

The Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara.

By

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It is more important to understand what *Śaṅkara* taught, than to determine when he lived. Leaving, therefore, the question of *Śaṅkara's* date to abler hands, I content myself with the simple attempt of explaining, so far as I can, his philosophy and doctrines. Some of our principal guides for a thorough elucidation of the subject are the *Pañchadaśī*, the *Upadeśasahasrī*, the *Advaita — Svârâjya* — and *Naishkarmya-siddhis*, the *Vedântasâra*, the *Vedânta-Paribhâshâ*, the *Chitsukhî* and the many minor poems of *Śaṅkara* and of his followers. But some of these are highly overburdened with the growth of later technicalities, and do not afford us full scope for studying *Śaṅkara* in his original simple light. These, and all works bearing on the Vedânta, are based upon, what are called the *Prasthânatraya* — the *Brahmasûtras*, the *Bhagavadgîtâ*, the *Upanishads*. Every philosopher, to be called an *âchârya*, the founder of a religion, has to comment upon these three, and to explain them in conformity with his philosophy, and without contradicting one another. *Śaṅkara*, *Vallabha*, *Râmânujâ*, *Mâdhva*, and almost all founders of religions have done so. As *Saṁskṛita* began to be displaced by the *Prâkrîtas*, several religious interpreters interposed themselves between these masters and the public, and taught the old religion under a new name. Among these may

be mentioned the names of *Kabîra*, *Dâdu*, *Nânaka*, *Chaitanya*, *Sahajânanda*, and many others in succession. It is, therefore, possible to classify the apparently interminable sects of the Indian religion, under three or four principal heads, the *Jainas* and the *Bauddhas* completing the list.

It is plain, then, that we shall be able to understand *Śaṅkara* best through his commentaries on the *Prasthānatraya*, and chiefly through that on the *Brahmasūtras*. It is impossible to proceed in our inquiry without trying, at the outset, to comprehend, the relation in which the *Sūtras* stand to the general mass of religious literature. The *Vedas* are, indeed, the fountain-head of all that underlies Indian society in its widest sense. The nature-worship of the *Veda* was, however, not sufficient to satisfy the wants of inquiring minds; and even in the *Vedic* period itself, hymns like the *Purushasūkta* point to those early glimmerings, which proclaim the approaching dawn of Truth. The thought thus awakened crystallizes itself in the *Upanishads*, the end of the *Veda* (*Vedānta*), both historically and spiritually; as the spirit of seeking after God beyond His works, becomes formulated into a system of ceremonial worship in the intermediate *Brāhmaṇas*. Then follows a period, when, for ready reference and easy application, we find the *Brāhmaṇas* reduced to short *Sūtras* or mnemonic rules; and the *Upanishads* also must have obtained similar help at the same time. But by this time the great problem of life had engaged various intellects, and the *Darśanas* were gradually forming: chief among them the *Mīmāṃsā* or inquiry into the explanation and force of *Vedic* texts. As the *Mīmāṃsā* of the ceremonial came to be called the prior or *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*, so the *Mīmāṃsā* of the final aim of all knowledge, obtained the epithet *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā*, or the final inquiry into the nature of the Godhead, — thus tacitly admitting between the two the relation of subordinate and principal. Clearly, the teaching of the *Upanishads* had begun to influence the whole range of Indian thought; and religion, which, in India, means not theology pure and simple but philosophy, politics, morals and the like, was moulded in accordance therewith. It became difficult for the rays

of Light to penetrate to the deep recesses of the popular mind; and the *Smṛitis* and the *Purāṇas* served as proper lenses for the purpose. It is remarkable that these rays, though partaking of the colour and form of the medium through which they pass, do not fail to convince any observer of their unmistakable presence in the darkest chaos, or in the most pleasant and soothing scenery. Thus were the *Smṛitis* an intermediate help to the understanding of the *Vedic* religion; as the *Purāṇas* were to the *Smṛitis*, but neither were free from the control of the *Upanishads*. The most popular of the *Purāṇas*, the *Bhāgavata*, for example, teaches in every word of it the *Aupanishada* doctrine of *Brahma*, but unfolds it in a manner best suited to the capacity of hearers in "this iron or kali age". This is not the place for it, or I would fain go into an analysis of this masterpiece of popular religious exposition, explaining how the whole life of *Krishṇa* is but another way of representing the various phases of *Brahma-vidyā*. And such explanation would be no abnormal stretch of the imagination, when we already have similar explanations of whole *Purāṇas* and poems, by commentators of no mean importance. If, again, the ceremonial governed by the spiritual has in this manner found various *Purāṇas* to explain the principal doctrines to the multitude, the *Upanishads* also have a whole *Purāṇa*, the *Ātma-Purāṇa*, devoted entirely to them, giving a popular explanation of the higher philosophy. Thus all branches of Indian religious literature unmistakably point to the *Upanishads* as their guide, and we can now understand what place the *Brahmasūtras*, which put forth a consistent explanation of the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, hold in the religious literature of India.

In India there are so many works assigned to a *Vyāsa*, that it becomes difficult, nay almost impossible, to determine which *Vyāsa* is meant to be the author of the *Brahmasūtras*. If it is the *Vyāsa* known as *Vedavyāsa* in the *Bhāgavata*, he is undoubtedly the same as *Bādarāyaṇa*, son of *Parāśara*. The *Purāṇas* declare that he lived in the beginning of the *Dvāparayuga*, which we must, in this place, leave to represent what period of time it may.

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In the Sûtras themselves we find the name Bâdarâyana mentioned at least seven times;¹ and the Bhâshyakâra puts in several opinions in the name of a Vyâsa or Vedavyâsa,² frequently in his Bhâshya. The name Krishṇa Dvaipâyana³ also occurs many times, but the Bhâshyakâra always refers to the author as Âchârya.⁴ All these references prove that Vyâsa, the author of the Sûtras, is none other than the Bâdarâyana of the Bhâgavata. The fact that he has mentioned his own name in his Sûtras, need not puzzle us, after our knowledge of the practice of old writers, in such works as the Âpastamba-Grihya-Sûtras, of putting in their favourite, but comparatively new opinions in their own name, at places where similar popular opinions form the subject of dispute. Even Śaṅkara's distinguishing the author as Âchârya is not sufficient to disprove this fact after the positive manner in which he declares this *âchârya* to be none other than Bâdarâyana, in at least two places.⁵ We are thus able to say with confidence that the Sûtras belong to none other than Bâdarâyana Vyâsa, and that, therefore, the arguments advanced in some quarters against this view are not sufficiently conclusive.

Before trying to analyse what Śaṅkara teaches, we must understand his position as a religious teacher. The *Vedic* religion was essentially a religion of ceremonial — a *Karmakânda*, confining itself to the philosophy of rewards and punishments commensurate to one's *Karman*, which if good would lead to Heaven. But several philosophers had already begun to meditate upon the nature of the *summum bonum*, and the way of attaining to it. To this spirit of inquiry may be traced the origin of the celebrated *Darśanas*. We, however, do not find any clear denunciation of the *Vedic* ritual in any one of them,⁶ but in the *Upanishads*, which plainly declare all hap-

¹ i. 3. 26; i. 3. 33; iii. 2. 41; iii. 4. 1; iii. 4. 8; iii. 4. 9; iv. 3. 15 etc.

² xi. 3. 29; i. 3. 33; ii. 1. 12; ii. 3. 47; iii. 1. 14 etc.

³ xii. 3. 29; iii. 3. 32.

⁴ xi. 4. 12; ii. 4. 20; iii. 3. 1; iii. 3. 24 etc.

⁵ Comm. iv. 4. 7; iv. 4. 21.

⁶ This is only a general statement, for the *Vedânta* — one of the *Darśanas* — plainly advocates the doctrine here attributed to the *Upanishads*.

piness, and even the ultimate and highest happiness, to rest in *Jñāna* and not in *Karman*. Still the revolt against the religion of *Karman* was not complete. It was reserved for *Buddha* to proclaim in unmistakable language the illusoriness of worldly possessions, including even that Heaven which the *Karmakāṇḍa* promised to its devotees and to establish instead, *Nirvāna* or the total absence of all worldly illusions, as the state of perfect bliss. His was a code of high morality and universal brotherhood not only of men, but of the whole creation from the tiny straw to the proud human lord treading heedlessly upon it. The Gospel of *Buddha* found its adherents, but it was a breaking away from the religion of the *Karmakāṇḍa*, far too abrupt and perhaps too unpractical to reconcile all grades of intellect to its truthfulness. *Kumārila* tried to restore the dying *Karmakāṇḍa* to its former position, but it was *Śaṅkara*, who suppressed with a sure hand the rising revolt. He brought the *Upanishads* to the front, and indirectly accepting the sublime philosophy of *Buddha*, effected a reconciliation between *Karman* and *Jñāna*, by showing that the former is a fit preparation for the latter. While effecting this, he was not indifferent to the disaffection in his own ranks. There were the various *Darśanas*, which though setting up an ideal slightly different from the *Vedic* one, were, yet, allies neither of *Buddha* nor of *Śaṅkara*. *Śaṅkara* paid the best attention possible to these, and his philosophy would appear in the sequel to be mainly evolved from them. Thus the hand of the Master restored peace throughout the region of philosophy, by reconciling the cravings for a higher and truer ideal with the ritual of the *Veda*, and thus significantly showing that the *Vedānta* was really the *Uttara-mīmāṃsā* sequel (*Jñāna*) to the *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* or preliminary (*Karmakāṇḍa*). In the extreme south where *Buddha*'s voice had perhaps never reached, and *Śaṅkara*'s teachings had not had any firm footing, the *Karmakāṇḍa* still continues in all its various forms, and several sects continue to abuse *Śaṅkara* as a *Prachchhanna Buddha*, a *Buddha* in a *Brāhmaṇic* garb. No clearer commentary is necessary on the work of *Śaṅkara*.

We are, now, indeed, in a position to understand the philo-

sophy of the *Upanishads* as explained by *Śaṅkara*. In as much as *Śaṅkara's* philosophy is an outcome of previous speculations, we shall have to go, though cursorily, over the whole field of Indian religious thought. We have seen how the Vedic ceremonial was gradually yielding under its own weight, and speculations about the nature of life and happiness were moulding themselves into fresh theories of worship and conduct. The problem, then, was the same as it is now; and the fact no doubt bears ample testimony to the hopelessness of our ever succeeding in an universally acknowledged solution of its character. And yet who will not agree with LESSING when he says: 'If the all powerful Being holding in one hand, Truth, and in the other, the search for Truth, said to me, 'choose', I would answer Him, 'o, all-powerful, keep for Thyself the Truth, but leave to me the search for it, which is the better for me.' The search for the Truth is thus perpetually pleasant; and we are now so nearer to the Truth than when we *know* that the Truth, which the keeps to Himself, is not independent of Him. The problem roughly stated is an explanation of the phenomena of the objects of Nature, in their relation to or as contradistinguished from the almost inexplicable idea of life, and an enunciation of those principles of conduct which should lead to happiness true and real; in other words, the question of the much vexed inquiry into the nature of subject and object, spirit¹ and matter, and the subsequent bearing of the results on the question of morals. I shall confine myself in this paper only to the first part of the subject.

The followers of the Nyâya system of philosophy hoped, by cultivating the instruments of knowledge² — Perception, Inference, Analogy, Testimony — to reach final beauty, by right inquiry. They generalized from the phenomena of life to an extra-cosmic Deity

¹ This is a very misleading word, but I have used it throughout as synonymous with that phenomenon of life which we distinguish from matter.

² प्रमाणप्रमेयसंशयप्रयोजनदृष्टान्तसिद्धान्तावयवतर्कनिर्णयवाद्जल्पवितण्डाहिलाभासच्छलजातिनिग्रहस्थानानां तत्त्वज्ञानान्निःश्रेयसाधिगमः ॥ गौ० सू० २ ॥

of superhuman powers commanding our homage and worship. The inanimate universe, including the soul and mind of man, they left to itself, and believed it to be the result of an act of Divine creation. The *Vaiśeṣikas* accepted the generalizations of *Gautama*, but went a step further in analysing the nature of material existence. They acknowledged the existence of an extra-cosmic Deity, but like Gassendi, nearly dropped the idea and busied themselves with the atoms and their nature. With them the universe began with atoms — infinite and eternal, moved by the will of the Divine Power. Thus as *Gautama* built up the metaphysics, *Kaṇāda* supplied the physics of a philosophy which generally goes under the name of *Nyāya*. It is enough for our purpose to state only these fundamental principles, for they enable us to understand what explanation the *Nyāya* puts forth regarding the relation of matter and spirit. A philosophy built upon mere abstractions and generalizations from phenomena, which can in reality never be individually generalized from, must result either in pure Atheism, or anthropomorphic Deism. 'Generalization so far from apprehending reality, is a process, which takes us away from it, and the further it advances, the more abstract our thought becomes, the further do we recede from the real objective truth of things.'¹ If the *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika*, thus, represent the positive side of the method of abstract generalization, the *Chārvākas* (and the *Jainas*), represent the negative aspect. They were not far from the modern materialists when they maintained life) thought or energy to be the result of material organisation, but their philosophy made few disciples and converted none. All experience is in favour of declaring that *dead* matter as such is never capable of producing life, and even the best representatives of modern physical science stand confessed of their ignorance of the real nature of matter and energy *per se*, at the altar of eternal Truth. Observation has proved it beyond doubt that every atom of matter is full of energy in one form or another; and it is evident that the very fundamental the conception of matter

¹ Principal Caird, 'Philosophy of Religion'.

must imply that of Mind. So that instead of postponing the appearance of Mind to the last stage of material organisation, it is more consistent with reason to regard it as the very beginning. The *Nyāya* had done this, but the intermeddling of a God isolated from His creation did not satisfy subsequent reasoners: such philosophy being subversive of that real knowledge, which must by the very conditions of knowledge or thought look upon thought and being as inseparable. It is in some such train of reasoning that we find an explanation of the *Purusha* and *Prakṛiti* of *Kapila's Sāṅkhya*. The *Sāṅkhyas* had advanced further, if advance it may be called, than the *Vaiśeṣikas* in their analysis of matter, and had demonstrated a theory of evolution, anything more entirely novel than which even the *Vedānta* has not to teach. They postulated *Prakṛiti* or undifferentiated cosmic matter as the eternal basis of cosmic evolution; and they definitely enumerated the various evolving stages of this matter with its properties, being here upon called the *Sāṅkhyas*. They were, however, conscious of the impossibility of postulating matter without mind, and they, therefore, laid down an eternal union between *Purusha* or the Eternal Mind, and *Prakṛiti* in all its stages of evolution. They attributed no functions to *Purusha*, thus avoiding the mistake committed by the *Naiyāyikas*; and regarded the evolutions of *Prakṛiti* for this *Purusha* who was ever in it but never of it, trying in this manner to satisfy the necessity of philosophic thought. The *Sāṅkhyas* will, thus, appear to be nearer the Truth, nearer because they were, by postulating two entities in the form of *Prakṛiti* and *Purusha*, both *interdependent* so to speak, indirectly precluding the possibility of *Moksha*, and initiating a principle which would lead to false results in practical ethics. *Sattvaguna* or purity, is after all a kind of material purity in as much as that *guna* is inseparable from *Prakṛiti*, and to set this up as the standard to which man should ever try to reach, is only to point a way to re-incarnation or fresh evolution (of the individual self), and misery. Contemplation of *Prakṛiti* can raise the contemplator no higher than *Prakṛiti*, the source of all mundane existence and pain. *Patañjali* not satisfied with the practical side of the *Sāṅkhya*, set up a kind

of training, generally known as *Yoga*, for attaining the state of eternal bliss, and postulated a kind of *Īśvara* for purposes of contemplation. His *Yoga* led to marvellous physical results, but nothing beyond. It again landed the student in *Prakṛiti*, only on a higher stage of it. This difficulty is satisfactorily solved in the *Vedānta*, or the *Upanishads*, as explained by *Śaṅkara*.¹ As already stated we shall confine ourselves chiefly to the *Brahmasūtras* and the commentary of *Śaṅkara*, in deriving our explanations.²

It is easy to understand the position of *Śaṅkara*, and the basis of his philosophy after this introduction. *Śaṅkara* was truly the evolution of his own age; and yet one cannot detect wherein his philosophy fails to satisfy the requirements of the advanced thinking of the present century. He grasped the problem in all its clearness and understood the failures of his predecessors and contemporaries. He perceived that the conception of life and matter hitherto advanced by various thinkers was not endorsed by the *Upanishads*, and was in no way logical or in accordance with the facts of the question. Prof. TYNDALL was not aware that he was expressing, only in other words, a difficulty felt by a powerful thinker nearly one thousand years before him, when he said in his address to the British Association 'Two courses and two only are possible. Either let us open our doors freely to the conception of creative acts, or abandoning them, *let us radically change our notions of matter*'. The Italics are mine. When even now 'the origination of life is a point lightly touched upon, if at all, by Mr. DARWIN and Mr. SPENCER',³ *Śaṅkara* tried to put forth a solution, higher than which, it is, I suppose, impossible

¹ From this examination of philosophical systems I have purposely omitted the *Mīmāṃsā*, as reference has already been made to its contents, which speak for themselves. The services of this *Darśana* lie more in the direction of pure dialectics, than philosophy proper.

² It should not be understood that the *Vedānta*, philosophy began with *Śaṅkara* or that he was its founder. It is only through *Śaṅkara* that we receive a clear explanation of the *Advaita*-doctrine, and hence the importance of his work.

³ Prof. TYNDALL.

for human intelligence to attempt. It must remain an open question whether *Śaṅkara* taught any practical method for an analytical view of life-organisation, but we are concerned only with the metaphysical aspect of the question. *Śaṅkara* was certain¹ of the futility of having recourse to acts of special creation for an explanation of the phenomena of life, for he looked upon such a theory as nothing short of an imbecile confession of the impossibility of that *something* inherent in the very nature of man, which compels him to inquire and search for God in His works. He was early conscious of the impossibility, demonstrated in recent times by *Mill* and other thinkers, of reconciling the existence of evil with the existence of an extra-cosmic God, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-merciful, and all-good.² Nor did he lend countenance to that theory of the relativity of human knowledge, which in the hands of *HAMILTON* and more decidedly in those of his theological interpreter *Mansel*, resulted in pushing aside reason from the domain of religion, and in those of *H. SPENCER* led to the setting up of a negative 'Unknown', as the source of all creation and the origin of a religion based simply on the awe of a stupendous and impenetrable idea. The materialistic theory which derives all life from matter is, indeed, the main point of his attack in his commentary on the *Sūtras*.³ Even the *monads* of *LEIBNITZ* were not sufficient for the practical ends *Śaṅkara* had in view. To the mind of *Śaṅkara* the very idea of relation implied something beyond relation, the very idea of a centre implied a circumference, the very word outward implied an inward, the very thought of the mirage implied a substratum — ground saturated with salt, the conception of matter implied mind, thought implied being. To think of the Infinite, something other than finite, something beyond conditions, is to think the unthinkable, in as much as thinking means nothing but conditioning. Such a conception of the Infinite with which several eminent European scholars have tried to explain the idea of *Brahma* is simply an

¹ *Brahma-Sūtras*, II, 2, 37 a comm. et seq.

² *Idem*.

³ I. 1; I. 4; II, 1 and 2.

impossibility, a contradiction in terms. Thought (*Jñāna*) can never transcend itself, and it is in thought that we find that something which is at once related and not related, conditioned and not conditioned; and in which everything is held together. That method of false abstraction which can result either in anthropomorphic deism or pure atheism, Śaṅkara completely renounced; and postulated a something, which I am afraid to call an Entity, and yet which is an Entity in all entities, in which all relations melt away, all conditions become annulled, the notions of matter and mind are held in one compact unity. This something is nothing and everything, beyond thought and yet within it. It, indeed, is the very basis of individual consciousness, or individual consciousness is rather its manifestation in organised matter. It is the permanent substratum of material manifestations, with whose variety of changes it has, however, nothing to do. Thus though always in matter, mundane existence can effect no change either for weal or for woe, in it. He accepted material evolution in the widest sense of the term, accompanied even by psychical evolution, but all this had nothing to do with the unchangeable witness of them all — *Ātman* or *Brahman*. In fact so indescribable is this ultimate factor that it may be noted even Śaṅkara never describes it but by the impersonal *It*. Even the *Upanishads*, at their best, declare it to be, not this, nor that, nor that; and say that speech and mind are alike unable to lay hold of it. Śaṅkara directed the attention of man to his own consciousness, and taught that it is nothing but the universal consciousness speaking through him, and that it has no share in the changes to which its material coil is subject, and of which it is conscious. The universe is *Brahma* — something very great, combining all thought and being —; and this *Brahma* is ever free, ever happy, ever existent, ever enlightened. Thus to speak, even at the risk of being misunderstood, in clear language, Śaṅkara recognises matter as full of life — a life on which all phenomena of matter are hung as upon a string;¹ life ever love and blessedness, never

¹ सूत्रे मयिगया इव, Bh. Gītā.

affected by the properties of matter, which is its coordinate and not the cause. Of all ignorance and its consequences, he leaves *Prakṛiti* — matter — to take care by its inherent properties, but the eternal, unchangeable *Purusha*, *Brahma*, life, has nothing whatever to do with it. Yet both never exist apart: but pure unalloyed happiness arises not from contemplating upon the changeful counterpart of *Brahma*, but upon its permanent and unique light which illumines all. We have, now, seen that *Brahma* is the *Highest Existence*, of and through which is all *knowledge* — the essence of *knowing*. As all existence is, as it were, suspended from it, there can be nothing in the universe, which can be a stranger to anything, and which cannot be held fast to itself in a union above all worldly relations: hence *Brahma* in all love, which is the highest *bliss*. It is therefore described, not defined, as *sat* existence, *chit* knowledge, and *ânanda* bliss. To define the real nature of *Prakṛiti* and *Purusha*, in the words of *Śaṅkara*, they are both *anādi*, without beginning, and *anirvachanīya*¹ — indescribable. No research can ever reveal to us the ultimate character of either. *Brahma* is the real Ens, and its inseparable coordinate *Prakṛiti*, is ever changeful, never known in its full form, dependent for its manifestation on *Brahma*, therefore, all ignorance — *ajñāna* — and darkness. Hence in their pure technical language the *Vedāntins* always argue, vainly as it may appear to some, against the *Naiyāyikas* that *a-jñāna* is a positive substance, and not a mere negation of *jñāna*. Separating the word from the thought we can easily understand that the *ajñāna* of the *Vedāntins* means *matter*, which cannot be the negation of anything in as much as its possible counter-entity *Brahma* (*jñāna*) is not apart from it. So, also *adhyāsa* or false impression, is but the influence of the two factors of the Totality on each other: — the one presenting the other as part and parcel of itself. The relation of *Prakṛiti* and *Brahma* is explained in yet another manner, highly illustrative of the capacity of the *Āryan*

¹ This word in its highly technical sense means when applied to changeful *Prakṛiti* a *something* which is neither eternally existent, nor non-existent, but of which we are conscious only in the present viz matter (*Prakṛiti*).

mind, of condensing a whole argument in one word, by what is called the *vivartavāda* or what may roughly be described as the theory of assumption. The *Upanishads* declare that everything proceeds from *Brahma*, which *Śaṅkara* interprets by this theory to mean that the universe is of *Brahma* just as the snake, which a rope is believed to be, is of that rope. It is no more a result of it, but it exists by it. The *Adhyāsa* or false impression just explained, born of ignorance which is a synonym of *Prakṛiti* and is therefore eternal, is the cause of such false assumption. Right knowledge dispels this illusion, as sufficient light explains the nature of the snake; and all is *Brahma* — eternal love and joy.

The word illusion puts us in mind of the theory of *Māyā*, often laid at the door of *Śaṅkara* in its illogical, not to say absurd, aspect. Because *Śaṅkara* uses, though rarely, the word *Māyā* or illusion, and advocates as strongly as he can the *vivartavāda*. Some have thought that he regards the whole phenomena of matter as an illusion, a phantasm, not existing *per se*. They carry this kind of reasoning to its consequences and reduce even the substratum of such illusions or dreams to an illusion again; and confront the *Vedāntins* with the impossibility of reconciling the two contraries *Jñāna* (*Brahma*) and *Ajñāna* (*Māyā*), waking and dreaming as existing in one place at the same time. *Śaṅkara* teaches the doctrine of *Māyā* no doubt, it is in fact the very corollary of his *vivartavāda*, but he never teaches it with a vengeance. He says that *Nāma* and *Rūpa*, name and form, are *Māyā*, and we should have no faith in them. One of the best interpreters of the latter *Vedānta*, *Bhāratīrtha*, says the same thing:

अस्ति भाति प्रियं रूपं नाम चैतद्विषयकम् ।

आद्यं त्रयं ब्रह्मरूपं जगद्रूपं ततो द्वयम् ॥¹ 20

'Intercourse implies five attributes and no more: Existence, knowledge, bliss, form, and name; the first three are *Brahma*, the last two, *Jagat* (*Māyā*).' Even the *Chhândogya* says nothing different:

¹ *Drigdrītyaviveka*.

यथा हि सीम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृत्सम्यं विज्ञातं भवति वाचारंभणं
विचारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् etc. 'As oh good one! by knowing
one lump of clay all that is made of it is also known, *all names being
but the play of words*, the truth being clay and clay alone', even so
etc. So also the *Bhagavadgītā*:

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्वानादी उभावपि ।

विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥ XIII. 19.

प्रकृतेव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ XIII. 29.

'Know Prakṛiti and Puruṣa to be without beginning, and the various forms and properties know to be from the former. He who in every way perceives all Karman¹ as proceeding from *Prakṛiti*, realises the *Puruṣa*, as beyond all *Karman*.' The *Bhāgavata*, too, has:

सा वा एतस्त्र संद्रष्टुः शक्तिः सदसदात्मिका ।

माया नाम महाभाग यथेदं निर्ममे विभुः ॥ III. 5. 25.

'She, oh happy one, is of this great Seer the power in the form of eternity and non-eternity,² called *Mâyā*, where with He — the Lord — created this.' But let us allow *Śaṅkara* to speak for himself. In his *Bhāṣhya* on *Brahmasūtras* II. 1. 14 he says : अन्धुपगम्य चेमं व्यावहारिकं भोक्तृभोग्यत्वचरणं विभागं स्थाज्ञोक्तवदिति परिहारो ऽभिहितो न त्वयं विभागः परमार्थतो ऽस्ति यतस्तयोः कार्यकारणयोरनन्यत्वमवगम्यते । कार्यमाकाशादिकं ब्रह्मप्रपञ्चं जगत् कारणं परं ब्रह्म तस्मात् कारणात् परमार्थतो ऽनन्यत्वं व्यतिरेकेणाभावः कार्यस्यावगम्यते ॥ 'By the previous *Sūtra*³ is explained the possibility of the distinction between subject and object necessary for all intercourse, notwithstanding the hypothesis (of the unity of subject and object); but such distinction is not meant to be real, for the effect and its cause are known to be

¹ The commentator *Madhusūdana* as well as *Śaṅkara* explain कर्माणि by वाङ्मनःकायारभ्याणि which is equal to our idea of *Mâyā*.

² i. e. अनिर्वचनीया name and form again.

³ भोक्तापत्तेरविभागश्चेत्स्थाज्ञोक्तवत् II. 1. 13.

inseparable. The effect is the whole changeful universe beginning with *Ākāśa*, and the cause *Para Brahma*. From this cause the effect is really inseparable, *never existing without it*, apart from it.' Here *Śaṅkara*, apparently, appears to put forth a doctrine much in accordance with the exoteric *mâyāvāda*, and his illustration of the snake in a rope, mirage on ground saturated with salt, will appear to lend support to such conclusion. But the words **व्यतिरेकेणाभावः** as an explanation of **अनन्यत्वम्** should be borne in mind, together with the words¹ of *Vāchaspatimiśra* explaining *ananyatva* as **न खल्वनन्यत्वमित्यभेदं ब्रूमः किंतु भेदं व्यासेधामक्षतञ्च नाभेदाश्रयदोषप्रसङ्गः** (we do not by *ananyatva* mean to demonstrate any unity, but we simply deprecate all idea of conceiving them apart from each other; thus will our theory not be open to the objections consequent upon a belief in the unity — of cause and effect). There is no identity between subject and object, nor any other relation, but each can never be conceived as apart from the other, — Thought and Being being inseparable. This is the real meaning of the *vivartavāda*, which we must regard *Śaṅkara*, on the authority of another of his commentators *Govindānanda*,² as enunciating in the passage quoted above. With this explanation of *ananyatva* in our hands, we must grant that *Mâyā* or illusion has its province really restricted to name and form and nothing else. But we hope to make the point still more clear. He plainly repudiates³ the opposite conception to which the above words would seem to

¹ In the *Bhāmatī*.

² पूर्वस्मिन्नेव पूर्वपक्षे विवर्तवादेन मुख्यं समाधानमाह.

³ In his commentary on *Brahma-Sūtras* II. 1. 27, is introduced a discussion on the meaning of the *Śruti* just quoted from the *Chhândogya*: **यथाहि सौम्य**, etc.; and *Śaṅkara* remarks in conclusion **वाचार्भणमात्रत्वाच्चाविद्यापरिकल्पितस्य नामरूपभेदस्य न निरवयवत्वं ब्रह्मणः कुर्यात् । न चेयं परिणामश्रुतिः परिणामप्रतिपादनार्था तत्प्रतिपत्तौ फलानवगमात् ॥** 'The theory of *Brahma* having no parts though with distinctions of name and form induced in it by *avidyā* (ignorance), is not contradictory, in as much as these latter are a mere play of words. This *Śruti* setting forth a kind of evolution cannot mean any relation of *development* (between the effect and the cause). For then we should have to bid farewell to all idea of *Moksha*.'

lend some colour, that the universe is a *development* from *Brahma*, and is *ananya* in that sense. This is called the *Parināmavāda*. The theory of *parināma* or development is scarcely tenable without the help of that inverted logic which would evolve matter from mind. This attempt is the opposite extreme of materialism; and *Vallabha* in order to escape from the apparent inconsistency of explaining the universe as in and of *Brahma*, and maintaining at the same time the self-contradictory and suicidal theory of *māyā*, which we have been trying to set aside, subscribed to the more easy but equally absurd theory of development or evolution, and preached his religion accordingly. There are others like *Rāmānuja* and *Mādhva* who separate *māyā* (*Prakṛiti*, Matter) and *Brahma*, as subordinate and principal, and not being by the very hypothesis able to explain the phenomena of individual life (soul)¹ in any other manner than a part — an ever-existent part — of *Brahma*, maintain in fact three realities as the basis of the Cosmos. But a truer explanation of the *māyā* or *vivartavāda*, which all these try to avoid by theories not quite consistent with the necessities of philosophic thought, can be easily found between the terms of the problem, *Brahma* and *Prakṛiti*, which are inseparable, not one. We must, however, refer to yet another passage in order to make our ground more firm, for though it is clear that by *ananyatva* *Saṅkara* does not mean anything but inseparableness, still it is not quite clear whether he has a belief in the existence of a substantial basis of the universe. This fact, if ascertained, will show us a way to the position which must baffle all attempt at interpreting *māyā* into illusion out and out, and thus, in a sense, turning the weapons of the *vivartavāda* against itself. In dealing out a reply to the *kṣhanīkaviññānavāda*,² a theory nearly resembling the Idealism of BERKLEY, he says: न खल्वभावात् बाह्यस्वार्थस्याथवसात् शक्यते। कस्मात्। उपलब्धिः।

¹ In the theory of *Saṅkara* individual life as such is a chimera, and yet the differences in the consciousness of different beings are explainable as due to the difference in the *Upādhi* or accident — *manas*, *buddhi* etc. — whose evolution cannot, without considerable digression be the subject of the present paper.

² *Brahma-Sūtras* II. 2. 28.

उपलभते हि प्रतिप्रत्ययं बाह्यीर्थः सन्भः कुडं घटः पट इति न चोपलभमान-
 नस्त्वेवाभावो भवितुमर्हति । - - - - ननु नाहमेवं ब्रवीमि न कश्चिदर्थमुप-
 लभ इति किं तूपलब्धिव्यतिरिक्तं नोपलभ इति ब्रवीमि । बाढमेवं ब्रवीषि नि-
 रङ्कुशत्वात्ते तुष्टस्व न तु युक्त्युपेतं ब्रवीषि यत उपलब्धिव्यतिरेको ऽपि बला-
 दर्थस्याभ्युपगन्तव्य उपलब्धेरेव । नहि कश्चिदुपलब्धिमेव सन्भं कुडं चेत्युपलभते ।
 उपलब्धिविषयत्वेनैव तु सन्भकुडादीन् सर्वे लौकिका उपलभन्ते । - - - -
 न च ज्ञानस्य विषयसाम्यद्विविधनाशो भवति । असति विषये विषयसाम्य-
 यानुपपत्तेः । बहिरुपलब्धेऽपि विषयस्य । अत एव सहोपलम्भनियमो ऽपि प्रत्य-
 यविषययोरेपायोपेयभावहेतुको नाभिदहेतुक इत्यभ्युपगन्तव्यम् ॥ 'It is im-
 possible to demonstrate the non-existence of all objectivity, for we
 cannot, surely, get rid of it. In all acts of consciousness some objec-
 tive substratum is present in the form of a post, a wall, a jar, a
 piece of cloth and so on; and it is impossible to ignore our direct
 perceptions. It may be argued that it is not meant to ignore the
 existence of objectivity, but it is only meant that it is not apart
 from its correlative mental impression. This may all be very well,
 for one who argues in this manner is free to make any assertion he
 likes, but there is hardly any logic in what is thus said. The exist-
 ence of objects apart from their corresponding *presentation* must be
 acknowledged; and for obvious reasons based on our perceptions. No
 one, indeed, cognises his mental idea of a post or a wall to be the
 actual post or the wall, but all observers regard the post and the
 wall to be objects cognised by the mind. Nor, because the impression
 takes the form of the object, does the latter deserve to become *nil*;
 for if it were so, there would have been no impression; and objects
 do as a matter of fact exist without the mind (and give impressions).
 Hence even the concomitance of the mental image and the objective
 existence does in no way prove their unity but only their relation
 as subject and object'. Now let us revise our explanation of *ananyatva*
 by the light of this passage. *Śāṅkara* evidently recognises some ob-
 jectivity which it is impossible to ignore, which cannot be an illusion,
 and says that it is *Brahma*, in so far as it is not separate from it.

Thus *mâyâ* is again definitely reduced to *nâma* and *rûpa*, and the consistency of the *vivartavâda* clearly demonstrated. Even the comparison of *mâyâ* to *svapna*, dream, need not mislead us, after recognising some substratum of the dream. As the things (*nâma* and *rûpa*), seen in a dream to be real, are shown to be false on waking, so is *mâyâ* shown to be false after full knowledge — the residuum, so to speak, being *Brahma*, as *jñâna* common to dreaming and waking.¹ Thus *mâyâ* or ignorance, or *avidyâ* or illusion is now clearly explained. It is the cause of the universe. The nature of *adhyâsa* explained before will show where cosmic evolution begins. Let us conclude this discussion by one last passage from *Vidyâranya*. While explaining this *Mûlâdhyâsa* he says:

सर्वं ज्ञानमनन्तं यद्ब्रह्म तस्मात्समुत्पत्तितः ।
 सर्वं वाय्वपिजसोर्बोधिष्वन्नदेहा इति श्रुतिः ॥
 आपातदृष्टितस्त्र च ब्रह्मणो भाति हेतुता ।
 हेतोश्च सत्त्वता तस्मादन्योन्याध्यास उच्यते ॥

Pañchadâśi vi, 191—92.

'From *Brahma* — ever existing, all blessedness, and eternal — arise *Ākāśa*, *Vāyu*, *Agni*, *Jala*, *Prithivī*, vegetables, grain, animal bodies, in succession. In this *Śruti*, *Brahma* would appear to be the cause (of the cosmos), and the (cosmos) would appear real, — this is called mutual *adhyâsa*'. Even here *Brahma* becomes the cause of material manifestations which also appear real — but both conceptions are *adhyâsa* — false impressions. *Brahma* is beyond all conception, and matter is not apart from it. It is ignorance or *mâyâ* that works in the middle, being, a part or synonymous of material manifestation. *Śaṅkara*'s philosophy is thus a consistent and unique demonstration of the inseparable correlation of Thought and Being.'

¹ For this explanation of the comparison of this universe to a dream see end of the comm. *Brahma Sûtras*, II. 2. 29. अपि चानुभवविरोधप्रसङ्गाज्जागरितप्रत्ययानां स्वतो निरासंबन्धतां वक्तुमशक्नुवतास्वप्नप्रत्ययसाधर्म्याद्ब्रह्मिष्यति । न च यो यस्य स्वतो धर्मो न संभवति सोऽन्यस्य साधर्म्यात्तस्य संभविष्यति । न ह्यपि ब्रह्मणोऽनुभूयमान उदकसाधर्म्याच्छीतो भविष्यति । दर्शितं तु वैधर्म्यं स्वप्नजागरितयोः ॥

This is the chief essence of the *Advaita* philosophy, and it is full of many important results in all departments of life, especially that of practical Ethics. But this I must postpone to some other occasion. Meanwhile it is enough if I have succeeded in laying even a hazy sketch of the *Advaitavāda* before my readers. I must say in deference to the great minds who teach and talk *Vedānta* all the hours of their life, that it will be no fault of the theory itself, if I have not succeeded in putting it in its clear unassailable form.
