CHAPTER-III

THE NATURE OF APPEARANCE
Chapter-III: 1) THE NATURE OF APPEARANCE

From the beginning of the philosophical history in India, we find that there are various interpreters of Upaniṣadic literature and as a result of which various systems developed in India. Śaṅkara was also such an interpreter and he himself insisted that he was expounding the truly vedāntic view which was already in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads, as we have found, donot yield any consistent philosophy, as their authors were many and not all of them belonged to the same period. The credit of Śaṅkara was to interpret the Upaniṣads in a single coherent manner.

Śaṅkara himself, most humbly propounded the view that he was not the founder of the school of Vedāntism. He was only expounding the ideas which was contained in the vedas and Upaniṣads. In the words of Radhakrishnan "he is voicing an old and weighty tradition which has been handed down to us by an unbroken series of teachers." Thus we find that Śaṅkara never claimed to give an original view of reality of his own. Again he was not even a blind follower of Upaniṣadic thought, rather he formulated a new theory of Vedānta which is enriched

The fundamental problem of the Advaita Vedanta is to explain how the world appears at all and what is the nature of the world-appearances. The Indian Philosophers, from the time of Vedic religion even, have advanced various interpretations of the nature of the world-appearances, and the reality behind it. But most of the interpretations are theistic and dualistic in character. What goes to the credit of Saṅkara is that his interpretation provides for the reconciliation of dualistic theism with non-dualistic absolutism, by giving us a two-fold conception of the Absolute, both as devoid of attributes (Nirguṇa) and as endowed with attributes (Saguṇa). He does not however place these two conceptions on the same level of existence which may involve self-contradiction. He regards one of them as higher and the other as lower. The Absolute in itself is of course devoid of all attributes and free from all distinctions, there be nothing in reality besides Brahman. This is the higher view of Brahman. But so long as we are in the embodied existence and believe in the reality of this world, we cannot rise to the true conception of reality. So we mis-conceive the Absolute as God who has created this beautiful world and of which we are the beautiful creations. As
long as we believe in the existence of this world appearance, in which we live and move and have our being, we cannot help believing some supreme being. Who has created this world along with us into a perfect order. This supreme being is God, the Absolute for our common understanding and this is the lower view of Absolute.

Thus, "Ultimate reality, according to Śaṅkara, is Ātman or Brahman which is pure consciousness (jñāna-svarupa) or consciousness of the Pure self (Svarupa-jñāna) which is devoid of all attributes (Nirguṇa) and all categories of the intellect (nirvīśeṣa)". The world is an appearance of Brahman like the snake in a rope and Brahman associated with its potency (Sakti) which is called Māyā or Muṣtavidyā, appears as the qualified Brahman or Śiva, who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this world.

It will be better for us if we can have an idea about the world appearance as depicted in the history of vedāntic philosophical systems, beginning with the Upaniṣads so that we can have a clear understanding of Śaṅkara's view about the nature of world-appearances.

1. THE THEORY OF APPEARANCE IN UPIŃŚADAS

The highest monistic philosophy which we find in Śrī Veda, as one reality (Ekaṁ sat), which realises

itself in all the variety of existences, is found in a more logical way in the philosophy of Upaniṣads which is known as Brahman. "That from which these beings are born, that in which when born they live and that into which they enter at their death, that is Brahman." There are many passages in the Upaniṣads which clearly show that the Absolute is the only reality and what we call the world creation, are only empirically real but transcendentally they are non-different from the Absolute. What, according to Upaniṣads then, are the relation of Brahman and the world-appearance? Thus in the Mūndokopānishedad it is stated that "just as a spider creates and retracts its thread, as the herbs and trees grow upon the surface of the earth just as from the living person the hairs of the head and the body grow, similarly from this immutable. Brahman does all this universe spring" (M.I.1.7). Again, in another passage of the same Upaniṣads, it is stated, "just as from a fire well-lit thousands of scintillations arise, and into it are resolved, similarly from this immutable Brahman manifold beings come into existence and into it are merged (M.II.1.1). Thus the world is a mere

3. Ibid. P - 161.
appearance of Brahman which does not affect Brahman. The
Upaniṣads attempts to bring out the relationship between
the Brahman and the world with various metaphorical exam-
pies as cited above. There are such other similies also,
such as the metaphors of the spinning of the web by the
spider, the bearing of the child by the mother and the
production of tune from musical instrument. All these
symbols and images express the tādātmya or oneness betw-
een Brahman and the world. Just as the light coming from
the sun does not affect the sun or the spark spirining
out from fire, does not do any harm to fire so also the
world of multiplicity, coming from the Brahman does not
do any harm to the unity of Brahman. Brahman is the mate-
rial as well as the efficient cause of the world. So how
the relationless Brahman is related to the world? The
world is not an essential factor in the existence of
Brahman. A reciprocal dependence of the world on Brahman
and vice versa would not be possible, for in that case
Brahman will be reduced to the level of the world of space
and time which is not possible.

Again we can not assume the creatorship to
Brahman. For the creation of the world by God would imply
that God was alone once for a time and at a certain point
in his history, he created the world. Then why he created
the world in a certain point of time. Why not before; and many other questions may arise as we generally find. So it is better to make the world as an expression of God. In many passages of the Upanisads, it is declared that the world is only a development of the Absolute spirit. And the inexplicability of the relation between the world and the Absolute is due to Māyā.

Now we come to the problem of the source of the doctrine of Māyā. As Dr. R.D. Ranade pointed out, there are three distinct theories as to the origin or source of the doctrine of Māyā. The first one is that the doctrine of Māyā is a mere fabrication of the fertile genius of Śaṅkara; the second theory states that the doctrine of Māyā as it is found in the Śaṅkara's philosophy, is to be traced entirely in the Sunya Vāda of the Buddhists and according to the third, the doctrine of Māyā is already present in the Upanisadic philosophy. None of these theories can satisfactorily explain the doctrine of Māyā. For to accept the second view that Māyā is the outcome of nihilistic philosophy of Buddhists, is to give a nihilistic interpretation to the philosophy of Śaṅkara. Again, to support the view that Māyā is found in full-fledged form in the Upanisads which was borrowed and depicted by Śaṅkara in his philosophy will be to underestimate the extra-ordinary talent of Śaṅkara. After a careful study of the Upanisadic

ideology, we find that there is sufficient justification for saying that the doctrine of Māyā is occurred frequently in the Upaniṣads, and so far as Saṅkara's contribution is concern, he had fabricated the doctrine, under the influence of nihilistic schools of thought. As a true thinker and philosopher, Saṅkara has elaborated the idea of māya that he found in the Upaniṣads, under the inspiration of Gaṇḍapāda's idea, his great grand teacher, whose philosophy is influenced by the Buddhists Abhidharma.

The trace of the Māyā doctrine is found in the Upaniṣads as the ideas, instead of the words. We have made some important references about the origin of the idea of Māyā. "The Isopanishad tells us that truth is veiled in the universe by a vessel of gold, and it invoices the grace of God to lift up the golden vessel and allow the truth to be seen". Here the conception of 'veil' prevents truth being seen. Another passage in the Kathopanishad says that "how people living in ignorance, and thinking themselves wise move about wandering, like blind man following the blind, in search of reality, which they would have easily seen had they lodged themselves in knowledge instead of ignorance". Here we have the conception of "blind-foldness".

2. ibid - P. 163.
where we deliberately shut our eyes to the truth. Then thirdly, Mundaka Upaniṣad says "Ignorance is compared to a knot which a man has to untie before he gets possession of the self in the recess of his own heart".1 The Chhāndogya Upaniṣad states how "knowledge is power and ignorance impotence".

The famous prayer in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka "in which a devotee is praying to God to carry him from Not-being to Being, from Darkness to Sight, from Death to Immortality, merely voices the sentiment of the spiritual aspirant who wishes to rid himself of the power of Evil over him. Unreality is here compared to Not-Being, to Darkness or to Death".2 Here Māyā is described as an 'adhruva' an unreality or an uncertainty. The Chhāndogya Upaniṣads states that 'a cover of untruth hides the ultimate truth from us, just as the surface of the earth hides from us the golden treasure that is hidden inside it'. Māyā is here compared to a 'cover of untruth'. Again in the Praśnopanishad the word Māyā is used directly and almost in the sense of illusion as that "we cannot reach the world of Brahman unless we have shaken off the crookedness in us, the falsehood in us, the illusion (Māyā) in us." Even in the Svetasvatara Upaniṣad the word Māyā is used in the

1. ibid. P - 163.
2. ibid. P - 163.
sense of cosmic illusion as that "it is only by meditation upon God, by union with Him, and by entering into His being that at the end there is the cessation of the great world-illusion". There are another passages in the Svetas-vatara which describes that "the Godhead as spreading his meshes and making them so manifold that he catches all the beings of the universe in them, and rules over them".1 Here we have the conception of a 'net' or 'meshes' which entangled all beings. Another famous passages in the Brihadāranyaka, speaks of "as if there were a duality", which implies that there is really no duality, Signifies the identification of Māyā with an appearance. Lastly in the celebrated conversation between Svetaketu and Ārūni we are told that "everything besides the Ātman is merely a word, a mode and a name".2

Thus from the analysis of the various passages in the Upaniṣads the idea generally arises that though the word 'māyā' is not used directly in the Upaniṣads, still the conception that implies Māyā is already present there and even though we do not claim a full fledged doctrine of illusion there, as we find in Gāndhārī or later Vedāntins, still we find that all the materials out of which Śaṅkara had easily build-up his doctrine of māyā is present

1. ibid. P - 164.
2. ibid. P - 165.
in the various passages of the Upaniṣads.

(1). THE THEORY OF APPEARANCE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GAUḍAPĀDA:

Gauḍapāda's philosophy is essentially based on Upaniṣads, particularly on the Māṇḍukya, the Bhadāranyaka and the Chhāndogya. He was the teacher of Govinda, who was the teacher of Śāṅkarāchārya and Śāṅkara had respected him as his 'great grand teacher'. Gauḍapāda lived when Buddhism was prevalent in India. Naturally he was acquainted with the Buddhistic doctrine. Thus we find the clear evidence of Buddhistic influence in his philosophy, specially the dialectic of Māgārjuna and Vijnānavāda.

After examining the relation between the supreme principle of Ātman and the phenomenal world, Gauḍapāda maintains that there is no such thing as creation at all. Thus he rejects the Asatkāryavāda theory of causation as hold by Naiyāyikas according to which the effect is a new creation and who believe that the world-appearance is a new creation from primal atoms. Again the rival view of Asatkāryavāda is the theory of Satkāryavāda which is held by Sāṅkhya who maintained that the world is the result of the evolutionary process of Prakṛiti and Puruṣa. His main point is that there is no world in reality and hence no question of its creation or origination arises. Gauḍapāda considers the
different alternatives suggested to account for creation - "some regard it as of the nature of dream or illusion (svapnamaya); others maintain that it is the will of God, while those who believe in time declare that everything proceeds from time (Kāla). Some say that creation is for the sake of enjoyment (bhoga), while others hold that it is for sport (Kriṣṇa)." Gauḍapāda rejects all these views and maintains that it is the manifestation of the very nature of God, the expression of His power. Thus the fundamental doctrine of Gauḍapāda is the Doctrine of No-origination (Ajātivāda). Ajātivāda, negatively means that the world being only an appearance is never created and positively it means that the Absolute, being self-existent, is never created.

The ultimate reality is the non-dual Brahmān according to Gauḍapāda. It is to be noted that Nāgārjuna neither denies nor affirms the reality clearly, but Gauḍapāda is more convinced and firmly teaches the absolute reality as Brahmān which is carried forward by the later Vedāntins. Thus the reality being non-dual, the world of duality is due to māyā. The illustrations of earth, iron, sparks etc. as used in the Upaniṣads are

regarded by Gauḍapāda only for the realisation of the nature of Absolute. He uses several expressions to indicate the illusory nature of the world, such as māyā, mithyā, vaśityḥ, kalpita, ābhāsa, viparyaya, samvṛti etc.

Gauḍapāda attempts to explain how the world-appearence is related to Brahman which is actually non-different from Brahman with the analogy of the dream experience and illusion. In dream experience, the things are imagined as if existing outside, but they are only the illusory creations of the mind. That which is unmanifested in the mind and that which appears as distinct and manifest outside, are all imaginary production in association with the sense faculties. There is first the imagination of a perceiver or soul (jīva) and then along with it the imaginary creations of diverse inner states and the external world. The utility of the dream experience is realised when we are in a waking state. Thus as opposed to the Anātmavāda absolutism of the Buddhists, Gauḍapāda establishes the absoluteness of the self and asserts that the appearance of the multiplicity is due to the non-dual Ātman in the same way as the appearance of snake in a rope. Just as in darkness the rope is imagined to be a snake, so the self is also imagined in diverse forms due to illusion.

"There is neither any production nor any destruction (na nirodho na ootpattih), there is no one who is enchained
no one who is striving, no one who wants to be released".\(^1\)
The sages who have transcended the world of attachment and
who know the true nature of Brahman, can realize the
absolute identity of Brahman and jīva and that the world-
appearance is only an imaginary appearance and all these
apparent multiplicity is due to avidyā. "The unborn is
born in manifold ways through māyā. The Real can be born
only through māyā, and not in reality, the unreal however,
can be born neither really nor phenomenally".\(^2\)

The theory of māyā is not used by Gauḍapāda in
any strict sense like Śaṅkara. As pointed out by Dr. S.
Radhakrishnan, māyā is used by Gauḍapāda to indicate firstly
the inexplicability of the relation between the Ātman and
the world, secondly it means the power of Īśvara and
thirdly the apparent dream-like character of the world.
And Śaṅkara seems to accept the first two meaning in his
doctrine of māyā.

Śaṅkara, the great grand pupil of Gauḍapāda,
Occupies the same position in the vedānta tradition as
Nāgārjuna occupied in the Buddhist tradition. He developed
the vedānta, almost in the same way which was already given
by Gauḍapāda. Both Śaṅkara and Gauḍapāda are Advaitins and

P - 425.
2. L. N.Sharmah. Kashmir Saivism. Quotation on Mandukya
Karika. II, 27-8, P-41.
both establish the non-reality of the world. So both the philosophers are equal in their fundamental points. But both of them differ in their ascertainment of philosophical standpoint. "Gauḍapāda in writing his philosophy from the standpoint of Brahman declares the world to be non-existent; whereas Śaṅkara viewing the phenomenal from the standpoint of māyā, sees it to be real (existent) as long as it is cognized as such by the individual ātman, and until the individual's realisation of Brahman negates it as real." 1 Thus Gauḍapāda, viewing the world-appearance from the standpoint of Brahman declares it as unreal, but Śaṅkara viewing the phenomenal world, from the standpoint of māyā, declares it as neither real nor unreal i.e. anirvacaniya.

IV. THE THEORY OF APPEARANCE IN ŚAṅKARA

Now let us come to our main point of discussion about the nature of world-appearance. In our previous discussion, we find that the problem of world appearance as to how it comes into existence has been vastly discussed in the different systems of Indian philosophy before Śaṅkara. Though the different philosophers have different outlook about the ultimate truth, yet their sources are the same

Upaniṣadic tradition and it is from this reason that we find similarities among their viewpoints which we may call influence of one of the other or the borrowal of ideas from others.

So far as the classical Upaniṣads are concerned, Śaṅkara is representing the main tendency of the Upaniṣadic religion under the idea of his absolute idealism. As we have already pointed out, Śaṅkara himself admitted that he had contributing nothing more to the Indian philosophical studies than what was already contained in the Upaniṣads.

An Indian tradition have criticises Śaṅkara that he is a Buddhist in disguise and his māyāvāda is but crypto-Buddhism i.e. he is a Buddhism in disguise. As a support of their view, they maintained that in the 'Padma purāṇa' there is clear evidence of it as "Īśvara is said to have declared to pārvatī: 'the theory of māyā is a false doctrine, a disguised form of Buddhism; I myself, O Goddess, propounded this theory in the Kaliyuga in the form of a Brāhmaṇ".1 Again in the same purāṇa it is stated that "that great system, the māyā theory, is not supported by the Veda, though it contains the truth of the

Thus there are many other references also, which try to prove that Śaṅkara’s theory of māyā is a direct borrowal from Buddhistic doctrine.

However, in spite of so many arguments raised against Śaṅkara’s doctrine, we can boldly claim that the doctrine of Advaitavāda which is the creation of a highly talented brain, can not surely be a mere borrowal. There cannot be any doubt that Śaṅkara’s philosophy develops from the Upaniṣads and Vedānta Sūtra without any reference to Buddhism. The Buddhists are not opposed to Upaniṣads. Buddha developed certain views of the Upaniṣads. As Dr. Radhakrishnan remarked, in the religious history, there is a misconception that Buddhism was opposed to Vedā. But the inclusion of Buddha as an Avatāra of Viśnu, implies that Buddhism appeared for the establishment of Vedā, and not for destroying the Vedāic religion. Thus there are so many similarities between the two doctrine, but this does not necessarily mean Advaitavāda is influenced by Buddha. It is only due to the fact that both have the same source of origin in the Upaniṣads. Again as have already pointed out that Śaṅkara is very much influenced by the philosophy of Gauḍapāda who was directly influenced by the Buddhistic idea flourished at that time. And thus there is the

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possibility of an indirect influence of Buddhists ideas in Śaṅkara's philosophy. We even find that there are some basic problems, which are more or less same in both the systems. Thus the phenomenalism of the Buddhists is akin to the doctrine of māyā. Again Śaṅkara's distinction between absolute truth (paramārtha) and empirical truth (vyabhicāra) is more or less similar to the Buddhistic distinction between paramārtha and saṃvṛti satya. Even Śaṅkara's view of mokṣa is not so different from the Buddhists conception of Nirvāṇa. Considering from all these points we may remark that Buddhism which has the source of ānātma-vāda and Vedāntism which has the source of Ātmasvāda doctrine are two friendly philosophical doctrines.

(४) Adhyāsa

The doctrine of 'Adhyāsa-bhāṣya' is the central concept of Śaṅkara's Advaitavāda. Śaṅkara has given a vast explanation about Adhyāsa in his commentary on Brahma Sūtra.

Adhyāsa means superimposition which implies the erroneous cognition (mithyājñāna), illusory cognition. Śaṅkara defines it as "Atasminstadd buddhi" - "the perception of (or knowledge) a thing in what it is not" (Adhyāsa-bhāṣya). It is again defined "the appearance
elsewhere, with a nature like to that of recollection of what was seen before (srutirupah paratra purva-drastava-bhāsaḥ) "^1

Thus superimposition is the false cognition of a thing which is really not. The rope is not snake, yet the rope is perceived as snake. The nacre is not silver and yet the nacre is mistaken for silver and people attempted to pick it up. Hence it is clear that the cognition of snake or silver is illusory. Here the quality of snake or silver is imposed on rope or nacre, and Sāṅkara maintained that all these are appearances which are like the recollection of objects perceived before. Thus in the rope-snake illusion, the perceived is not perceiving a really existing snake nor does he has a recollection of snake which was perceived before (as what happen in the recognition), but that he has a perception of snake which has a nature like that of his memory image of snake.

Sāṅkara mentioned various rival theories of delusion or error as held by different systems of Indian philosophy and observed that all of them are agreed on the point that error or superimposition consists in the appearance of one-thing as being of the nature of

Theories of error are known as khyātivādas. All the schools of Indian philosophy differ in explaining the nature of illusion. All the different theories of illusion may be classified into two groups vis. Satkhyāti and Asat-khyāti. There are three views under it—Anyathākhyāti, Ātmakhyāti and Akhyāti. According to the latter, an error is non-existent. It is advocated by the Asatkhyāti (Mādhyamika) school. There are five main theories in it.

N.3. NYĀYA THEORY OF ILLUSION—ANYATHĀKHYĀTIVĀDA:

The Nyāya theory of illusion is known as Anyathākhyātivāda, which is also known as viparitakhyāti or the theory of erroneous cognition. For the Naïyāyikas, error consists in the misapprehension of one thing as another thing through extra-ordinary way. Thus the perception of silver in a nacre depends upon the extra-ordinary contact between the sense-organs and the objects.

"The real silver and silverness come to be connected with the sense-organ through an extra-ordinary contact, called jñāna-lakṣaṇa. It is by means of this extra-ordinary contact, that the idea of silver reproduced in memory by association causes the visual perception of silver in
Thus according to Naiyāyikas error is due to misapprehension of objects due to the extra-ordinary sense-object contact.

b. ASATKYÄTI OR THE APPREHENSION OF THE NON-EXTERNAL OBJECT - (Mādhyamika school)

The Mādhyamika school of Buddhism advocates the theory of Asatkyäti. This school is nihilistic, as it maintains that nothing is real in the phenomenal world. Hence, according to this school, illusion consists in the perception of a non-being (asat) as being. Thus in the illusion of silver in the nacre, there is the perception of non-existent silver existent and error arises. Both the object and the knowledge of the object of such perception are non-existent.

The Mādhyamikas negates all existence. For them, there is no such thing as external or internal, all are void. In the case of rope-snake illusion, both rope and snake are unreal. So how rope appears to be a snake? "No unreal or non-existent object can appear to be existent".

C. ĀTMAKHYĀTI OR THE THEORY OF SELF-APPREHENSION:

The Yogacāra idealist schools of Buddhism advocates this theory of Ātmakhyāti. According to this school, consciousness is the only reality. Illusion consists in projecting a mental idea as an extramental or fact. Thus the silver which is in the form of subjective idea wrongly appears to be an objective fact. The mental idea of silver which is in the form of subjective idea, appears wrongly as an object silver. Thus according to yogacāra error consists in the appearance of a mental idea as an objective fact.

Cf. AKHYĀTI OR THE THEORY OF NON-APPREHENSION:

This school is advocated by the Prabhākara school of Mīmāṃsā. This school holds that error consists in the absence of knowledge (khyāti). For Prabhākara, knowledge is valid by itself, so there is no error or illusion in knowledge. Illusion is not misapprehension or non-apprehension. Error means the lack of discrimination between two cognition. According to Prabhākara, there are two elements of illusion - presentative and representative, and error arises due to the non-discrimination of these two elements. In the case of nacre-silver illusion, the silver is represented and the nacre is presented. And error arises due to the non-discrimination of these silver from nacre. The cause of non-
discrimination is the obscuration of memory. Thus "the nacre by virtue of its luster which it has in common with silver, is mistaken as silver on account of obscuration of memory."  

2. **ANIRVACANIYAKHYĀTI OR INDEFINABLE THEORY OF ERROR**:  
The Advaita Vedānta school advocates the theory of Anirvacaniyakhyāti of error. According to this theory, the object of illusion is neither real (sat) nor unreal (asat) nor both real and unreal (sadasat). It is not real, or existent, otherwise it would not have been sublated and contradicted. Secondly, it is also not unreal or non-existent, because it appears in experience, and an unreal or totally non-existent like a barren woman's child can never appear in existence. Thirdly, it cannot be said to be both real and unreal which involves a contradiction. Therefore the object of illusion is really indeterminable (Anirvacaniya).  

The Advaitins criticize all other theories of illusion in order to establish their own view of error. The Anyathākhyāti-vāda of Naiyāyikas are untenable. For this theory maintains that something else is regarded as the object of illusion. But if something else is the

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object of illusion, it cannot be called the illusion. "The object of perception cannot be said to be something else other than what it perceived".1

Moreover, the Naiyāyika’s explanation of illusion as due to extra-ordinary contact is also not satisfactory. The distant silver is perceived through this contact, in the nacre. But actually silver is perceived 'here and now' and not in a distant place. For Advaitin, therefore illusion is presentative as it is produced by the present objects.

The theory of Ātmatva (Yogacāra) is also not satisfactory. It holds that illusion consists in perceiving something as extramental whereas all objects are mind dependent. The Advaitin refutes it and holds that if there is no silver outside, there cannot be a cognition of silver in the outside world. In the rope-snake illusion, the snake is not a mere state of consciousness. He who runs away from it, does not run away from a state of mind, but from the external snake. If the snake were a subjective fact, it would not be cancelled by the perception of the external rope, for the perception of an external thing has hardly anything to do with the negation of an internal state. So the snake is an

unreal objective, which is superimposed on the rope which is also an objective fact.

The Asatkyāṭivāda (Mādhyamika) view also is not satisfactory. In false perception one is conscious of the existence of an object, one's cognition cannot be a contentless perception. The illusory snake appears as a full fledged content which involves activity or consequent reaction to the cogniser, otherwise it could not have produce any reaction like frightening, running ahead etc. Thus if there is no object at all, there cannot be illusion at all.

The Prabhākara Mīmāṃsaka theory of Akhyāti also does not agree with our experience. The experience of error nowhere gives it a mere negative non-discrimination, nor does its correction shows it as a confusion between two distinct experiences. If the snake were merely a negative entity, due to the obscuration of memory, then it would not induce the cogniser for its practical reaction. In the correction of knowledge, the cogniser does not withdraw the memory-image of snake, but a snake cognised here and now. Unless there is a positive and determinate cognition of the snake, there can be no tendency to withdraw from it. So mere non-discrimination or mere confusion of two experiences cannot be the cause of
false appearance. The false appearance is a thing presented. It is not a negative non-distinguishing of two different types of experience. Thus Advaitin maintains that error is a unitary positive entity.

We find the different views of error as advocated by different schools of Indian philosophy. Though they differ in their opinion regarding the views of illusions, yet all of them agree on the same point that "superimposition as the apparent presentation of the attributes of one thing in another thing. And therewith agrees also the popular view which is exemplified by expressions such as the following: "Mother-of-pearl appears like silver", "the moon although one only appears as if she were double".

The concept of 'adhyäsa' occupies the central importance in the Advaita of Śaṅkara. And it is for this reason that Śaṅkara has commented on Brahma-Sūtra on the analogy of the concept as 'Adhyäśi-Bhāṣya'. The schools of Advaita vedānta commonly known as Vīvarana and the Bhāmati school, have elaborately discuss on the concept of Adhyäśa-Bhāṣya. In the Adhyäśa-Bhāṣya, Śaṅkara is not interested on describing Adhyäsa as merely an illusion.

error or misconception. The adhyāsa is described as the false knowledge of ascribing the self as not-self and not-self on the self and the illegitimately transfering of the properties (dharma) of the one on the other, constitutes the subject-matter of discourse. This false knowledge is described by Śaṅkara as the most basic and fundamental veiling all our knowledge, is natural and is rooted in our very existence as a human being, and it is explained by us in the previous chapter.

This superimposition is called ignorance (Avidyā) metaphorically. It is also named as Māyā. This ignorance does not of course, means the lack of knowledge, rather it means that kind of knowledge which is falsified later on, by the knowledge of thing as it is (vidyā). This superimposition or false knowledge can be removed only through vedāntic discipline and practice by which an absolute realisation of truth is attained.

VII. THE DOCTRINE OF MĀYĀ :

According to Śaṅkara, Brahman or Ātman is the only reality and the world is an illusory appearance of Brahman. Now, what is the relation between the Brahman and the world or how the world-appearance is connected with Brahman? For Śaṅkara, the question is an illegitimate one and is unnecessary to answer. For a relation presuppose
two distinct things and if Brahman and the world are to be related, they must be distinct from each other and the Advaitism of Saṅkara will be interrupted. So the relation between Brahman and the world is such that the world is not identical with Brahman, nor different from Brahman and not both identical and different from Brahman which is self-contradictory. It is hence anirvacaniya.

Saṅkara maintains that it is impossible to explain the relation between Brahman and the world. "The real is never known to have any relation with the unreal". The world somehow exists and its relation to Brahman is indefinable (anirvacaniya). As Dr. Radhakrishnan pointed out, Saṅkara attempts to explain the relation between the two and finds them all unsatisfactory. Firstly, the theory of causation cannot be applied to the relation of Brahman and the world, since causal relation depends upon space-time relation. The world is finite and conditioned, so it is difficult to conceive how the finite world comes out of the infinite, as according to the theory of causation the cause and effect are qualitatively equal? So there is no causal relation between the world and Brahman.

Saṅkara does not accept the view of parināmavāda of sāṃkhya. If the world is a real transformation of Brahman, then whether Brahman is wholly transformed or partly transformed is a problem. If it is wholly transformed into the world, then Brahman will be nothing but the sum total of the world and there will be nothing transcendental element which man seek to know. Again if it is partly transformed, then Brahman will be subject to division which will disturb its eternal character. Scriptures states that Brahman is devoid of parts (Netravayava). "When once Brahman becomes partially or totally the substance of the world, it is no longer its substance and no longer independent\(^1\). So it is pointed out by Dr. Radhakrishnan that every attempt to bring Brahman and the world into a connection turns into fertility. So the relation between the finite world with the infinite spirit remains in a mystery for the human understanding. Every religious philosophy holds the view that the finite is rooted in the infinite and that both are connected from the time eternity and yet no system till today can logically establish the relation between the two. No system can adequately explain how the world appearance is bound up with the Absolute. However long the chain of

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our reasoning is, however strong our argument is, yet the explanation of the rise of finite world out of the bosom of the Infinite, the origin of the world process from the Infinite Brahman remain a fact capable of no further explanation.

It is Śaṅkara, who boldly and logically announce the doctrine of 'māyā' as an explanation of the relation between the world-appearance and Brahman. The magician create the hundred coin out of one single coin. We cannot explain it and we call it as māyā. The traditional example of rope-snake illusion is employed by Śaṅkara to explain the world-appearance.

The concept of Māyā is not a mere hypothesis, as it is based on the facts of experience. We find in our experience that the reality of thing is different from its appearance. To the passengers in a moving railway train, the trees appear to be running backwards, when the clouds move in the sky, it looks as if the moon is moving. A stick which is burning at one end, when revolved rapidly, produces the impression of a circle of fire. These experiences are happened in our everyday life which are natural to us. The "disparity between appearance and reality is mainly due to the intellectual apparatus owing to these limitations things appears to us other than what
According to Śāṅkara, Māyā is the principle which breaks up the original unity of reality and gives a distorted picture of it as subject and object. It breaks up the original nature of things and reconstructs them in their own way as it is presented to sensation. This process of concealment of the real nature of things and presentation of something which is not there, are the two stages in the process of development. Thus Māyā has two functions: concealment or enveloping of the real and the projection of the unreal. The truth is concealed from our view and something else is presented to us. This power of concealment is called āvaraṇa śakti, and the power of projection is called the vikāra śakti. The power of envelopment is such that it covers the real nature of Brahman or the soul, just as a patch of cloud covers the sun from our view, or just as the real nature of the rope is covered by darkness. The power of projection is such that just as the rope appears as a snake, the sun appears as a disc, Brahman appears as the world of diversity and change, viewed through the medium of senses and the mind. The soul which is unlimited and unconnected with this

world, by this enveloping power, appears to be the knower, doer and experiencer of all worldly objects, like the rope appears as a snake and create the feelings of fear or terror. Thus Brahman, associated with this mayā or Ignorance, possessing of these two powers, appears to be the material of this world and also the creator of this world like the spider appears as the material cause of the web when considered from its body, and the efficient cause of the web when considered from itself.

Now what is the specific nature of this Nescience? First of all, we may speak of Mayā as anirvachaniya i.e. indescribable. It is neither real, nor unreal nor both real and unreal. It is not real like Brahman, otherwise the Advaitism will be converted into dualism. It is not unreal as a hare's horn or the son of a barren woman which cannot be conceived to existent. As we have found we have the experience of ignorance. Again it is not both real and unreal which is self-contradictory. So it is indescribable i.e. anirvachaniya. Secondly, it is a positive entity (Bhāvarupa). Mayā or Ajñāna is not an 'absence of knowledge' i.e. jñānabhava. For it not only conceals the reality of Brahman, but also misrepresent the reality into various forms of appearances. Thirdly it is 'antagonistic to knowledge' (jñānavirodhi). This means that mayā or ajñāna is dispelled by right knowledge.
(jñāna). The Maya vanishes at the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman, like the darkness vanishes before the light. So Maya is not only 'absence of apprehension' but also 'misapprehension and the two powers represents these two attributes of ignorance; respectively. Lastly, Maya is composed of the three qualities (trigunātmaka). Maya, is like the prakṛti of sāṃkhya, which is composed of three gunas an, Sattva, Rājas and Tamas. Thus Maya can produce the qualities of goodness, passion and darkness. But whereas the sāṃkhya prakṛti is an independent reality, coeternal with puruṣa, Maya is not an independent but is subordinate to Brahman. These characteristics are beautifully discussed in the vedāntasarā of sadananda.

VIII. AVIDYĀ AND MĀYĀ:

There arises a confusion regarding the two terms – māyā and avidyā, which are so often used in Advaita vedānta, whether they are different in meaning or used in the same sense. Generally a distinction is made between the two terms in our empirical life. It is believed that māyā is the cause of projections and avidyā is the cause of obscuration. There are some Advaitins who hold the view that māyā and avidyā are different from

1. G.A. Jacob. The philosophy of the vedanta by Paul Deussen and The vedāntasarā by Sadananda Yogendra. PP.53-54.
each other and they have given their own explanations. One of their explanation is that māyā has predominance of pure sattva and avidya has a predominance of impure sattva. Vidyāranya, a follower of Advaita vedānta states that "the reflection of Brahman in māyā which is made of pure sattva is Īśvara, while the reflection of Brahman in avidyā, in which rajas and tamas are also present, is the jīva or the individual".1 Advaita accepts the Sāṅkhya-concept of prakrti which has as its constituents three gunas, as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. But while Sāṅkhya prakrti is an independent reality, in Advaita, prakrti is under the Brahman. When the sattva element of prakrti is impure and is dominant, then it is called māyā and when the rajas and tamas are also impure along with the sattva element, then it becomes avidyā. The former is the adjuncts (upādhi) of Īśvara, while the latter is the adjunct of jīva.

In the 'Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya', Śaṅkara does not make a distinction between avidyā and māyā. For Śaṅkara, the tendency of viewing things as many which is really one is avidyā, and this is common to all human beings. So when he speaks of avidyā, he is not telling

about any individual ignorance, but it is the impersonal force which transcends all individual consciousness, which is the same as māyā. Again Śaṅkara, does not make the distinction between jīva and Īśvara. For him the distinction is like the difference between pot-ether and ether-at-large. When the pot is removed, then the ether will merge in the ether-at-large. So also jīva is different from God only due to the limiting factors which is the result of ignorance. Thus the individual self is not different from God, the individual soul has no reality of its own. It is superimposed on the supreme self due to ignorance.

For Śaṅkara, Māyā and avidyā are one and the same. The difference between them is only considering them from different point of views. When we look at the problem from the objective point of view, then we speak of māyā, and when the same is viewed from subjective side we have the avidyā. Thus, just as one and the same reality is viewed as Brahman and Ātman, so also māyā and avidyā are also the different name of the one and the same power of ignorance. Thus māyā is both the subjective and the objective, individual and universal. Out of which the universe of intelligence and the objective beings are arises.
Śaṅkara identifies māyā with avyakta, the unmanifest, which is the power of Īśvara. This avyakta is of course, not identical with the pradhāna of the sāṅkhya school, as has repeatedly been explained by us. For while māyā is dependent on Brahman, avyakta is independent of the supreme Lord. The Purusha, which is coeternal with Him. Thus it is avyakta or māyā that Īśvara projects the world and this potential power isnescience (avidyā).

So it is clear that though the term avidyā and māyā are used in different senses by different followers of Advaita, though in our ordinary experience, we find different interpretation of the two terms, yet in Śaṅkara we find that the term māyā avidyā and ajñāna are used in the same sense. There is no essential difference in their meaning. It is the same universal power of illusion that becomes the limiting adjuncts of both the jīva and Īśvara, although there exists a difference of their application. Avidyā and māyā represent the subjective and the objective elements of the one fundamental fact of experience. From the subjective side, it is called avidya, since it is removed by vidyā (knowledge); from the objective side it is called māyā. Since it is coeternal with the supreme Being or Īśvara. We may conclude here with Dr.T.M.P. Mahadevan's line, which he
collected from the commentary on Katha-Upanishad (iii,1) that "Sankara says that avidyā is the seed of the whole world, that before the creations of the world avidyā has with in itself, in a latent form the entire world, even as the tiny banyan seed has within itself the potency of to produce a huge tree, and that avidya is the wrap and woof in Brahman. Avidyā here is referred to by such terms as avyakta, avyakrta and akāsa".1

Now, then, we know what the appearance is. It is not something by the side of the Reality (Brahman). It is only a false apprehension of Brahman. It has no ultimate reality of its own.

The last point - that it has no ultimate reality of its own, raises the problem of its 'status' in the scheme of the world. And this is what we are going to inquire into, in the next chapter.