CHAPTER SEVEN
TRANSFORMATION

Sankara in his *Vivekacūḍāmānī* says that three things are extremely difficult to obtain except through divine grace—birth as a human being, a longing for liberation, and the company of the wise.

durlabhāṁ trayamevaitad-devānugrahahetukam
manusyātvaṁ sumuṣṭaṁvī maṁprasāsanaṁ
drayaṁ

by virtue of the merit (*punya*) obtained through the performance of infinite good deeds in previous lives, a soul is born as a human being and is endowed with a subtle and receptive mind (*sūkṣma-citta*). At some stage in one’s journey from bondage to liberation, a fortunate soul becomes sensitive to the spiritual. The individual develops a growing distaste (*virakti*) for the empirical and becomes aware of the existence of a higher spiritual reality. Seized with a burning desire for liberation from finitude, the individual begins to question (*vīcāra*) one’s own being and entertains doubts (*saṁśaya, saṁkha*) about the real nature of the perceived phenomena. Therefore, the individual seeks the company of the wise and the help of the scriptures (*śruti*) to find an answer to the
existential predicament. Such a doubt or uneasiness
does not assail a seer, because the latter has realised
truth and is aware of the illusory and impermanent
nature of the world. Therefore, the empirical phenomena
do not confound a mystic. A person watching a magic
show is aware of the non-real nature of the objects
conjured up by a magician, by the wave of the wand. But
the spectator, nevertheless, suspends judgments about
their reality, and willingly submits oneself to the
amusement derived from witnessing the performance.
Similarly, a mystic also "enjoys" the physical objects
of the world, conscious of their illusory nature. Like
a seer, the ignorant man (ajñāni), too, is not confronted
by doubts about the world, because his senses (inoriyaa)
certify that the world is real (vāstavī). It is only a
person whose spirituality has been aroused and curiosity
kindled to know the truth of things, who is discomfited
by finitude, and is anxious to overcome the limitations,
undertake the inquiry into the real. Aversion for fini-
tude as well as a persistent hankering for emancipation
(mumukṣutva) is the precursor of the transformation in
the individual's consciousness, and the progenitor of
one's spiritual evolution.
Through the grace of God and the guidance of a Self-realised teacher (guru), a qualified and sincere seeker (mumukṣu) is able to comprehend the import (tātparya) of scripture, intuit reality, overcome the miseries (duḥkha) of bondage, and experience forever the bliss of liberation. This, in short, is the transformation of a seeker (sādhaka) into a seer (siddha), the ignorant one (ajñānī) into an enlightened one (jñānī), the bound soul (suddha) into a liberated soul (muktā).

1. **Method**

A. **Linguistic Analysis**

All the schools of Vedānta are commonly based on the Vedas, but their metaphysics differs radically because of differences in hermeneutics or interpretation of the Vedas. Therefore, although the texts are the same, the principles of linguistic analysis and of interpretation of texts (vākyas) project a spectrum of philosophy, thereby giving rise to different schools of systematic metaphysics.
Much of Indian philosophy has developed through the commentarial tradition. Its propounders have put forward logical arguments and adduced the evidence of experience to establish their views, defend them from the rival views of the critics, and refute their opponents through dialectics. This conceptual and linguistic warfare has enriched the literature of Indian philosophy. It affords an insight into the argumentative ability, intellectual virility, logical sophistication, and dialectical ingenuity of Indian philosophers, coupled with their mystic intuition of truth. Therefore, it would be naive to accuse Indian philosophers of indulgence in quibbles and linguistic muddles. According to Chatterjee and Datta, in the Tattvapratipikā, the Khandana-khanda-khādyā, and the Advaita-siddhi, "logical skill and dialectical subtlety attain heights scarcely reached by the most profound treatises of this kind in the West."³

The difference between metaphysical or speculative philosophy and analytic philosophy is that while metaphysics involves analysis, analytic philosophy is anxious to remain exclusively analytic and metaphysically neutral.⁴ But there can be no clear dividing line between
engaging in analysis and formulating metaphysics, because the analysts are covertly metaphysical, and metaphysicians are involved in linguistic analysis while enunciating their views.

In Indian philosophy, the Naiyāyikās specialised in logic (tarka), while the Viśeṣāntarastriya, in hermeneutics. The Indian epistemologists or pramāṇa-theorists (in the words of Matilal), defined a "pramāṇa" as a means, source, or instrument, of valid knowledge (pramāṇa ka anumāna = pramāṇam) Advaita stipulates that valid knowledge (saṁyogajñāna) is knowledge which is unsublatable (abhāvita). It is not only uncontradictable, but also novel (apuṣṭa) since that knowledge cannot be got through any other means of knowledge (asaṁdhānte karane pramāṇam).

The epistemology of Advaita admits six means of knowledge (aadh-pramāṇam). They are: (1) perception (pratyakṣa), (2) inference (anumāna), (3) verbal testimony (śabda), (4) comparison (uśmāna), (5) postulation (arthāpatti), and (6) non-cognition (anupalebdhi). Except the verbal testimony of scripture (śruti), all the other five means of knowledge have only empirical
validity (v-avaharika-pramāṇya). Scripture alone is accorded transcendental validity (paramārthika-pramāṇya). Because it is super-human (apaurṣya) in origin, and is, therefore, free from doubt (saṁśaya) and error (viparṇya). In matters trans-empirical (paramārtha), scripture is the final authority.

Scripture embodies the revelation and mystic experience of the seers (ṛṣi). The seers try to communicate their vision (darśana) of truth with a view to mitigate the sufferings of humanity and enable the ignorant souls (aḥamkāra) attain liberation (mokṣa).

Sāṅkara is an orthodox philosopher. His philosophy of Advaita seeks to keep the Vedic tradition alive, and ensure its continuity. Sāṅkara upholds that the uniqueness (spūrvatā) of scripture lies in imparting the knowledge (1) of soul's identity with Brahma (jīva-Brahma-saikya-jñāna) and (2) of the illusory nature (mithyātva) of the physical phenomena of the world (jagat). Advaita affirms that the aim (tātparya) of scripture is to teach the removal of the plurality projected by ignorance (śvayā kalpita bheda nivṛtti paratvāt sastras-yo), and dissolution of the world of duality (prapancas-a pravilayaḥ śabdena pratipādyate).
Let us now discuss the linguistic and exegetical guidelines that are involved in arriving at the purport of the oneness of the soul with Brahman.

1. **Criteria for Significant Combination**

According to Indian philosophy, a sentence is meaningful only when it fulfills the four conditions of (a) expectancy (ākāṅkṣā), (b) appropriateness (yo-yatā), (c) proximity (Īsāṇī, sannidhi), and (d) import (tātparyya)

Of these, expectancy and appropriateness constitute the material conditions, and proximity the formal condition, for a meaningful combination of words.

A written or uttered word (danda), e.g. "Krishna", generates an expectancy in the reader or hearer who anticipates and awaits more information. The word becomes significant only when the stimulated expectancy is satisfied by providing sufficient information, e.g., "Krishna is the brother of Balarama." Depending on the context, even a single word can become meaningful. If the context is a question which seeks an answer, "Who is the brother of Balarama?" then the word "Krishna" becomes significant.
Every word has a power (sakti) through which it conveys its meaning. Therefore, the words used in a sentence must be appropriate to convey the intended sense. When inappropriate words are used, their powers neutralise one another, and the sentence as a whole becomes meaningless, e.g., "Heat water with ice." But sentences of this kind also become meaningful when viewed in the right context. If someone says, "He tries to make the Heaven and earth meet," it means that the individual tries to accomplish the impossible. The suitability or appropriateness of words to convey the intended meaning can be established only in the context in which they are made.

All uttered and written words have an existence in time and space. Therefore, words must follow one another with a sufficient spatio-temporal gap, so that the hearer or reader does not have any difficulty in getting acquainted with what is being conveyed.

The context or universe of discourse plays a very important role in fixing the meaning of a word, because words have multiple use. One and the same word can suggest different meanings in different contexts.
c.g. "safe", "bank", "page", "chaff", etc. Therefore, the context in which the word occurs determines its meaning.

ii. The Principles of Interpretation

There are six canons of interpretation (sad-tātparya līγa), which are applied in eliciting the purport of scripture. While interpreting scriptural texts, Advaita affirms that the real teaching is that (1) which is set forth in the initial passage and reaffirmed in the concluding passage (upakrama and upasaṁhāra), (2) which is repeatedly declared (abhyaśa), (3) which is novel (spūrva), that is to say which is not within the reach of the ordinary sources of valid knowledge like perception or inference, (4) which holds out the highest and really abiding reward (phalem) of the realisation of Brahman and release from all bondage, (5) which is borne out by frequent glorification (arthavāda), and (6) which is rendered probable to reason by means of analogies (upa-atti).  

iii. Kinds of Meaning

Two kinds of meaning are recognised in Advaita. They are: (1) primary meaning (mukhyārtha) and
(2) secondary meaning (lakṣaṇyārtha).

1. The Primary Meaning (mukhyārtha)

The primary meaning is arrived at directly through the application of the four conditions for meaningful combination. When the primary meaning is contradicted by another means of knowledge (pramāṇa-bādha) and becomes inexplicable, then the secondary or figurative meaning (lakṣaṇyārtha) which is closely connected with the primary meaning is resorted to, e.g. "He is a lion," means that the individual is courageous.

2. The Secondary Meaning (lakṣaṇyārtha)

(a) Exclusive Implication (Jalal-lakṣaṇa): In this the primary meaning is abandoned due to its contradiction by another means of knowledge, and a meaning closely connected with the primary meaning is, instead, adopted. For example, "The village on the Ganges." means "The village on the bank of the Ganges."

(b) Non-exclusive Implication (ajalal-lakṣaṇa) In this, the primary meaning is retained, but it is supplemented by the secondary meaning, e.g. "The red is running," means "The red (horse) is running."
(c) **Exclusive—Non-exclusive Implication** (Jnāñ-e-jñāñ-lakṣaṇaḥ): In this type of secondary meaning, the primary meaning is partly dropped and partly retained. Therefore, it is also known as bhāga-tvāga-lakṣaṇaḥ. For example, in "This is that Devadatta," the "this" and "that" denote one and the same Devadatta. Hence the individual alone (yakti-mātra), i.e. the identity of the person alone, which is the import of the statement, is retained, and the incompatible factors—time, place, and context—qualifying the subject, Devadatta, are dropped. "This is that Devadatta" is a secular (leukika) example, whereas "That thou art" (tāt tvam āṣi) is a scriptural (vaidika) example illustrating this kind of secondary meaning.

iv. **Classification of Sentences**

According to Advaita, all significant statements can be classified under two categories: (1) sentences which are relational in meaning (bheda-saṃśāraḥ) and (2) sentences which are non-relational in meaning (abheda-saṃśāraḥ).

Sentences which are relational in meaning convey difference (bheda) such as the subject, object,
instrument of action, etc., e.g., "(You) bring the cow (here) using a stick."

Sentences which are non-relational in meaning convey non-difference (abheda) or identity. They are of two kinds; (a) sentences in which non-difference is conveyed by the words constituting the statement (sāsār-ā-abheda). For example, "The big blue fragrant lily." In this statement, the connotations of the three predicates are different, but the denoted logical subject—lily—is the same. And (b) sentences in which bare identity or oneness alone (svarūpa-abheda) and not a differentiated oneness; is suggested as the import of the statement. For example, "This is that Devadatta," and "That thou art."

In the above classification, propositions falling under bheda-sāsār-ā, and sāsārga-abheda can be grouped under relational statements (sāsārgāvāgāhi-vāk-ās), because they exhibit subject-predicate, cause-effect, whole part relation, etc. For example, "The cow is white," "This cup is made of silver," "The cloth consists of threads," etc. Non-relational statements which come under svarūpa-abheda are identity judgments. They
are known as akhandārtha-vākyas, because they convey no relation; but identity or oneness is the import of these statements; e.g. "This is that Devadatta," "I am Brahman" (ahāṁ brahmaṁ), etc. Advaita upholds that the major texts (mahāvākyas) of the Upaniṣads are identity judgments and that their aim is to convey the oneness of the soul and Brahman, which is the import of the Upaniṣads.

V. Interpretation of the Major Texts

Three stages are involved in deriving the import of the soul’s identity with Brahman from the major texts of scripture. They are: (1) knowledge of the grammatical co-ordination of words (sāmānādhikaraṇya-ijnāna), (2) knowledge of the qualification-qualified relation (viśeṣa-viśeyatā-ijnāna), and (3) knowledge of the implication-implied relation (lakṣya-lakṣaṇa saṃbandha ājnāna) respectively.

1. Knowledge of the Grammatical Co-ordination of Words: In the statement "This is a big blue fragrant lily" (nīlāṁ mahat svagandhi utpalam̐, the words "big", "blue", and "fragrant" are in grammatical co-ordination with each other. Similarly in the major text, e.g. "That
thou art" (*tat tvam asī*), the words "that" (*tat*) and "thou" (*tvam*) are in grammatical co-ordination with each other. The word "that" denotes God (*Īśvara*) and "thou" denotes the soul (*jīva*). The word "is" (*asi*) unites the two words in an appositional relation.

2. Knowledge of the Qualification-qualified Relation: The different connotations "big", "blue", and "fragrant" are the predicates of the logical subject "lily", their common denotation. But this kind of interpretation will not hold good in the case of "That thou art", for then the finitude of "thou" (soul) will become a predicate of "that" (God), and the infinitude of "that" will come to qualify "thou". The primary meanings of "that" and "thou" cannot suggest identity, because they denote two different entities qualified by two different sets of incompatible determinants (*sopā-ghīka-tattvās*). The pervisciant soul is consciousness qualified by *avidyā* as its adjunct (*avidyā upahita caitanya*), whereas the omniscient God is consciousness qualified by *māyā* as the adjunct (*māyā u-phite caitanya*). According to Advaita, the soul and God are not related as substance and attribute, for then Brahman will become a qualified (*saguna*) entity, and thereby, non-eternal (*anitya*). This will contradict the scriptural
view that reality is attributeless (nirguna) and eternal (nitya). Advaita teaches the soul's identity with Brahman, and not the soul's identity with God. The Advaitin, therefore, resorts to the knowledge of the implied-implication relation.

3. Knowledge of the Implied-Implication Relation

In the final stage, since the two words "that" and "thou" fail to suggest identity, for attaining identity, the meanings of "that" and "thou" must be revised. Since the primary meanings are inappropriate, the secondary meaning is instead adopted. One, therefore, has to identify and isolate the adventitious (au·adhika) from the essential factors in the two terms— "that", and "you". When the adventitious factors—avidyā and māyā—are eliminated through exclusive-non-exclusive implication, what remains is neither the soul nor God, but pure consciousness (caitanya-mātra) which is no other than Brahman, the essence of both "that" and "you".

In this way, Śaṅkara derives the essence of the soul's identity with Brahman from the major texts of the Upaniṣads. This sublime knowledge is imparted by a Self-realised teacher (guru) to a qualified seeker (adhiṣṭhiti-yuṣṭa) who exhibits a deep longing for liberation (mukhya).
The edifying knowledge of the soul's oneness with Brahman, initiates the subconscious transformation of the finite personality, and eventually culminates in the termination of the soul's bondage, and the attainment of liberation.

8. Psychological Analysis

Having discussed the linguistic analysis to derive the purport (tātparya) of the principal texts (mahāvākya), we have now on our hands mediate knowledge (parokṣa-ānā) of the identity of the soul with Brahman (jīva-brahma-aikyā-ānā). This mediate knowledge should be transformed into immediate experience (aparokṣa-ānā, anubhūti) through intuition (sākṣātkaśa). We have earlier seen that transformative philosophers emphasise on the need for a trained spiritual faculty to enact the transformation from contemplation (nididhyāsāna) to experience. We also saw that transformation is not possible as long as the mind (atishkarana) is impure (asuddha), and is contaminated by the subliminal residual impressions (sāmkṣāra, vāsanā). In spite of persistent epistemological inquiry and analysis, and metaphysical investigation, there is no knowledge of the Self (tām-ānā, because
of the presence of obstacles (ratibandhas) - of the past (atīta), present (vartamāna), and future (āgami). The obstacles of the present were listed as dullness of the intellect (prājñā-māndhya), clinging to misconceptions (viparyaya-durāgraha), bad logic (kuterka, and hankering for sense-objects (viśaya-āsaktī). Their remedy was prescribed as consisting in the study of scripture (śravaṇa), rational reflection (manana on it, and contemplation on its import. The obstacles are the manifestations of ignorance. They incline an individual towards the life of the lower self which spells sorrow, ignorance of one's true nature, bondage (bandha), and transmigration (saṁsāra). The life of the lower self is caused by the residual impressions of the impure variety (saūddha-vāsanā). According to Advaita, as the subconscious impressions, so the mind; as the mind, so the actions (karma); as the actions, so the agent (karta). Therefore, as the inclination, so the individual. Hence bondage is due to the presence of subconscious impressions, and the elimination of these impressions is liberation (moksha).

The Jīvanmukti-viveka upholds that liberation is facilitated by (a) obliteration of the subconscious latent impressions (vāsanā-keśa), (b) annihilation of
the mind (manomāyā), and (c) knowledge of the Self or reality. Of these three factors, knowledge of the Self is the principal, whereas obliteration of subliminal impressions and destruction of the mind are auxiliaries to Self-knowledge; for, only when knowledge of the Self is attained can the mind be vanquished forever, and the residual subconscious impressions totally incapacitated.

The subtle body (sūkṣma-sarīra) which is the storehouse of the residual impressions transmigrates along with the soul to enable it experience the fruits of its actions in empirical life. The latent impressions determine the kind of body the soul has to inherit, and influence the nature of its experience. The latent impressions are the potent form-seed, and experience their actual form-tree. On reaching maturity (ākṣatvā), the subconscious impressions evolve into conscious states without any effort on the individual's part. If the three states (avasthā-śrēṣṭha) of waking (jāgrata), dream (svapna), and deep sleep (suṣupti) account for all human experience, the subconscious impressions are the psychological forces which trigger these experiences and stimulate the stream of thought in the mind of human beings.
The latent impressions give rise to mental modes and sustain the mental world as oil does the flame of a lamp, and perpetuate the empirical life of the individual. By giving rise to mental modes, the latent impressions drive the extrovert mind and the senses to their corresponding physical activity, and prevent apprehension of the inward Self, which is immanent in experience. Therefore, for attaining liberation, the residual impression must be effaced, and the restless mind subdued.

According to the Jīvamukti-viveka, there are two ways of controlling the mind. They are: (a) the use of neuro-motor force to control the modes of the mind, e.g. prāṇāyāma, hatha-yoga, etc., and (b) the adoption of gentle methods of gaining gradual control over the mind by substitution and sublimation of ideas. This method, too, is adopted in psychology to control mental states. The Laghu-yogācārika compares the former method with trying to forcefully drive a cow into its shed by beating it. But this technique of mind-control has been disfavoured, for it is as difficult as trying
to bind a rutting elephant with stalks of the lotus. The latter method can be likened to holding a bundle of grass before a cow to lure and lead it unaware into its shed. Vidyārāṇya is in favour of this approach to quell the restless mind.

In the mind of an individual, there are two states as the forerunner of all religious pursuits. They are an awareness of misery and finitude, and a deep yearning to overcome it. Therefore, the mind not only experiences misery, but also strives consciously to free itself permanently from the trauma it undergoes. Since transformation takes place in the mind, let us now discuss the phenomenon of transformation from the standpoints of the science of psychology and of the philosophy of Advaita, keeping in view the fact that psychology or philosophy cannot account for transformation, because transformative experience transcends both psychology and philosophy. These can only give a general description of what happens in transformation, because the when, why, and how of transformation is a psychological, a philosophical, and a theological mystery.

According to William James, the mind is a system of ideas, wherein ideas mutually check or reinforce one
another. Each aim "awakens a certain specific kind of interested excitement, and gathers a certain group of ideas together in subordination to it as its associates." Therefore, the ideas form different, relatively independent groups or systems. When one group predominates and preoccupies the individual's interest, the other ideas and their allies get obscured from the mind. The mental infrastructure of ideas is sustained by the force of habit. As the individual grows, there, are mental rearrangements due to changes in one's habitual outlook. Ideas and aims which were once peripheral or marginal in consciousness can become central, and those which were central can become peripheral. It is very important as to which set of ideas are central and which, peripheral in consciousness. In religious life, spiritual ideas which were previously marginal in consciousness migrate to the centre, and spiritual aims become the keynote or the habitual centre of one's energy. By "habitual centre of energy" is meant a group of ideas which engage a person's attention and from which the individual works. Habits and established groups of ideas hamper mental rearrangement, whereas "explosive emotions"—e.g. happiness, hope, resolve, etc.—catalyse changes. Explosive emotions can destabilise the interstitial structure of the mind sustained by habit and,
thereby, initiate a mutation of the mental outlook and transformation of the personality of an individual. Shifts in the centres of energy are due to the subconscious incubation or maturation of ideas, and partially due to the conscious effort of thought and will.

If habits and established ideas of life retard rearrangement, new information accelerates changes in habits and personality. The influence is subconscious. According to psychology, the subliminal, or transmarginal, or mystical, or super-natural region is the storehouse of the impressions of sense-experience. It is the source of all non-rational activities and spiritual experiences—e.g. superstitious beliefs, convictions, presuppositions, dreams, intuition, etc. In a religious person, this region is said to be very wide. William James is of the view that the higher power with which one communicates in religious experience operates through this region.

According to psychology, the subconscious impressions on attaining maturity or "tension", "enter consciousness with something like a burst." All inexplicable changes in consciousness are the outcome of the tension of the subliminal memories reaching the bursting point. The invasions from the subliminal assume objective appearances,
and suggest to the individual an external control. Therefore, the "other" higher power with which one interacts is only a subconscious continuation of the conscious life of the individual. In transformative experience the change from tension, responsibility, and anxiety to equipoise, passivity, and peace is the blessed outcome of the change in inner equilibrium or the personal centre of energy. William James upholds that in mystic experience the subconscious maturation of the higher emotion and the exhaustion of the lower emotion simultaneously produce the edifying experience, whereas, according to Starbuck, in terms of a change in equilibrium,

the movement of new psychic energies towards the personal centre and the recession of old ones towards the margin (or the rising of some objects above and the sinking of others below the conscious threshold) are only two ways of describing an indivisible event. 15

Transformation or conversion can be enacted in two ways by (a) eliminating the undesirable emotions, e.g. anger, fear, worry, etc., by cultivating their opposites and (b) remaining indifferent to the undesirable emotions,
because as long as "egoistic worry... guards the door, the expansive confidence of... faith gains no presence." 16

There are two types of conversion: (a) volitional or conscious conversion where transformation is gradual and (b) non-volitional or unconscious conversion where transformation is sudden. The difference between the two is only relative. It is not due to a divine miracle, but rather due to "a simple psychological peculiarity." 17 A sudden convert possesses "a large region in which mental work can go on subliminally, and from which invasive experiences, abruptly upsetting the equilibrium of the primary consciousness may come." 18 A slow convert gradually acquires a well developed subliminal region, through the practise of religion.

Let us, now, see how the above discussed psychology is implicit in the philosophy of Advaita characterised as a metaphysics of experience. According to Advaita, the finite soul is what it is because of its adjunct (upadhi)—the mind, which is a totality or system or bank of dormant subconscious impressions. As mentioned earlier, the latent subconscious impressions on attaining maturity, flower into experience in the mind of the individual.
In bondage, the empirical life of the finite personality (jīvatva) of an individual evolves from four kinds of impure subconscious impressions.\(^\text{19}\) They are: (a) Loka-vasanā causes concern for social opinion. It kindles dislike for disrepute, and desire for name and fame. (b) Sāstra-vasanā gives rise to the ego of erudition in three ways. The individual has a passion for study, or is attracted to too many branches of knowledge, or blindly adheres to the injunctions of scripture. (c) Deha-vasanā generates conceit in the body. Its three effects cause wrong identification of the body with the Self, desire for physical charm, and effort to rid physical disorders through impermanent remedies. These three kinds of latent impressions constitute mānasa-vasanā or impressions of mental desires. (d) Visaya-vasanā pertain to the residual impressions born of the actual experience of objects. The notions of doer-ship (kārtrtva), knower-ship (jñātrtva), enjoyer-ship (bhoktrtva), and plurality (bheda) responsible for bondage and transmigration, are implicit in these subconscious impressions. Therefore, these impure impressions which give rise to the feeling of finitude or individuality must be obliterated and the mind annihilated if bondage is to be terminated and liberation attained.
According to Advaita, the impure impressions of the life of the lower self can be eliminated from the mind by the implantation of the pure impressions of the life of the higher self, e.g. discrimination (viveka), dispassion (vairāgya), meditation (dhyāna), desireless action (niskāma-karma), fortitude (titikṣā), equanimity (uparati), control over the senses (sāma), restraint over their activity (dama), etc. The virtues of the life of the higher self are encompassed by the fourfold preliminary discipline—sādhanā-catustaya, and the threefold final discipline of ārāvana, manana, and nididhyāsana. In this way, the inferior and binding emotions of the lower life are substituted with, and sublimated by, the cultivation of their opposites—the superior and liberating emotions of the higher life. Thus, substitution and sublimation of ideas, through the entertainment of their opposites adopted in psychology, to rid the mind of its unwholesome tendencies, are implicit in the ethical preliminary and the final disciplines of Advaita. The preliminary and the final disciplines are the stipulated intellectual and spiritual exercises which psychologically prepare a seeker for intuiting the subtle Self.
In a seeker (sādhaka) striving for liberation, desire for liberation or knowledge of the Self (jñāna) becomes the habitual centre of energy with the virtues of the life of the higher self as its allies. Just as the lotus and the pond in which it grows cater to mutual well-being, so also desire for the knowledge of reality and the virtues of the higher life strengthen each other. According to Śaṅkara, virtues and edifying thoughts flourish in a mind where dispassion and desire for liberation (mumukṣautva) are intense (tīrtha), and erelong fructify in realisation of the Self. When the impressions of the life of the higher self are implanted in the mind, the impressions of the life of the lower self which vitiate wickedness and vice fade away from the field of consciousness, and desire for the Self develops deep-roots and occupies the individual’s undivided attention. According to Rāmarāyaṇaki, the desire to know Brahman, which arises when one fulfils the fourfold means to eligibility is intense, it ceases to exist only when Brahman, the object of desire, is realized. So the intense desire, to know Brahman (brahma-jñāna), which is the motivatory force, impels the eligible candidate not only to undertake the inquiry into the Vedānta but also to pursue it till the goal is reached.
In the mind of a bound individual, the complex of pseudo-plurality and the edifice of the pseudo-personality are founded on ignorance sustained by the bricks of the *loka*, *sastra*, and *deha-vāsanās* responsible for the feelings of agency, knower-ship, enjoyer-ship, and plurality, and strengthened by the cement of ancient (*anādi*) non-discrimination (*aviveka*). This mental structure is sustained by non-inquiry (*avicāra*). The new (*āpūrva*) knowledge of the identity of the soul with Brahman initiates a change in the mental structure of accustomed (*naśāsargika*) finitude. Through the practice of the final discipline—*śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*—the bricks of agency, knower-ship, enjoyer-ship, and difference are destabilised, and the foundations of ignorance gradually undermined and uprooted by the mediate knowledge of the oneness of the soul with Brahman. When this knowledge of the identity of the soul with Brahman matures, it activates the dormant spiritual consciousness of infinitude (*brahmātva*) to enlarge and expand. A seeker who is on the threshold of liberation abandons all pursuits (*karmaḥ*), secular (*laukika*) and sacred (*vaidīka*), and remains in an attitude of indifference to all stimuli—external and internal, like a witness (*sāksin*).
This attitude of indifference towards undesirable feelings is also a stance of psychology to overcome unwanted mental modes.

When the aspirant finally abides as Brahman, the latter which is infinite (ananta) becomes the individual's object (viśaya) of consciousness. According to the Kīta-bhramara-nyāya or the tat-kratu nyāya, the mind becomes that which it constantly meditates on. In contemplation, the notion of infinitude matures, or is incubated, in the cocoon of the mind. The mind, being finite, can neither arrest nor accommodate the expanding consciousness of infinitude. Therefore, finitude drops off, and the soul metamorphoses into Brahman. The complex of illusory plurality and the edifice of the false personality collapse like a deck of cards. Like a butterfly emerging from the pupa, the soul outgrows the wrong identification (adhyāsa) with its empirical vesture—the five sheaths (panca-kosā)—encasing and imprisoning it. Once this is accomplished, no new mental structure needs to be raised; for, when the barriers blocking the effulgent Self are negated, the self-luminous (svaprakāśa), blissful (ānanda-svarūpa),
and ineffable Self reveals itself. The caterpillar-soul, is essentially a butterfly—Brahman; only the name and form are different, because of the association with the limiting adjunct—the cocoon in the case of the caterpillar, and the mind in the case of the soul. When the adjunct is outgrown, the real nature (svarūpa-sthiti) is attained. The fruit of the plantain tree destroys the tree itself, so also when mediate knowledge—a finite mode (khanda-vṛtti) of the mind—fruits in immediate intuitive knowledge—an infinite mode (akhandākāra-vṛtti) of the mind, it destroys the tree of the mind, which perpetuates the life-cycle of transmigration. Theoretical knowledge is translated into experiential knowledge. The individual is freed from the finitude and misery of bondage and attains the infinitude and bliss of liberation. The butterfly cares only for the honey of flowers, and ignores their various names and forms; so also a knower perceives only the essence of Brahman in the variety of names (nāma) and form (rūpa). The knower floats in the infinite expanse of the Self, neither seeking nor rejecting that which comes to one through destiny (prārābdha). Apparently enjoying the pleasure afforded by the objects (visayānanda), the knower sports in the Self (ātma-krīda) relishing the
nectar of immortality and eternality; and revels ever-after in the incomparable (niratisaya) bliss of Brahman. In this way, transformation is ushered in the mind by a revolutionary change in the individual's accustomed approach to the gross external physical world of public particulars, i.e. material bodies and persons, and the subtle internal psychical world of private particulars, i.e. feelings and emotions. According to Advaita, the elimination of ignorance and thereby of bondage, and the attainment of the knowledge of reality and thereby of liberation, are simultaneous.

Transformation can be sudden as in the case of Janaka, Ramana, and others, or slow as in the case of many seekers. The difference between the two, which is relative, is due to inequalities in mental maturity, or psychological preparedness, for liberation. A sudden convert inherits a refined and well developed psyche or subtle body permeated by the latent impressions of virtues acquired in the previous lives, which makes it easy for him to enact the transformation with minimal effort. A gradual convert slowly trains the mind through the constant practice of austerities to make it fit to intuit the Self.
According to William James, the effects of transformation are: (a) loss of worry, (b) perceiving new and unknown truths, (c) apprehension of novelty in the external world, and (d) attainment of bliss. The above mentioned results of transformation cited in psychology are contained in the philosophical concept of liberation—in—life (jivanmukti) as formulated in Advaita. According to Advaita, when knowledge of the Self is attained, the individual is liberated forever from the travails of transmigration. The knower perceives everything as Brahman (sarvam khalvidam brahma), and realises that the Self is the reality in all phenomena. The liberated soul discerns a "family-resemblance" in the phenomenal universe, inasmuch as all existents are mere name and form superimposed on the canvas of the infinite Brahman. With the dawn of Self-knowledge, the mist of plurality and the mark of personality, which confounded the soul, vanish without a trace. Transmigration gets terminated, and the individual awakes to the sublime and infinite bliss (paramānanda) of liberation in life.

2. Nature

A. The Apparent Nature of Transformation

"Man is a being who is not what he is, and is what he is not." According to Advaita, this
inconsistency is due to ignorance of one's real nature (svarūpa-ajñāna) as Being or Self. Therefore, Advaita seeks to unravel the mystery of Being, and resolve the existential predicament of mankind. In this context, two questions raised by Bādarāyana are significant. They are: (a) is the Self known? or (b) is the Self not known? If it is known, then, there is no need for inquiry (vicāra). If it is not known, then, there can be no inquiry at all into it. According to Advaita, the Self is both known and not known. Everybody knows the Self generally and superficially, but not essentially as constituting one's very being. In bondage (bandha), the Self is experienced by the individual (jīva) as a felt presence, and is transformed into a conscious presence in liberation (mokṣa). This transformation terminates the soul's (jīva's) apparent self-alienation from truth and restores it to its original sublime and blissful stature (svarūpa-avasthā).

In the earlier chapters, it was mentioned that transformation is only figurative or apparent (vivarta) and not real. According to Advaita, bondage and our effort (sādhana) to transcend it through religion are
"real" at the empirical (vyāvahārika) level; but there is no such thing as bondage or liberation at the transcendental (pāramārthika) level of Brahman. Like the "snake" superimposed on the rope, diversity (bhada), misery (duhkha), bondage, religion, ethics, station in life (āśrama), and its duties (dharma), liberation, bliss (ānanda), etc., are superimposed on the immutable (nir-vikāra) Self. Therefore, what is needed for liberation is only an emancipation (mukti) from the delusions (bhrama) caused by the finite mind, and a negation of the superimpositions (adhyastha) made on the Self. This is accomplished when the seeker adheres to the spiritual programme stipulated in Advaita.

According to Śāṅkara, the soul which is no other than Brahman only appears to be bound due to ignorance (avidya). Therefore, when ignorance is eliminated, Brahman is not something which is newly attained, but only attaining the already attained. Liberation is the essential nature of the soul. Hence "attaining" Brahman or liberation is only figurative, since it is accomplishing the accomplished. Just as an individual recognises oneself as the tenth person (daśama-purūsa), likewise in liberation, when the superimpositions (adhyastha) obscuring the Self are eliminated, the soul
intuits its essential identity with Brahman. Like attaining a chain that is round one's neck, but which was wrongly thought to be lost, and is presently discovered, so also in liberation, Brahman-hood (brahmatva) about which the seeker was not aware of due to an ignorance and forgetfulness of one's true nature, is discovered as one's very being in Self-realisation. Therefore, the elimination or negation of bondage is not factual like extricating a thorn embedded in the flesh, but only a phenomenal negation like the annihilation of the "snake" superimposed on the rope. Thus, in liberation "what is ever free gets liberated, and that bondage which is not really there gets removed." Therefore, bondage and liberation are both illusory (mithyā). According to Gaudapāda, there is none bound, none seeking liberation, none liberated, except the Self, the highest truth. But to arrive at this grand conclusion we need knowledge which must ultimately negate itself and what remains is the ineffable self-luminous (svapprakāśa), non-dual (advitiya) Self. Liberation is unknowing all knowledge, deconstructive, and unlearning the learnt. In that highest state, there is neither doubt nor doubter, neither question nor answer; for, having attained Brahman, all doubts get dispelled, and one remains established in the absolute certainly of all certainties.