PREFAE

The alluring phenomena of the world have been a subject of inquiry from time immemorial. Could the world with its diversities have been created by some Almighty Omniscient Lord? Or has it always been there and will continue to exist even though changes may occur? Or is it a big illusion? And who is it, that is deluded? How many ultimate entities could there be? Such questions certainly compel an inquisitive mind to think that there should be at least two entities—sentient and Non-sentient, or consciousness and Matter. But at the same time, a doubt arises: How could there be any inter-relation between entities so opposed to each other? Now, if there be only one ultimate entity, it should necessarily be sentiency, which could appear to be Matter also. Further another inquiry may arise: Could this one eternal sentient principle be capable of modification or change? Or is it eternally unchanging?
If the first alternative is accepted, it should either be divisible and so non-eternal, or it should cease to exist giving place to something other. And if it is eternally unchanging, how could the world Phenomenon be accounted for? So far as the world phenomenon is concerned, we all experience it with its dealings; and so they have to be accepted. But at the same time, what proof or warranty is there for their existence except that they appear in our perceptions, or are known through other means of knowledge based on perception. But this does not necessarily prove the reality of the world around. We experience things in a dream, which do not exist as a matter of fact being a fiction of our imagination. Similarly, could the world of the waking state also be a fiction of our imagination? But we all experience the same world-phenomenon—could it then be the imaginary construct of one supreme Being? How then would we individual selves be related to that supreme Being; of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss?
Indian philosophical thought tried to tackle such problems in different ways with the result that a number of philosophical systems came into existence and developed by virtue of mutual influence. As a student of the Vedānta Darśana, I was keenly interested in studying carefully, how kevalādvaitavedānta has handled this problem of the unreality of the phenomenal world. And in consultation with my guide prof. Dr. Esther A. Solomon, I decided to do research work for my Ph. D. degree on Drsti-Srstivāda, which forcefully negates the phenomenal reality (empirical reality) of the world.

As research in the true sense of the term demands, I tried to detect the slightest hint in Vedāntic works beginning with the Upaniṣads, which could gradually show the way to the doctrine of Drsti-Srṣṭi. I have taken up for consideration some pre-śaṅkara as well as some post-śaṅkara Vedāntic works, as well as the Idealistic schools of Buddhism, and have tried to trace the line of development leading to Drsti-Srṣṭi-vāda.
I here acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rāis of the Sanskrit lore for whatever knowledge I have been able to attain from the original Sanskrit works. I also express my gratitude to the great scholars, living or dead, from whose works I have benefitted much. They are all mentioned in my Bibliography and I respectfully bow down to their scholarship.

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