse of emancipation and should be included among the figures that define this epoch.

Third Period. This epoch could be defined by a second moment of emancipation, beginning at the end of the nineteenth century and being bookended with the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Defining figures are José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930), whose book *Siete ensayos sobre la realidad peruana* (Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality) (1968) gave expression to a new emancipation agenda that is explicitly elaborated in terms of a dual approach that is attentive to the historical reality of the Americas, with its indigenous and criollo backgrounds. It launched a critical appropriation of European ideas in the “Latin American” context. This epoch is defined by the crises of both development efforts and populisms that were inattentive to the severe racial, ethnic, and class divisions within the Latin American nations. It is against this context that Augusto Salazar Bondy (1925–1974) and Leopoldo Zea (1912–2004) began to debate the question whether there is a Latin American philosophy. This third period is defined by the explicit consciousness of economic, political, social, and cultural dependence, under-development, and domination (Vallega 2014). It is in this period that the need of a discourse of liberation begins to be explicitly articulated.

This section discusses the broader social and intellectual context of the third period indicated above, from which an explicit and nuanced philosophy of liberation would emerge.

An important part of the origin of the philosophy of liberation as an autochthonous philosophical movement was rooted in the question of a distinct or authentic Latin American philosophy. The problem of a distinct Latin American philosophy has been in gestation at least since the late nineteenth century, when the so-called “generation of patriarchs” began to ask about a philosophy or thinking from and for the “Americas” (Beorlegui 2004). This problem took a distinct shape when Salazar Bondy (1968) re-framed it in terms of the question as to the actual existence of a Latin American philosophy. Using existentialist and Marxist categories, Salazar Bondy gave a negative answer. There is no authentic Latin American philosophy because the sub-continent has lived and developed under conditions of mental colonialism, intellectual subordination, and philosophical dependence. In order to achieve an

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authentic Latin American philosophy, Salazar Bondy maintained, the sub-continent had to achieve its independence and establish its autonomy and self-determination. These thoughts, and Zea's subsequent response (1969), set the agenda for a generation. The philosophy of liberation, so explicitly christened, it could be argued, has gone through at least the following three stages: constitution and maturation, persecution and exile, challenges and debates (Dussel 2005; Beorlegui 2004; Cerutti Guldberg 1983 [2006]).

Constitution and Maturation (1969–1975). The philosophy of liberation was explicitly labeled as such at the Second Argentine National Congress of Philosophy, which was held in Cordoba in 1971. The inaugurating group was conformed by Osvaldo Ardiles, Alberto Parisini, Juan Carlos Scannone, Julio de Zan, and Anibal Fornari. But this group took a more formal shape at the jornadas (week long working seminars) of philosophy that were organized at the Jesuit University, Universidad of San Salvador (where Pope Francis was educated), in San Miguel, in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The first jornada took place in 1971, and a second was held later the same year with the title "Latin American Liberation". A third jornada was held in 1973, at which Salazar Bondy gave a paper titled "Filosofía de la dominación y filosofía de la liberación (Philosophy of Domination and Philosophy of Liberation)" (1973), and Leopoldo Zea gave a paper titled "La filosofía latinoamericana como filosofía de la liberación (Latin American Philosophy as a Philosophy of Liberation)" (1973). This stage comes to a close in 1975 with the First Mexican National Congress of Philosophy in Morelia, Mexico, with papers by Dussel, Miró Quesada, Arturo Roig, and Abelardo Villegas. This was an important meeting because it signaled the launching of the philosophy liberation as a Latin American philosophical agenda that supersedes its initial Argentine formulations. A new group of philosophers from across Latin America entered into the debate: Hugo Assmann, Carlos Bazán, Arturo Roig,

In 1974 the journal *Revista de Filosofía Latinoamericana* begins to be edited and published in Buenos Aires, and goes on to become a major publishing venue for philosophers of liberation, along with *Stromata*, published at the University of El Salvador, in Buenos Aires, Argentina,

in which many of the inaugural essays and quasi-manifestos of the movement were published.

Persecution and Exile (1975–1983). With the Peronist dictatorship in Argentina, from 1975 to 1983, there began the persecution of the philosophers of liberation. Many went into exile, moving to Canada, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. In this way, then, the agenda of liberation philosophy was brought to other parts of Latin America. However, the Latin American dictatorships of the sixties and the Cold War in general, had directly influenced internal debates about the “who” of Latin American philosophy, and consequently had polarizing and decisive effects for how liberation was understood. The role of populism and nationalism in defining the task of philosophy became a litmus test. In 1980, the AFYL (Asociación Filosofía y Liberación [Philosophy and Liberation Association]), was established in Bogotá, Colombia, and it became a major vehicle for organizing congresses, round tables, and sessions at international philosophy congresses.

Challenges and Debates (1983 to today). With the transition to democracy and the collapse or defeat of the military dictatorships in Latin America there began a new stage in the normalization and maturation of liberation philosophy. Horacio Cerutti Guldberg’s *Filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana* (Philosophy of Latin American Liberation) (2006) offered the most comprehensive historical and critical reconstruction of the movement. In 1988–89, Jorge J.E. Gracia edited a special issue on “Latin American Philosophy”, with a long essay by Cerutti Guldberg in which a synoptic overview of the movement is presented. In 1993, Ofelia Schutte published her *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought* in which a critical confrontation with some key theses of liberation philosophy is developed. These substantive texts signaled the maturity and general coherence of the philosophy of liberation, at the very least as it was perceived by its critics. These works called for re-articulations and reformulations that made explicit the inner tensions and divisions within the group of thinkers that had first given voice to this new current and method of doing philosophy in Latin America.

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These differences and divergences have become increasingly pronounced. It may now no longer be possible to speak of a “philosophy of liberation”, in the singular. Instead, it may be more appropriate to speak of “philosophies of liberation”, in the plural, where what is shared is a set of overlapping themes among the distinct accounts of what are the situations and conditions from which liberation is to be sought, and different philosophical methods and traditions used to articulate those accounts. To be sure, there remains a substantive core that holds together the constellation of the philosophy of liberation now in the middle of its fourth decade of existence. Widely shared characteristics of the various philosophies of liberation include the following:

An indisputable point of departure for all philosophers liberation is the consciousness of the economic, social, political and cultural dependence of Latin America on Europe and the United States.

The general affirmation that “philosophy” has to be practiced from a specific context of both engagement and commitment within the distinct Latin American historical and geopolitical situation. The claim is that implicitly or explicitly all philosophizing is always a form of commitment with an existential situation. All philosophers of liberation share the conviction that a philosophy that is worthy of that name is a tool or means of enlightenment, a theoretical elaboration at the service of a praxis of liberation. The philosophy of liberation is the twin of a practice of emancipation.

All philosophizing is done out of a concrete historical situation. Yet, this “concrete historical” situation has received different formulations, which define the different currents within the philosophy of liberation (see section 3, below). For now, we can note that the “point of departure” can be a people, nation, or autochthonous culture; it can refer to a class or economic group understood along Marxist lines; it can include a cultural, historical, existential project that manifests itself in terms of a historical formation or agent.

As a critique of putatively colonized thinking and dependent philosophy, the philosophy of liberation is a metaphilosophy. For this reason, issues of method are integral to its philosophical agenda. In tandem with the different “points of departure” for philosophy that is authentically



grounded, different liberation philosophers argue on behalf of the virtues of one or another philosophical method or current. Thus, we find some philosophers of liberation who are “indigenistas”, some who at one time or another were Ricoeurian, Heideggerian, Levinasian; others who were Diltheyan, Gadamerian, and Gaosian and/or Ortegian, and some who were Marxists. The philosophy of liberation, which is critical of European philosophy, is so from within, immanently, even when some of its representatives argue from some “analectical” standpoint, or standpoint of metaphysical “exteriority” to imperial and totalizing thought. It is thus not surprising that philosophy “companions” or handbooks to Existentialism, Phenomenology, Marxism, or to figures such as Martin Heidegger, Karl Marx, Emmanuel Levinas, include entries on “philosophy of liberation”, or some of its most representative figures.

Inasmuch as it is defined by the word “liberation”, all philosophy of liberation is entangled with the project of sketching an utopia and identifying the “subject” of the construction of such an utopia. The utopia of liberation entails either recognizing the suppressed historical subject, or forging a new one. This liberation or emancipating subject could be the “el pueblo”, or the proletarian class, or the popular sectors, made up by the “pueblo” now understood as the destitute and exploited of the nation. For others, as we will see, this subject is constituted by the nation as it is embodied in its popular sector. That sector is not understood simply in terms of class or even cultural identity, but in terms of an anti-colonial attitude aimed at national sovereignty.

These general and shared characteristics, problems and themes could be summarized in three observations about the coherence and unity of the philosophy of liberation.. First, there is a general agreement that Latin American philosophy must be a philosophy of liberation that aims at overcoming dependence, domination and subordination. Second, there is ample disagreement as to the who, what, or how, is this project of liberation to be undertaken. Third, there is also ample disagreement as to the “content” or final goal of liberation. In short, the philosophy of liberation is defined by what many would argue is integral to all philosophy as such, namely questioning the general individual existential

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situation of alienation, the corresponding project of liberation, and what the utopia of achieved liberation could and would look like. Philosophers of liberation argue, nevertheless, that this questioning takes on a universal character only and precisely because it is taken up from within a specific and unique existential, historical, and geo-political situation.

### **Themes and Debates**

Philosophical currents have distinct profiles not only because of the theses that define their methods and approaches, but also because of the themes and problems that remain their preoccupations despite changes and the incorporation of new methods and theses. The philosophy of liberation has since its inception taken up the following themes.

The question of populism. At the heart of the philosophy of liberation is the problem of the historical subject of liberation. This problem has been addressed in terms of the idea of the “pueblo” or people. Yet, this has been defined in a variety of ways: as an ethnocultural historical formation; as a socio-economic entity; as a cultural entity that transcends both nations and classes; as what is to be forged through a democratic political project. The problem of what or who is the “people” has taken on a new urgency as new forms of democratic participation have emerged, and as Latin American nations find themselves more integrated economically and politically due to hemispheric transformations. The political transformations of the last decade throughout Latin America, away from revolutionary violence and towards political participation, have been addressed in terms of the need to rethink the issues of political representation and participation.

The question of the subject. This problem is the other side of the question about the historical subject of liberation. What is the relationship between the individual subject, whether it be conceived as an epistemic or ethical agent, and their belonging to a macro-historical subject, where this may be conceived as “el pueblo” that is either a national-cultural unit, or a transnational, cultural entity, such as the “Americas”. As a chapter in phenomenological-hermeneutical philosophy, the philosophy of liberation has addressed the nature of the particular and distinct embodied, free, historically located, and dependent subject. The

embodied and historical situatedness of the agent is continuously addressed from the standpoint of the most deprived and most vulnerable in the collective historical subject that is always under question.

The question of utopia. As a philosophical movement defined by the quest for liberation, the philosophy of liberation has had to always address the question of the role of utopia in energizing individual and social movements. The question of utopia, however, is the problem of the collective imaginary that projects goals that will guide transformative movements. Yet, at the same time, such transformative imaginaries are criticized because of their lack of feasibility or operability.

The question of history. The significance of history is a problematic that threads the entire current and tradition of the philosophy of liberation, not only because “dependency” and “liberation” are understood as historical issues, but because the very project of liberation is to be undertaken from within history. Indeed, even in its most “ontological” and “analectical” versions, the philosophy of liberation is always addressing the historical character of human existence. Collectively, philosophers of liberation affirm that historical indexicality of freedom, that is, that human freedom cannot be understood in the abstract, but only against a very specific historical conditions that are material because they take the form of socio-political institutions. For philosophers liberation, human liberty must be embodied and material precisely because it is part of a dynamic historical reality.

The question of democracy and social order. The philosophy of liberation was defined as much by its resistance to all forms of authoritarianism as by the persecution that many of its philosophers suffered at the hands of dictators and authoritarian political figures. In its early years question of democracy, legitimacy and legality were subordinate to the metaphysical and ontological questions of the subject of historical emancipation. However, over the last two decades, the political future of Latin American has become a more pressing issue. The quest for national sovereignty and liberation from Euroamerican imperialism is now framed in terms of ethnoracial democracies and the greater participation of sectors of the Latin American people that were either excluded or entirely ignored during the processes of national independence and

national-state formation. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, philosophers of liberation think of themselves as contributing to the elaboration of what has been called “multicultural” democracy, and in this way, more historically inflected and less “ontological” notions of “el pueblo” are being embraced and developed.

To close, like most vibrant and still alive currents in world philosophy, the philosophy of liberation has been contributing to three key issues that are vital to all philosophy in general, namely: the question of meaning, i.e., how we produce, reproduce and transmit historically produced meaning across a variety of semiological and hermeneutical practices. This is the general question of how humans continue to communicate across time, even when their basic conditions of the production of world-views has radically altered. In tandem, the philosophy of liberation, which began partly as a challenge to a certain historiography of ideas in Latin America, continues to raise the question of how we write the history of philosophy, for whom and for what purposes, in such a way that we surrender to neither ideological distortions nor naïve purisms, neither Eurocentrism nor thirdworldism. Finally, like all transformative and enduring philosophical movements, the philosophy of liberation has since its inception articulated itself as a metaphilosophical reflection, i.e., as a philosophy that reflects on its own practice and what merits the dignity of being called philosophy tout court (Vallega 2014).

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### **13.3 NATURE OF MOKSA (LIBERATION)**

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Like existentialism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, and poststructuralism, the philosophy of liberation was never a homogeneous or monolithic movement. From its inception the philosophy of liberation was marked by internal tensions, which over time have become more intense, but that have also led to philosophical developments that have taken the original theses to new levels of refinement and theoretical elaboration. Cerutti Guldberg, who has written the most substantive and comprehensive study of liberation philosophy, has offered a typology of the internal currents that names four different currents (Cerutti Guldberg 1983, 1988–9, 2006). Beorlegui, writing more recently, argues that there are in fact six currents, though he accepts Cerutti Guldberg’s four as

being the core and originating current (Beorlegui 2004: 695–727). These four currents will now be discussed sequentially.

### **13.1 The Ontologist**

This current is generally associated with Mario Casalla, Carlos Cullen, Gunther Rodolfo Kush, and Amelia Podetti. According to these thinkers, a Latin American philosophy of liberation has to begin from the ontological situation of the American people, which has a distinct relationship to being. This distinct relationship to being is expressed in the two forms of the verb “to be” in Spanish: *ser* (to be) and *estar* (to be in). Authentic Latin American philosophy begins from the *estar* of the American people in its own being. At the same time, everything that is either European or North American has to be rejected as manifestations of a philosophy of oppression and philosophical hegemony. This new philosophy that breaks with the past and everything that is allegedly foreign must break with the “ontological dependence” that has been suffered by Latin American in different ways. This current rejects as much European liberalism, as a form of abstract individualism, and Marxism, as a form of economic and inorganic collectivism. It calls for a form of populism that is neither nationalistic nor class oriented. Instead, “*el pueblo*” is considered as an ontological entity, a community of fate, and organic unity that is a pure manifestation of a being-in that assumes distinct cultural characteristics. This “*pueblo*” is not the nation, but the American mestizo and Amerindian. It is for this reason that Cerutti Guldberg also refers to this current as a manifestation of “anti-historicist populism” (Cerutti Guldberg 1988–9: 46).

### **13.2 The Analectical**

This current is associated with Enrique Dussel and Juan Carlos Scannone. Like the ontologist, the analectical also presents itself as a critique of both Eurocentrism and North American neo-colonialism. It presents itself as a critique of modernity, conceived as a colonial and imperial ideology that has “*encubierto*” or concealed what is distinctly Latin American. More generally, however, the analectical current articulates itself as a metaphysical critique of the thinking of the totality,

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of all that is thought in terms of being, the whole that is postulated as the true. At the same time, it also argues that philosophy must “depart” or “locate” itself with reference to both a subject and object of philosophizing. This subject and object is also “el pueblo”, or the people. In contrast to the ontologist position, however, the people is not understood ontologically, but metaphysically, or more precisely analectically, (derived from “ana” or beyond, in contrast to “dia” or through and between). This strand of the philosophy of liberation aims to overhaul all of philosophy by subsuming all Western philosophy under the logic of the thinking of ontology and the dialectical totality that is always self-referential, from Aristotle and Plato, to Hegel, Marx and Habermas.

For philosophers in the analectical current, the authentic people is what is always outside the totality. Its form of being cannot be determined once and for all. It is at a given time, as it gives expression to its quest for justice that has left its own legacy and memory of struggle. However, its continuing quest for justice and the redress of past sufferings remain undetermined and unaccounted for. If for the ontologist current the role of the philosopher is to guide the people to recognize its own deep and unsuspected wisdom, for the analectical philosopher the role of philosopher is one that is focused on being attentive to the clamoring, or “interpellations”, of the people, so that he or she can give voice to their cry for justice. That said, it must also be noted that both Dussel and Scannone have moved beyond many of these ideas, as they were first formulated in the early seventies (Dussel 1998, 2007; Scannone 1990). To this extent the analectical denomination may be already anachronistic. While Scannone, remaining faithful to his Levinasian philosophical commitments, has turned towards the development of “inter-cultural philosophy”, Dussel’s engagement with Karl-Otto Apel and Juergen Habermas has led him to develop a more dialectical philosophy of liberation that has made the linguistic and pragmatic turns (Vallega 2014).

### 13.3 The Historicist

This current is associated with the work of Horacio Cerutti Guldberg, Arturo Roig, Arturo Ardao, and Leopoldo Zea. Like the “problematizing” current (see below), it presents itself as a critique of the two prior tendencies. These thinkers argue that it is neither possible nor desirable to set out from some absolute unsoiled and authentic point of departure. Instead, they argue that we are always already immersed in a history of ideas, and the task is thus to think the experience of Latin America from out its distinct history as it has been already thought. Indeed, a lot of the work the thinkers in this current have done is to engage in a rigorous reconstruction of the history of ideas in Latin America, to see their emergence out of unique process of social transformation, and their continued dialogue and confrontation across the decades and centuries. This history of ideas in Latin America has also been presented as part of the project of political emancipation. It is for this reason that the historical antecedents of Latin American philosophy cannot be dismissed, for they are also part of a history of the forging of political freedom in the subcontinent.

#### **13.4 The Problematicizing**

This current is associated with the work of Horacio Cerutti Guldberg, José Severino Croatto, Manuel Ignacio Santos, and Gustavo Ortiz. Cerutti Guldberg has also argued that Salazar Body and Hugo Assmann ought to be considered as contributing to this current. For this group of thinkers, the criteria of philosophy’s efficacy or relevance cannot be authenticity, or how it relates or departs from some “null” point of enunciation that either responds to or is an interpellation of some “macro” subject. For this current, the question is what could constitute a critical reflection, without fetishes or mystifications, on the demanding crises and challenges of Latin American social reality. Unlike the ontologizing and the analectical currents, both the historicizing and the problematicizing reject all ontological or metaphysical attempts to fix “el pueblo” or what is properly “Lo Americano”, (that is, what properly belong to the “Americas”). Philosophy is caught in the river of history, it cannot jump out of, or pretend that a “rupture” with the past can be executed or proclaimed. For this group of thinkers, the critical issues

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were twofold. First, how does philosophy respond to a specific set of historical challenges, without falling prey to the ideological prejudices that condition that presentation of that very historical? Second, what is the language that will allow that philosophical reflection to remain ever vigilant?

Notwithstanding these substantive and often time irreconcilable differences, the philosophy of liberation has been recognized as an extremely important and representative philosophical movement that synthesized and responded to distinctly Latin American intellectual traditions and historical challenges. In nearly half a century, other figures have aligned themselves with the movement, even if they were not part of the founding cohort.

This is the case with Franz Hinkelammert, who was born in Germany in 1931, and was educated in the Free University in Berlin. In 1963, he emigrated to Latin America, first to Chile and then to Costa Rica, where along with Hugo Assmann, he funded the Departamento EcuMénico de Investigaciones (DEI). His original training was in economics, but over the last four decades he has produced a series of influential books dealing with the relationship between theology, economics, and philosophy. His work takes up liberation theology, but from the perspective of political economy and aims to show that the theology of liberation's critique of religious idolatry are matched by Marxism's critique of the fetish of the commodity form and exploitation. Hinkelammert has also produced a series of monographs aimed at the critique of neoliberalism. Still, what he has contributed is what he calls the *Crítica de la razón utópica* (Critique of Utopian Reason) (1984), which is operative as much in Marxism as it is in liberalism. To counter unrealizable utopian projects, Hinkelammert introduced the principle of "factibilidad" or feasibility, as criteria for the evaluation of the ethicalness or morality of any transformative moral-political project.

Another figure that has contributed to the further refinement of the philosophy of philosophy, mostly through his students, is the Jesuit theologian Ignacio Ellacuría, born in 1930 in Viscaya, Spain. He was a student of Karl Rahner and Xavier Zubiri. He moved to El Salvador, to teach at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), where he became



rector in 1969, a position he led until 1989 when he was assassinated by paramilitary forces trained by the United States military.

Ellacuría worked closely with the Spanish philosopher Zubiri, whose work aimed to overcome the separation between epistemology and ontology, knower and known, through the notion of what he called “sentient intelligence”, or “feeling logos”. Ellacuría took up Zubiri’s ontological work and transformed it into a philosophy of history. Reality is historical and thus it is dynamic. Dynamic historical reality is where subjects are formed, but they are also the ones that make historical reality transformative because of their praxis, their practical engagement with the world. The praxis of human, however, is also always the expansion of the horizon of action. Praxis gives rise to more possibilities for engagement historical reality. The telos of praxis is thus greater liberty. His incomplete magnum opus *Filosofía de la realidad histórica* (1991) aimed to develop a philosophy of history that celebrated the “historical intelligence” that is the sediment of praxical beings taking charge of their historical reality that aims at greater liberty. It is to be noted that Ellacuría’s philosophy of history and “feeling logos” have been most effectively taken up in Dussel’s most recent work on the ethics and politics of liberation, which is one reason that, as was noted above, the “analectical” designator may no longer be a useful denomination for a current that has been influenced so profoundly by recent developments in Latin American philosophy (Dussel 1998, 2007).

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## 13.4 MOKSA IN HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM

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The concept of *moksha* appears much later in ancient Indian literature than the concept of *dharmā*. The proto-concept that first appears in the ancient Sanskrit verses and early Upanishads is *mucyate*, which means freed or released. It is the middle and later Upanishads, such as the Svetasvatara and Maitri, where the word *moksha* appears and begins becoming an important concept.

Kathaka Upanishad, a middle Upanishadic era script dated to be about 2500 years old, is among the earliest expositions about *saṃsāra* and *moksha*. In Book I, Section III, the legend of boy

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Naciketa queries Yama, the lord of death to explain what causes *samsāra* and what leads to liberation. Naciketa inquires: what causes sorrow? Yama explains that suffering and *samsāra* results from a life that is lived absent-mindedly, with impurity, with neither the use of intelligence nor self-examination, where neither mind nor senses are guided by one's *atma* (soul, self). Liberation comes from a life lived with inner purity, alert mind, led by *buddhi* (reason, intelligence), realization of the Supreme Self (*purusha*) who dwells in all beings. Kathaka Upanishad asserts knowledge liberates, knowledge is freedom. Kathaka Upanishad also explains the role of yoga in personal liberation, *moksha*. Svetasvatara Upanishad, another middle era Upanishad written after Kathaka Upanishad, begins with questions such as why is man born, what is the primal cause behind the universe, what causes joy and sorrow in life? It then examines the various theories, that were then existing, about *samsāra* and release from bondage. Svetasvatara claims bondage results from ignorance, illusion or delusion; deliverance comes from knowledge. The Supreme Being dwells in every being, he is the primal cause, he is the eternal law, he is the essence of everything, he is nature, he is not a separate entity. Liberation comes to those who know Supreme Being is present as the Universal Spirit and Principle, just as they know butter is present in milk. Such realization, claims Svetasvatara, come from self-knowledge and self-discipline; and this knowledge and realization is liberation from transmigration, the final goal of the Upanishad.





In myths and temples of India and Bali Indonesia, Sarasvati appears with swan. Sarasvati is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, learning and creative arts, while swan is a symbol of spiritual perfection, liberation and moksa. The symbolism of Sarasvati and the swan is that knowledge and moksa go together.

Starting with the middle Upanishad era, *moksha* - or equivalent terms such as *mukti* and *kaivalya* - is a major theme in many Upanishads. For example, Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad, one of several Upanishads of the bhakti school of Hinduism, starts out with prayers to Goddess Sarasvati. She is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, learning and creative arts; her name is a compound word of “sara” and “sva”, meaning "essence of self". After the prayer verses, the Upanishad inquires about the secret to freedom and liberation (*mukti*). Sarasvati's reply in the Upanishad is:

It was through me the Creator himself gained liberating knowledge,  
I am being, consciousness, bliss, eternal freedom: unsullied, unlimited,  
unending.

My perfect consciousness shines your world, like a beautiful face in a  
soiled mirror, Seeing that reflection I wish myself you, an individual  
soul, as if I could be finite!

A finite soul, an infinite Goddess - these are false concepts,  
in the minds of those unacquainted with truth,  
No space, my loving devotee, exists between your self and my self,  
Know this and you are free. This is the secret wisdom.

— Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad, Translated by Linda Johnsen

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### Evolution of the concept

The concept of *moksha*, according to Daniel Ingalls, represented one of many expansions in Hindu Vedic ideas of life and afterlife. In the Vedas, there were three stages of life: studentship, householdship and retirement. During the Upanishadic era, Hinduism expanded this to include a fourth stage of life: complete abandonment. In Vedic literature, there are three modes of experience: waking, dream and deep sleep. The Upanishadic era expanded it to include *turiyam* - the stage beyond deep sleep. The Vedas suggest three goals of man: kama, artha and dharma. To these, the Upanishadic era added *moksha*.

The acceptance of the concept of *moksha* in some schools of Hindu philosophy was slow. These refused to recognize *moksha* for centuries, considering it irrelevant. The Mimamsa school, for example, denied the goal and relevance of *moksha* well into the 8th century AD, until the arrival of a Mimamsa scholar named Kumarila. Instead of *moksha*, Mimamsa school of Hinduism considered the concept of heaven as sufficient to answer the question: what lay beyond this world after death. Other schools of Hinduism, over time, accepted the *moksha* concept and refined it over time.

It is unclear when the core ideas of samsara and *moksha* were developed in ancient India. Patrick Olivelle suggests these ideas likely originated with new religious movements in the first millennium BCE. *Mukti* and *moksha* ideas, suggests J. A. B. van Buitenen, seem traceable to yogis in Hinduism, with long hair, who chose to live on the fringes of society, given to self-induced states of intoxication and ecstasy, possibly accepted as medicine men and "sadhus" by the ancient Indian society. *Moksha* to these early concept developers, was the abandonment of the established order, not in favor of anarchy, but in favor of self-realization, to achieve release from this world.



Mokṣa is a key concept in Yoga, where it is a state of “awakening”, liberation and freedom in this life.

In its historical development, the concept of *moksha* appears in three forms: Vedic, yogic and bhakti. In the Vedic period, *moksha* was ritualistic. Mokṣa was claimed to result from properly completed rituals such as those before *Agni* - the fire deity. The significance of these rituals was to reproduce and recite the cosmic creation event described in the Vedas; the description of knowledge on different levels - *adhilokam*, *adhibhutam*, *adhiyajnam*, *adhyatmam* - helped the individual transcend to mokṣa. Knowledge was the means, the ritual its application. By the middle to late Upanishadic period, the emphasis shifted to knowledge, and ritual activities were considered irrelevant to the attainment of *moksha*. Yogic *moksha* replaced Vedic rituals with personal development and meditation, with hierarchical creation of the ultimate knowledge in self as the path to *moksha*. Yogic *moksha* principles were accepted in many other schools of Hinduism, albeit with differences. For example, Adi Shankara in his book on *moksha* suggests:

अर्थस्य निश्चयो दृष्टो विचारेण हितोक्तिः ।  
न स्नानेन न दानेन प्राणायमशतेन वा ॥ १३ ॥

By reflection, reasoning and instructions of teachers, the truth is known, Not by ablutions, not by making donations, nor by performing hundreds of breath control exercises. || Verse 13 ||

— Vivekachudamani, 8th Century AD

Bhakti *moksha* created the third historical path, where neither rituals nor meditative self-development were the way, rather it was inspired by constant love and contemplation of God, which over time results in a perfect union with God. Some Bhakti schools evolved their ideas where God became the means and the end, transcending *moksha*; the fruit of bhakti is bhakti itself. In the history of Indian religious traditions, additional ideas and paths to *moksha* beyond these three, appeared over time.

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### Synonyms

The words *moksha*, nirvana (*nibbana*) and kaivalya are sometimes used synonymously,<sup>1</sup> because they all refer to the state that liberates a person from all causes of sorrow and suffering. However, in modern era literature, these concepts have different premises in different religions. Nirvana, a concept common in Buddhism, is a state of realization that there is no self (no soul) and Emptiness; while *moksha*, a concept common in many schools of Hinduism, is acceptance of Self (soul), realization of liberating knowledge, the consciousness of Oneness with Brahman, all existence and understanding the whole universe as the Self. Nirvana starts with the premise that there is no Self, *moksha* on the other hand, starts with the premise that everything is the Self; there is no consciousness in the state of nirvana, but everything is One unified consciousness in the state of *moksha*.

Kaivalya, a concept akin to *moksha*, rather than nirvana, is found in some schools of Hinduism such as the Yoga school. Kaivalya is the realization of aloofness with liberating knowledge of one's self and union with the spiritual universe. For example, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra suggests:

तस्य हेतुरविद्या,  
तदभावात्संयोगाभावो हानं तद् दृशेः कैवल्यम् ।

After the dissolution of avidya (ignorance), comes removal of communion with material world, this is the path to Kaivalyam.

— *Yoga Sutra (Sadhana Pada)*, 2:24-25

Nirvana and *moksha*, in all traditions, represents a state of being in ultimate reality and perfection, but described in a very different way. Some scholars, states Jayatilleke, assert that the Nirvana of Buddhism is same as the Brahman in Hinduism, a view other scholars and he disagree with. Buddhism rejects the idea of Brahman, and the metaphysical ideas about soul (atman) are also rejected by Buddhism, while those ideas are essential to *moksha* in Hinduism.<sup>[60]</sup> In Buddhism, nirvana is 'blowing out' or 'extinction'. In Hinduism, *moksha* is 'identity or oneness with

Brahman'. Realization of *anatta* (anatman) is essential to Buddhist nirvana. Realization of *atman* (atta) is essential to Hindu *moksha*.

### Hinduism

Ancient literature of different schools of Hinduism sometimes use different phrases for *moksha*. For example, *Keval jnana* or *kaivalya* ("state of Absolute"), *Apavarga*, *Nihisreyasa*, *Paramapada*, *Brahmabhava*, *Brahma jnana* and *Brahmi sthiti*. Modern literature additionally uses the Buddhist term nirvana interchangeably with *moksha* of Hinduism. There is difference between these ideas, as explained elsewhere in this article, but they are all soteriological concepts of various Indian religious traditions.

The six major orthodox schools of Hinduism have had a historic debate, and disagree over whether *moksha* can be achieved in this life, or only after this life.<sup>[67]</sup> Many of the 108 Upanishads discuss amongst other things *moksha*. These discussions show the differences between the schools of Hinduism, a lack of consensus, with a few attempting to conflate the contrasting perspectives between various schools.<sup>[68]</sup> For example, freedom and deliverance from birth-rebirth, argues Maitrayana Upanishad, comes neither from the Vedanta school's doctrine (the knowledge of one's own Self as the Supreme Soul) nor from the Samkhya school's doctrine (distinction of the Purusha from what one is not), but from Vedic studies, observance of the *Svadharmas* (personal duties), sticking to *Asramas* (stages of life).

The six major orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy offer the following views on *moksha*, each for their own reasons: the Nyaya, Vaishesika and Mimamsa schools of Hinduism consider *moksha* as possible only after death.<sup>[67][70]</sup> Samkhya and Yoga schools consider *moksha* as possible in this life. In Vedanta school, the Advaita sub-school concludes *moksha* is possible in this life,<sup>[67]</sup> while Dvaita and Visistadvaita sub-schools of Vedanta tradition believes that *moksha* is a continuous event, one assisted by loving devotion to God, that extends from this life to post-mortem. Beyond these six orthodox schools, some heterodox schools of Hindu tradition, such as Carvaka, deny there is a soul or after life *moksha*.

### Sāmkhya, Yoga and mokṣa

Both Sāmkhya and Yoga systems of religious thought are *mokshaśāstras*, suggests Knut Jacobsen, they are systems of salvific liberation and release. Sāmkhya is a system of interpretation, primarily a theory about the world. Yoga is both a theory and a practice. Yoga gained wide acceptance in ancient India, its ideas and practices became part of many religious schools in Hinduism, including those that were very different from Sāmkhya. The eight limbs of yoga can be interpreted as a way to liberation (*moksha*).

In Sāmkhya literature, liberation is commonly referred to as *kaivalya*. In this school, *kaivalya* means the realization of *purusa*, the principle of consciousness, as independent from mind and body, as different from *prakṛti*. Like many schools of Hinduism, in Sāmkhya and Yoga schools, the emphasis is on the attainment of knowledge, *vidyā* or *jñāna*, as necessary for salvific liberation, *moksha*.<sup>[72][74]</sup> Yoga's purpose is then seen as a means to remove the *avidyā* - that is, ignorance or misleading/incorrect knowledge about one self and the universe. It seeks to end ordinary reflexive awareness (*cittavṛtti nirodhah*) with deeper, purer and holistic awareness (*asamprājñāta samādhi*). Yoga, during the pursuit of *moksha*, encourages practice (*abhyāsa*) with detachment (*vairāgya*), which over time leads to deep concentration (*samādhi*). Detachment means withdrawal from outer world and calming of mind, while practice means the application of effort over time. Such steps are claimed by Yoga school as leading to *samādhi*, a state of deep awareness, release and bliss called *kaivalya*.



**Jñāna yoga**





**Bhakti yoga**



**Rāja marga**

Three of four paths of spirituality in Hinduism. Each path suggests a different way to *moksha*.

Yoga, or *mārga* (meaning "way" or "path"), in Hinduism is widely classified into four spiritual approaches. The first *mārga* is Jñāna Yoga, the way of knowledge. The second *mārga* is Bhakti Yoga, the way of loving devotion to God. The third *mārga* is Karma Yoga, the way of works. The fourth *mārga* is Rāja Yoga, the way of contemplation and meditation. These *mārgas* are part of different schools in Hinduism, and their definition and methods to *moksha*. For example, the Advaita Vedanta school relies on Jñāna Yoga in its teachings of *moksha*.

### **Vedanta and mokṣa**

The three main sub-schools in Vedanta school of Hinduism - Advaita Vedanta, Vishistadvaita and Dvaita - each have their own views about *moksha*.

The Vedantic school of Hinduism suggests the first step towards mokṣa begins with *mumukṣutva*, that is desire of liberation.<sup>[21]</sup> This takes the form of questions about self, what is true, why do things or events make us happy or cause suffering, and so on. This longing for liberating knowledge is assisted by, claims Adi Shankara of Advaita

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Vedanta, guru (teacher), study of historical knowledge and viveka (critical thinking). Shankara cautions that the guru and historic knowledge may be distorted, so traditions and historical assumptions must be questioned by the individual seeking *moksha*. Those who are on their path to *moksha* (samnyasin), suggests Klaus Klostermaier, are quintessentially free individuals, without craving for anything in the worldly life, thus are neither dominated by, nor dominating anyone else.

Vivekachudamani, which literally means "Crown Jewel of Discriminatory Reasoning", is a book devoted to moksha in Vedanta philosophy. It explains what behaviors and pursuits lead to *moksha*, as well what actions and assumptions hinder *moksha*. The four essential conditions, according to Vivekachudamani, before one can commence on the path of *moksha* include (1) *vivekah* (discrimination, critical reasoning) between everlasting principles and fleeting world; (2) *viragah* (indifference, lack of craving) for material rewards; (3) *samah* (calmness of mind), and (4) *damah* (self restraint, temperance). The *Brahmasutrabhasya* adds to the above four requirements, the following: *uparati* (lack of bias, dispassion), *titiksa* (endurance, patience), *sraddha* (faith) and *samadhana* (intentness, commitment).

The Advaita tradition considers *moksha* achievable by removing avidya (ignorance). *Moksha* is seen as a final release from illusion, and through knowledge (*anubhava*) of one's own fundamental nature, which is Satcitananda. Advaita holds there is no being/non-being distinction between *Atman*, *Brahman*, and *Paramatman*. The knowledge of Brahman leads to *moksha*,<sup>[84]</sup> where Brahman is described as that which is the origin and end of all things, the universal principle behind and at source of everything that exists, consciousness that pervades everything and everyone. Advaita Vedanta emphasizes Jnana Yoga as the means of achieving *moksha*. Bliss, claims this school, is the fruit of knowledge (*vidya*) and work (*karma*).

The Dvaita (dualism) traditions define *moksha* as the loving, eternal union with God (Vishnu) and considered the highest perfection of existence. Dvaita schools suggest every soul encounters liberation

differently. Dualist schools (e.g. Vaishnava) see God as the object of love, for example, a personified monotheistic conception of Shiva or Vishnu. By immersing oneself in the love of God, one's karmas slough off, one's illusions decay, and truth is lived. Both the worshiped and worshiper gradually lose their illusory sense of separation and only One beyond all names remains. This is salvation to dualist schools of Hinduism. Dvaita Vedanta emphasizes Bhakti Yoga as the means of achieving *moksha*.

The Vishistadvaita tradition, led by Ramanuja, defines *avidya* and *moksha* differently from the Advaita tradition. To Ramanuja, *avidya* is a focus on the self, and *vidya* is a focus on a loving god. The Vishistadvaita school argues that other schools of Hinduism create a false sense of agency in individuals, which makes the individual think oneself as potential or self-realized god. Such ideas, claims Ramanuja, decay to materialism, hedonism and self worship. Individuals forget *Ishvara* (God). Mukti, to Vishistadvaita school, is release from such *avidya*, towards the intuition and eternal union with God (Vishnu).

### **Mokṣa in this life**

Among the Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta schools of Hinduism, liberation and freedom reached within one's life is referred to as *jivanmukti*, and the individual who has experienced this state is called *jivanmukta* (self-realized person). Dozens of Upanishads, including those from middle Upanishadic period, mention or describe the state of liberation, *jivanmukti*. Some contrast *jivanmukti* with *videhamukti* (*moksha* from *samsara* after death). *Jivanmukti* is a state that transforms the nature, attributes and behaviors of an individual, claim these ancient texts of Hindu philosophy. For example, according to Naradaparivrajaka Upanishad, the liberated individual shows attributes such as:

- he is not bothered by disrespect and endures cruel words, treats others with respect regardless of how others treat him;
- when confronted by an angry person he does not return anger, instead replies with soft and kind words;
- even if tortured, he speaks and trusts the truth;

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- he does not crave for blessings or expect praise from others;
- he never injures or harms any life or being (ahimsa), he is intent in the welfare of all beings;
- he is as comfortable being alone as in the presence of others;
- he is as comfortable with a bowl, at the foot of a tree in tattered robe without help, as when he is in a mithuna (union of mendicants), grama (village) and nagara (city);
- he doesn't care about or wear śikha (tuft of hair on the back of head for religious reasons), nor the holy thread across his body. To him, knowledge is śikha, knowledge is the holy thread, knowledge alone is supreme. Outer appearances and rituals do not matter to him, only knowledge matters;
- for him there is no invocation nor dismissal of deities, no mantra nor non-mantra, no prostrations nor worship of gods, goddess or ancestors, nothing other than knowledge of Self;
- he is humble, high-spirited, of clear and steady mind, straightforward, compassionate, patient, indifferent, courageous, speaks firmly and with sweet words.

When a Jivanmukta dies he achieves Paramukti and becomes a Paramukta. Jivanmukta experience enlightenment and liberation while alive and also after death i.e., after becoming paramukta, while Videhmukta experiences enlightenment and liberation only after death.

### **Mokṣa in Balinese Hinduism**

Balinese Hinduism incorporates *moksha* as one of five tattwas. The other four are: *brahman* (the one supreme god head, not to be confused with Brahmin), *atma* (soul or spirit), karma (actions and reciprocity, causality), *samsara* (principle of rebirth, reincarnation). *Moksha*, in Balinese Hindu belief, is the possibility of unity with the divine; it is sometimes referred to as nirwana.

### **Buddhism**

In Buddhism the term "moksha" is uncommon, but an equivalent term is vimutti, "release". In the suttas two forms of release are mentioned,

namely ceto-vimutti, "deliverance of mind," and panna-vimutti, "deliverance through wisdom" (insight). Ceto-vimutti is related to the practice of dhyana, while panna-vimutti is related to the development of insight. According to Gombrich, the distinction may be a later development, which resulted in a change of doctrine, regarding the practice of dhyana to be insufficient for final liberation.

With release comes Nirvana (Pali: Nibbana), "blowing out", "quenching", or "becoming extinguished" of the fires of the passions and of self-view. It is a "timeless state" in which there is no more becoming.

Nirvana ends the cycle of Dukkha and rebirth in the six realms of Samsāra (Buddhism). It is part of the Four Noble Truths doctrine of Buddhism, which plays an essential role in Theravada Buddhism. Nirvana has been described in Buddhist texts in a manner similar to other Indian religions, as the state of complete liberation, enlightenment, highest happiness, bliss, fearless, freedom, dukkha-less, permanence, non-dependent origination, unfathomable, indescribable. It has also been described as a state of release marked by "emptiness" and realization of non-Self. Such descriptions, states Peter Harvey, are contested by scholars because nirvana in Buddhism is ultimately described as a state of "stopped consciousness (blown out), but one that is not non-existent", and "it seems impossible to imagine what awareness devoid of any object would be like".

### Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you know about Moksa?

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.....  
.....

2. Discuss about the Nature of Moksa.

.....  
.....  
.....

3. Describe Moksa in Buddhism.

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## 13.5 LET US SUM UP

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Moksha (/ˈmookʃə/; Sanskrit: मोक्ष, mokṣa), also called vimoksha, vimukti and mukti, is a term in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism for various forms of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release. In its soteriological and eschatological senses, it refers to freedom from saṃsāra, the cycle of death and rebirth. In its epistemological and psychological senses, moksha is freedom from ignorance: self-realization, self-actualization and self-knowledge.

In Hindu traditions, moksha is a central concept and the utmost aim to be attained through three paths during human life; these three paths are dharma (virtuous, proper, moral life), artha (material prosperity, income security, means of life), and kama (pleasure, sensuality, emotional fulfillment). Together, these four concepts are called Puruṣārtha in Hinduism.

In some schools of Indian religions, moksha is considered equivalent to and used interchangeably with other terms such as vimoksha, vimukti, kaivalya, apavarga, mukti, nihsreyasa and nirvana. However, terms such as moksha and nirvana differ and mean different states between various schools of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The term nirvana is more common in Buddhism, while moksha is more prevalent in Hinduism.

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## 13.6 KEY WORDS

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Moksha : Moksha (/ˈmookʃə/; Sanskrit: मोक्ष, mokṣa), also called vimoksha, vimukti and mukti, is a term in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism for various forms of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release. In its soteriological and eschatological senses.

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## 13.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. Discuss about the connection of Moksa in Hinduism.
  
2. Discuss the nature of Moksa.

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## 13.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 13.2
2. See Section 13.3
3. See Section 13.4



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## **UNIT 14: CONCEPT OF KARMA, BHAKTI AND JNANAYOGAS**

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### **STRUCTURE**

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Concept of karma Yoga
- 14.3 Bhakti yoga
- 14.4 Jnana yogas
- 14.5 Prapatti
- 14.6 Rejection of jivanmukti
- 14.7 Let us sum up
- 14.8 Key Words
- 14.9 Questions for Review
- 14.10 Suggested readings and references
- 14.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### **14.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know the Concept of karma Yoga
- To discuss the Bhakti yoga
- To discuss the Jnana yogas
- To know about the Prapatti
- To discuss Rejection of jivanmukti

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### **14.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The concept of Karma is India's unique contribution to the world. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, the major religions of the world which originated in India, all acknowledge the universality of the law of karma in their own individual ways. According to Jainism, karma is not just a metaphysical law, but a real substance which flows into people and attaches itself to them like an impurity as they engage in various actions.

People are born again and again until they rid themselves of the karmic substance.

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## 14.2 CONCEPT OF KARMA YOGA

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According to Buddhism, Karma is an eternal law, which is responsible for the births and deaths and the suffering of beings in the causative world or samsara. While no one can really be free from the law of karma, people can minimize its negative impact by leading a righteous life, following the Eightfold Path. According to the three religions, the law of karma is applicable not only to humans but all beings, including plants, animals and microorganisms.

The early Vedic people were not familiar with the concept of karma. However they had an ethical sense and awareness of dharma (divine justice) and righteous actions. They believed that by pleasing the divinities and performing ritual acts in a prescribed manner, men could enter the higher worlds, by the path of the moon or that of the sun according to their deeds. It is difficult to say whether they believed in the rebirth or reincarnation of souls. Probably they did not.

Karma is concerned not only with the relationship between actions and consequences, but also the moral reasons or intentions behind actions, according to a 1988 article in the journal *Philosophy East and West*. So if someone commits a good deed for the wrong reasons — making a charitable donation to impress a potential love interest, for example — the action could still be immoral and produce bad karma.

Importantly, karma is wrapped up with the concept of reincarnation or rebirth, in which a person is born in a new human (or nonhuman) body after death. The effects of an action can therefore be visited upon a person in a future life, and the good or bad fortune someone experiences may be the result of actions performed in past lives.

What's more, a person's karmic sum will decide the form he or she takes in the next life.

There are a number of Western religious (and non-religious) phrases that are similar to karma, including "what goes around comes around" and "violence begets violence."

### **The Origin and Development Of The Concept Of Karma**

The concept of karma entered Hinduism through ancient non-Vedic sects such as Saivism and Bhagavatism and the old Samkhya school. Saivism recognized karma as one of the three impurities<sup>1</sup> responsible for the bondage of individual souls. It emphasized that only by the grace of Siva or a guru who had realized Him, individual souls could free themselves from the impurities and attain liberation. For a considerable period of time, ancient religious sects of India debated on the question of whether it was fate or free will which shaped the lives of people upon earth. Those who believed in fatalism, such as the followers of Ajivikas, argued that everything in the world was predetermined and that there was nothing an individual could do other than accepting his lot passively and following the order of things (niyati) as they were. Those who believed in karma argued that man was endowed with free will and that he could change the course of his life, if he wanted, through his actions. They believed that desire ridden and egoistic thoughts and actions were responsible for the suffering of individual souls and their corporeal existence. According to them fate was a product of one's own actions and what might look like the intervention of chance in case of some individuals was actually a result of their previous actions done either in their present lives or in their previous ones.

It was the latter opinion that gained ground through the popularity of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Even Sikhism, which is the most recent of all Indian religions, accepts karma as an inseparable reality of the earthly life. Today if there is one concept that is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of Hindus, and for that matter a vast number of Indians, and influences their thinking and actions so deeply, it is undoubtedly the concept of Karma. They may not think of it constantly while they perform their daily chores, but it is there, deep in their subconscious minds, like a self-regulating mechanism, influencing their lives and actions. Hindus believe in the inviolable law of karma and its binding nature. Whether they are literate or illiterate, they honor it and respect it. It makes them feel responsible for their lives and accept their lot rather poignantly.

### **The Meaning And Purpose Of Karma**

## Notes

Generally speaking, karma means any action. "Kar" means organs of action and "ma" means producing or creating<sup>2</sup>. So literally speaking, karma is that which is created or produced by one's physical organs. However karma does not mean only physical actions. Mental actions also constitute karma. Hindus believe that thought has the power to create things and impact others. Harmful thoughts directed at others have the ability to hurt not only others but also the person who has unleashed them. Since ancient Hindus used mantras for everything and the mantras had great power and potency to make or break things, the practice of yoga became necessary to stabilize the minds and the thoughts of those who had the knowledge of the mantras and the ability to use them effectively. Ancient rishis had the power to materialize things through their thought power. Their blessing were as potent as their curses. When they cursed others, they lost a good part of their spiritual powers and had to spend a great deal of time to regain them by performing severe austerities and penances (tapas).

The karma incurred by a person through his actions determines the course of his life upon earth and his progression into the higher worlds. Since karma is a correcting and regulating mechanism, our actions have the potential to mitigate our suffering or intensify it. Karma is meant to teach us lessons. If we learn quickly, we will make progress towards perfection. If not we will be presented with much harder options until we realize our mistakes and correct them. Good deeds result in inner peace and happiness while bad deeds result in negative consequences for ourselves and our dependent souls.

### **Is Inaction Also Karma?**

Since both action and inaction have consequences, the law of Karma is equally reticent about what we do or do not do in our lives intentionally. We all are aware of the importance of inaction or non-performance of certain actions in our lives. What we intentionally do in this life is as important for our future as what we do not intentionally do. Both produced positive and negative consequences according to the choices we make. If we shun evil actions, we earn good karma. However, if we shun good actions also or if we do not respond righteously or adequately

to evil in our lives and environment for some personal or selfish reasons, we may suffer from the consequences of our passive complicity and cowardice. We have to be therefore very careful about our intentions and sincerity behind our actions and inaction. The Bhagavadgita touches upon this subject in the following verses (Ch. 4:17 & 18).

"Certainly one should have a clear knowledge of what is action, what is inaction and what is wrong action, for mysterious are the ways of action.

"He who sees action in inaction and inaction in action, is wise among all men. He is the accomplished yogi who has succeeded in performing actions.

### **References To Karma In The Hindu Scriptures**

References to the concept of karma is found copiously in the scriptures of Hinduism. Almost all of them identify desires as the root cause of our suffering and caution us against actions that are motivated by desires. The scriptures leave no doubt that every living being, including gods and celestial beings are bound by the law of karma.

### **Upanishads**

Although the Upanishads focus mainly on transcendental reality and the nature of Atman and Brahman, some of the early texts do contain references to the concept of karma and the importance of doing good deeds. The following passage found in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is perhaps one of the earliest references to the subject of karma in the Hindu scriptures.

" Accordingly as one behaves so does he become. The doer of good becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous actions. Others become bad by bad actions." (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Chapter 4, Brahmana 4, Verse 5)

The next passage in the same verse identifies desire as the root cause of all human activity.

## Notes

"Others however say that a person consists of desires. As is his desire, so is his will. As is his will so is the deed he does. Whatever deed he does that he attains."

The following verse in the same Upanishad deals with the consequences of actions performed by people out of desire. According to it, deeds attach themselves to the soul and go to the other world upon its departure, where they determine its further existence.

The object to which the mind is attached, the subtle self goes together with the deed, being attached to it alone. Exhausting the results of whatever works he did in the world he comes again from that world to this world for (fresh) work. This is for him who desires. But he who does not desire...his breaths do not depart. Being Brahman he goes to Brahman."

In the Svetasvatara Upanishad there are many passages that deal with the subject of karma such as the following, which declares that the embodied self wanders in this world and assumes many forms and lives according to its karma.

"Because of thoughts, touch, sight and passions, and because of the availability of food and drink there are the birth and growth for the individual soul. The embodied soul assumes various forms in various places according to the nature of his deeds.. (Svetasvatara Upanishad Chapter 5 and Verse 11)

### **The Bhagavadgita**

In the Bhagavadgita there is an entire chapter dealing with the subject of karma yoga or the yoga of action. The scripture repeatedly emphasizes the binding nature of desire ridden actions and how we can free ourselves from the consequences of such actions. It affirms God as the real Doer. In the scripture, Lord Krishna informs Arjuna, His disciple, that our actions arise from our desires, which in turn are caused by the triple gunas or qualities that are inherent in us and in the entire creation, namely sattva, rajas and tamas. Karma binds each soul to the cycle of births and deaths until it manages to find a way out by completely and unconditionally surrendering itself to God and by performing actions without desires and expectations.

"He who is free from attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, whose actions are but actions of sacrifice only, his actions are completely dissolved.

"His offering is Brahman, his oblation is Brahman, his sacrificial fire is Brahman, the sacrificer is Brahman. He certainly attains Brahman who finds Brahman situated in all activities. (Bhagavadgita Ch. 4: Verse 23 and 24)

### **The Puranas**

We cannot fail to notice the symbolic representation of desire in the Hindu Puranas and Hindu mythology and how it motivates people and gods alike in performing various kinds of actions. Desire was the great serpent Vrata that Indra slew. Desire was the dark serpent Kali whom Krishna tamed after a bitter fight and on whose head He danced, symbolizing His complete mastery. Desire was the mischievous god of lust whom Siva reduced to ashes with His third eye. Desire again was the reason why Kaikeyi decided to insist upon Lord Rama going to the forest. Desire and ambition made Dhritarashtra, the father of the Kauravas, to remain passive while his sons indulged in evil actions to usurp the throne from their cousins, the Pandavas. Desire ruined the life of Ahalya and the wives of Rishis when they succumbed to the temptations of gods. Desire made Varudhini seduce Pravarakhya, her father's sincere disciple. So it was in case of Yami who approached her own brother Yama with lustful intentions. Even Brahma, the creator, was overcome with desire to marry Saraswathi, the goddess of learning, who was his own creation. It was because of the desire to outdo each other, the gods and demons fought with each other several times. It was out of the desire to achieve immortality the gods and demons churned the ocean and extracted amrita or the elixir of life. Desire is the multi-headed Adishesha on which Lord Vishnu rests, while the Goddess of wealth, whom every one covets, sits at His feet. True to the tradition, it was desire which Lord Buddha, Mahavira and later Guru Nanak identified as the root cause of all human suffering.

### **Which Karma is Binding?**

According to the tenets of Hinduism, actions performed out of desires bind all living beings. Actions that are rooted in ignorance also bind us. Even the most natural acts like breathing and sleeping are part of our karma. Our minds and bodies are made of the various principles or tattvas of Nature. Actions arising out of our inborn qualities<sup>3</sup> are also binding.

"But he who has qualities and is the doer of deeds that bear fruit, he is the enjoyer, surely of the consequences of whatever he has done. Assuming all forms characterized by the qualities, treading the three paths he, the ruler of the vital breaths wanders about according to his deeds." (Svetavatara Upanishad V.7).

In the Bhagavadgita we see a more detailed description of the nature and manner in which our actions arise and impact our lives individually and collectively. According to the scripture, contact with the sense objects results in attachment. Our attachment is responsible for our desires. From desire comes anger. Out of anger comes delusion. Delusion leads to confusion of memory and confusion of memory in turn leads to the loss of buddhi or discrimination. With the loss of buddhi man perishes. (Bhagavadgita, Chapter II).

### **Non-Action Is No Solution**

If our actions are responsible for our karmic consequences, it follows logically that by inaction we can resolve the problem of karma and break the chain of cause and effect. However it is not true. Non-action is not a solution to the problem of karma because firstly it is practically impossible to live without doing something even for a moment. Even when we are seemingly inactive, there are still some activities that take place in us like breathing, thinking, blood circulation, digestion and so on. Secondly as we discussed in the previous paragraphs, deliberate inaction may sometime produce negative and harmful consequences.

### **Renunciation of Desire**



Actions by themselves do not cause bondage. It is the attitude with which we perform our actions, which is more important. Good actions do not necessarily always produce good consequences. Our morals and values are relative. Killing a person in the battlefield is valor. But killing him on the street is a mortal sin. Thus, the context and the intention with which we perform our actions are important. Equally important is the reason why do them. Work done with an egoistic attitude, with a desire to enjoy its fruit, results in our suffering and bondage to the cycle of births and deaths. The Bhagavadgita makes this point very clear in the following verse.

Certainly one should have a clear knowledge of what is action, what is inaction and what is wrong action, for mysterious are the ways of action. (Bhagavadgita Ch4:17)

Then what is the solution? Again we find a clear answer in the scripture: "He whose all undertakings are devoid of desires, whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge, he is declared as a scholar by the wise. "Renouncing all attachment to the fruits of his actions, ever satisfied, without seeking shelter or protection, depending upon nothing, he certainly does nothing though he is engaged in actions. (Bhagavadgita Ch4:19-20)

We have to realize that actions by themselves do not bind us. God Himself is a dynamic and active Principle. Our world is a world of movements and living within it we cannot remain inactive. We cannot control the world or its myriad things. But we can control our actions and our thoughts and desires behind them. We can change the way we think about ourselves or the way we look for security through material things. We can also relinquish our doership, acknowledging sincerely that we are mere instruments in the hands of the divine and that He is the real Doer.

### **Accepting God As The Doer**

The law of karma does not apply to God because He is complete in Himself and there is nothing that He desires or does not have. He is all, is

## Notes

in all and around all. Actions do not bind Him as He performs all His actions without desire and without attachment. As the Indweller of everything, He is at the center of all our actions and inaction. His will or intention reigns supreme. All that is here and whatever we have moves according to His inviolable Will. He is also the true enjoyer (bhogi) of the results of our actions. The whole creation exists for His enjoyment. He is the Creator and also the created. He makes the offering, is the offering and also the recipient of the offering. He is the priest who performs the rituals, the things that are offered in the rituals, the divinities who receive the offerings, the people who participate in it and also the mysterious and silent witness watching all these things simultaneously. Therefore, the first and the most important step in freeing ourselves from the consequences of our actions is to acknowledge the supreme Will of God and surrender to Him unconditionally.

### **Make Your Life A Sacrificial Offering To God**

Renunciation, detachment and sacrifice go hand in hand with the true virtues of self-surrender, faith and selflessness. The best way to renounce the fruit of our actions is to make an offering of it to God with humility, devotion and detachment. In the very first verse of the Isa Upanishad, we come to know why we should live in this world with a sense of sacrifice.

All this is inhabited by God, whatever that moves here in this moving universe. Therefore by renunciation alone enjoy all things. Do not covet what belongs to others.(Isa 1.1)

When the whole universe is inhabited by God and everything belongs to Him, what else is there that we can call as our own? Can we hope to own something that is not ours? True enjoyment, according to the Upanishad, is possible only when we free ourselves from the burden of ownership and egoism and transfer our problems and responsibilities to God, surrendering ourselves unconditionally to Him. When we detach ourselves from all the bonds, we become free from the compulsion of

carrying our burdens entirely upon our shoulders and in that freedom we begin to enjoy our earthly existence.

### **True Renunciation Is An Attitude**

Renunciation does not mean that one should leave behind everything physically and live a reclusive and depressed life of self-negation and self-denial. Mental renunciation of things and ownership is much more important than the outward and superficial renunciation. One has to be inwardly free from the encumbrances and burdens of life, without feeling oppressed or intimidated by the suffering that is part of our existence. It means that one should live with the spirit of renunciation and inner detachment and enjoy life as it comes, without any preferences, expectations and the need to own and possess or promote oneself. We find this theme in the next verse of the same Upanishad.

Always performing works here (with the spirit of renunciation) one should wish to live a hundred years. There is no other way by which karma would not adhere to you." (Isa I.2).

A similar idea is echoed by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, when He suggests that it is not renunciation of action but renunciation of the fruit of action which is the key to liberation.

"By renouncing mentally all his actions, the self-controlled karma yogi lives happily in the city of nine gates( the body) neither doing anything nor making other do any thing. (Bhagavadgita Chapter 5:13)

Actions performed without desire do not bind man to the cycle of births and deaths. Actions performed without any seeking do not bind.

"He who is free from attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, whose actions are but actions of sacrifice only, his actions are completely dissolved." (Bhagavadgita Chapter 4:22)

Therefore if one wants to remain free from the consequences of ones actions, one should perform them with a sense of detachment, without any desire for their fruit, surrendering oneself completely to God and offering all His actions to Him, acknowledging him as the real doer.

### **The Consequences of Karma**

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There is no definite time frame in which the karma of an individual bears fruit. The consequences of one's action may manifest immediately or after a certain gap. In the latter case it may happen in this lifetime or in some future birth. This mechanism explain clearly reasons for the sudden and inexplicable ups downs in our lives.

In the course of its long existence, which may stretch over millions of years, an individual soul carries the burden of its own karma upon its shoulders, like a baggage from its past. This is a baggage which no one can just leave behind. It is something that keeps growing continuously and uninterruptedly during our existence upon earth since we cannot live here without doing something each moment of our lives. And as we have seen earlier, it even follows us in death to the other world.

According to Hindu beliefs, when a person of good deeds dies, he goes to the next world through the path of light and enjoys the heavenly pleasures. When his karma is completely exhausted, he returns to the earth to continue his life again. A person of evil deeds on the other hand goes to the darker world through the path of darkness and suffers there till he exhausts his bad karma and returns to the earth.

In either case karma is a binding factor and has to be exhausted. It does not liberate man. It offers no greater rewards except a little relief if the actions are meritorious. It may provide temporary distractions for the embodied souls, but keeps them confined to the illusory world. What leads to their permanent liberation is the renunciation of the doership and detachment from the fruits of their actions.

### **Does Belief In Karma Makes One Fatalistic?**

The answer is certainly no. If you truly believe in the theory of karma you will not lead a passive and irresponsible life. You will live and act with the understanding and the belief that every event and circumstance in your life is your own creation. You will take responsibility for your life and actions. You will become more sensitive and mindful to what you do, whether you live and act ethically, and whether you are on the right side of things. You will listen to your conscience and do things that

are good for you and others. You will not blame others for your problems or expect others to come and save you. You will not live and act like a victim of your circumstances. Nor you will try to victimize others as you know the consequences of it. Most importantly, as you begin to look for solutions to the problem of your karma, at some stage in your life you will begin to accept God as the doer of your actions and surrender to Him unconditionally.

A true believer in karma would not blame anyone or anything for his or her difficulties in life. He knows that he creates each and every moment of his life through his own actions and intentions. He also knows that while there is nothing much he can do about his past, he can neutralize the effects of his karma and create a new future for himself through his present actions or by seeking the grace of God. This makes him feel more optimistic about his future and more sensitive about his present life. It also widens his vision and makes him look at himself and his life in a much larger and vaster timeframe encompassing not just this life, but countless lives stretching over millions of years.

When you truly believe in karma, you will take responsibility for your life.

*Karma* is the executed "deed", "work", "action", or "act", and it is also the "object", the "intent". Wilhelm Halbfass explains karma (karman) by contrasting it with another Sanskrit word *kriya*. The word *kriya* is the activity along with the steps and effort in action, while *karma* is (1) the executed action as a consequence of that activity, as well as (2) the intention of the actor behind an executed action or a planned action (described by some scholars as metaphysical residue left in the actor). A good action creates good karma, as does good intent. A bad action creates bad karma, as does bad intent.

Karma also refers to a conceptual principle that originated in India, often descriptively called the principle of karma, sometimes as the karma theory or the law of karma.<sup>[10]</sup> In the context of theory, karma is complex and difficult to define. Different schools of Indologists derive different definitions for the karma concept from ancient Indian texts; their definition is some combination of (1) causality that may be ethical or

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non-ethical; (2) ethicization, that is good or bad actions have consequences; and (3) rebirth. Other Indologists include in the definition of karma theory that which explains the present circumstances of an individual with reference to his or her actions in past. These actions may be those in a person's current life, or, in some schools of Indian traditions, possibly actions in their past lives; furthermore, the consequences may result in current life, or a person's future lives. The law of karma operates independent of any deity or any process of divine judgment.

Difficulty in arriving at a definition of *karma* arises because of the diversity of views among the schools of Hinduism; some, for example, consider karma and rebirth linked and simultaneously essential, some consider karma but not rebirth essential, and a few discuss and conclude karma and rebirth to be flawed fiction. Buddhism and Jainism have their own karma precepts. Thus karma has not one, but multiple definitions and different meanings. It is a concept whose meaning, importance and scope varies between Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and other traditions that originated in India, and various schools in each of these traditions. O'Flaherty claims that, furthermore, there is an ongoing debate regarding whether karma is a theory, a model, a paradigm, a metaphor, or a metaphysical stance.

Karma theory as a concept, across different Indian religious traditions, shares certain common themes: causality, ethicization and rebirth.

### Causality



Lotus symbolically represents karma in many Asian traditions. A blooming lotus flower is one of the few flowers that simultaneously

carries seeds inside itself while it blooms. Seed is symbolically seen as cause, the flower effect. Lotus is also considered as a reminder that one can grow, share good karma and remain unstained even in muddy circumstances.<sup>\</sup>

A common theme to theories of karma is its principle of causality. One of the earliest association of karma to causality occurs in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad of Hinduism. For example, at 4.4.5-6, it states:

Now as a man is like this or like that, according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he be; a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad; he becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds; And here they say that a person consists of desires, and as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap.

#### — Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 7th Century BCE

The relationship of karma to causality is a central motif in all schools of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist thought. The theory of karma as causality holds that (1) executed actions of an individual affects the individual and the life he or she lives, and (2) the intentions of an individual affects the individual and the life he or she lives. Disinterested actions, or unintentional actions do not have the same positive or negative karmic effect, as interested and intentional actions. In Buddhism, for example, actions that are performed, or arise, or originate without any bad intent such as covetousness, are considered non-existent in karmic impact or neutral in influence to the individual.

Another causality characteristic, shared by Karmic theories, is that like deeds lead to like effects. Thus good karma produces good effect on the actor, while bad karma produces bad effect. This effect may be material, moral or emotional — that is, one's karma affects one's happiness and unhappiness. The effect of karma need not be immediate; the effect of karma can be later in one's current life, and in some schools it extends to future lives.<sup>\</sup>

The consequence or effects of one's karma can be described in two forms: *phalas* and *samskaras*. A *phala* (literally, fruit or result) is the

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visible or invisible effect that is typically immediate or within the current life. In contrast, *samskaras* are invisible effects, produced inside the actor because of the karma, transforming the agent and affecting his or her ability to be happy or unhappy in this life and future ones. The theory of karma is often presented in the context of *samskaras*.

Karmic principle can be understood, suggests Karl Potter, as a principle of psychology and habit. Karma seeds habits (*vāsanā*), and habits create the nature of man. Karma also seeds self-perception, and perception influences how one experiences life events. Both habits and self-perception affect the course of one's life. Breaking bad habits is not easy: it requires conscious karmic effort. Thus psyche and habit, according to Potter and others, link karma to causality in ancient Indian literature. The idea of karma may be compared to the notion of a person's "character", as both are an assessment of the person and determined by that person's habitual thinking and acting.

### **Karma and ethicization**

The second theme common to karma theories is ethicization. This begins with the premise that every action has a consequence, which will come to fruition in either this or a future life; thus, morally good acts will have positive consequences, whereas bad acts will produce negative results. An individual's present situation is thereby explained by reference to actions in his present or in previous lifetimes. Karma is not itself "reward and punishment", but the law that produces consequence. Halbfass notes, good karma is considered as *dharma* and leads to *punya* (merit), while bad karma is considered *adharma* and leads to *pāp* (demerit, sin).

Reichenbach suggests that the theories of karma are an ethical theory. This is so because the ancient scholars of India linked intent and actual action to the merit, reward, demerit and punishment. A theory without ethical premise would be a pure causal relation; the merit or reward or demerit or punishment would be same regardless of the actor's intent. In ethics, one's intentions, attitudes and desires matter in the evaluation of one's action. Where the outcome is unintended, the moral responsibility for it is less on the actor, even though causal responsibility may be the same regardless. A karma theory considers not only the



action, but also actor's intentions, attitude, and desires before and during the action. The karma concept thus encourages each person to seek and live a moral life, as well as avoid an immoral life. The meaning and significance of karma is thus as a building block of an ethical theory.

### Rebirth

The third common theme of karma theories is the concept of reincarnation or the cycle of rebirths (*samsāra*). Rebirth is a fundamental concept of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. The concept has been intensely debated in ancient literature of India; with different schools of Indian religions considering the relevance of rebirth as either essential, or secondary, or unnecessary fiction. Karma is a basic concept, rebirth is a derivative concept, so suggests Creel; Karma is a fact, asserts Yamunacharya, while reincarnation is a hypothesis; in contrast, Hiriyanna suggests rebirth is a necessary corollary of karma.

Rebirth, or *samsāra*, is the concept that all life forms go through a cycle of reincarnation, that is a series of births and rebirths. The rebirths and consequent life may be in different realm, condition or form. The karma theories suggest that the realm, condition and form depends on the quality and quantity of karma. In schools that believe in rebirth, every living being's soul transmigrates (recycles) after death, carrying the seeds of Karmic impulses from life just completed, into another life and lifetime of karmas. This cycle continues indefinitely, except for those who consciously break this cycle by reaching *moksa*. Those who break the cycle reach the realm of gods, those who don't continue in the cycle.

The theory of "karma and rebirth" raises numerous questions—such as how, when, and why did the cycle start in the first place, what is the relative Karmic merit of one karma versus another and why, and what evidence is there that rebirth actually happens, among others. Various schools of Hinduism realized these difficulties, debated their own formulations, some reaching what they considered as internally consistent theories, while other schools modified and de-emphasized it, while a few schools in Hinduism such as Charvakas, Lokayatana abandoned "karma and rebirth" theory altogether. Schools of Buddhism consider karma-rebirth cycle as integral to their theories of soteriology.

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Early development

The Vedic Sanskrit word *kárman-* (nominative *kárma*) means "work" or "deed", often used in the context of Sruta rituals. In the Rigveda, the word occurs some 40 times. In Satapatha Brahmana 1.7.1.5, sacrifice is declared as the "greatest" of *works*; Satapatha Brahmana 10.1.4.1 associates the potential of becoming immortal (*amara*) with the *karma* of the agnicayana sacrifice.

The earliest clear discussion of the karma doctrine is in the Upanishads. For example, the causality and ethicization is stated in Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 3.2.13 ("Truly, one becomes good through good *deeds*, and evil through evil *deeds*.")

Some authors state that the *samsara* (transmigration) and karma doctrine may be non-Vedic, and the ideas may have developed in the "shramana" traditions that preceded Buddhism and Jainism. Others state that some of the complex ideas of the ancient emerging theory of karma flowed from Vedic thinkers to Buddhist and Jain thinkers. The mutual influences between the traditions is unclear, and likely co-developed.

Many philosophical debates surrounding the concept are shared by the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist traditions, and the early developments in each tradition incorporated different novel ideas. For example, Buddhists allowed karma transfer from one person to another and *śraddha* rites, but had difficulty defending the rationale. In contrast, Hindu schools and Jainism would not allow the possibility of karma transfer.

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## 14.3 BHAKTI YOGA

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What Does Bhakti Yoga Mean?

The Sanskrit word *bhakti* comes from the root *bhaj*, which means "to adore or worship God." *Bhakti yoga* has been called "love for love's sake" and "union through love and devotion." *Bhakti yoga*, like any other form of yoga, is a path to self-realization, to having an experience of oneness with everything.

"*Bhakti* is the yoga of a personal relationship with God," says musician Jai Uttal, who learned the art of devotion from his guru, the late Neem

Karoli Baba. At the heart of bhakti is surrender, says Uttal, who lives in California but travels the globe leading kirtans and chanting workshops.

Yoga scholar David Frawley agrees. In his book, *Yoga: The Greater Tradition*, he writes that the ultimate expression of bhakti yoga is surrender to the Divine as one's inner self. The path, he says, consists of concentrating one's mind, emotions, and senses on the Divine.

### Where to Practice Bhakti Yoga

As American yoga matures, interest in bhakti yoga has exploded. The Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, holds an annual bhakti festival. Yoga Tree in San Francisco held the Bhakti Yoga Sunsplash, a celebration with music. And Bhakti Fest is another yoga festival worth attending.

### How Yogis Practice Bhakti Yoga Today

Today's Western yogis don't necessarily practice devotion to a Hindu deity, a guru, or "God" as a patriarchal figure in white robes (although some do). Many Westerners who practice bhakti yoga tend to connect with a more encompassing idea of the Divine, the Beloved, the Spirit, the Self, or the Source. As Uttal says, "Everyone has their own idea or feeling of what 'God' is."

"For me, bhakti means whatever strikes your heart with beauty, whatever hits the mark of your heart and inspires you to just feel the love," says Sianna Sherman, a senior Anusara Yoga teacher.

As you tap into this universal love, you naturally develop a sense of trust that this benevolent, wise universe provides; you relax; and you can't help but generate positive energy for others.

Frawley calls bhakti "the sweetest of the yoga approaches" and says it is often more accessible than other forms of yoga, which may explain its growing popularity. "

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At first, American yoga was just a fitness thing," says Carlos Pomedá, a yoga scholar in Austin, Texas. "But more and more we are seeing people discover this whole other world of love and devotion."

See also *Lead With Your Heart: How to Practice Bhakti Yoga*

### A Brief History of Bhakti Yoga

In its purest form, bhakti burns like a devotional fire in the heart. An early and extreme example of a bhakti yogi comes from the 12th century, when a 10-year-old girl named Akka Mahadevi shunned childhood games and instead became a devotee of Shiva, the Hindu deity known as the aspect of destructive forces.

Mahadevi eventually married a local king. But she found that her overwhelming love for Shiva overshadowed mortal love. She rejected her husband and ran away. According to legend, she gave up all of the riches of the kingdom, leaving even her clothes behind, and used her long hair to cover her body. For the rest of her life, Mahadevi devoted herself to Shiva, singing his praises as she traveled blissfully around India as a wandering poet and saint.

Akka Mahadevi is part of the rich tradition of bhakti yoga, which, historically, is seen as a reaction to a more ascetic approach to self-realization. Five thousand years ago, yoga represented a spirit of struggle, a solitary pursuit of overcoming the body and mind. In his quest for enlightenment, the archetypal yogi gave up clothes in favor of a loincloth, shunned material possessions, and paid little heed to the body's desire for food and sex. By renouncing all worldly pleasures, he sought to quiet his mind and know the Self.

But another idea was also brewing—one that emphasized the importance of channeling love toward God. The turning point in accepting this new path was the Bhagavad Gita, which was written somewhere between the third and second century BCE.

The Gita, often called a "love song to God," expressed the idea that it's possible to move toward the highest goal—that of spiritual realization—by developing a connection with the heart. "The Gita is the birthplace of bhakti yoga," Pomedra says. "It was the first statement where you see bhakti as a separate—and complete—path."

With this idea cracked wide open, yogis began to view devotion as a legitimate route to enlightenment. But the Gita doesn't prescribe any specifics on the bhakti path. According to Pomedra, it would take several centuries for a systematic practice of bhakti yoga to solidify.

By the fifth century CE, the first devotional schools in the Shaiva tradition started to spring up in Southern India. These schools advocated devotion: worshipping and chanting mantra to deities like Shiva, Krishna, Vishnu, and Kali; singing devotional songs; following a guru; meditating on the Divine; reading and writing ecstatic poetry; and performing rituals like puja and arati ceremonies. The bhakti tradition emphasized the intense longing to know God, often called "the Beloved" in the poetry of the time.

In a beautiful way, bhakti yoga values love and tolerance, which was revolutionary in the conventional caste system of India. Traditionally, women stayed home and only upper-caste men undertook serious spiritual study. But texts show that everyone, of whatever gender or class, was welcome to embrace bhakti practices.

"Lower castes and women don't show up much anywhere in the narratives of this time, but they do show up in the bhakti traditions in India," Pomedra says. "This speaks to the democratic spirit of devotion, the universality of devotion."

Bhakti Yoga is the Path of Devotion

How can you incorporate Bhakti yoga into your daily life?

Bhakti Yoga is the Path of Devotion

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Bhakti yoga is one of six systems of yoga revered throughout history as paths that can lead you to full awareness of your true nature. Other paths to self-realization are hatha yoga (transformation of the individual consciousness through a practice that begins in the body); jnana yoga (inner knowledge and insight); karma yoga (skill in action); kriya yoga (ritual action); and raja yoga (the eight-limbed path also known as the classical yoga of Patanjali). These paths aren't mutually exclusive, although, for many, one path will resonate more deeply.

Ayurvedic physician, scholar, and author Robert Svoboda illuminates one way these systems overlap: He says that an asana practice (as part of hatha yoga) provides the opportunity to gather and direct the prana (life force) necessary to follow the rigorous path of a true bhakti yogi.

"Only when you have removed the obvious obstructions to the circulation of prana out of your kosha [bodily sheaths] will the prana [be able to circulate]," he says. "Then you can collect and refine it and get it down deep into your marrow."

But while getting your prana circulating is a worthy goal, Svoboda thinks it's not important—and potentially detrimental to the path of bhakti—to get caught up in complicated asana practice, which could deter you from the true goal of knowing your authentic Self.

Some Western yogis dabble in bhakti yoga through an occasional prayer or kirtan. But if you're a serious practitioner looking to find union with the Divine, a more rigorous practice is in order.

Svoboda says the path of devotion involves total dedication and surrender. He doesn't identify a person, deity, object, or idea to which bhakti yogis should devote themselves. Each individual needs to discover that through whatever process they believe in—a prayer to God or a request to the universe—to ask for guidance, he says.

"You need to say, 'I desperately need to be guided, and I request guidance on what to do, whom to worship, how to worship, and when to do it. I am requesting your permanent direction in my life.'"

And you may need to do so repeatedly, Svoboda says, until you actually surrender, not just surrender superficially. He says that you need determination, patience, and a certain desperation to fully surrender to the bhakti path.

It sounds like a tall order for Westerners, but it's certainly worth trying. "If you have an asana practice, do a little bhakti practice every day," he advises. If it works for you, dedicate yourself to it; determination does pay off. "You have to decide that this path of devotion is what you're going to do—[that] this is what is most important to you. Tell yourself that life is short, that death is inevitable. Tell yourself, 'I don't want to be where I am now when I die.'"

### Who's Your Guru or Your God?

Just as Akka Mahadevi devoted herself to Shiva, some modern bhaktis devote themselves to a specific deity. For example, Seitz feels guided by Saraswati and other deities in her creative work in the field of book publishing.

Still others devote themselves to a guru, living or dead. For practitioners of Integral Yoga, it is Swami Satchidananda; Sivananda yogis revere Swami Sivananda; Siddha Yoga members follow Gurumayi Chidvilasananda. Each of these traditions maintains ashrams or centers where followers gather to receive spiritual instruction and to come together for meditation and acts of worship such as puja ceremonies.

Some find having a guru essential to the bhakti path. Northern California yoga teacher Thomas Fortel was deeply involved in the Siddha Yoga tradition for two decades.

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He says that his teacher, Gurumayi, made him feel safe enough to explore and surrender to God. Uttal says that his guru, Neem Karoli Baba, helped teach him that divine energy is in everyone. But both students bring a modern spin to the guru question. "In the end, it's all about internalizing what I learned and making it my own," Fortel says.

Uttal suggests that a Hindu guru is not essential. "I believe that everyone has a guru. That guru doesn't necessarily take a human form, but if they need it, it's there," he says. "For me, bhakti takes a particular form: singing kirtan, playing music, and being married and being a daddy. I think my little boy is as much an expression of my bhakti practice as any mantra."

But he hesitates to say that he can give a true definition of bhakti or say what the practice involves for anyone but himself. "One of the scary things about being asked the definition of bhakti is that it opens the door for me to think I know something. For me, one of the hugest parts of bhakti is remembering that I don't know anything. Anything I do for my ego just brings more ego. All I can begin to do is offer everything to God."

See also *Ultimate Vibration: The Power of Bhakti Yoga and Kirtan*

### **Broadening the Definition of "Bhakti Yoga"**

Many modern bhakti yogis believe that "the guru" can be found in all things. Bhakti, then, becomes a state of mind, a consciousness that involves embracing the Beloved—in whatever form that takes. San Francisco yoga teacher Rusty Wells calls his style of yoga "Bhakti Flow." To him, the definition of bhakti yoga can get unnecessarily complicated: "What I've always understood is that it's a simple way to embrace the Beloved, the Divine, God, or the connection to other sentient beings on this planet," he says. He often begins class by encouraging students to offer their effort, compassion, and sense of devotion to someone in their life who is struggling or suffering.



Sherman, who also relies on a contemporary interpretation of bhakti, aims to inspire the practice of devotion in her students.

"Everyone shares the experience of love, but it looks different for every person," she says. "Some people fall madly in love with different aspects of nature; for others, it's a way of dancing or speaking poetically. It can look like so many different things. I don't try to determine what that is for somebody, but just by teaching from that place of love inside me, my hope is that people feel welcome to find that place inside themselves."

There was a time when the most dominant factor in a human being was his emotion. Today, emotion is not the most dominant part in you but it is still the most intense part in you. Most people are not able to get their physical body to a high level of intensity. It takes a lot of effort to keep the body intense. People can keep the mind intense off and on, but very few people are capable sustaining an intense mind. In energy, people are generally not at all intense. They know only certain moments of intensity, not a steady state of intensity. But emotion can get very intense. If not love, at least in anger you are intense. In some emotion you are capable of being intense. If I cannot make you get intense with love or joy, if I abuse you, you will become intense with anger at least – intense to a point where you will not sleep the whole night. If I tell you, "Please sit and stay awake. I will teach yoga," you will drop off to sleep. But if I abuse you, you will sit awake the whole night. Angry people cannot sleep, isn't it? So emotion has always been the dominant factor in human beings.

### **Bhakti yoga: Using intensity of emotion**

The only thing is, emotion can take different forms. It can take very sweet and wonderful forms, it can take absolutely nasty and horrendous forms. The thing is to train it to take a sweet and beautiful form. Devotion is a way of transforming your emotion from negativity to pleasantness. Just see, people who have fallen in love do not care about what is happening in the world. The way they are, you think they are unrealistic. It is just that they have made their emotions pleasant, so their

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life is beautiful. That is the state of a devotee. Devotion is a multiplied and enhanced version of a love affair. A devotee is in an unending kind of love affair because if you fall in love with a man or a woman, they do not go the way you expect them to, and it eventually gets into some trouble. That is why people choose God. It is simply a love affair, and you are not expecting any response. Your life becomes utterly beautiful because your emotion has become so sweet. Through that sweetness, one grows. That is devotion.

Devotion is another dimension of intelligence. Intellect wants to conquer the truth. Devotion just embraces the truth. Devotion cannot decipher but devotion can experience. Intellect can decipher but can never experience. This is the choice one has to make.

### **Devotion: A question of perspective**

A diagram of Earth's location in the Universe in a series of eight maps that show from left to right, starting with the Earth, moving to the Solar System, onto the Solar Interstellar Neighborhood, onto the Milky Way, onto the Local Galactic Group, onto the Virgo Supercluster, onto our local superclusters, and finishing at the observable Universe.

When you are overwhelmed by something or someone, you naturally become devout. But if you try to practice devotion, it creates problems because the line between devotion and deception is very thin – it will lead you into so many kinds of hallucinations. So you cannot practice devotion, but you can do certain things so that you arrive at devotion.

If you just recognize one thing, you will naturally become a devotee: the cosmos is very large. You do not know where it begins or where it ends. There are hundreds of billions of galaxies. In this vast cosmos, this solar system is a tiny speck. If the solar system disappears tomorrow, it will not even be noticed in the cosmos. In this tiny speck of a solar system, planet earth is a micro speck. In this micro speck of a planet, the city you live in is a super-micro speck. In that, you are a big man! This is a serious problem of perspective. It is only because of this that there is no devotion in you.

If you cannot imagine the vastness, the Hubble telescope has brought in all kinds of fantastic pictures which are on the internet. Just look at the pictures and see how endless it is. Or go out at night, switch off the lights and look at the sky. You don't know where it begins or where it ends, and here you are a micro-super-micro speck of dust, spinning on a planet, not knowing where you come from or where you will go. It will be very natural for you to be devout. You will bow down to everything you see. If you just look at yourself with reference to the rest of the creation, there is no other way to go. It is only because people have lost perspective of who they are and what their place in this existence is, that they have become arrogant fools.

With all our science, we have not figured even a single atom in its entirety. We know things in bits and pieces, we know how to use them but we do not know what it is. If you realize this, if you observe everything, a leaf, a flower, an atom, a bird, an animal, an ant, you cannot understand one thing in its entirety. Then you will bow down to everything. Even an atom is beyond your grasp. That is the nature of creation. If you pay attention to the nature of creation, how can you not be a devotee?

One simple thing you can do is consider everything in this existence as higher than yourself. The stars are definitely higher, but try seeing the little pebble on the street as higher than yourself. Anyway, it is more permanent, more stable than you. It can sit still forever! If you learn to look at everything around you with attention and care, you will realize that you can not even figure the nature of an atom in its entirety. Everything is above your intelligence. Everything is higher than yourself, you will naturally become devout.

A devotee knows things that you cannot even imagine. He can grasp things that you have to struggle with because there is not much of him within himself. When you are too full of self, there is no room for anything higher to happen.

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Devotion does not mean you have to be a temple-going, pooja-doing, coconut-breaking person. A devotee has understood what his place in the existence is. If you have understood this and are conscious of it, you will walk as a devout person. There is no other way to be. It is a very intelligent way to exist.

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### 14.4 JNANA YOGAS

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Jnana yoga is the yoga of knowledge—not knowledge in the intellectual sense—but the knowledge of Brahman and Atman and the realization of their unity. Where the devotee of God follows the promptings of the heart, the jnani uses the powers of the mind to discriminate between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transitory.

Jnanis, followers of nondualistic or advaita Vedanta, can also be called monists for they affirm the sole reality of Brahman. Of course, all followers of Vedanta are monists: all Vedantins affirm the sole reality of Brahman. The distinction here is in spiritual practice: while all Vedantins are philosophically monistic, in practice those who are devotees of God prefer to think of God as distinct from themselves in order to enjoy the sweetness of a relationship. Jnanis, by contrast, know that all duality is ignorance. There is no need to look outside ourselves for divinity: we ourselves already are divine.

What is it that prevents us from knowing our real nature and the nature of the world around us? The veil of maya. Jnana yoga is the process of directly rending that veil, tearing it through a two-pronged approach.

#### An Unreal Universe

The first part of the approach is negative, the process of *neti, neti*—not this, not this. Whatever is unreal—that is, impermanent, imperfect, subject to change—is rejected. The second part is positive: whatever is understood to be perfect, eternal, unchanging—is accepted as real in the highest sense.

Are we saying that the universe that we apprehend is unreal? Yes and no. In the absolute sense, it is unreal. The universe and our perception of it have only a conditional reality, not an ultimate one. To go back to our earlier reference to the rope and the snake: the rope, i.e., Brahman, is perceived to be the snake, i.e., the universe as we perceive it. While we are seeing the snake as a snake, it has a conditional reality. Our hearts palpitate as we react to our perception. When we see the “snake” for what it is, we laugh at our delusion.

Similarly, whatever we take in through our senses, our minds, our intellects, is inherently restricted by the very nature of our bodies and minds. Brahman is infinite; it cannot be restricted. Therefore this universe of change—of space, time, and causation—cannot be the infinite, all-pervading Brahman. Our minds are circumscribed by every possible condition; whatever the mind and intellect apprehend cannot be the infinite fullness of Brahman. Brahman must be beyond what the normal mind can comprehend; as the Upanishads declare, Brahman is “beyond the reach of speech and mind.”

Yet what we perceive can be no other than Brahman. Brahman is infinite, all-pervading, and eternal. There cannot be two infinities; what we see at all times can only be Brahman; any limitation is only our own misperception. Jnanis forcefully remove this misperception through the negative process of discrimination between the real and the unreal and through the positive approach of Self-affirmation.

### **Self-Affirmation**

In Self-affirmation we continually affirm what is real about ourselves: we are not limited to a small physical body; we are not limited by our individual minds. We are Spirit. We were never born; we will never die. We are pure, perfect, eternal and free. That is the greatest truth of our being.

The philosophy behind Self-affirmation is simple: as you think, so you become. We have programmed ourselves for thousands of lifetimes to

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think of ourselves as limited, puny, weak, and helpless. What a horrible, dreadful lie this is and how incredibly self-destructive! It is the worst poison we can ingest. If we think of ourselves as weak, we shall act accordingly. If we think of ourselves as helpless sinners, we will, without a doubt, act accordingly. If we think of ourselves as Spirit—pure, perfect, free—we will also act accordingly.

As we have drummed the wrong thoughts into our minds again and again to create the wrong impressions, so we must reverse the process by drumming into our brains the right thoughts—thoughts of purity, thoughts of strength, thoughts of truth. As the Ashtavakra Samhita, a classic Advaita text, declares: “I am spotless, tranquil, pure consciousness, and beyond nature. All this time I have been duped by illusion.”

Jnana yoga uses our considerable mental powers to end the duping process, to know that we are even now—and have always been—free, perfect, infinite, and immortal. Realizing that, we will also recognize in others the same divinity, the same purity and perfection. No longer confined to the painful limitations of “I” and “mine,” we will see the one Brahman everywhere and in everything.

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## 14.5 PRAPATTI

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Sriman nArAyaNA out of His great compassion towards the baddha jIvAtmAs propagates vedAs and allied sAstrAs, which are the only way through which they can possibly know about Him & the ways to reach Him. The ultimate and final essence of sAstrAs is that Sriman NArAyaNA is the sarIrI and, all chit & achit are His sarIrA. This eternal sarIrA sarIrI bhAvA is composed of the following three things: 1. AdheyatvA (i.e. being supported by a sarIrI): Existence of the sarIrA(body) is due to the sarIrI i.e. sarIrI supports the sarIrA. In other words, if sarIrI ceases to exist, sarIrA also ceases to exist. 2. niyamyatvA (i.e. being controlled by a sarIrI): Not only that sarIrA derives its existence from a sarIrI, it is also being controlled by the sarIrI. So, sarIrA acts as per the will/desires of sarIrI. 3. seshatvA(i.e. existing for the

pleasure of sarIrI): Not only that sarIrA is supported & controlled by sarIrI, it exists only for the pleasure of sarIrI, i.e. sarIrI is sarIrA's Master. It is to be noted that the "sarIrI" needn't be physically present inside a "sarIrA". This is not a condition to be met out for the sarIra-sarIrI bhAvA to hold good. Thus Sriman NArAyaNA supports and controls all jIvAtmAs, and all the jIvAtmAs exist purely for His enjoyment. Thus, the very essential nature (svaroopam) of a jIvAtmA is to perform kainkaryam to Sriman NArAyaNA for His pleasure and performance of any other activity doesn't conform to its nature. This implies that, baddha jIvAtmAs are like fish out of water, suffering in the material world by not living according to their actual nature. Only in Sri VaikuNTham can a jIvAtmA perfectly act according to its nature (svaroopam) without any interruption. Realizing this great truth by the mercy of a sadAchAryA, a baddha jIvAtmA becomes highly desirous of obtaining moksham and thereby reach Sri VaikuNTham, the spiritual world beyond this material world, and perform uninterrupted bhagavad anubhavam and kainkaryam to the Divya Dampati, with great bliss. This is just like the ardent desire of a fish which is out of water (not according to its nature), to get into the water (in accordance with its nature). Such highly glorifiable baddha jIvAtmAs are called as mumukshus, whose only goal is the attainment of moksham. The mumukshu thus needs to know about the means(upAyA) to fulfil his desire. sAstrAs declare that Bhakti and prapatti are the only two means (sAdhya upAyAs) by which the baddha jIvAtmAs can attain moksham, while the Divya Dampati are the Siddha upAyam. NArAyaNA Himself, in Ahirbudhnya samhita categorically declares: "bhaktyA paramayA vA-pi prapattyA vA mahAmathe prApyoham na anyathA prApyO mama kainkarya lipsubhihi" NArAyaNA here clarifies that bhakti and prapatti are the only means & by no other means will He grant moksham. So, all other processes like Bhagavad kalyAna guna Sravanam, nAma sankeertanam, living at a Divya desam, bathing in pushkarinIs & sacred rivers etc should culminate in either "bhakti" or "prapatti" for one to obtain moksham. So, it is not that a highly devoted person would be deprived of moksham by Sriman nArAyaNA. Such a devotee would be guided by Sriman nArAyaNA to end up with either "bhakti" or "prapatti" and thus its just a matter of time may be within that

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life time or in the next few births, that he/she would obtain moksham. In many Vedic literatures & in works of Sri Vaishnava AchAryAs, the term "Bhakti" is usually associated with the term "Bhakti YogA", which is the meditation through ashtAnga yogA on the kalyAna gunAs, divyamangaLa vigrahA etc of Sriman nArAyaNA with unsurpassed love. "Bhakti" referred here is the continuous stream of knowledge which is of the nature of uninterrupted memory and which is unbroken like the flow of a stream of oil. This description is not to be taken lightly. The intensity of the uninterrupted nature of contemplation on Sriman nArAyaNA is the central focus of ashtAnga yogA. There are 32 Brahma vidyAs (i.e. upAsanAs) that are prescribed in the upanishads. A devotee performing bhakti yogA will adopt a particular Brahma VidyA as the means (sAdhyaupAyA) for attaining moksham. Due to lack of a proper word, the term "Bhakti" is also sometimes used to imply "devotion" to Sriman nArAyaNA, which needn't be the "matured state of jn~AnA" (i.e. "Bhakti" proper) expressed through ashtAnga yOgA. The seven general pre-requisites for Bhakti YogA are: 1. VivekA (discrimination): Purification of body through proper intake of sAttvik food etc. 2. VimOkA (freedom): abjuration of all desires other than to meditate on Sriman nArAyaNA. 3. abhyAsA (practise): Practise worshiping the Lord with full enthusiasm (again & again). This involves strict adherence to scriptures etc. 4. kriyA (work): proper adherence to the VarnAshrama dharmA mainly dealing with the pancha mahA yaj~nAs (this makes only the dvijAs to be fit for starting "Bhakti yogA"). 5. kalyANA (auspiciousness): practise of virtues like truthfulness, integrity, compassion, benevolence, ahimsA etc. 6. anavasAda: being without any despair due to dissatisfaction, completely forgetting all past sorrows. 7. anuddharSa: absence of exaltation i.e. being in a state which is the optimal midway between excessive joy & the absence of it. The severe practise of karma & jn~Ana yogA can only bring forth the stage for performing bhakti yogA. Jn~na yogA is the "self-realization" ("self" stands for jIvAtmA), whereas "bhakti yogA" is "God-realization". So, "ashtAnga yogA" is performed for God-realization i.e. for obtaining moksham. Jn~Ani is a person who performs Bhakti YogA (God realization) & not jn~Ana yogA. The person performing Jn~Ana YogA



(self-realization) is known as kevalA. Jn~Ana YogA is the constant meditation of the self i.e. jIvAtmA. It results in Atma sAkshAtkAram i.e. selfrealization. It is however important to note that a kevalA is fully aware of his swaropa of being subservient to SrIman NArAyanA. But a kevalA is nevertheless firmly attracted by the bliss derived in the meditation of his own self (with the understanding as servant of nArAyaNA) & is unable to come over it & proceed further to meditate on ParamAtmA SrIman NArAyanA. A kevalA's position is very much understandable since many a people in this world cannot overcome even watching TV, cinemAs, sports etc which only have dry hapiness (fully material; not spiritual). The bliss derived from the contemplation of the "self" (jIvAtmA) would certainly be attracting a kevalA like a magnet. He attains "KaivalyA" wherein he attains the state in which he simply meditates on his own self (fully self-realized state). From there he can continue further to perform bhakti yogA and attain moksham. After perfecting karma & jn~Ana yogAs one will start performing "bhakti yogA" (since karma yogA by itself is integrated with jn~Ana yogA, bhakti yogA can be started after its perfection also). The perfection of bhakti yogA is through ashtAnga yogA which has 8 parts: 1. yama: self control & practise of virtues like ahimsA, non-covetousness, non acceptance of gifts etc. 2. niyama: practise of purity in thought, word & deed. 3. Asana: adoption of proper posture & seat. 4. prAnAyAma: Control & regulation of breath alongwith the reflection on the meaning of the mantrA like ashtAksharam. 5. pratyahAra: Withdrawl of mind & other senses from their out going tendencies. 6. dhArana: fixing of the mind towards SrIman nArAyaNA. Depending upon the type of upAsana (out of 32 Brahma vidyAs prescribed in upanishads) one chooses, the contemplation on nArAyaNA will vary. 7. dhyAna: Continuous meditation on the divya mangaLa vighraha, kalyAna gunAs etc of nArAyaNA to the exclusion of all other objects. One must be almost sinless to attain this stage of having deep and profound love towards SrIman nArAyaNA which is the driving force for dhyAna. 8. samAdhi: Final stage of concentration when the yogi attains the super-conscious state of divine life & becomes united with SrIman nArAyaNA. There is "unity" & not "identity". When the dhyAna ceases, this communion (i.e.

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unity) with nArAyaNA also ceases. In other words, eternal communion is not possible as long as the jIvAtmA has connection with prakruti. The culmination of samAdhi is the attainment of liberation (mokshA) & eternal union at Sri VaikuNTham. Devotion in the form of nAma sankeertanam, Bhagavad ArAdhanam, Listening to the avatAra leelAs of Sriman nArAyaNA etc aids one to have steady remembrance of Sriman nArAyaNA. They by themselves doesn't constitute "bhakti yogA". Rather they are some ways of expressing one's devotion & develop the "love" for nArAyaNA, thereby aiding the process of ashtAnga yogA. During bhakti yogA, the yogI will at first encounter the stage called "Para bhakti" wherein his mind, thought & all sense organs are completely focussed on Sriman nArAyaNA. He does only worship of nArAyaNA & meditation on Him & these are the only things that sustain him. After severe practise of the ashtAnga yogic process, the yogi passes onto the next stage called "para jn~AnA" wherein the thirst for the direct vision of Sriman nArAyaNA becomes highly intense. Sriman nArAyaNA being pleased with his devotion gives the mental vision of His divya mangaLa vigraha. This results into much more intense love & the yogI is mad after communion with nArAyaNA. He cannot bear the separation even for a second & is literally pleading with Sriman nArAyaNA constantly for the arrival of the eternal union with Him. At right time, he attains the God-realization & enjoys the divine company of nitya soorIs & muktAs at Sri VaikuNTham in serving Sriman nArAyaNA uninterruptedly. Obviously this process is out of question in this age of kali. Likes of vashistar, vyAsar, sukar, jada bharadar, Bheeshmar, nAthamunigaL are the capable persons for performing such contemplation with deep & unsurpassed love towards Sriman nArAyaNA. Thus, prapatti is the only way out. The second upAyA Prapatti (i.e. SaraNAgathi alias Bhara nyAsam) as nyAsa vidyA is enshrined in upanishads and can infact be performed by anyone irrespective of age, sex, caste etc. Its modus operandi is explained in a detailed manner in Ahirbudhnya samhita, Lakshmi tantrA & other pramAnams. IthihAsa purAnams also have lot of references to prapatti. Ofcourse, AzhwArs advocate Prapatti. Similarly, Sriman nArAyaNA advocates prapatti especially in His varAha avatAram, RAmA avatAram and KrishNA avatAram through the respective charama slokams. Not

satisfied, He in His most merciful archAvatAram also advocates prapatti through His varada hastham, as in Thiruvinnagaram (Than oppAr illappan alias oppiliappan) and Thirumalai (SrInivAsan). The greatness of Sri Vaishnava sampradAyam is that, Sriman nArAyaNA in His archA avatAram as PeraruLALan (kAnchi varadan) also advocated prapatti by His divine answers to Bhagavad RAmAnujA through Thiruk kachi NambigaL. Sriman NArAyaNA did not want to merely be a preacher of prapatti. His mercy is so unbounded that He as MAIolan of Ahobila initiated a paramabhAgavathA into sannyAsa AshramA and ordered him to propagate the most glorious prapattimArgA in each and every village and He Himself accompanied the AchAryA to all the villages, in order to accept the prapatti of baddha jIvAtmAs. That parama bhAgavathOthamA was none other than the illustrious Sri Adivan Shatakopa Yateendra MahAdesikan, the first jeeyar of Sri Ahobila Mutt the 6th centenary celebrations of which is going to be celebrated in a very grand manner by adiyEn's AchAryan and the current AzhagiyaSingar Sri Lakshmi Nrusimha Divya pAduka sevaka Srivan Shatakopa Sri NArAyana Yateendra mahAdesikan, only because of whose divine katAksham can adiyEn be even considered as a worthwhile object. The forthcoming celebration at Ahobila for sure is going to be eulogized by even all the muktAs and nityasUrIs, as a great event in the history of Sri Vaishnavam. SwAmi Desikan explains that Prapatti is neither a mere faith in the saving grace of Sriman nArAyaNA nor a mere prayer to Him for protection/moksha. Prapatti doesn't mean merely a surrendered life in this world, centred around serving Sriman nArAyaNA. Prapatti encompasses all of this & is much much more. Though "SaraNAgathi" is in general used for denoting "surrender", what all things that needs to be fulfilled in that surrender which is performed only once for obtaining moksham, is very important. The greatest burden (Bharam) for a baddha jIvAtmA is "bhakti yogA" because Sriman nArAyaNA would only grant moksham to a perfectionist of bhakti yogA. Though the jIvAtmA wishes to meditate continuously on nArAyaNA, it is not able to do so primarily because of its karma. Also, not all are eligible for Bhakti yogA. Only dvijAs can start performing it. Moreover, one cannot be sure of the number of future births that is needed to be taken while adopting bhakti

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yogA, since the prArabdha karmA (that which has started to yield its effect) is not destroyed. Nevertheless, a mumukshu (one desirous of moksham), who has the burden of bhakti yOgA seeks moksham. So, during prapatti, SrIman nArAyaNA Himself is pleaded to be present in the "place"(sthAnA) of bhakti yOgA and give the fruit of Bhakti YogA i.e. SrIman nArAyaNA is pleaded to attain the level of "pleasing" He will obtain if one approached Him through "Bhakti yOgA", which will make Him grant moksham to the mumukshu. That's why Prapatti is also known as BharanyAsam. The main qualifications for a mumukshu to adopt prapatti are: 1. Akinchanyam: Destituteness which may result either due to one's lack of mental and physical strength to adopt bhakti yogA OR lack of requisite knowledge from sAstrAs OR Prohibition by sAstrAs regarding the adoption of Bhakti yOgA OR Inability to put up with any delay in attaining mokshA. 2. Ananyagatitvam: Seeking the Supreme Lord SrIman NArAyaNA as the sole refuge with complete aversion to all fruits other than mokshA. This implies that one shouldn't resort even in his/her dream to a demigod like Brahma, Shiva etc. Prapatti, which is also called by different names such as (Atma) nikshEpa, nyAsA, SannyAsA and tyAgA has the following five angAs (accessories).

1. Anukoolyasya Sankalpam: Determination to perform whatever is pleasing to SrIman NArAyaNA. Since sAstrAs are His divine commands, one should be firm in one's mind to perform what they are being ordered to do so (like SandhyAvandanam, Bhagavad ArAdhanam etc), which will thus be pleasing to the Divya Dampati.

2. Pratikoolyasya Varjanam: Avoidance of acts that are displeasing to SrIman NArAyaNA. So, one should abstain from acts that are prohibited in sAstrAs. For example, one shouldn't either eat egg, meat, onion, garlic etc OR drink alcohol, tea, coffee etc; one shouldn't eat rice during ekAdasi etc.

3. KARpanyam: Feeling of utter helplessness. One should cry in front of SrIman NArAyaNA for his inability to perform Bhakti yOgA and should

be fully aware of the fact that he/she cannot attain moksham by their own efforts. Utter dependence on the mercy of the Divya Dampati is needed.

4. MahA VisvAsam: Intense faith that SrIman NArAyaNA will certainly grant moksham for the prapatti performed, eventhough one has committed countless sins. This complete faith on the saving grace of the Lord i.e. on the efficacy of prapatti is very difficult to obtain because of various reasons. But in order to obtain mahA visvAsam, one needs to have absolute faith in sAstrAs and the words of SrIman NArAyaNA and AchAryAs, which unanimously glorify prapatti as a supreme upAyA. Extensive knowledge in various fields of sAstrAs wouldn't necessarily yield this supreme unshakable faith. Only by the mercy of a sadAchAryA can one obtain mahA visvAsam, the most important angA of prapatti. It is also very important to understand that lack of mahA visvAsam doesn't mean that one is either doubtful about the authority of vedAs or skeptical about the supremacy of NArAyaNA OR skeptical about the existence of Sri VaikuNTham etc. If one doesn't even recognize SrIman NArAyaNA as the supreme unparalleled Lord, then his/her prapatti won't be accepted by the Lord in first hand. The mahA visvAsam here is regarding the faith in the efficacy of prapatti which can be strengthened by contemplating upon the efficacy of purushakAratvam (recommendation) of pirAtti, eternal sesha-seshi bhAvA existing between jIvAtmA & paramAtmA, Soulabhyam & Sowseelyam of SrIman NArAyaNA, He being the Sarva Saranyam and SaranAgata Vatsalan etc. 5. Goptrtva Varanam: Begging SrIman NArAyaNA for offering protection. This is the prayer to the Lord for granting mokshA, wherein one pleads with Him, the sole refuge, to be present in the place (sthAnA) of bhakti yogA and grant its fruit of moksham to an akinchanA like himself/herself.

Performance of prapatti is done with sAthvIka tyAgam, similar to how one performs sAthvIka tyAgam before and after a kainkaryam. The three components of the sAthvIka tyAgam are: 1. Kartrutva tyAgA: One should shed the doership attitude and realize that SrIman NArAyaNA is the actual doer, since it is the ocean of His dayA that is responsible for one to perform the act of prapatti. 2. MamatA tyAgA: One should give up the thought of "mine" while performing prapatti. It is also done for the

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pleasure of Srīman NArAyaNA. 3. Phala tyAgA: One should give up the thought that the fruit of performing prapatti belongs to him/her and realize that the fruit of Prapatti also belongs to Srīman NArAyaNA. One is completely wrong if he/she thinks that they by themselves performed prapatti (i.e. doership ego is still there). One cannot say "I performed prapatti to perumAL", since this defies kartrutva tyAgam. Actually, it is by the mercy of the Divya Dampati that one is made to perform prapatti. So, one with proper understanding of prapatti will say either "Divya Dampati by their mercy has made adiyEn to perform SaraNAgathi and granted moksham" OR "AchAryA out of his great compassion made an akinchanan like adiyEn obtain moksham" etc. This is the essence of kartrutva tyAgam. The performance of prapatti is for the pleasure of Divya Dampati. The fruit of prapatti is the eternal kinkaryam to the Divya Dampati, which is done for their pleasure. So, if Srīman NArAyaNA tells a mumukshu 'x' that He would grant moksham simply because 'x' wanted it, then also 'x' shouldn't accept it. 'x' accepts the moksham only if Srīman NArAyaNA awards it out of His own pleasure and not simply because 'x' wanted moksham. Though a mumukshu sincerely wishes to be in accordance with his (jIvAtmA's) svaroopam by performing the kinkaryam eternally to the Divya Dampati at Sri VaikuNTham, it's upto the Divya Dampati to grant it out of their own pleasure and a mumukshu while performing prapatti should not have ego in this aspect also. This is the essence of mamatA tyAgam and phala tyAgam. Ofcourse, Srīman NArAyaNA's vratam (vow) is to grant moksham to those who perform prapatti unto Him and the Divya Dampati will be very happy to grant moksham to such a mumukshu.

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## 14.6 REJECTION OF JIVANMUKTI

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Ramesam Vemuri: As the word connotes, Jivanmukti is release or freedom (in Sanskrit 'mukti') when one is still living (in Sanskrit 'jivan') with a body. The immediate question that comes up will then be: is there release after death also? The answer is yes. It is called Videhamukti or Liberation without the body.

But what ‘exactly’ is the freedom or release from? This is the most critical point to be appreciated.

The release is from the ‘bondage’ of the world. But the world does not bind one down with any ropes. The body of the person is as much a part of the world wherein it moves and works unfettered. How then is the person bound by the world?

A person living fascinated by the world is a “Worldly person” or in Sanskrit a “samsAri.” (S)he is driven by his mind and senses captivated by various objects of the world. He struggles for his continuity and perpetuation. One of the self-survival tools that the mind quickly discovers in nature is the pattern of causation.

The mind tends to detect a cause-effect relationship even in random unrelated happenings in the world. He entwines himself in these imagined cause-effect relationships weaving several theories around them and building prediction mechanisms. He ends up ever struggling, ever chasing. His happiness and sorrow depend on the success or failure of his expectations. He is thus caught up in or totally “bound” by the apparent cause-effect machinations in the world (in Sanskrit ‘samsAra’).

One may ask: “Is there any other way of living in the world?” Yes, there is. It is being “not-bound” by the cause-effect equation. After one is unbound, the world and the things in it (including his body), of course, will continue. So will all the other natural processes including the hunger, pain and aging of the body.

However, two big changes take place. For one, he clearly understands the falsity of the cause-effect relationship and other such mechanisms and patterns conceived by the mind. He also becomes free of the limitations and constrictions imposed by the mind which thus far had isolated him. He will not anymore take himself as an entity confined to the body-mind separate from a world sitting out there; nor will he consider the world to be something antagonistic, a world from which he

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needs to be protected and saved. Just as you see a man in totality as a wholesome man and not as an ensemble of separate legs, hands, eyes, ears etc. etc., he “sees” the entire world (inclusive of his body-mind) as one seamless whole.

Please notice the quotation marks used on the word “sees.” The word “sees” is used only to convey a sense of what it will be like. In fact he does not ‘see’ or ‘cognize’ anything after being unbound. He is not a ‘seer’ or ‘cognizer’ seeing an object located out there separate from himself. The whole thing, whatever that is (including his body) just remains as “Is-ness.” Just as ‘seeing’ takes place without the ‘seer,’ actions also happen without a ‘doer.’

If things are experienced by him, the experiencing takes place without an ‘experiencer.’ He is thus not any more ‘conscious’ of a separate body with an independent ID-tag to be taken care of, to be protected. So no more struggles, no more chasing or being bound by cause-effect relationships and expectations. He takes all things in his stride as they come to happen on their own accord without any effort on his part. This is the second big change.

The earlier contracting and confining mind with its tendency to reify and deify does not any more isolate the individual. It melds and dissolves into the very Consciousness that cognizes everything and “That” is everything. He does not identify himself with the finite body-mind. He is synonymous with Oneness where there is no ‘other.’ To be as that infinite expansive mind is Jivanmukti.

The " Jivanmukti-Viveka " or " The Path of Liberation in this Life " is a compilation from several important works, by the great scholar Vidyananda. He is known to have written on almost every important branch of literature, in his time, with such grasp and finish as would surprise the most-accurate writer of the present day. He lived in the fourteenth century. He was minister of the king of Vijayanagara Bukka Raya to whom he has dedicated his best work the elaborate scholia of the



Veda. S&yana the minister became in after life Vidyaranya the - iannydsin. He has compiled this work after he renounced all concern with the world. His life spent in the midst of varied activity at the court of Bukka Raya was con- cluded in the quiet bliss of supreme spiritual exhaltation. Vidyaranya or Sayana is an illustrious example of the true Brahmana and his very life nobly illustrates the truth of his teaching. He, indeed, found " Liberation-in-this-life," and " The Path " he points us is, no doubt, the surest road to eternal peace and happiness, while yet in the world.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What do you know the Concept of karma Yoga?

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2. Discuss the Bhakti yoga.

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3. Discuss the Jnana yogas.

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4. What do you know about the Prapatti?

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**14.7 LET US SUM UP**

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Karma, a Sanskrit word that roughly translates to "action," is a core concept in some Eastern religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism.

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Though its specifics are different depending on the religion, karma generally denotes the cycle of cause and effect — each action a person takes will affect him or her at some time in the future. This rule also applies to a person's thoughts and words, and the actions other people take under that individual's instructions.

Today, people use the word karma in ways that are not wholly consistent with its traditional meaning. For example, karma is often misused to denote luck, destiny or fate. Karma is also misused as a way to explain sudden hardships.

With karma, like causes produce like effects; that is, a good deed will lead to a future beneficial effect, while a bad deed will lead to a future harmful effect.

Bhakti yoga is one of most popular forms of religious practice for Hindus. Unlike many religious practices in Hinduism, it is not only accessible to Brahmin males, but to both males and females and those of every caste. A common theme in bhakti yoga is sincere, direct devotion and it's superiority over rigid rules and rituals. (3)

Prapatti literally means 'total surrender to God'.

Prapatti is a technical term specially used in Rāmānuja's philosophy, Viśiṣṭādvaita and religion, Śrīvaiṣṇavism. God-realization is the final or the only goal of life. This is possible only through the path of bhakti or devotion. This path of bhakti has two aspects:

Bhaktiyoga

Prapatti or Prapattiyoga

Though the path of bhakti or devotion to God has been considered as easy, compared to other yogas like Jñānayoga, it too has quite a few formal rules and disciplines to be followed. This naturally makes it a difficult path, especially for the ordinary sādhakas who have neither the time nor the competence to observe these disciplines properly. Here comes the role of the second path, that of prapatti or total surrender, complete submission to the will of God.

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## 14.8 KEY WORDS

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Karma : Karma (/ˈkɑːrmə/; Sanskrit: कर्म, romanized: karma, IPA: [ˈkəɾmə] (About this soundlisten); Pali: kamma) means action, work or deed; it also refers to the spiritual principle of cause and effect where intent and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect).

Bhakti: Bhakti literally means "attachment, participation, fondness for, homage, faith, love, devotion, worship, purity". It was originally used in Hinduism, referring to devotion and love for a personal god or a representational god by a devotee.

Prapatti : Prapatti literally means 'total surrender to God'.

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## 14.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. Discuss Rejection of jivanmukti.
2. Write about Prapatti. Discuss the impact of Indian Philosophy.

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## 14.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 14.2
2. See Section 14.3
3. See Section 14.4