CHAPTER III
THE INDIVIDUAL

The Advaitins entertain three theories on the appearance of the supreme transcendental self as individual being (Jīva, Pratibimbavāda, Abhāsavāda and Avacchedavāda - these are the three theories and according to each of these theories the individual soul is but an appearance of the transcendental self, i.e. the Absolute.

The Vivaraṇa School is the exponent of the first theory that is the theory of reflection (Pratibimbavāda). According to this theory the individual being is the reflection of the transcendental consciousness (Cīt). To support their position the Pratibimbavādins illustrate the reflection of space in a lake of water. Just as the space without any material form can be reflected in the water so the transcendent self evidently without any material form can be reflected in āvidya and thus can appear as an individual being. The Reflection Theory has been entertained equally by Maṇḍana Miśra, Prakāśānanda, Sarvaññātma Muni as well as by other teachers. Thus they fundamentally agree in accepting the same theory to account for the

1. Vivaraṇa - P - 347;
Brahmasūtra Śāṅkara Bhāṣya - P-I.
Calcutta Sanskrit Series.
appearance of the individual being. But the difference arises as to the medium of this reflection. To some of the teachers, avidya in cosmic scale exists as the medium of this reflection. The Absolutist like Prakāśānanda accepts this, because according to this theory, there is only one individual. And the whole cosmic order is the creation of that one individual who idealises all these things under the spell of maya. To others again, the Psychic avidya exists and functions as the medium of this appearance. The Vīvarāṇācārya maintains this in perfect accord with all other teachers belonging to the moderate school. Sarvajñātmakuni however suggests that the medium is buddhi or the finite mind that originates from avidya.

The Abhāṣavāda has been entertained by Suresvara. According to the Abhāṣavāda also the individual being is the reflection of the transcendental consciousness - the Absolute. But the difference with the former theory is that, according to the Abhāṣavāda the reflection that appears in the medium of avidya is false and is liable to total suppression and contradiction by the ultimate enlightenment. According to the Pratibimbavāda on the other hand the reflection is real and not ontologically different from the transcendent self, and as such - is not affected by contradiction. To be more explicit -

1. Antahkarana-tatsamākāvatsamājñānānāpratibhibitam
   Chaitanyāṁ śīva iti vīvarāṇākarah - Siddhāntatīndu - Dānhālokī - sl.1.
2. Kāryopadhistāvatā ca - Śaṅkaraśārikā - III/43 142 (sl)
   See also, Siddhāntatīndu - Dānhālokī - sl.1.
in Sureswara's opinion - as the double that creates
difference is false, (because it is through the medium
of avidya which is a false entity), and as the reflection
represents the concentrated being conditioned by the
nescience and not the original self itself, so the
reflected consciousness cannot represent the true
self. Hence the reflection is not ultimately real —
viewed from the metaphysical standpoint, and as such
it courts contradiction ultimately. The Nyarapacarya
holds that the original and its so-called reflection or
image are not ontologically two different things but one.
When one sees the image of one's own face in a mirror he
believes to see his face as it is. The face appears in
the medium of the mirror instead of on one's shoulder
owing to the mirror's capacity to deflect sun's light
and so on. The belief that it is the image and not the
real face is false as it fails to note that the appear­
ance in another medium is only an error of perception.
All along the face is seen and the belief that it is
only a reflection is wrong. There is no reflection
independent of and apart from the real face. Accordingly
the reflection of the transcendental self in the medium
of avidya is nothing but the original self and the
error lies in the belief that it is affected by the
defects of the medium. This has been elucidated by Gauda
Brahmananda in the Nyayaratnavali.1 According to what is

1 Svarupatah mithyabhutan pratibimbamiti ...... abhasavatam. Svarupatah satyam pratibimbavaratunena
mithyabhutan ............... pratibimbavatvatvam.
Nyayaratnavali - p-452 -
Sankaragrantharatnavali - P-I. Calcutta Ed.
called the reflection theory (Pratibimbavāda) the reflection is real ontologically taken by itself, as it is not any thing numerically different from the self. It becomes false when it is believed to be a reflection of the original prototype different from it. But according to Suresvara the reflection is a false appearance per se from start to finish. It is only a semblance, a simulation, a transitory appearance as false and treacherous as a counterfeit coin.

The Jahatsvarthalaksana and Jhadajahadlaksana entertained by the teachers (while interpreting the real import of the Sruti professing the identity of the individual with the Absolute), are based on these two theories - the Ābhāsavāda and Pratibimbavāda respectively. Suresvara says - the bondage exists as long as we confound the reflected consciousness with the self. And the liberation is attained when this is contradicted. The reflected consciousness also courts contradiction. In the Vivaranācārya's opinion the double appearance as individual is contradicted, but the reflected consciousness does not court contradiction. Thus they diverge from each other. But this difference is of little importance as the ultimate conclusion is the same. According to both of these theories the individual is an imperfect appearance of the transcendental being. In fact, both of these two theories (the Pratibimbavāda and Ābhāsavāda) established
with the help of practical illustrations are entertained to explain clearly the true position of the individual from the metaphysical standpoint.

To the Advaita philosophers, the supreme truth is identity. The distinction as Absolute and individual (Brahman and Jiva) appears in empirical life. The reality has, therefore, been identified as our immediate self. Hence viewed properly, the individual being is not a separate entity by itself. It is Absolute that appears as individual. In essence the individual involves absolute identity with the transcendental self. As the Saṅkarites hold, this absolute identity with Brahman is the main fundamental thesis of the Vedānta. But, though the empirical being - the individual - is not a separate entity, and though there is absolute identity in essence with the Absolute, still the Absolute can not be identified as individual. According to Advaita analysis the supreme truth is our immediate self, but at the same time the Advaitins distinguish the self from the subject (which we have discussed already in the First Chapter). In fact, if the Absolute were the individual himself, it would include all those imperfections and distortions which it excludes in reality. Consequently, Śaṅkara says¹ that the empirical being - the individual - is not a separate entity other than the Absolute. But neither the individual is Absolute itself. The empirical being, he concludes,

¹. Na sa eva sāksat, na sa eva sāksat, nāpi vastvantaram - (Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya - 2/3/50)

Brahmasūtra Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, Bombay Ed.
is the Ībhāsa or the reflection of the Absolute. Both the Pratibimbavāda and the Ībhāsavāda have been established on this basis. The empirical being as the reflection of the Absolute involves both the identity and difference together with the Absolute. The reflection taken by itself, that is as distinct and apart from the self, is not the real thing itself because it is the reflection of the thing and not the thing itself. But being the real self in essence it is not a separate entity by itself as it can not exist apart from the original thing. The reflection of a thing is, in fact, the real thing which appears as reflection through some medium. So the individual is the appearance of the Absolute.

We have seen previously when the Absolute appears as individual āvidvā exists as the medium. Sarvajñātanamuni holds indeed that buddhi is the medium of this appearance, but this medium is also projected by āvidvā. Hence ultimately āvidvā is the fundamental cause of this appearance. And āvidvā being the fundamental cause of this appearance the difference that arises through it should not be taken as real. The identity in essence in fact is the only real thing. Thus though the Advaitins admit the identity and difference of the individual with the Absolute still they do not really accept the Bhedābheda theory. According to the
R̄ṣe-dābheda philosophers the individual involves both the identity and difference with the Absolute and both the identity and difference are real. But the Advaitins, as we have seen, hold that as long as āviśyā exists and the being appears as individuated plurality there is difference along with identity. But after the destruction of āviśyā identity is the only fact realised.

The reflection theory has been criticised by Śrīkara's opponents. According to the reflection theory the self exists transcending the empirical life and the reflection of the self appears in the role of individual being. Hence the imperfections and distortions that we confront in the empirical life do not really affect the self. The Upaniṣad vacates indeed that the self exists in all purity and it is eternally free. The Advaitins quote Śruti in support of their position and hold that the empirical self as the reflection of the transcendental self in the medium of āviśyā may involve distortion and imperfection, but it does not really affect the self. Viewed from this standpoint the Pratibimbavāda is the main fundamental thesis of the Advaita philosophy. By accepting this theory we can explain how the self excludes the imperfections and distortions of the empirical life even at the time when it appears in the role of the empirical being. Therefore Śrīkara himself entertains this theory, as he says that
the individual is the reflection or dhāraṇā of the Supreme transcendental self and Vācaspati also appears to entertain this theory accepted by many others.

The Avadānayāda has been entertained to exhibit the concentrated existence of the being as accidental. The infinite in fact cannot exist or appear with the finite form which we confront in the empirical life. Now those who entertain ultimate difference and profess that the distinction as finite and infinite is real ultimately, hold that the concentrated existence is natural. But in Śaṅkara’s opinion it is accidental and false. As Śaṅkara says the atomicity (anuttva) of the being cannot be accepted because the conscious feeling all over the material body contradicts this assertion. If the sentient being is atomic (anu) it cannot pervade the whole material form so as to make it sentient by its presence. Thus the atomicity of the being entertained by the Vaiṣṇava philosophers to establish the ultimate difference of the individual with the Absolute has been rejected in the Advaita philosophy with contempt. Those who accept the atomity of the being differentiate indeed the consciousness from the being. Consciousness, in their opinion, is the permanent property of the soul and exists as the basic character of being. And they maintain dynamic

*Abhāsa eva caīṣa jīvaḥ paraśya ātmano jalaśūryya-Kādīvad...

character of knowledge. So, though the being is atomic and can not exist therefore pervading the whole material body, still consciousness pervades the whole body and thus imparts conscious feeling just as the radiating ray of the light illuminates far and near though light itself is posted in some far corner. Viewed from the Advaita standpoint however the very premise is wrong because consciousness can not be thus differentiated from being. The being and consciousness are identical in their opinion, which we have noticed already. Besides, Sākara says, even if we admit that consciousness is a quality of being, still it can not exist pervading the whole body while being is atomic. The thing and its quality can not exist being separated from each other. According to the Naiyāikas' definition indeed, the quality or attribute always involves some permanent locus (āsraya) from which it can not be separated. On this ground the Advaitins deny the atomic existence. Besides the limitation of size is incompatible with the concept of consciousness. So the transconceptual being can not have any of those sizes that we confront among the material objects. The body size of the soul (entertained by the Jaina Philosophers) has been equally rejected by the author of the Brahmaśūtra. According to the Upaniṣad the sentient being may involve either the

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\text{1. Sarīrakabhāṣya = 2/3/36, 39, 38, 34, p–609; Brahmāsūtra, Gītakaro Bhāṣya, Bombay Ed.}
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\text{2. Brahmāsūtra = 2/32/34,35.}
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the infinite all-expansive existence or the finite atomic existence. Those who maintain the ultimate difference between the Absolute and individual hold that the infinite being and the atomic being (about which we find in the Bruti), imply respectively the Absolute and individual. The Absolute is the omnipotent, omniscient being. Endowed with infinite power and knowledge the Absolute exists pervading the whole empirical order of existence. The individual, on the other hand, is the finite atomic being limited in power and knowledge. But the Advaitins as we have seen deny the ultimate difference. The empirical being or the individual is not a separate entity other than the Absolute. The empirical being is the reflection of the transcendental being. Hence the concentrated existence is not natural. But in the empirical life, it appears as concentrated being on account of being conditioned by the body and mind. Just as the unlimited space appears limited and concentrated, encircled by some medium, so the infinite being appears as concentrated in the empirical life with the imposed limitation of the body and mind. Thus the Advaita-vada has been entertained to imply the concentrated appearance of the being as accidental.

Here we shall note the difference with the "Upadhyava" of Bhaskara. The concentrated appearance as accidental has been equally established in the Bhedabhed philosophy, because, according to the Pantheistic scheme of Bhaskara the individual being is not a separate entity other than the Absolute. But the individual is
the partial concentration of the transcendental being through some medium. The same illustration of space has been entertained. Thus the Bhaskarites also entertain the Avacqeda theory. But according to their view, the concentrated appearance though accidental is real. But the Mayavādins deny it either to be real. The concentration is simply a delusion. The Advaitins entertain, therefore, avidyā as the fundamental cause of this appearance. Indeed if the concentration is real and the individual involves the identity with the Absolute, as Bhāskarites hold, it shall spell the disintegration of the absolute being. Besides, we cannot account any other cause for this appearance except avidyā, as viewed from the standpoint of reason, all those causes of the appearance as karma enumerated by others, fail ultimately. In fact action (karma) or desire (kāma) imply the psychological ideality of the being viewed as so far from Advaita standpoint. And the psychological ideality involves the concentration. Hence it is avidyā that exists as the main fundamental cause of appearance. The main point is, the transconceptual being cannot have in reality the concentrated existence like material objects. It is simply a delusion that the being appears concentrated in the empirical life when it appears in the role of an individual.

From the metaphysical standpoint, therefore, the individual being, as a reflection of the transcendental being, holds but a nominal position. The finite -personality-
personality, viewed from this standpoint, is a self-imposed limitation of the being under the hypnotic spell which continues until the transcendental knowledge dawns. So in the transcendental scheme though the self exists, the individual does not exist: The individual is lost with the finite personality.

Within the empirical order however, the individual occupies a prominent place. According to the doctrine of Maya, the egocentric consciousness is at the root of the empirical projection. The finite personality appears when the self becomes associated with the body and mind; and when there is superimposition of identity with the body and mind. To be more explicit, when the self becomes associated with the not-self (that is the body and mind) and we identify the body and mind as self and superimpose their especial characteristics on the self, the being appears as the doer and enjoyer, which has been discussed already—(Chap.1). According to the Sāṅkhya Philosophers the empirical being is not the doer. Being associated with the mind it appears as enjoyer, though in reality, it excludes also the enjoyement as it excludes the action. But Sāṅkarites hold that being associated with the mind it appears both as the doer and enjoyer. Action and enjoyment go together. So the individual both participates in action and enjoys its result in the empirical life, though in
reality, the being excludes both of these facts. Thus the egocentric consciousness due to the association with the mind, leads to action, action leads to enjoyment and for the enjoyment of the individual the empirical world with the manifold objects varying in name and form come to exist. The absolutists hold that it is created by the individual himself. The teachers of the moderate school (Advaita) though reject this view, still, the enjoyment in their opinion, exists at the root of the appearance of the empirical order. Thus, within the empirical order, the individual holds the most prominent place.

(II)

FIVE SHEATHS

The individual has combination of five sheaths that conceals the inner being. These five sheaths have been noted after the Upanishad* as:

1) annamaya,
2) pranamaya,
3) manomaya,
4) vijnanamaya, and
5) anandamaya.

Sakkarites hold that all these sheaths are projected by avidya to enwrap the being.

The annamaya kosa is the gross physical form. The pranamaya kosa includes the life organ with five organs of action (the hand, the feet etc). The manomaya kosa includes the central organ of conscious life.

*The tattvāyopanishad - 2/8, p.379, Poona Ed.
life including the five sense-organs (i.e. the organs of hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and testing)\(^1\).

The **Vijñānamaya Kosa** is the intelligence (buddhi) with the senses. The subtle distinction between the **Manomaya Kosa** and **Vijñānamaya Kosa** is that the former is the sheath of volition associated with the active organ but the latter is the sheath of intelligence and it is nearest to the self. Knowledge is essentially concentrated in it. Thus the **Manomaya Kosa** is the sheath of will and the **Vijñānamaya Kosa** is the sheath of intelligence. The inmost sheath is that of bliss. It is avidya pure and concentrated. The Sattva quality predominates in this stage. So this inmost sheath is transparent and the transcendental bliss remains reflected in it.

Viewed from the metaphysical standpoint, these five sheaths that constitute the finite personality concealing the inner being are false as they are projections of avidya, and they are self-imposed limitations of Being. But these sheaths which are properly speaking different bodies of the same individual involve different cognitive stages in empirical life. The **sthula, sūkṣma** and **kāraṇa** - that is the gross, subtle and causal - involve the individual being in three stages of existence. Each

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of these stages again involves the other two stages.
In the material life, therefore, there are three stages 
as Jâgrat, svatna and susunti. In these three stages
the individual is called respectively viśva, tâijasa
and prâjña. This classification is just parallel to
the classification of the universal being as Virât.

Sûtrâma and Hîranya-garbha and Jôvâna.

In the waking state the individual enjoys
the gross objects. The Advaitins hold that at this
stage the individual identifies the physical sheath (annamaya-kosa) with his immediate self. So this
material world appears before and we enjoy through it
identifying the physical sheath as our self. In dream
there is subtle enjoyment. The individual exists with
the subtle body and subtle world appears for his enjoy­
ment. The subtle body is the combination of three
sheaths:

1) Prâgamaya-Kosa,
2) Manomaya-Kosa, and
3) Vi/jânamaya-Kosa.

In the waking state along with these three sheaths, the
physical sheath exists to constitute the gross material
existence. The being appears as subject being associated
with the sheath of intelligence. So in both of these
two states - in Svanna and Jâgrat - the sheath of intel­
ligence exists and the being appears as associated with
it.

1. Viśvohi sthūla-bhuṅg nityam, tâijasa pravivikta-bhuk
ānanda-bhuk tathā prâjñā strîdha bhogām nibodhata
(Mândukya Kârikâ - Âgamaprakarana-sūtra 3)
In deep sleep (súvánti) the individual exists with the causal body only. In this state there is no activity - physical or mental. For the time being, as the Advaitins hold (and as it has been preached in the Upaniṣads also), the individual passes to the indeterminate stage of existence. But as avidvā exists screening the consciousness, so the individual cannot comprehend that he has passed to the highest stage. Vivaranaçārya¹ holds that there is abstract functioning of avidvā in this stage. So the individual comprehends the non-apprehension of object along with the bliss and the existence of the self as witness. But according to Suresvaraçārya² there is no such functioning of avidvā. Thus the individual attains the indeterminate stage, though being stepped in ignorance he cannot comprehend it. Due to his ignorance the individual in deep sleep is called prāna.