CRITICISM OF MIMĀNSĀ

There are two sides of the Veda, the ritualistic and the speculative. The former is dealt by the Mīmāṃsā and the latter by the Vedānta. Accordingly, Mīmāṃsā furnished ways of correct interpretation of the complicated and obscure Vedic injunctions, which were to be used in the performance of rituals. Consequently, it is a system harmonising rituals which are supported by the authority of the Veda. It is a study into the nature of Dharma. As such, it is concerned with something which is more practical than philosophical. This does not mean that there are no philosophical speculations in Mīmāṃsā Philosophy. But the point is that they are not accorded a supreme place in this system. For example, Mīmāṃsā does recognise the eternal nature of the soul; for, otherwise how will it enjoy and reap the fruits of the sacrifices performed here during its worldly existence. Belief in heaven necessitated the recognition of the permanency of the soul. Second obvious philosophical tenet is that it believes in the reality of the world. Thirdly, it contemplates a permanent being which keeps an account regarding the fruits of actions. But these philosophical problems find a secondary place in the scheme of Mīmāṃsā.
Philosophy, the primary aim and chief interest of which is ritual.

a) **Difference between Purva Mimāṃsā and Uttara Mimāṃsā**

Different commentators have interpreted the relation of Uttara Mimāṃsā to Purva Mimāṃsā in a number of different ways. But this is certain that these two foremost orthodox systems are only exegeses of scriptures. Though Rāmānuja and the Vārttikakāra are of the view that both the Mimāṃsās form one work. But Śaṅkara differs from them. He exhorts very strongly not to confuse these two independent branches of Indian Philosophy. He declares explicitly that one who is qualified for the study of Vedānta may undertake the inquiry into the nature of Brahman directly, even if he has not read Dharma. Accordingly, Śaṅkara had to differentiate between Purva Mimāṃsā and Uttara Mimāṃsā in the very beginning of his Sharīraka Bhāsya, in very clear terms so that the reader may have no such undesirable notion as may lead him to believe that the study of Brahma-Vidya presupposes the study of Dharma-vidyā. Śaṅkara knew well in advance every likelihood of such a wrong line of association in the inquirer's mind. Therefore, he devoted the first part of his commentary on the first Sharīraka Sūtra in bringing out in a logical and convincing manner the difference between the two Mimāṃsās. His main emphasis has

1. Vide Sharīraka Bhāsya on 1/1/1.
been on the following points:-

(i) Inquiry into the nature of Dharma presupposes an order of succession with regard to the sacrificial animal. For example, it is enjoined in the performance of the Agnisomīya Pashuyāga that the heart of the animal is to be cut first, then the tongue and then the breast. No such order of succession can be maintained between Purva Mīmāṃsā and Uttara Mīmāṃsā, because they are not related to each other that the study of the one may make the aspirant qualified for the study of the other.

The relation of principal and subordinate is admitted in the sacrifices. For example, offering of the Prayāgas is subordinate and Darshapūrṇamāsa sacrifice is the principal action. Moreover, the study of Dharma introduces different stages of qualifications for the aspirant. The person engaged in the sacrifice, because qualified to perform next in order if he has performed the preceding one. For example, the offerings of the Darshapūrṇamāsa qualifies one for the performance of Soma-sacrifice. But there is no possibility of contemplating such relations of principal and subordinate or order of succession with regard to inquiry into the nature of Brahman. A person who is endowed with the four

---

1. अग्निसोमीय पाशुयागा के अनुसार चिह्नित का मान: ।
2. दर्शपूर्णमासा मिन्दू तथा राजमात्रा का मान: ।
basic requisite qualifications for the study of Vedanta, will immediately and naturally undertake inquiry into the nature of Brahman.

(ii) The objects of inquiry and results accruing therefrom are different in both these branches of knowledge. The results of the performance of Vedic duties are impermanent and are dependent on the performance sacrificial acts. The result of undertaking inquiry into the nature of Brahman is eternal and characterised by unalloyed bliss. It does not demand performance of any sacrificial act.

(iii) Performance of sacrificial actions depends on the will of the aspirant. He may do it or may not or do it in a wrong way. But there is no such freedom with one who is endowed with the four basic requisite qualifications for the study of Vedanta. He cannot but undertake the study of Brahman, just as a hungry man, when told about some food lying in the adjoining room, cannot help trying to get that good. Unlike Purva Mimansa, no option can be admitted with regard to the knowledge of an existent substance. It will dawn as-it-is-in-itself at the proper ripe time and no option, which depends on the notion of the aspirant,

1. (i) Power of discrimination between what is eternal and non-eternal, (ii) Dispassion from all worldly and supermundane objects of enjoyment, (iii) A group of six virtues of Shama etc., and (iv) strong urge for emancipation.

2. अययविविधिः करविविधिः साधनेयः

3. न वेदित्वा गृहस्त्म सान्तुधान च विविधवस्तुम्
can be entertained. Therefore, the true knowledge of Brahman depends on Brahman itself and no reference can be made to any action as auxiliary to its achievement.

The fruits of undertaking study of Purva Mīmāṃsā are to be received at a later stage, keeping in view the sanctions of Adrśā. But, on the other hand, a person undertaking inquiry into the nature of Brahman is immediately emancipated on his non-dual realisation, irrespective of the fact of continuation or fall of his physical body.

(iv) The two inquiries under discussion are different also because of the difference in the treatment of their respective subject-matter. The texts enjoining sacrificial duty convey instructions which immediately engage the aspirant in action. The texts pertaining to the inquiry into the nature of Brahman merely inform the aspirant and he is not required to undertake any kind of activity whatsoever.

(v) In Purva Mīmāṃsā, Scriptures are the only means of knowledge, but in Uttara Mīmāṃsā, experience etc. are also recognised and utilised; because the object of inquiry, Brahman, is an existent entity and final realisation of Brahman-knowledge is something which is a practical achievement of the aspirant.

(vi) Lastly, Mīmāṃsists hold that gods are not entitled for the study of Dharma-Vidyā, for, otherwise unto whom

1. Vide Śārīraka Bhāṣya-on 1/1/2.
the sacrifices will be made. But, on the other hand, they are equally qualified for the study into the nature of Brahman, because, after all, they are endowed with their respective bodies and can, therefore, undertake the inquiry into the nature of Brahman the moment they possess the four requisite qualifications for the study of Vedānta.

Hence Śaṅkara had to engage himself in regular fight with the Mīmāṃsikas on the one hand the Sāṅkhyas on the other, who, being the vigorous advocates of Realism came up as the foremost opponents of monism. Consequently, Śaṅkara had to refute the Sāṅkhyan and the Mīmāṃsikā's interpretations of the Vedas, if it was to be established that the supreme Reality of the Upanisads is undoubtedly Brahman.

b) Rebuttal of the Doctrine that Vedic passages have their import in action alone.

The Mīmāṃsikas interpret Vedas as demanding some sacrificial actions or exhorting to refrain from certain unwanted actions. Because the Upanisads are also a part of the Veda, therefore, they must also be interpreted as imparting injunctive instructions and not simply as statements of an ever-existent Reality, Brahman. The Mīmāṃsik suggests further that the passage describing the nature of Brahman, may be interpreted as implying that Brahman is to be meditated upon in the manner described there.

1. Sharīraka Bhāṣya on 1/3/26-33 discusses their issue elaborately
fact the Self is never said to producing a body. Hence non-intelligent body can remain the cause of non-intelligent nails etc. Thus the opponent's charge remains still valid even in the light of Śaṅkara's above explanation.

The monist meets the above argument thus:

even if we grant the said statement, the difference in the nature of both still persists. Non-intelligent body is an abode of the intelligent Self, whereas, neither cowdung nor hair and nails etc. are abodes of any intelligent entity. It may be remarked here that both the examples are not exactly at par, so as to embody all characteristics of the cause and the effect; but still Śaṅkara's analysis appeals and is subtle.

It may be observed in passing that in regarding human body as an intelligent entity, Śaṅkara has gone off the track of his thesis. That is why George Thibaut remarks in his introduction to the translation of the Śārīraka Bhāṣya, "Now, an argumentation of this kind is altogether out of place from the point of view of the true Śaṅkara. According to the latter the non-intelligent world does not spring from Brahman in so far as the latter is intelligence, but in so far as it is associated with Māyā. Māyā is the upādāna of the material world, and Māyā itself is of a non-intelligent nature".

1. Page Xiii.
The arguments of Šāmkara, observes a learned renowned scholar of Indian Philosophy, are "not only weak but rather uncalled for. If the world of effects is mere Māyā and magic and has no essence, the best course for him was to rush straight to his own view of effects as having no substantiality or essence and not to adopt the Pariṇāma view of real transformation of causes into effects to show that the effects could be largely dissimilar from their causes". In fact, the whole discussion could have been wiped off just by saying that all this was only a magical show and thus Šāmkara could have avoided such a bothersome discussion. But, it may be remembered, he declares heroically in the beginning of the second Chapter of his commentary that he will meet all the possible objections against monism and refute the inconsistent doctrines of the non-monistic schools of Indian Philosophy. Dr. S.N. Dasgupta's above remark may be answered that Šāmkara has argued here from the Sānkhyā point of view and this does not bring any discredit to his own views. It is rather creditable to criticise the opponent-views objectively.

Sarvajñātma Muni has explained away this difficulty thus: The Sānkhyān theory of causation is nearest to the Vivartta theory of the monists. Šāmkara's initiation of persons into the theory of transformation was intended to lead the reader later to Vivartta theory easily. In fact

1. "History of Indian Philosophy" by Dr. S.N. Dasgupta, Volume II, Page 38.
2. Vide "Sākṣēna-Śāṅkara" 2/61-62 and 64.
Parinama theory is only a preface to Vivarttavada. The former serves as a preparatory ground for the understanding of the latter. There is only a shade of difference in the two theories. This explanation does carry a good deal of weight and is quite convincing. This is Shankara’s outstanding good point as a critic that he criticises his opponent on the lines of argumentation employed by the opponent himself. He first puts on his opponent’s garb, becomes himself a believer of the principles of the opponent and then attacks the very base of his opponent’s stand.

Shankara admits partial identity between the cause and the effect. It may be pointed out that the factor of “existence” is common to both—Brahman and the world. They may very well differ in certain respects. Moreover, if the effect were to be completely identical with the cause, then there is no fun in maintaining distinction between them.

The Sankhyas are lucky in this respect in so far as they do not have to face the difficulty of “Vilaksatatva” because they maintain that the Pradhâna and its effect, the world, are both non-sentient. But it would not be possible for them to explain the division of the world into “Sat” and “Asat” or “Vijnana” or “Avijnana”. The

1. It will not be out of context to mention here the following lines of Bhâmati to know the exact point of Shankara:-

\[
\text{कात्यायनं प्रभुतत्त्वं न विभिन्नतायं कविकू स्वरूपत्वं ज्ञाते} \\
\text{स्ततं वेद्वचनं विनिश्चितं । लोक स्वरूपत्वं कर्तरेः प्रभा} \\
\text{जतं मध्यः केवल उपपादः प्राप्त तत्स्ति स्वरूपं महत्त्वः ।}
\]
Viśṇa part does definitely indicate that its cause can only be a sentient entity.

c) Refutation of the Sāṅkhya theory of the First Cause

In order to reach at the first cause of the world, the Sāṅkhyaṣ argue thus: Vessels of clay have clay alone as their cause. On this analogy, it is inferred that the cause of the world, an effect, must also be possessed of the three qualities which characterise the world. The world is characterised by pleasure, pain and infatuation. Its cause must be a combination of such three elements which may correspond to these three characteristics. That causal entity can only be Pradhāna which is composed of the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, parallel to the three characteristics—pleasure, pain and infatuation. To such a view, Viśṇikara objects thus:

(i) Pradhāna is inert and therefore, it cannot create such a diverse and well-designed world as we see. It demands and presupposes well planning on the part of its creator. Various species of beings and the arrangement of their organs, appropriate fruits for them; baffle the imagination of even the most talented architects. Can such a world be created by a non-intelligent principle like Pradhāna?

1. Other reasons for the establishment of Pradhāna as the first cause of the world have been enumerated right in the beginning of the present chapter.
It may be observed that the above objection raised by Śaṅkara is valid if the Sāṅkhya as Pradhāna as the Efficient cause of the world. The Sāṅkhya assign efficient causality to the contact of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Śaṅkara, conscious of this, says further: Sāṅkhya argue from material cause of effects back to the First Cause. What is there to prevent the Vedāntin from tracing the efficient cause of effects back to the First efficient cause, which can in no case be inert. The force of the Vedāntin's argument is doubled when that First Efficient Cause is also made the First Material Cause.

(ii) The objects in themselves are not constituted of pleasure, pain and infatuation which correspond to the three Guṇas of the Pradhāna. Bhāmatī rightly adds here to Śaṅkara that had things been consisting of pleasure, pain and infatuation, sandal paste which is cool in summer, would have been so in winter too. Camels eat thistles and derive pleasure out of it. Had pleasure been innate of thistles, even men should also eat them with equal delight.

Thus Śaṅkara corrects the misunderstanding of the Sāṅkhya as and says that external and internal objects of this


2. अठारे सप्तां चार्दिवृत्तात्मा वचि शन्तसुप्रस्माकात्
   शाक्तिक्रयार्थायामपेक्षा शुचिसाधित्तात्
   न हु सक्ये
   शाक्तिक्रयात्मा वचि नानाधाराये ।
world are not made up of pleasure, pain and infatuation. The reason is that pleasure etc. are mental states whereas objects are causes of pleasure etc. This fact is made clear by the example of sound. Sound is a sense-object and yet is neither painful nor pleasant in itself. It is painful for a patient, pleasant for a musician and neither painful nor pleasant to an indifferent person. Hence objects themselves are not made up of pleasure pain and infatuation. This clarification certainly attacks the very base of the inference of the Sānkhyas about the first cause.

(iii) The Sānkhyas can say that roots, sprouts are the products of several things. Applying inductive method of logic, they can deduce the conclusion that all the objects of the world are in the same way, effects of the conjunction of several things, which in themselves are composed of the three Gunas. Thus the difficulty mentioned in point (ii) above does not come up. Śaṅkara brushes aside this explanation by applying this very reasoning on the Sānkhyas. He says that the constituents of Pradhāna—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—arise on account of the previous conjunction of several things. Because they themselves are distinct and separate entities, therefore, they will also have to be regarded as the effects of some previous conjunction of several constituent factors; and so on and so forth. Thus the poor Sānkhya finds himself entangled in the web woven by himself, because he cannot escape to face
The fallacy of Regress in Infinitum.

The monist corrects the statement of the opponent and points out that not all the effects are always invariably due to the non-intelligent prior condition, they are also caused due to an intelligent principle which exists even beyond that non-intelligent principle. This observation is much more correct, logical than the Sāṅkhya's contention and keeping in conformity with the authority of Scriptures.

(iv) The Sāṅkhya says that before creation, the three Gunas remain in their equipoised condition. Due to some original disturbance, the two Gunas become subordinate to the other and there starts the creation of the world with the evolutes of Mahat etc. as the first products. They argue that non-stop action and reaction perceived in experience among the products indicates their origination from such a first cause which is capable of activity. That entity can only be Pradhāna and in no case the non-active Brahma.

The Advaitin replies here that motion in non-intelligent entities requires an intelligent agency to set them in motion, just as the clay is changed into a pot by an intelligent potter or a chariot is moved by a worse. We have no entity in Sāṅkhya doctrine to whom we may attribute

1. Vide Sāṅkhya Aphorism 1/61.
the original disturbance in the three Gunaś due to which creation starts. Śaṅkara has beautifully brought out this flaw in the doctrine of the Sāṅkhyas. The above argument of the Sāṅkhyas does not answer this difficulty, but seems to adopt an assertive attitude in attributing First Causality to Pradhāna.

The opponent revolts here saying that the Vedāntin is in no better boat than his, because the original disturbance cannot be attributed even to Brahmaṇ which is pure consciousness and is never perceived, whereas the 'Praṇāta' indicates some perceptible substratum in which it is to occur. The Vedāntin overcomes this objection by citing an example of magnet and concludes that a stable thing can cause movement in another thing. If it be said that motion is impossible in case of Brahmaṇ because 'All this is Brahmaṇ' indicates that there is no place where Brahmaṇ may be moved, Śaṅkara reminds the opponent here that why does he forget that the world about whom he is so enthusiastically talking is but all illusion caused by Nescience. Activity is possible if the ultimate cause is all knowing Brahmaṇ, but never in case of inert Pradhāna.

The Sāṅkhyakārīka 15 gives us five reasons for the establishment of Pradhāna. The first of them is: 'Bhedāṇam Parimāṇāt'. Let us analyse the phenomenon of 'Parimāṇata'. It can assume three forms. It can be with relation to (i) dimension (ii) duration, and (iii) difference in the number of characteristics.
The first case does not apply to Space. The second case becomes untenable because the Śāṅkhāyās do not recognize the category of time. The third alternative is a clear case of impossibility and cannot be logically sustained. All products of the Śāṅkhāyas have the three Gūnas as their necessary aspects; one fails to understand here, how these Gūnas, who possess distinct nature from each other and are infinite and eternal, can composite themselves in an equipoised state to constitute Pradhāna. How can then the following description of the Gūnas be taken as true.

The opponent may say here that Gūnas are by nature changing and just as a "number of continuously moving and clashing balls might, by a fortuitous equalisation of opposing forces, be thrown into a momentary and even a periodic equilibrium, so might it happen in case of the three constituents by the "Prakṛti" or it may be said that Gūnas are by nature such that they get equaliberalised after an ellapse of certain definite duration of time". But it may be pointed out here that this solution leaves no scope for Free Will. In fact, the independent nature of the Puruṣās demands an intelligent Principle to regulate and supervise the process of creation, an assumption which the Śāṅkhāyas refuse to admit.

1. Vide Tattva Kaumudī on 33.
The Sāṅkhya s guard their position by giving the example of milk. Just as milk is capable of nourishing the body of a calf, similarly, inert Pradhāna can cause the initial movement in the Gunas. But, on the basis of the results reached in point (v) above, we can say here that the movement in milk is to be attributed only to the supervising Lord alone.

The source of the motion of the chariot is undoubtedly the horse. Chariot or the charioteer, taken individually cannot cause the motion. Hence it arises from their combination. This combination is an illusory as a dream and as such the all-intelligent can very safely remain unaffected by the combination. Hence the validity of Śaṅkara's solution.

Thus the gushing out of milk from the cow's udder is to be attributed to some intelligent entity. After saying this, Śaṅkara proceeds to add that the cow is the source of the milk movement here. The instinctive affection between cow and the Calf sets the flow of milk. Śaṅkara is here unconscious of a difficulty that a cow whose calf is dead, still gives milk, proves that the flaw of milk cannot be attributed to the affection of the calf, it is...

1. Vide Sāṅkhyā-Kārikā 57
2. "He dwells and rules the water from within"—Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad III/7/74.
3. चैत्यायांशं वहः: तत्त्वेष्वरं वस्त्र: परस्तरस्त्रोपन्ते: तत्त्वं
   वॉण ज्ञान व परस्त्व वाच्यायांत्याम:
rather spontaneous. Shrīnivāsa has reconciled this difficulty by saying that the flow of milk, after the death of a calf, is due to the memory of the same calf.

In the last lines of his commentary on 2/2/3, Śaṅkara becomes conscious of a contradiction. He used the illustration of milk to prove that God can create the world even in absence of any instrument, just as milk changes into curd unaided by any external agency. Here he says that source of all movements, including the transformation of milk into curd, is God. Its explanation given by Śaṅkara is hardly convincing. He calls the previous explanation as given from the practical point of view and says the present one a logical way of explaining things. Dr. S.K. Belvalkar remarks in this connection that postulating God as the inward controller of everything is hardly a "Śastra-drsti" in the real sense of the term. "For has not the Ācārya himself declared that there

---

1. "... rather spontaneous. Shrīnivāsa has reconciled this difficulty by saying that the flow of milk, after the death of a calf, is due to the memory of the same calf.

2. In the last lines of his commentary on 2/2/3, Śaṅkara becomes conscious of a contradiction. He used the illustration of milk to prove that God can create the world even in absence of any instrument, just as milk changes into curd unaided by any external agency. Here he says that source of all movements, including the transformation of milk into curd, is God. Its explanation given by Śaṅkara is hardly convincing. He calls the previous explanation as given from the practical point of view and says the present one a logical way of explaining things. Dr. S.K. Belvalkar remarks in this connection that postulating God as the inward controller of everything is hardly a "Śastra-drsti" in the real sense of the term. "For has not the Ācārya himself declared that there

3. "... rather spontaneous. Shrīnivāsa has reconciled this difficulty by saying that the flow of milk, after the death of a calf, is due to the memory of the same calf."
is no such thing as the controlling lord and the
controlled creation from the point of view of Ultimate
Truth? Or have we to distinguish the "Śastraḍṛṣṭi"
from the "Paramārtha Ṛṣṭi"?

Śaṅkara becomes unfair to Sāṅkhya when he
asserts that there is no category beyond Pradhāna whom
we may call the regulator of the process of creation.
Leaving aside the possibility of Puruṣa for that matter,
we can consider Karma Vāsanās to account for the initial
movement in the Gùnas causing creation. Vācaspati Mādhyā
realising this, tries to satisfy the opponent as follows:

...
Hence Karma vasanas are only external factors responsible for initiating the original Pravṛtti. And Pravṛtti itself demands that it must be from within. If that Pravṛtti is to occur after certain intervals, we cannot avoid admitting intelligent God to regulate that Pravṛtti which function can never be performed by the inert Pradhāna.

(vii) The position of the Sāṅkhyaś about the creation and dissolution of the world involves contradiction. A non-intelligent object cannot be set in motion without the help of an intelligent entity and if in motion, cannot stop without the help of an intelligent entity. When Pradhāna is non-intelligent, how creation or dissolution is possible when both demand activity in the Gūnas. This activity cannot be attributed to Puruṣa who is indifferent.

The problem here is to find out a proper cause whom we may assign the authorship of the original disturbance in the Gūnas. That entity must be external to Prakṛti and should occur invariably after a fixed interval of time. Puruṣa cannot be that entity because it "sees" constantly.

(viii) It is incorrect to say that Pradhāna becomes active in order to fulfill the purposes of the Puruṣa. To achieve the liberation of the Puruṣa means the achievement of something which was already materialised, because the

Puruṣa was in a liberated condition even before the activity in the three Guṇas of the Pradhāna. Moreover, the Puruṣa of the Sāṅkhyas is characterised to be such as it does not stand in need of emancipation. Besides, if the motive is not to give pleasure and pains of life, then there would be no empirical experience whatsoever. Empirical experience demands that objects should give pleasure or pain to the subjects. We may mention here that Śaṅkara is probably unaware of the later development of the Sāṅkhyas that Puruṣas are of two types.

If we say that the purpose is both mundane pleasure and pain on the one hand; and liberation on the other. Close scrutiny reveals that neither of these two cases is possible. Liberation would be impossible because final release is not achieved till there exist infinite objects, produced by Pradhāna. Satisfaction of desire cannot be attributed either to Pradhāna or to the Puruṣa because the former is inert and the latter is indifferent, pure and partless.

To avoid all these difficulties, two reasons may be forwarded by the Sāṅkhyas. The Pradhāna becomes active firstly, on account of its inherent power to produce or secondly, on account of Puruṣa's inherent power to 'look on' at the things produced. In that case also, liberation will not be possible because of the endless existence of this Sāṅsāra on account of the eternity of these two powers.
In both the cases the activity will not stop because both the entities in question are eternal by nature and therefore, whatever function is assigned to them, it can never be intermittent. Hence, no state of liberation or dissolution can be maintained.

The central weakness of the Śāṅkhya system is that it does not bring out clearly the relation of Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Therefore, Śaṅkara remarks in a forceful way, "It is absurd to suppose that an unconscious principle can act either to injure or to benefit a conscious entity". The Śāṅkhyan theory of causation is comparatively more organic and undoubtedly sounder than that of the Nyāya. But still, the Prakṛti as the cause of the world cannot account satisfactorily for the start of world-evolution, the liberation of Puruṣas, the graduation of 23 elements, the bondage of the Puruṣa and cessation of the evolution.

d) Some Objections on the Advaita Considered

The opponent further raises objections basing his stand on the theory of transformation:

(1) The Vedāntins believe that the effect merges into its cause at the time of dissolution. Hence Brahma is bound to be polluted when the non-intelligent and impure world will become one with It at the time of dissolution.

1. Vide Śāṅkara Bhāṣya on 2/2/3.
2. Vide Śāṅkara Bhāṣya on 2/1/18.
(ii) When there prevails only one pure Absolute Brahman at the time of dissolution, then there is no cause due to which the next creation may take place.

(iii) When everything merges in Brahman at the time of dissolution, the actions and fruits thereof would also get merged into Brahman. Then there would remain no difference between the liberated and the non-liberated. In that case, there is every likelihood of the liberated souls to be born again when new creation takes place.

Shāṅkara meets these objections thus:

(i) There are numerous instances which prove that the effect does not pollute its cause when it merges into it. For example, a clay-pot, when it is broken, does not transfer its qualities in the clay. George Thibaut has remarked in passing that this argument is "singularly inappropriate if viewed in connection with the doctrine of Māyā, according to which the material world is no more in Brahman at the time of Pralaya than during the period of its subsistence. According to Shāṅkara the world is not merged in Brahman, but the special forms into which the upādāna of the world, i.e. Māyā, had modified itself, are merged in non-distinct Māyā, whose relation to Brahman is not changed thereby".

1. Vide his Introduction to the translation of Sharīra Bhasya, Page Xciv.
In connection with Dr. Thibaut's remark quoted above, 
Shākara's following verse from the Satasādi Stotra 
will not be out of place to recall here:

Hence it is very true that the cause always includes 
the effect and even transcends it. Therefore, 
Śaṅkara's position 
is true. The very nature of absorption implies that the 
qualities of the effect cannot continue— they become one. 
Over and above all this, Śaṅkara's reply should not be 
considered taking into account the opponent's charge. The 
opponent can best be silenced if he is replied in the 
language which pleases him most. On the other hand, 
point (ii) below clears Śaṅkara's own standpoint.

The point at issue can be best illustrated by a 
Rāmakrishna's parable. The parable goes to say that a salt-
doll went to fathom the depth of a sea. It got melted the 
moment it dived into the ocean and became one with the water 
of the ocean. Similarly, embodied self, the salt-doll, 
goes to know Brahman, but alas it gets merged with It and 
loses its separate identity when the true knowledge dawns.

(ii) Śaṅkara corrects the opponent from the monistic 
point of view and shows that the opponent has misunderstood

L. Vide "Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta", by W., Volume I, 
Page 76-77.
his thesis. According to monism, the effect and its qualities are mere false appearances due to Ignorance and thus cannot pollute the cause in any way, either at the time of dissolution or at the time of subsistence. For example, a magician creates the magic-play for others, yet he himself remains unaffected. Similarly Brahman is not affected by the creation of this illusory world. The experiences of dream do not affect us because we know them to be illusory. Even so, the existence of this world shall not affect Brahman who very well knows its illusory nature.

It may be noted here in passing that the example of dream is nearer the spirit of the Advaita whereas the simile of the magician does not justify Shāṅkara's point in all its bearings. The magician uses apparatus to create his play. If he loses that apparatus, he becomes sad. He shows his play in order to earn his livelihood. These factors can in no way be convincingly justified if the role of Brahman is to be compared with that of a magician.

(iii) As to the last objection mentioned above, Shāṅkara says that the fact of new creation can be explained by examining the phenomenon of deep sleep. The world of duality does not exist during deep sleep because all the senses cease to work in that state. But on waking up one finds the world of duality. The phenomenon of dissolution can also be of the same type. Existence of Ignorance is responsible for the new creation. This clears the
liberated souls whose Ignorance has been destroyed, cannot be born again.

It is noteworthy that Śaṅkara's system admits the creation of the world by Brahman, but it seems to exclude the embodied Self from the creation by Brahman when it says, "The embodied self is Brahman, nothing other than It". Śaṅkara probably conscious of this difficulty, seeks the help of practical point of view of explaining things in the beginning of his commentary on 2/1/14. It will not be out of place to add here that the other Vedāntins maintain that the individual soul originates directly from Brahman, like sparks from fire.

According to monism, the effect and the cause are not different from each other in the past, present or future alike. The opponent may question here, what differences does there remain between the two states of dissolution and subsistence if no consideration is maintained for the time factor? Śaṅkara, if fortunately concerned, would instantly explain it through his great weapon of Nescience. Ignorance remains in its seed form at the time of dissolution and there is no consciousness of it. But it is full fledged working machine at the time of subsistence. The difference lies in the developed or the undeveloped forms of Ignorance.


2. A detailed discussion of this problem is available in the Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on 2/3/17.
Shamkara, conscious of this difficulty, clears his position thus:

After meeting the objections successfully, Shamkara points out that the objections raised above are also true about the opponent's thesis. The world, as the experience tells us, is characterised by sound, taste, form etc. But its cause, the Pradhana is devoid of them. The objection of polluting the cause is equally applicable to the opponent's thesis also. But the monist's position is better because of two reasons. Firstly it is backed by Scriptures and secondly, all objections have been answered from its standpoint.

Brahma is admitted to be the material cause of the world. In that case, objects the opponent, it would become impossible to maintain the distinction of subject and the object, a phenomenon which no sensible person can deny.

The above conclusion is refuted by forwarding a counter-example. Waves, foam, bubbles etc. are only different modifications of water and yet they are distinct from each other. But they are in essence water only. Similarly, all things of the world, being basically of the nature of Brahman, appear to be having separate entities, which is not true in the ultimate analysis.

2. Ibid., 2/1/19.
3. Ibid., 2/1/13.
It may always be kept clear that Śaṅkara has admitted that all course of the world would go undisturbed till the realisation of non-difference of the embodied self with Brahman. For example, at the time of dream, the dreamer does not believe even for a fraction of a moment that the objects he is perceiving are unreal. Similarly, due to the influence of Ignorance, the ignorant people forget their non-difference with Brahman and that all this is Brahman. Consequently, they identify themselves with their belongings and relations and call them their own. How can such people think the world to be unreal? The distinction of subject and object disappears at once when the knowledge of Brahman dawns. This clears that the objection raised above is only due to confusion between the ultimate and the practical points of view.

Another charge from the opponent is that the illustration of clay indicates modification in Brahman. This goes against the nature of Brahman, which is 'one without a second'. Hence Brahman cannot be said to have become all this. The monist brings in the authority of scripture which denies modification on the part of Brahman. The description of Brahman in negative terms indicates that changelessness is a characteristic of Brahman and all the so-called modifications are mere appearances. The knowledge of the changeless and attributeless Brahman leads to emancipation and not the knowledge that Brahman is modified.
In reply to the opponent's charge, following clarification may also be given: In Advaita system of Philosophy a definition may assume two forms—Svarūpa Laksāṇa or Tatāstha Laksāṇa. The first type of definition narrates the eternal, and therefore real, essence of the object defined. Take for example, when Brahman is defined as "Sat-Çit-Ānanda". The second type of definition presents Brahman as viewed due to the veil of Nescience. e.g., when creation, maintenance and reabsorption of the world are attributed to Brahman. It is clear therefore, that the definition of Brahman in Brahma-Sūtra 1/1/2 is only to guard us against any type of misleading conception of the Pradhāna and the like about the First Cause. It never implies modification of Brahman.

To know that clay alone is real. Similarly, the knowledge of Brahman, as having potentialities of producing this world, is only to emphasize that Brahman alone is real. The existence of the world has its basis in Brahman alone.

The opponent may ask as to how this world of great varieties can emerge from the one, unchangeable Brahman. Shankara meets this objection by furnishing an example from the daily life. Just as food assumes different forms, such as blood or hair; or to have a clearer example, just as the same earth yields different trees like sandal and camphur which possess different kinds of leaves, flowers,
fruits, fragrance etc; or just as stones, being basically the same, present a great variety among themselves, even so within one Brahman, there may remain various distinctions of the embodied self, God etc. ¹

It may be observed here in passing that Śaṅkara's above solution goes against facts of Biology. Hence they become less convincing in present times. The variety here can be attributed to the difference of the nature of food, soil and climate etc. But which factor is responsible in the variety of world appearance? Ignorance cannot account for the diversity. Law of Aryan may be brought in to save the situation.

The opponent is not satisfied with the above explanation. He argues further: Intelligent beings (efficient causes) require some matter and instruments in order to create something. But Brahman is devoid of such material and instrumental apparatus. Hence, it is incapable of creating the world. Śaṅkara replies that Brahman is capable of creating this world just as milk changes itself into curd without any aid from outside. If it is said that curdling takes place due to some foreign aid of some heat etc., we reply that, had there been no inherent capacity in the milk to

¹ Vide Śaṅkara Bhasya on 2/1/23.
² Ibid., on 2/1/24.
³ This line of argument is comparable with Śaṅkara's celebrated thesis that Brahman projects itself in the form of this world.
transform itself into curd (of course, not unaided by an intelligent controller) no amount of heat would have changed it into curd! Why does water or any other liquid for that matter, not change into curd even when heated incessantly for a long time?

The opponent may say that inanimate substances like milk etc. may create without extraneous help. But intelligent beings like rotter etc. are never seen to create things without external help. How then Brahman, being intelligent, can create this world without any aid of external means?

Shankara replies the objection by giving an example of creation by an intelligent agent without taking any help from outside. Just as gods can create through their inherent power, similarly, Brahman can create this world. Shankara makes clear-cut statement in this respect that Brahman does not depend on any extraneous help to create. He has infinite power to create this world of diversity. He is unconditionally free to create.

By observing phenomenon such as creation of posts etc., we cannot deduce a universal conclusion that conditions observed in the creation of posts must be satisfied in all

1. It may not be forgotten that the argument that assigns sentient authorship to the world reduces the creator to the level of an ordinary man.

processes of creation. But it may be noted that introduction
of gods having infinite power to create cannot satisfy persons
having modern sceptical outlook.

The upholders of the creationist theory of causation
object further: Brahman is partless. When it transforms itself
into this world, we can infer that the whole of It undergoes
change because It is 'one impartite whole'. Thus there remains
no Brahman whom we may aspire to 'see'. Had Brahman been made
up of parts, the problem could have been saved by saying
that the change occurs in a few parts and the rest of the
parts remain in their original state whom we may very well
long to "see". In view of Śaṅkara's following reply, it may
be observed that the objection is raised from a material plane
and the answer is given from a metaphysical plane.

(i) The Scriptures say that Brahman is not only the
source of the origination of this world, but It also exists
even apart from the world. ¹ How can then the entire Brahman
be spoken of as having transformed itself into the world
when its existence is admitted by Scriptures even beyond it? ²

(ii) The Scriptures speak of embodied Self as "becoming
one with It during deep sleep". This passage clearly indicates

---

1. Vide Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI/8/2.
2. Vide Śāriṅgaṇa Śaṅkara on 2/1/27
that the whole of Brahman does not get transformed into this world. Had Brahman been not existent even beyond this world, then with what does the embodied self become one at the time of deep sleep?

(iii) Had the whole of Brahman transformed itself into this world. It should have been perceptible through the eyes even as the world is. But the very fact that Brahman is not an object of perception and is formless proves that it remains in an unmodified form.

(iv) Shankara finally resorts to the Scriptures. He says that ordinary things of the world such as gems and herbs produce different and opposite things which baffle human intellect, how many times much more difficult would it be then, to go to understand Brahman, the creator of all this and existent even beyond this creation, by intellect alone? We cannot apply reasoning to what is unthinkable. The Scriptures are the only authority in reaching decisive and final conclusions about supersensuous matters. Hence the opponent's insistence to apply reason and inference even in matters of pursuing an enquiry into the nature of Brahman, is futile.

(v) Moreover, there is no contradiction if Brahman is admitted to be formless and also at the same time that It

projects itself as this world. The poor opponent forgets that these distinctions of name and form of the phenomenal world are only apparent and are caused by Ignorance. In reality Brahman ever remains the same. The import of the Scriptural passages advocating transformation is only to direct our attention to Brahman, the reality underlying every object of the universe. Just as the experience of dreams do not affect the real nature of the individual Self and as the juggler remains unaffected by the play he creates, even so Brahman that creates this world through its unlimited power of Nescience, remains unaffected by the act of creation.

(vi) Finally, Shankara says that from the standpoint of monism all objections have been answered. But the same objections can be reverted to the opponent's thesis. It is difficult to meet those objections satisfactorily from his point of view.

No intelligent being is seen to change itself in activity unless he is to fulfill some motive through it. No such motive can be attributed to the pure nature of Brahman. Hence it may be objected that, Brahman cannot be the cause of the world.

2. Ibid., 2/2/29.
4. Vide Shāntaka Bhāṣya on 2/1/32.
Shānkara replies that it is a natural sport on the part of Brahmān to engage itself in the act of creation even as we respiration during deep sleep, or just as kings engage themselves in sports, even though they have no motive behind it. Similar may be the case with Brahmān when we attribute the act of creation of the world to it.

If this world is created by Brahmān, then it must be held to be partial, because it is Brahmān who has made some people happy, others sorrowful. As a corollary of this conclusion, it will also be inferred that Brahmān is cruel in as much as it inflicts rain on all creatures and finally causes destruction of the world.

In reply to the above, Shānkara compares Brahmān to rains. Rain is not considered to be the cause of difference in crops and plants. Just as the difference of various plants cannot assign partiality on the part of rains, similarly, partiality cannot be attributed to Brahmān even if there does exist difference of pleasure, pain etc. in the so-called created things. It may be noted in passing that Dr. S.K. Belvalkar very aptly points out here that the analogy of rains is not satisfying. The characteristic differences of seeds can exist independently of rain. But in case of God, there can be no diversity for which He himself is not responsible. Shānkara takes the support of Shruti and says that the creation is relative to its

1. Vide Sharīraka Bhāṣya on 2/1/33-34.
difference of merits and demerits. It may be urged here that there was only 'One being without a second', so there did not exist even merits or demerits. Then why this difference in creation? This can only be explained by attributing partiality to God. Śaṅkara answers the objection by calling the creation as beginningless, like seed and the sprout. Thus, it is possible for merits and demerits to continue to work, because no beginning can be assigned to them. Hence the question of first creation does not arise.

Thus we see that objections of the opponent are met by bringing in the doctrine of Vivarttavāda. Though it resembles with the theory of transformation in many respects, yet it has its own distinct features as well. Śaṅkara invented the doctrine of Vivarttavāda to explain the unique relation between Brahman and the world. It tells us that the world is only an appearance of Brahman. Brahman is thus the ground of the world. World cannot have its existence apart from Brahman. When Śaṅkara asserts the

---

1. The fact that God has to attend to the fruits of actions of men cannot affect Lord's independence. Bhamati, foreseeing this difficulty, has rightly said:

2. Vide Śārīraka Brāhīya on 2/1/35.
non-distinctness of Brahman and the world, it does not mean their identity. It is only to negate the reality of world. Brahman is never affected by the existence or non-existence of the world. The cause exists independent of the effect. It is the effect that borrows its existence from the cause. The reasons for Shankara's adherence to Vivartavāda are many. The creationist theory of causation of the Sankhyas demands some relation between the cause and the effect. The problem is argued thus: the cause and the effect are either similar to each other or not, if they are identical, what is the fun in calling them by two distinct names. If they are not, then they need some connection to get themselves related. But no such relation is possible between Brahman and the world. Hence Shankara's gigantic and creative brain, in order to reconcile these doubts and so-called inconsistencies, formulated the famous theory of Vivartavāda. In the light of this explanation, the charges of the opponent, which are undoubtedly raised from an angle of the theory of transformation, not only cease to carry any significant weight, but also become irrelevant.

e) Criticism of the Doctrine of many Souls

The Sankhyas advocate the doctrine of many souls. They say that the number of souls is many. They are all-pervading, pure intelligence attributeless and of paramount excellence. Pradhāna is their common agency which provides
then enjoyment and liberation. It is Pradhāna through which the souls get enjoyment and finally attain liberation. All souls are intelligent entities and at the same time they are equally at par with regard to their proximity with Pradhāna. All this information being given, Shankara infers that all the souls must be equally connected with pleasure and pain. Shankara's conclusion is right here because the souls display a uniformity of character and hence the connection of one with pleasure and pain necessarily means that all the souls are connected with equal amount of pleasure, pain etc. Thus Shankara brings out that the doctrine of many souls involves contradiction.

Well, the difference of souls with regard to their pleasure and pain can be attributed to the purpose of Pradhāna which has for its aim, the liberation of Purusās.

1. Vide Śāṅkhya-Kārikā 19.

2. It may also be mentioned that Anandabodha, a great name in Shankara Vedanta, has criticised the arguments of the Sāṅkhya that the plurality of souls can be proved on the analogy of birth and death. He has refuted the diversity of objects. He brings out quite convincingly the impossibility of perceiving difference through sense-perceptions, because the perception of difference demands the knowledge of the object and all else from which it differs.

As such, it takes up a particular course that may suit best towards the achievement of liberation of Puruṣas. Thus the degree of pleasure pain etc. may differ in the individual cases of Puruṣas.

Śaṅkara is not satisfied with the above explanation. He demands a solid proof which may convincingly account for the difference in pleasure and pain of the souls. So the difficulty stands as unsolved as before. 1

7) Criticism of the Relation of Puruṣa and Prakṛti...

Now Śaṅkara proceeds to prove the futility of the illustrations of the lame and the blind given by the Śāṅkhya. Puruṣa, being indifferent and inactive cannot move the Pradhāna. It is possible that a lame man may lead a blind. The simple thing he is required to do is to sit on the back of the blind and impart him instructions. He leads him by verbal instructions. Hence the contradiction that, on the one hand, the Puruṣa is advocated to be devoid of action and qualities and then, on the other hand, he is expected to move the Pradhāna.

Another example which is given by the Śāṅkhya is that of a magnet. Magnet being inert, does attract

iron. Similarly, the Purusa, himself being inactive like a magnet, can cause disturbance in the Pradhāna like iron. 

Shaṅkara's penetrating intellect brings here two facts before us: Firstly, Purusa and Pradhāna being permanently together will cause perpetual activity, and so release will become impossible. Secondly, the magnet should be clean if it is to attract iron. Purusa is always pure and therefore, it will attract Prakṛti eternally because it is ever clean or it will not indulge in creation to contract impurities from Pradhāna. In either case, the difficulty stands so as before.

g) Criticism of the Gūnas

The moment any of the Gūnas becomes dominant and they are no longer equipoised, then, the Pradhāna will no longer be Pradhāna because, the conception of Pradhāna in Sāṅkhya is that it is nothing but the equipoised condition of the three Gūnas. In that case the Pradhāna will neither remain eternal by itself (Kūṭastha Mitya) nor eternal as a process (Pariṇāmī Mitya). If the Sāṅkhya's say that the three Gūnas are endowed with the capacity to change by themselves and thus produce the effects, the same defect will ensue that there will be no arrangement of the world in absence of a governing principle.

Shaṅkara has shown another contradiction in the doctrine of the Sāṅkhya's. Sometimes they say that the senses are seven in number and sometimes they tell their number to be
eleven. At one place they say that the I'ämättras originate from "Ahankāra" and at another they attribute their origination to "Mahat". At one place, they speak of only one internal organ and at another place, they speak of three internal organs. But wherefrom Śaṅkara has derived this data, we have no means to ascertain. The Sākhya text which Śaṅkara has in mind is apparently not available now. The contradiction relating to the internal organ can be reconciled by saying that constituents of the internal organ, if taken collectively, go to form one and if taken individually, they become three.

Rāmdūja has pointed out another untenability of the Sākhya system. At one place they say that Pradṛśa becomes active just to liberate the Puruṣa, and at another place they say Puruṣa is absolutely indifferent and non-active. How can we maintain a category non-active and passive when "seeing" is attributed to it?

Concluding Remarks.

Thus, we see that Śaṅkara's line of attack revolves around a single weak point in the doctrine of the Sākhya that it does not postulate the existence of such an intelligent principle whom we may attribute the planning and the supervision of the acts of creation, preservation and destruction of the world. The Puruṣa is an indifferent spectator. This being his eternal nature, he cannot be assigned the said act, because "no amount of analogies can

1. Vide Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on 2/2/19.
help in making possible what is inherently impossible”.

Another weak point of the Śākhya system is that it divides the world into two contradictory halves - the Pradhāna and the Puruṣa consequently, the system is left with no alternative except to think and work out all possible means to bring "these incompatible halves together. This cannot be achieved as long as halves persist in maintaining intact their own absolute, 'touch-me-not' quality, unless you can have a recourse to the Vedantic explanation of the utter unreality of the contact". Shankara’s inventive and penetrating intellect has availed this weak point fully to expose the untenability of the system.

It will be observed that arguments and line of reasoning employed by Shankara while attacking his opponent, can very well, and may be with the same force, be turned towards his own doctrine. That is why Shankara is seen very frequently escaping to his eternal protection of the doctrine of nescience, beginningless nature of the Śankūras and to the doctrine of "Ajātivāda". "But it is only fair to point out that Shankarācārya uses his ultimate weapon only when there remains to him no other escape possible".

1. "The Brahma-Sūtras of Bāḍarāyaṇa" by Dr. S.K. Belvalkar, Page 80 of the notes.
2. Rāmānuja has done so.