CHAPTER IV

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND MYSTICAL ASPECTS OF ADVAIATA VEDANTA

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CHAPTER IV

METAPHYSICAL AND MYSTICAL ASPECTS OF AVAVITA VEDANTA

Section 1

Reason, Revelation and Intuition

Ashutosh Shastri in his article "AVAVITA VEDANTA: MYSTICISM", says "Vedanta in accepting authority as a source of knowledge has shown the highest regard for truth conveyed unto humanity and in this has not limited the scope of knowledge to the ordinary source.... Vedanta has, therefore recognised all the possible sources of knowledge though it has not accepted anyone of them without sufficient reason and ground."

The possible sources for Advaita Vedanta are the six pramāṇas viz., perception, reason, comparison, presumption and non-apprehension.

Śrīmadvivekānanda defines valid knowledge as the knowledge of an object, which was not known before. Knowledge cognizing an object known before is invalid. So he excludes recollection from valid knowledge. Novelty is a characteristic of valid knowledge.

Valid knowledge, according to Vācaspati Miṣra is unassisted, undoubted knowledge of an object, which was not known before. Pramāṇa produces valid knowledge.
Knowledge according to the advaitins is not pure-consciousness nor is it a mental state alone, but it is a blend of both, the pure consciousness and the mental state. The mental state could arise from everyone of the six prāṇāṇās and the consciousness reflected in the mental state of the mental state inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it, is known as empirical cognition.

When the sense of sight functions in respect of a particular object, mind goes out through sense of sight and assumes the form of the object. In other words, mind undergoes modification in the form of the objects. This transformation is known as vṛtti. This vṛtti which pervades the entire object removes first the ignorance present in the consciousness delimited by the object and makes the object fit to receive the reflection of consciousness.

As Swami Prajñānanda defines, "a prakāra is that which gives rise to a vṛtti or modification that manifests chit or consciousness, and a prakāra is said to be a modalized consciousness (vṛtti-ibhū), chit or pure consciousness is self-shining (ānvaś-jyoti), self-revealing (ānvaś-praśā), and undivided (abhanda), but when it manifests through the medium of the internal organ (antahkāraṇa) or mind, it assumes the form of vṛtti-ibhū. A vṛtti is, therefore, a product of chit and abhanda, i.e., a consciousness and antahkāraṇa or mind, which is a product of nescience or abhanda (a bhū-praśā)."
The Vedanta-saribhasa, defines \textit{vritti} as \textit{pramana vritti}.

Thus "the Advaitins admit two kinds of \textit{vritti}: \textit{anabhranas-vritti} and \textit{abhava-vritti}. \textit{Anabhranas-vritti} happens to be a subject, 'I' and both I (soul) and its objects are superimposed on \textit{abhran} or consciousness, and are, therefore, unreal. Similarly \textit{abhava-vritti} and its objects are superimposed on \textit{abhran} or consciousness, and are, therefore, unreal. In fact, a \textit{vritti-abhra} or \textit{abhran} or consciousness is not real, and consciousness devoid of any \textit{vritti}, is real being, free from any change.

It is said that a \textit{pramana} is the source of valid knowledge and this knowledge is defined as a novel knowledge which is not given to any sense, and is not sublated. If this is so, what do we mean by perception in Advaita Vedanta?

The Advaitins hold that the Upanisadic texts alone are the authority to know the truth, since they deal with the nature of Brahman. We count all the \textit{pramanas}, are the transfiguration of Brahman, but they deal with the object of the world. Hence, they conclude that the sentient element of Brahman is predominant in the \textit{Veda} in general and the insentient element of nescience is predominant in other \textit{pramanas}. The Upanisadic portion of the \textit{Veda} alone gives rise to the knowledge of Brahman, yet the other \textit{pramanas} are useful in one way or another.
On this basis, the Advaitins hold that Brahman can never be known by sense perception. It could give rise to the immediate experience only of empirical reality.

Suresvara gives three reasons for the unknowability of Brahman through perception. (a) Brahman is the eternal subject, the ever 'non-distant inner self' (Apramāṇa-Itapratyak śāta)

(b) It is an end in itself (Apartha) and cannot be experienced by others. (c) It is incapable of being known (Apramāṇa), as it has no attributes at all. So it is known only through the Vedantic texts.

The author of 'Tattvamāsāni' says that perception neither apprehends a thing nor its existence, but it apprehends beinghood alone common to them. Therefore, perception is favourable to the establishment of one Brahman as of the nature of being. Perception which apprehends mere indeterminate being is favourable to the establishment of one Brahman.

According to Suresvara, perception apprehends the thing, but it apprehends only the external objects. Hence it cannot be a valid pramāṇa for the reality of Brahman. So, no doubt could arise that perception contradicts scriptural testimony about the reality of one Brahman alone. A pramāṇa produces the knowledge of an object, which is not known. He says, a jar and the like being insentient are not objects of nescience (aprāmaṇa), as they cannot be veiled by it. They are objects of perception,
but were not unknown. The self-manifest Brahman alone is an object of nescience, for it is veiled by nescience. So Vedic testimony is a valid pramāṇa for the existence of Brahman. The śrutī, "Atman ought to be seen or intuited shows that Atman is an object of valid knowledge. It means that Atman is worthy of being intuited.

So the empirical validity of perception is not denied by Advaitins. It is due to this illusory perception, the unreal world is manifested as the real Brahman. Just as the mistaken cognition of silver in macra is sublated by the correct apprehension of the macra, so also the unreal world is sublated when the true knowledge of Brahman is realized. This unreal world is neither real, nor unreal, nor real-unreal but indefinable.

Thus, according to them, Vedic testimony is the highest pramāṇa with regard to the reality of non-dual Brahman.

Reason is also not a means to the knowledge of Brahman. Reason and presumption are useful only to establish the unreality of the universe.

Suresvara says, that, mere reason can never establish the existence and nature of Brahman; hence it can never lead to the desired end, i.e., mokṣa; but on the contrary it leads to undesirable consequences. Hence it is not a pramāṇa in the case
of Brahman.

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan in his book, Gauḍapāda, says, "reason is but a secondary means of knowledge .... The knowledge that reason gives is mediate and mediate knowledge is that which depends for its validation on the validity of some other knowledge which is its ground. If this other knowledge is also mediate, we shall be led on to a remunera ad infinitum without arriving at certitude. So, the proper grounds of rational knowledge is immediate knowledge." Thus this immediate experience is only through the scripture and from nothing else.

Though reason is not a pramāṇa for knowing Brahman, it is an aid for the interpretation of the scriptural passages.

Gauḍapāda interprets this text by means of reasoning. "He states explicitly that śrutī must be accepted as authoritative when it is compatible with reason (vīkti-viśāla) not otherwise." 13

More reasoning is a formal process. The conclusion at which it arrives depends on the premises with which it starts says Dr. Madhukrishnan. It has been said that the Upaniṣadic texts alone are the means of knowing Brahman. Then there arises a question of vīkti. Pāṇiniṇa takes the word vīkti to be a synonym of tarka. Tarka is only argument which proposes the unwelcome position, if a particular premise is not admitted. For example,
the knowledge of the invariable concomitance in the form "there
there is smoke, there is fire", is the instrument of the infer-
rential knowledge in the form, 'the mountain has fire'. If the
validity of the invariable concomitance is questioned by stating
that smoke could exist without fire, then tarka in the form "if
there is no fire, there could be no smoke" comes into operation.
This argument proposes an unwelcome conclusion, viz., the absence
of smoke, when smoke is being perceived if the invariable concomi-
tance between the smoke and fire is not admitted. Thus tarka is
an aid to a pramāṇa.

In the same way, presumption is applied to prove the
unreality of the universe. The universe is mit-ya, for otherwise
it would neither be presented in cognition nor annihilated. It
might be objected that a thing may be presented in a cognition
and it may be annihilated; but it is not necessary that it must
be niḥya. Hence, tarka in the form "if the universe is real,
then it cannot be annihilated; if it is unreal, then it cannot
be presented in a cognition "comes into operation. Brahmacārīna
in his Lankasundarīkā states that this argument is artha-śāstra-

Śāṅkara, in the Brahma-Sūtra, insists that the religious
experience as recorded in the scriptures ought to be the basis
for reason. By tarka, Śāṅkara means reason that has not been
restrained by the lessons of history. Such individualistic
reasoning cannot lead to the establishment of truth on account of the endless diversity in the power of apprehension. The ātmā embodies the truth of spirit which have satisfied the spiritual instincts of a large portion of humanity. It contains the traditional convictions of the race which embody not so much thought as the life of spirit, and for those of us who do not share the life these recorded experiences are of great value.

Sāṅkara recognises the need of reason for testing scriptural views. Wherever he has an opportunity, he tries to confirm scriptural statements by rational argument. Reasoning (jñāna), which works as an auxiliary of intuition (anubhāva) is commended by him. Reason with him is a critical weapon against untested assumptions and a creative principle which selects and emphasises the facts of truth. Sāṅkara says "even those destitute of the power of judgment do not attach themselves to particular traditions without any reason".

Appayya Liṅgita says, that when once it is established that inference cannot independently lead to Brahman, inference cannot contradict scriptural testimony, just as the sense of sight, which cannot bear, is unable to contradict our auditory experience. He says that like a sword's keen edge, when applied to a rock, inference is 'dented' when used to criticise scripture; and to say that inference is stronger than scripture is "(asthānavijñāvatām)."
Govindananda says that since scripture is the basic source (śruti) of our knowledge of God, and since inference cannot demonstrate the existence of God in opposition to scripture, inference cannot be used to argue that one and the same thing cannot be both efficient and material cause.

Hence according to the Advaitins, Upanishadic texts are the only means to the valid knowledge. But the Upanishadic texts themselves speak of the need for pañca (reason). The Brähma Upanishad says “Atman should be realised, for it should be heard, reflected and meditated upon.” This emphasises the need for reflection which is only arguing within oneself on the basis of reason etc., aided by ātma. This helps one to convince oneself that the teachings of the Upanishads is true. Reasoning is only useful in ascertaining the import of the Upanishadic texts. When the doubt as regards the validity of truth arrived at from the Upanishads, is removed by the exercise of pañca, then pursues what is known as nādiṇi-vasana.

Thus the claim of reason is no doubt high, but reason cannot give us immediate knowledge. When truth is revealed, reason finds it self-consistent and not opposed to its own affirmation.

Thus it is clear that the scripture is the source of valid knowledge. Sāṅkara clearly establishes in his commentary on the
that Brahma is to be known
from scripture. Brahma is not the object of perception
and other means of knowledge, for everything is rooted in
That which is the basis of all things cannot be grasped by anything
that is based on it. It is not explained by anything, as everything
is explained by it.

Sureshvara points out that since Self is devoid of sensible
qualities it is not an object of perception and since it does not
have any distinguishing marks, it is not an object of inference.
Moreover, inferential knowledge, is mediate. So, perception,
inference etc., which have only the sensible world for their object,
cannot in the very nature of things, grasp the nature of Brahma
which is transcendental and su-ensensible. Scripture alone can
give us knowledge.

As Pr. P. S. Sastara in his book Advaita-Bhisto says
that "Sutra is not to show Brahma as this or that object, but
is to establish that Brahma is eternal subject, distinctionlessly
one. Thus, the distinction of knower, known and knowledge, are
regarded as belonging to the realm of nescience. Perception,
inference etc., are valid only in this realm of nescience, while
perception and the other empirical means of knowledge teach about
objects, Scripture has as its special topic Brahma.
Only purportful scripture is authoritative. The purport of the Vedic words is determined through six characteristic marks (and īmāna). They are as follows: (1) the harmony of the initial and concluding passages (upamāna-upamāna), repetition (abhināma), novelty (apūrva), fruitfulness (phala), glorification by eulogistic passages or condemnation by depreciatory passages (arthvindā) and intelligibility in the light of reasoning (upapatti). By applying these tests, the Advaitins find that the entire Scripture has the non-dual Brahman for purport.

The Advaitins hold that the mābhāva-yaṇas like "I am" etc. bring out the non-dual nature of Brahman. It is said that, a bare sentence gives only the mediate knowledge, while the sentence whose purport has been inquired into give rise to the immediate experience. When the full purport of the sentence "This self is Brahman" is cognized after a thorough inquiry, Brahman becomes the content of immediate experience. Hence in the case of Brahman, there is at first the mediate knowledge of its existence from the scriptural statements like, "Existence alone, dear one, was this in the beginning, one only without a second" etc.; and then, the major texts "I am that I am" etc., when their purport is known, reveal the immediacy of Brahman. That there is mediate knowledge from mere statement and immediate knowledge from the sentence whose meaning has been inquired into, is illustrated in the episode of Sūgul.
Now it is asked in what relation does reason (\textit{yukti}) stand to revelation (\textit{sruti})? According to Advaitins, revelation is no doubt the principal \textit{srutis}. But what is revealed by scripture has to be modified in thought before it could get transformed into one's own experience. \textit{Sruti} is what is helpful; \textit{yukti} or \textit{anka} is what helps. As an aid to revelation, reason is of inestimable value; and it should be regarded as subsidiary to \textit{sruti} and \textit{anubh\textit{uti}}. Revelation exceeds the grasp of reasoning and on that account it is not to be regarded as irrational. As Sankara says “even if thousand scriptural texts were to proclaim something which is non-sensical and absurd, one is not bound to accept it as true”. Again he says, “that which is accepted or believed in without proper inquiry prevents one from reaching the final and results in evil consequences”. In this case reason is important for interpreting the scriptural passages.

These scriptural passages give rise to the direct experience of the identity of the individual soul with Brahman. It is this direct experience that is referred to by the term \textit{anubhava}. It is only a mental state and it annihilates \textit{âdhyâya} and thereby leads to the manifestation of Brahman. It is also called \textit{samanvay-}1\textit{Ina} (perfect knowledge) or \textit{samanvay-\textit{arhâna}} (perfect intuition). The former insist on the reflective perception, while the latter points to the immediacy of intuition, where the ultimate reality is the object of direct apprehension (\textit{\textit{ikshvā}}) as well as meditation (\textit{\textit{ikshvā}}).
According to Śāṅkara, it is possible to meditate on unreal object but not to experience them. Hence he admits **ātmajña i.e., Realization of the identity with Brahman.**

Dr Radhakrishnan has pointed out, "**anubhāva is not the immediacy of an uninterpreted sensation, where the existence and the content of what is apprehended are not separate. It is immediacy which is higher and not lower than mediate reflective knowledge**." He says that the ideas of God, freedom and immortality are only names and symbols and the deepest of human value, which one can attain after but not until one transcends the never ending struggle of mind. Therefore **anubhāva and i.e., intuition and intellect are 'the point to a fissure between the infinite reality and the finite mind'.**

As he says, "Śāṅkara admits, that, while **it is anubhāva is open to all, few attains to it. But the important point is, that it is open to all. Reality is there, objective, ever-present, waiting to be seen by the individual minds that can seize it. Apparently Śāṅkara has no sympathy with the view that the real reveals itself to a few elect souls in moments of illumination through doubtful creeds and mystic voices. A God who reveals himself to some and not to others is a fiction of plebeian imagination. Insight or spiritual experience is, as a matter of fact, confined to some individuals, though it is a universal possession, while reason is common to the greater mass of thinking
humility. While some powers are well developed in all men, others are not equally developed. In the present state of evolution, anubhava may be subjective and its evidence worthy of credence only when it is in conformity with the dictates of reason. 43

Vidyārāṇya interprets anubhava as a particular mode of the mind, which has for its result the intuition of Brahman.

Thus anubhava, which is only the mental state of is valid and can on no account be counted. Examination of the Upaniṣadic texts and application within oneself with the help of reasoning, that does not contradict the scriptural teaching constitute the method suggested by the Upaniṣads themselves to discover the truth.

Thus, according to Advaitins faith in the scripture is the highest aim. Faith in scripture leads to the final goal in Advaita i.e., experience. As Śāṅkara says, “the end of goal of brahma-vidhi, inquiry into the nature of reality, is experience (anubhava).” 45 śrutis is other’s experience; and the knowledge one derive there from, is but mediative (pramāṇa). Unless this becomes immediate (anumāṇa), the goal of Vedānta which is self-realization will not be reached. Hence the faith in scripture insisted on in Vedānta has but a methodological value, and has as its sole purpose the realization of intuitive experience.
The knowledge that is revealed by scripture must become a matter of experience; only then revelation would have fulfilled its mission. And for one who has realized the integral experience, there is no need to depend on any external authority in the form of śruti or to subscribe to a formal dogma. His wisdom is self-certifying and self-revealed. To him the Vedas are no Vedas.

"To accept śruti is to accept the witness of the saints and sages", says sadbhakrishnan..... "In matters of religious truth we should listen with respect to what the great religious geniuses, who strove by faith and devotion to attain their spiritual eminence, have given out".

A similar view is found in Gītā also. Gītā tells us that the true Bhakti requires faith or śraddhā; the devotee takes the supreme Reality on faith before it reveals itself to his consciousness.
II

Ultimate Reality (Brahman)

Advaita Vedanta is the theory of non-dualism, based on
the Upanishads. Brahman, the Absolute, is one and without a
second. It is a transcendental entity and it is due to nībha-
avat, Brahman appears as the world of plurality. There is
no difference between Brahman and the individual soul.

Sāṅkara in his commentary on Brāhmaṇa-sūtra says that Brahman
is the only thing which is unborn. It cannot be suspected to
have sprung from anything else. Brahman, which is mere being,
cannot spring from mere being as there is a certain superiority
on the part of the cause in the relation of cause and effect.
The fundamental cause of all effects, which is not itself an
effect, is Brahman.

To say that Brahman is reality is to say that it is diffe-
rent from the phenomenal, the spatial, the temporal and the
sensible. Since Brahman is not a thing, it cannot have spatial
relation to anything else, and is therefore, nowhere. It is
not a cause, for that would be to introduce time-relation into
it.

As Sāṅkara says, “Every word employed to denote a thing
denotes that thing as associated with a certain genus or act,
or quality, or mode of relation”. Brahman has no genus, it
possesses no qualities, does not act and is not related to anything. It is devoid of anything of a like kind or of a different kind, and has no internal variety (saṁśīvatvāt-ātman abhedarahītam).

The Upaniṣadic text, "That from which these beings arise, that from which they derive existence and manifestation and that into which they lapse back at the time of dissolution seeks to know That; That is Brahman", states that the source of the universe is Brahman. Brahman, however, is pure consciousness and it is only through its association with Śvayā it becomes the source of the universe.

Brahman, which is absolutely real is defined in two ways. The causality of the world is the qualification per accidents of Brahman. Brahman is the cause of the origination, sustentation and destruction of the universe (tīvastā-ātyā-gana), while the definition per essent am of Brahman, is truth, consciousness and bliss (svaśīva-lahāgana).

The author of the Kauṁsyā says, "Of Brahman that is the object of inquiry, the definition has been stated to be the causality of the creation, sustentation and destruction of the world, by the scriptural text, 'That verily, from which these beings originate' etc. Of the creation, sustentation and destruction of the world, the causality even of each one, since it does not attach to any other (except Brahman) is capable
(of itself) of being the definition; if this be said, true, this is certainly a threefold definition, each of which is independent of the others. Hence, it is that in such sections as 'The eater is Brahman, because of the mention of the movable and the immovable, the destruction of all and so on are mentioned separately as characteristic marks of Brahman'.

Others, however, say thus: since causality of creation and causality of sustentation are common to the efficient cause (too), in order to make known material causality, there is shown the dissolution of the world in Brahman. "Let Brahman be the material cause of the world; (but) in respect of its creation, like the potter in respect of the creation of the pot, and in respect of its sustentation, like the king in respect of the sustentation of the kingdom, the efficient cause may certainly be other than the material cause; in order to remove this doubt, the control of the creation and sustentation of the world is declared of that (Brahman) alone. And thus, this definition which is but single, qualifies not even the non-dual Brahman as that which is without differentiation the material and the efficient cause", says the author of Siddhántaleśasamhita.

The Upaniṣadic texts: "Brahman is truth, consciousness and absolute" and "Brahman is consciousness and bliss", convey the essential nature of Brahman. These texts signify Brahman to be truth, consciousness, bliss and absolute and imply the
absence of the opposites of truth, consciousness and blissful nature. Thus these texts convey in an affirmative manner the nature of Brahman as truth, consciousness and bliss and absolute and imply the absence of their opposites. There are certain Upaniṣadic texts which convey the essential nature of Brahman by negating all elements. The texts such as, "free, from sound, touch and form, un-decaying, free from taste, eternal, free from odour", etc., "How, therefore, the description of Brahman as "not this, not this", "There is no quality in Brahman", "It is neither gross nor subtle, neither short nor long ... it is neither air nor etheric space; it is unattached, it is without taste or smell, without eyes, or ears, without tongue or mind" etc., convey Brahman to be free from all characteristics. These texts which directly negate all phenomenal elements in Brahman are intended to clarify the essential nature of Brahman. The texts which are affirmative in nature convey the essential nature of Brahman to be truth, consciousness, bliss and absolute. The absolute nature of Brahman cannot be ascertained unless there is the knowledge of the absence of all phenomenal elements. The texts which are negative in character negate all phenomenal elements and thereby confirm that Brahman is absolute and that is not conditioned by time, space and object. The negative Upaniṣadic texts are thus to be understood along with the affirmative ones. Brahman therefore is truth, consciousness, bliss and absolute and is free from quality, action and form.
As DF Badhakrishnan says, "It is non-being, since it is not the being which we attribute to the world of experience. It does not follow that it is pure nothing, since the negative has its meaning only in relation to the positive. The Upaniṣads as well as Sāṅkara deny of Brahmā both being and non-being of the type with which we are familiar in the world of experience. We can at best say what Brahmā is not and not what it is. It transcends the opposition of permanence and change, whole and part, relative and absolute, finite and infinite, which are all based on the oppositions of experience. The finite is always beyond itself, but there is nothing which the infinite can pass into. If it did so, it would no longer be the infinite. If we call it infinite, it is not to be equated with a mere negation of the finite. We cannot understand the nature of Brahmā until we let go the formal and the finite...

Brahma is Ātman. Both have the same characteristic of being, consciousness all-pervasive and bliss. The Upaniṣadic texts such as 'Thou art that', etc., signify the transcendental entity. The latter is sometimes represented as the inner consciousness of the individual soul and is termed Ātman. The word 'tāt' in the Upaniṣadic text 'That art that' signifies Brahmā, while the word 'Ātman' of Ātman. This distinction is not meant to be taken as final, what the Upaniṣadic text states is the identity of Ātman and Brahmā. This identity of Ātman and
Brahman or more strictly their non-difference is the logical significance of the texts like tat tvam asī.

The Upaniṣadic texts such as "as a large fish swims alternatively to both banks of a river, so does this Self move to both the states of a dream and waking", and "as a hawk or falcon roaming in the sky becomes tired, folds its wings and hastens to its nest, so does this Self hasten for this state of deep sleep where falling asleep it cherishes no more desires and has no more dreams", affirms that the Self experiences deep sleep. It moves by turns from the waking state to the dream state, from the dream state to that of deep sleep, from that again back to the dream state and so on. The experient of these three states is the individual soul (jīva). It is only a blend of Brahman - the pure consciousness and māyā-avāyā, mind etc. The pure consciousness which is the essential nature of the soul (jīva) is termed Ātman.

The Upaniṣadic text, "This Ātman is identified with intellect is present as the inner ruler of the senses of knowledge and action and vital airs and is immanent, in the mind as self-luminous consciousness" gives us the knowledge of the true nature of the soul. This text shows that Ātman is self-luminous, consciousness and distinguishes it from the intellect, sense organs and vital airs by stating that it is indented with mind, that it is present as the inner ruler of the sense organs and the vital
airs and it is immanent in the mind. The true nature of the soul, therefore is Ītman which is pure consciousness and which is constant in and the witness of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

The difference between God and the individual soul is due to मायावद्वार. when these are removed, there is no difference between God and the individual soul, but their remains only the eternal, absolute and pure Brahman. when the identity of God and the individual is spoken of, this identity is between the two as conceived of without the limiting adjuncts. when associate with the limiting adjuncts, they differ from each as much as a servant differs from a king, or a well from the ocean, or an atom from a mountain.

As VP T.M.P. Mahadevan in his article on *The Idea of God in Advaita*, says "If the soul and God are one, where is the place for God in Advaita, it can be asked. The reply is simple. Even in the identity statements 'That thou art', 'I am Brahman', etc., it is not the identity of the soul with God that is taught. It is precisely because there could be no identity between the primary meanings of the two words in each statement viz., 'The individual soul', and 'God', that recourse had to the secondary implication. what these statements teach is not that the soul and God are one, but the secondary meaning of the two words is
the same Self, the unconditioned Self. What Advaita tells us is that Atman is Brahman and not the Jiva (soul) is Isvara (God). He says, there is a text of the Brahma Sutras, which says with reference to the Self of the state of deep sleep: 'This is the Lord of all, this is the know, or of all, this is the inner ruler of all. This is the source of all, the origin and end, indeed, of beings'. The meaning of this text is not that the empirical Jiva is identical with Atman; the text should be regarded as an eulogy of Brahman, the Self in the state of sleep where there is no duality whatsoever".... "If God be compared to the sea and the soul to its wave, it would be proper to say that the soul is a property of God and not that God is a property of the soul, even as it would be to say that the wave belongs to the sea and not that the sea belongs to the wave. It has been declared that the duality assumed for the sake of devotion is more beautiful than even non-duality (bhaktarthanam-akalpitanam ati-adhitam-ani suryavan).

Hence from the standpoint of absolute knowledge (anavasthitam) there is only one reality, Brahman, and there is no difference between God and the soul. Brahman conceived from the standpoint of worship and lower knowledge is Isvara (God). Brahman and Isvara are not two distinct things, but the same thing conceived from two different standpoints, says K. Satchidananda Murty. Brahman is therefore referred to in many places as...
i.e., the supreme Lord. So conceived, God is transcendent over primal matter and the world generated from it.

There are Upanishadic texts which convey Brahman as attributeless (nirūpa) and formless (nirūkṣa). There are other texts which convey Brahman as having attributes (sāguna) and forms (sākṣa). The Upanishadic texts such as "Brahman is not gross, not fine, not short etc." convey Brahman to be free from quality and form. And the Upanishadic text "He cherishes all (righteous) desires, contains all (pleasant odours) and is endowed with all taste", etc., conveys Brahman as having qualities. When such is the case how could we conclude that Brahman is attributeless and formless?

Sāṅkara notices this distinction between two forms of Brahman one which is without attributes and the other which is conceived with attributes. He observes that although Brahman as it is in itself, can be but one, it may yet be viewed in such a way that it appears to possess attributes which do not genuinely belong to it. Just as a piece of crystal although really transparent appears red when a red flower is placed near it, in the same way, the attributes of Brahman are presented in Brahman through aprākṛta. We thus escape the conclusion that those Vedic passages which ascribe form to Brahman are devoid of sense—a conclusion altogether unacceptable, since all parts of Veda are equally authoritative, and it must be assumed that the texts that
ascribe form of Brahman also have a meaning. Sankara further states that the Upaniṣadic texts teach Brahman which is free from attributes in order that it may be realized and they teach Brahman with attributes in order that it may be worshipped. It follows from this that Brahman which is non-dual can only be realised and Brahman which is possessed of attributes can only be worshipped.

The realization of Brahman which is free from all characteristic is the direct means to liberation. But to most average intellects this is not possible. For them the worship of Śaṅkara Brahman is intended. Those who worship Śaṅkara Brahman reach the world of Bhiravacarita and there they attain the knowledge of Brahman by pursuing śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana. The conception of Brahman with attributes therefore is not an irrelevant intrusion between Brahman, the absolute and Īśvara.

Brahman which is referred to in the Upaniṣadic as having attributes does not have personified forms. The personified forms of Śaṅkara Brahman as Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Śiva do not find the expression in any of the principal Upaniṣads. The Chandogya texts: "He the Puruṣa that is seen in the sun is golden in colour, His beard is golden, hair is golden, everything up to the tip of the nail is golden", etc., speaks of Brahman as having a form but does not speak of the three-fold distinction as Viṣṇu, Brahman and Śiva. It is only in the Kaitākya Upaniṣad that we find reference to the threefold conception of
as mentioned above. Therein it is stated that Brahman associates with avidhyā, is designated by such terms as Vighu, Brahmā and Śiva, according to the preponderance of three strands of avidhyā, namely, kālām and tāmas.

Śāṅkara in his commentary on the Brahma-sūtra which discusses the Chāndogya text cited above states that Isāva out of His own will takes an illusory form in order to bestow His grace upon His worshippers. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his Siddhāntabindu reiterates this view and cites a verse from the Śanapūrṇa-tārini Upaniṣad which is as follows: Brahman which is pure consciousness, absolute, impartite and formless, assumes forms for the fulfilment of the purpose of his devotees.

It might be objected that some texts convey Brahman as having qualities and forms and others without qualities and forms. On what ground is one to take that the description of Brahman as formless and attributeless is true and others false? why cannot the opposite be accepted?

This objection is answered by saying if Brahman has forms and attributes then the texts which teach it as being without forms and attributes would become purportless. The Upaniṣadic texts, after ascribing qualities to Brahman, negate them in words "not this, not this". On this ground is is held that Brahman is attributeless and formless. The distinctive qualities and forms
are brought about by avidyā and the passages which set them forth are not without a purpose. This teaching is useful for meditative worship of Brahman as associated with qualities and forms.

The foregoing discussion may be summed up as follows:

The Upaniṣadic texts convey Brahman, which is truth, consciousness, bliss etc., is non-different from Ātman - the true nature of the soul. According to Advaita it is the sole reality and it appears, owing to avidyā, as God, soul and the world.
Individual Soul (jīva)

The soul is an appearance of Brahman-Atman through avidyā. It is not produced, for, there are no scriptural statements to that effect. It is eternal and is not produced. The Upaniṣadic texts such as "the individual being does not die" state that the soul is eternal, and other Upaniṣadic texts such as "Having created that He entered into that"; "Brahman has entered these bodies up to the tips of the nails" state that Brahman itself has attained to the status of the soul. Further, the Upaniṣadic texts such as "Thou art that", etc. affirm that the soul is not distinct from Brahman. Since there are no scriptural statements to the effect that the soul is produced and since there are scriptural passages stating that Brahman itself attains to the status of the soul and since there are scriptural passages proclaiming the identity of or one strictly the non-difference between Brahman and the soul, it is clear that Brahman itself is the soul.

It follows from this that the nature and size of the soul must be similar to those of Brahman. Śaṅkara discusses the size of the soul in his commentary on Brāhma-Śiṣṭa. He argues that atomicity essentially belongs to mind (buddhi or understanding) and is wrongly attributed to Brahman. If soul were of atomic size, it could not experience sensation, extending all over the body. The contention that due to the connection of the soul with skin (viz., the sense of touch), sensations extend all over the body is not tenable. When one treads on a thorn, one does not
feel the pain, all over the body but only in a particular spot, where the skin is pierced by the thorn. Again if it were con-
tended that sensations can possibly extend over the entire body because intelligence is a quality of the soul, and this intelli-
gence is not atomic and that like the light from the lamp, intelli-
gence can spread out from the soul, it is replied that light is not a quality of the lamp, but is a substance in itself. Qualities are coincidental with their substance.

The soul, though infinite, is yet bound with the qualities like desire and aversion, pleasure and pain which in fact belong to mind (buddhi) during the state of transmigratory existence. The *Svatantrata* Upanishad a passage makes it clear: "That living soul is to be known as part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair, divided a hundred times and yet it is to be infinite." Here the conditioned existence of the soul when it is said to be atomic, due to super-imposition of the qualities of buddhi etc. on it, is first stated and then its true nature of infinity is revealed. So atomicity is only apparent, while infinity is real. Intelligence pervading the entire body is only the buddhi pervading the entire body.

The soul is of the nature of intelligence. It is nothing other than reality. The appearance of its limitedness is due to the limiting adjuncts. There are scriptural passages to this effect: "himself not asleep", "That person is self-luminous".
Sometimes it is argued that since in deep sleep consciousness is not patenty perceived, soul cannot be said to be of the nature of intelligence. But the reason why a person who is asleep does not see anything, is not that the intelligence is for the moment absent, but that objects are absent. This can be illustrated by the example of light. The light that pervades space with no objects to illumine, cannot be said to be non-luminous. The Upanisadic passage declares: "That he does not see (in deep sleep) is because although seeing then, it does not see; there is no cessation of the sight of the seer". The texts such as "Brahman is consciousness and bliss", "Brahman is supra-relational", "The one self-luminous entity is the self of all beings, is veiled by ignorance, is all pervasive and is the inner controller of all beings" state that Brahman is consciousness, bliss, supra-relational and all-pervasive. And, since Brahman itself is the soul, the true nature of the latter also is consciousness, bliss etc.

The soul while being Brahman comes to be called an agent and enjoyer as conditioned by the limiting adjunct-mind. Scriptural injunctions such as He is to perform the sacrifice", "He is to offer gifts" etc., would have meaning only if the soul is an agent. If the soul were not an agent, then these injunctions would become pointless. The Upanisadic texts, however, declare that the soul is supra-relational. A reconciliation between these two apparently contradictory positions is effected by
pointing out that the soul identifies itself with mind and its qualities and so comes to be called an agent and enjoyer. Agency etc., are the qualities of mind and these qualities are superimposed on the soul, because of the mutual identification of the soul with mind.

The Upanishadic texts, "I thinks as it were" and moves in it", state that this one (soul) does not think by itself nor does it move by itself. When the mind with which it is falsely identified thinks, it seems to think and when the mind moves, it seems to move. It is clear from this that the soul comes to be called an agent and one who thinks and moves when associated with mind. Scriptural injunctions such as "He is to perform sacrifices" etc., become valid as we admit that the soul becomes an agent by the superimposition of mind and its qualities on it. And in the same way the soul although all-pervasive appears to be finite by being identified with mind. This mutual identification of the soul with mind has but avidyā as its root. And this avidyā cannot be removed by anything other than the true knowledge of Brahman. Hence this mutual identification of the soul with mind does not cease so long as the direct knowledge of Brahman does not arise. When the latter arises, avidyā is annihilated and mind which is its product, also ceases to exist. Then the soul becomes free from the characteristics of being the agent, etc., which are brought about by its association with mind and remains as Brahman.
Hence it is clear from the above, that the Brahman reflected in or unlimited by mind attains to the status of the soul and falsely identifying itself with mind and its qualities appears as knower, agent and enjoyer. Although it is all-pervasive, yet, owing to its association with mind, it is viewed as finite. Ayādrā conceals the true nature of Brahman from it and consequent the soul losing sight of its identity with its true nature i.e., Brahman experiences the recurring cycle of birth and death.

As H.D. Sankara says, "It is strange that nobody has noticed the analogy of this Sūtra with theṚṣṇavaṇī (VIII.6), where we are told that the soul becomes that on which is contemplated. There is transmigration according to thought. A man becomes a boar or a tree if he contemplates on them. If one thinks about God, one becomes God. If a man is filled with God he does not transmigrate. In fact, the soul enters animate or inanimate existence according to its karma. All this is true from the empirical standpoint. Bhāva-bhavya (of the Sūtra II, 111.16) means immanent in objects. Immanence prevents transmigration which thus becomes only an uvacē. To talk of souls passing to ovable or inovable existence, it must be remembered, is only a mode of speech. As we have already pointed out, transmigration from the ultimate standpoint is a mere illusion."...

Thus it is because the Self is wrongly identified with the perishing things that constitute the sphere of the not-self that
it is mistaken to be many and finite.

The Self is covered by the layers of not-self. In order to know the true nature of the Self it is necessary to pierce these layers of covering (kosas) and discard them. In the alittii-vāpyanānand, there is an inquiry into the five kosas or sheaths that are said to encase the self. The five sheaths are: the sheath of food (annamaya kosa), the sheath of vital airs (prāṇamaya) the sheath of mind (vijnanamaya), the sheath of intellect (viśvāmaya) and the sheath of bliss (ānandamaya). The expression 'ānandamaya' does not mean the unexcelable bliss that is the Self, but a state of ignorance in which the bliss is reflected, such as what is experienced in deep sleep. The purpose of inquiry is to dispel the self from the non-real kosas and to realize its non-dual and eternal nature. Referring to this inquiry, Gauḍapāda says, "The sheaths such as the one consisting of the essence (of food) are verily explained in the Viśiśṭādvaita; their self which is the supreme soul is shown clearly with the help of the ēther-analogy".

These five sheaths is regrouped into three bodies. Annamaya is the same as the gross physical body (sthūla sārā - ma). The next three kosas, prāṇa, ānā ā and viśvāma constitute the subtle body (auśīma-sārā - ma). It is also called vijñāna - sā - ma. The last ānanda - vān - kosa is the causal body (ānanda - sā - ma)
There are three states of experience waking (jñāna), dream (svādha), and deep sleep (asāguṇā). The soul is conditioned by all the three bodies in the state of waking by the subtle and causal bodies in the state of dream and by the causal body alone in the state of deep sleep. In the state of waking, the soul experiences the objects of the external world; its enjoyment is gross; it is known as vīrù. It is so called because it is the self that is all, or that which leads all creatures of the Universe in diverse ways to the enjoyment of the different objects. There are also other names for it, vīra-ṣīkha, empirical soul, and cādabhāsa, reflected consciousness. In the state of dream there are no external objects. The soul that dreams creates a world of its own from the impressions of its waking experiences. In dreams, the soul is conscious of what is within and enjoys what is subtle. In the absence of the sense-functions, it experiences objects produced by itself. Having put the body aside, the dreamer moves about in dream without the help of sense-organs. These have gone to rest, but he is awake. No need is there for him to depend on external lights, for in dream he is self-illuminated. Hence this state is known as Tāliṣṭa. It is also known as abodha-kāraṇa, i.e., what is posited by dream and prāthibhāsa, which is apparent. In the deep sleep state, one is not conscious of what is without or what is within. There is no distinction between the knowing subject and known object. All empirical distinctions vanish in the state of sleep. The
self is realized to be relationless. There is then only the
undivided consciousness which is of the nature of bliss. In
the state of sleep one attains the temporary union with the
conscious-self (prācātman). The self in the state of sleep,
is therefore called prāna. It is also known as amaschinda,
that which is defined by nescience, and paramāchika, the supre-
morely real soul.

Thus, the states change and pass, the objects, external
and internal, appear and disappear. But the self is constant
and unchanging. It is the witness-consciousness which is never
absent. In order to distinguish it from the three states and
their contents, it is referred to as the 'fourth' (Tātva).
But the Tātva is not a fourth in addition to the three, viz.,
Viśva, Tai asa, and Prāna; it is their underlying and basic
reality. An analysis of the three states of experience, waking,
dream and sleep, thus, serves to exhibit the non-duality of the
self.

It is stated that the finite individuality of the soul
is due to avdvā but in reality the soul is non-different from
Brahman. While subscribing to the fundamental doctrine of non-
difference, the Advaitins after Śaṅkara have differed among them-
soever over the scope in which the non-difference is to be explained.
They explain the nature of the individual soul and God in two
different ways. They are known as Pratibhāśā and amaschindan


The former one is advocated by Padmapāda, Suresvāra, Sarvajñāna and Prakāśāntvāna. The latter is advocated by Vācaspatimisra.

According to the first theory, apadya and the mind receive the reflection of brahman — the ultimate reality. Since this view holds that brahman undergoes reflection, it is known as Pratibhā-viṣṇu.

Suresvāra is of the view that brahman — the pure consciousness when reflected in māyā-apadya is Īśvara (Īśvara) and when reflected in mini, is the soul (jīva). According to Suresvāra, māyā and apadya are identical. This way of viewing Īśvara (Īśvara) as a reflection in apadya leads to the conclusion that Īśvara (Īśvara) being a reflection is affected by defects present in the limiting adjunct — apadya and as such he cannot be viewed as one, who always realizes his identity with brahman. But Advaitins got over this difficulty by pointing out that the Upaniṣadic text, "He who knows everything in its general and particular aspects" states that he is an omniscience being. This omniscience could not hold good, if Īśvara does not always realize his identity with non-dual brahman. Thus although he is a reflected image, yet on the authority of the Upaniṣadic texts it is admitted that he is an omniscient being.
But Prakāśātman, takes God to be the prototype consciousness and the soul to be the reflected image, thus, obviating the defect pointed out above viz., that God (Īśvara) if be were a reflected image, would not be an omniscient being. He proceeds to say that apādyā which is superimposed on Brahman receives the reflection of the latter like a mirror, receives the reflection of a face. The pure consciousness which serves as a prototype (bhedā) is God (Īśvara) and he is not affected by the defects pertaining to the limiting adjunct, apādyā. The reflection of pure consciousness in apādyā, and its product, mind, is the soul. The latter is affected by the defects pertaining to the limiting adjunct. This is, as it should be, for the nature of the limiting adjunct, say mirror, presents the defect in it, like impurity etc., in the face that serves as prototype. This view allows for the fact that God according to say ita is not overpowering by apādyā, his limiting adjunct. God is pure consciousness that serves as prototype and the defects of the limiting adjunct are presented only in the reflected image and not in the prototype. God thus is not overpowering by apādyā. On the other hand He controls it.

The soul on the other hand, is the reflection of pure consciousness in apādyā and its products of mind. Being a reflection it is overpowering by its limiting adjuncts. The two powers of apādyā are fully active in its case. The true nature of Brahman
is veiled from it. It identifies itself with the physical and psychical accompaniments brought about by the \textit{vikarparakāśi} of adhyāt and thereby it experiences transmigration.

The unique feature of \textit{pratibhāsita-vid} is that the reflected image is identical with the prototype and hence it is real. This can be explained on the analogy of the reflected image of face in the mirror. In the face on one's shoulders, because of the defect, viz., proximity of the mirror, the three properties of being present in the mirror, facing one self and differences as prototype and image are superimposed. So what is an image is nothing but the prototype with the above properties superimposed there on. These properties constitute what is known as the state of reflection (\textit{pratibhāsita-vid}), and they are indeterminable. The reflected face however, is the same as the prototype face. When viewed in this light the reflected image viz., the soul is the same as the original viz., Brahman with certain characteristics such as agency, etc., superimposed there on, which constitute \textit{pratibhāsita-vid}, and which are indeterminable.

Among those who advocate \textit{pratibhāsita-vid}, Suresvara although he advocates \textit{pratibhāsita-vid}, does not subscribe to the view that \textit{pratibhāsita-vid} is identical with the original and hence real. He argues that the reflected image and the original cannot be identical on the following grounds: (1) the


defect seems to be present near the mirror, while the reflected face is seen to be present on one's shoulders. The
two therefore cannot be identical; (2) The reflected face is directed towards the original one. If the two are identical, then there is no possibility of one facing the other. (3) In ordinary experience the difference between the prototype and reflected image is clearly noticed.

On these grounds, it must be admitted that the reflected image is different from the original and is indeterminable. Since this view holds that the reflected image to be indeterminable, it is known as ādiṣṭha-vāda. It is almost the same as the pratibhā-vāda. It is different only in the conception and interpretation of the nature of reflection.

According to this view the pure consciousness that is reflected in ādiṣṭha is God and pure consciousness reflected in mind is the soul. God and soul being reflected images are different from the prototype consciousness and are indeterminable either as real or unreal.

It might be said that the indeterminable character of the reflected images, viz., God and the soul precludes the possibility of viewing the former as having the characteristics of being the cause of the universe, and the latter as having the characteristics of being the knower, agent and enjoyer. Sāṅkara gets over this difficulty by pointing out that the reflections of Brahman in ādiṣṭha and in mind are falsely identified.
with the consciousness that serves as a prototype and this accounts for God, the reflection of Brahman in advāt being viewed as the creator of the universe and the soul the reflection of Brahman in mind, being viewed as the knower, agent and enjoyer.

The reflection of pure consciousness in mind is identified with the prototype consciousness is the soul. Since mind is a manifold, the reflection of pure consciousness in it is also manifold and the prototype consciousness falsely identified with the manifold reflections appears to be many. This accounts for the manifold appearances of the souls. God, on the other hand, is the prototype consciousness, identified with the reflection of the consciousness in advāt. Since advāt is one, the reflection of pure consciousness in it is also one. Consequently the prototype consciousness identified with the reflection is one. Hence God is one.

The advaita-vidhi view is advocated by Vasāpati Mīśra in his Brahmā. Vasāpati Mīśra does not favour the theory of reflection of Brahman. While commenting on the adhivākñāya, Vasāpati observes, that there would not be any reflection of Brahman which is free from any form. An object having a form could receive that reflection of that thing, which has form. Brahman being free from any form, cannot have any reflection of sound, smell, taste etc. On this ground he advocates the
theory known as amogha-vina. According to this view, Brahman delimited by avyā is the soul, which serves as a locus and Brahman which is not conditioned by it but which is the content of avyā is God.

In his Shāmati, Vācaspati Mīrā states that Brahman appears as if defined by avyā in the form of avidya. Further, he states, that there is no real difference between the other conditioned by the pot and all pervasive ether. Yet the two appear to be different from each other owing to the limiting adjunct-pot. And, the difference would appear as long as the limiting adjunct is endured. In the same way, Brahman defined by avyā is the soul and there is no real difference between the two. Yet the two appear to be different from each other on account of the limiting adjunct avidya and the difference would continue to appear as long as the avyā exist.

In another section of the Shāmati, Vācaspati says, that the soul which is brahman defined by avidya is associated with mind in its gross form in the states of waking and dream. So it comes within the range of the determinate cognition in the form 'I'. In the state of deep sleep mind provisionally merges in avidya and so there is no determinate perception of the soul in the form 'I'. Since the association of mind gives rise to the determinate perception in the form 'I' in respect of the
soul, it is often said that the mind is the limiting adjunct of the soul.

God, according to Vācaspatī Miśra is Brahman which is the content of anowledge. In his commentary on the Brahma-sūtra, Sāṅkara states that para-amāyā is paramātmanāyā, i.e., it depends on Brahman. Vācaspatī Miśra interprets the word in the sense of its locus but in the sense of its content and Brahman as the content of anowledge is God.

Thus the Upaniṣads, the author of the Brahma-sūtra and Sāṅkara used the analogy of reflection and that of pot-defined ether in order to explain the nature of the soul. The two texts of the ārādhana and vis., "the one self appears to be many in different bodies like the one moon which appears to be many in water (filled up in several vessels)", and "as a pot is moved the pot alone is moved, not the ether enclosed in the pot". So too is the analogy of the soul with the ether, used the analogy of reflection and that of pot defined ether to explain the nature of the soul. The author of the Brahma-sūtra in the aphorism speaks of Brahman as reflection as well as delimitation of Brahman. Sāṅkara also in his commentary on Upaniṣads, ārādhana and Brahma-sūtra, used the analogy of reflection and pot defined ether to explain the nature of the soul.
According to the preceptors who advocate the 'prati-
brahman-vid\'a and aves\'a-sad-\'\=a\', the souls are many, because of
the plurality of the reflecting media, or delimiting adjuncts.

Apart from these two vi\'\=as, there is another view, which
seeks to explain the nature of the soul and God and this view
is known as ska\'-\=i\'\=va-
\=va\'.

According to this view, Brahman which is reflected in
\=a\'\=ya, is the soul and Brahman which serves as a prototype,
is God. As \=a\'\=ya is one, soul is also one. Soul, owing to
\=a\'\=ya which conceals the true nature of Brahman from it, is
the material and the efficient cause of the world. The entire
phenomenal world, souls (\=jiva\'s) and God are the fictitious
creations of \=a\'\=ya which conceals the true nature of Brahman
from the only one soul that exists. The phenomenal world, the
other souls (\=jiva\'s) and God are illusory and similar to the
one seen in dream. Unlike the previous \=vi\'\=as, where these have
empirical reality (\=vy\=avabhr\=ika-sat\=va), this view holds that
these have only apparent reality (\=prati\=bhr\=ika-sat\=va). Accord-
ing to the previous views, the world created by God is perceived
by the soul through innate knowledge. But according
to this view, creation of the world is simultaneous with the
perception of it, by the soul. In other words perception con-
stitutes creation. The world does not exist independent of
being perceived by the soul. This view is therefore known as
\=drati\=asti-
\=\=va\'. The knowledge of Brahman arises to the aspirant
who is the only soul, from the preceptor, the Upaniṣads and from the worship of God although these are only apparently real. And the soul whose ādīvā is annihilated by the rise of the knowledge of Brahmā remains in its self-luminous nature, which is liberation. The point that is of profound importance in this view is that as there exist only one soul, it alone is entitled to liberation. Hence the scriptural passages dealing with the liberation of Śiva and others are intended only to glorify the state of liberation. This view in ādīvāta terminology is known as eka-iva-nām or duṣṭi-artha-vādi. 139

Thus it is clear that Brahmā the only reality appears as God, and the soul. The limiting adjunct of God is ādīvā over which he has absolute control. He is omniscient and ever released. The limiting adjunct of the soul is mind which influences it. The soul, therefore, is ignorant and bound. The difference between God and the soul is thus caused by ādīvā and the limiting adjuncts. And, so long as this difference born out of ādīvā is not removed, God is different from the soul. When the true knowledge of brahmā arises, ādīvā is removed and thereby the characteristics of being the agent, etc., on the part of the soul and the characteristics of being the creator of the universe on the part of God are removed. What remains then is the non-
dual brahmā.
In order to account for the rise of the phenomenal world, the Advaitins formulate a theory of transfiguration, 
\textit{Vivekānanda}. According to it, the cause appears as the effect, without itself undergoing any change whatsoever. In the light of this theory, Brahman appears as the world; and being the substratum of the appearance of the world, it is the transfigurative material cause, \textit{vivartamanārtha rūpa}. The world has no independent existence apart from Brahman.

As regards the rise of the universe, the Nyāya-Vaśqyika school advocates the theory known as \textit{kārya-viśeṣa}. According to this theory, the effect is non-existent in its cause before its creation. This view is wrong on two grounds. (1) not all effects come from the given cause, but only such effects as pre-exist in the cause. Pot comes into existence only from clay and not from threads. This forces the Advaitins into the conclusion that the effect must pre-exist in the cause. (2) if the effect is totally non-existent before it is produced, then it is an absolute nothing, like a square circle and, hence it cannot be produced on any account. Hence the theory that what is created is non-existent in its cause does not stand to reason.

In contrast to the theory of \textit{kārya-viśeṣa}, the Saṅkhya school advocates the theory designated as “the doctrine of pre-
existent effect", sat-kārya-vidā. According to this, the effect exists in a latent form in its cause and causal operation manifests what is already in a latent form into a gross form. This theory is subject to the following criticism.

In order to manifest what is in a latent form into a gross form, some excellence should be added or some defect should be eliminated by causal operation. According to the Sāṅkhya, excellences or defects are existent in the wake of their basic theory of sat-kārya-vidā. What is existent can neither be added nor removed and so causal operation will be futile. Thus the Sāṅkhya theory of sat-kārya-vidā also is not sound. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory sat-kārya-vidā, according to which there is an entirely new creation of an object is also known as āmākhya-vidā. The Sāṅkhya theory of sat-kārya-vidā, according to which a particular cause transforms itself into an effect and transformation is the manifestation of what is already in a latent form is also known as pā-ābhima-vidā.

The defects in the theories of āmākhya-vidā and pā-ābhima-vidā have led the Advaitins to formulate the theory of transformation, Vivarta-vidā. According to this theory, the cause appears as the effect without itself undergoing any change. Brahman without itself undergoing any change appears as the world. The principle that accounts for the illusory presentation of Brahman as the world is aprā which is present in Brahman. This
is known as ब्रह्म-विनाश-विद्या in contrast to the theory of
known as ब्रह्म-नाय-नाश-विद्या, according to which the world is
a transformation of Brahman. The latter theory does not hold
good for the following reasons: If the whole of Brahman is tra-
sformed into the world then Brahman would cease to exist as
such. If, on the other hand, the advaitins point out, that a
part of Brahman is transformed, then it amounts to saying that
Brahman is capable of being divided into parts. This would be a
direct violation of the Upanishadic text which declares that Brahman
is partless. This leads the advaitins to conclude that Brahman
which is partless ever remains the same. It does not undergo any
change, though through aparā it is the ground of the phenomenal
world. The latter is only an appearance, विनाशा of Brahman and
not a transformation, नाशग.  

The difference between the नाशग view and विनाश view is that in the former, the effect is a real production from the
cause and hence quite as real as the cause. In the latter, the
effect belongs to the lower order and hence a mere appearance.
To elucidate the conception of विनाश, the example usually given
is that of a shell that appears as silver. Without undergoing
any change, and remaining as a shell all the time, it appears as
silver. It is modal ignorance present in the consciousness
delimited by shell that brings about the appearance of silver.
And yet the presence of shell is quite necessary for the appearance
of silver. The shell, therefore, is the substratum on which silver illusion arises. It continues to exist even after the disappearance of silver by the true knowledge of the substratum. Since shell is more real than silver, the latter is considered to be the vārtha of shell and shell, being the substratum of the appearance of silver, is said to be the transfigurative cause. \textit{Vivartha}śīdāna śāna of silver.

In the same way, Brahman is the substratum on which the world illusion arises. It is \textit{aridvā} rooted in Brahman that brings about the appearance of the world. Brahman continues to exist even after the disappearance of the world by the knowledge of the true nature of Brahman — its substratum. Since Brahman is more real than the world, the latter is said to be the \textit{vivartha} of Brahman and Brahman being the substratum of the appearance of the world, is said to be the transfigurative cause \textit{vārthaśīdāna karana} of the world. Brahman thus becomes the cause of the world through \textit{aridvā}.

120.

\textit{Sarvajñātman} holds the view that pure consciousness i.e., Brahman becomes the material cause of the world through \textit{aridvā}. The pure consciousness when associated with \textit{aridvā} remains as the proto-type consciousness and is known as God and it is this prototype consciousness that appears as the world and hence is viewed as a transfigurative material cause of the world. According to \textit{Sarvajñātman}, \textit{Sākā-avigā} is merely an accessory to Brahman
in making the latter appear as the universe. The prevalent view in Advaita is that \( \text{Bhūta} \) is the transformative material cause of the world and Brahman, by being the substratum of \( \text{Bhūta} \), is spoken of as the transfigurative material cause of the world. The two views of Anandamahāva, the author of \text{Padārthatattvam-rcaya} and Prakāśānanda, the author of \text{Siddhāntasamgi-tā-yali}, can finally be reduced to the view set forth above. Thus Brahman without undergoing any change whatsoever appears as the world. Brahman alone is real and the universe is illusory.

What kind of causality is recognised in respect of Brahman? Is it efficient causality alone (\text{nimitta kārama-vya}) or material causality (\text{upadānakārama-vya}) or both. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the \text{Brahma-shēna} states that Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause of the world. He observes that Brahman is to be admitted as the efficient as well as material cause, as this view does not conflict with the statements setting forth the thesis and the illustrative instance. The statement putting forth the thesis is the following: “Have you ever asked for that instruction by which that which is not heard becomes heard? that which is not reflected becomes reflected on; that which is not known, known.” Now the knowledge of everything is possible only through the cognition of the material cause, since the effect is not different from the material cause. The illustrative example is “Oh, gentle one just as by the one kind of clay all that is made up of clay becomes known, the media
fication being only a name arising from speech, while the truth is that it is just clay. Similar statements setting forth the thesis and illustrative instances which are to be found in all Vedānta texts are to be viewed as proving that Brahman is the material cause of the world.

Brahman at the same time is viewed as the efficient cause of the world. We have to conclude thus from the circumstance that there is no other guiding principle. Ordinarily material cause such as lumps of clay and pieces of gold are dependent in order to shape themselves into the vessels and ornaments on extraneous efficient causes such as potter and goldsmith; but besides Brahman as material cause there is no other efficient cause on which the material cause could depend; for the scripture says "that prior to creation Brahman was one without a second". Moreover, if there were admitted a guiding principle different from the material cause it would follow that everything cannot be known through one thing and thereby the statements putting forth the thesis as well as illustrative instances would be contradicted. Brahman thus is the efficient cause because there is no other guiding principle and it is the material cause, because there is no other substance from which the world could originate. Brahman thus is the material and the efficient cause of the world. Being the substratum of avidya, Brahman is viewed as the material cause, and being the substratum of desire, will,
and action which are the transformations of \( a\text{-}d\text{y}\text{a} \) and which are required for the creation of the cause of the world it is the efficient cause. Both material and efficient causality are brought about by \( a\text{-}d\text{y}\text{a} \).

Thus it has been said that Brahman itself without undergoing any change whatsoever appears as the world through \( a\text{-}d\text{y}\text{a} \) and the world is illusory.

The Advaitins are asked if Absolute Brahman alone is the truth, then ordinary means of right knowledge, perception etc., would become invalid and the Vedic text embodying injunctions and prohibitions and the Upanishadic texts referring to \( a\text{-}d\text{y}\text{a} \) lose their meaning if the world does not exist. Further if Brahman alone is real, then there is no room for the distinction between a God who rules and the souls and the world ruled by him. Devotion to personal God would be an impossibility. Moreover the passages of the Vedanta also are not real as they belong to the phenomenal world which is not real. Hence they cannot convey the truth of the identity of the individual soul with Brahman.

Sankara in his commentary on \( \text{Brahma-sutra} \) answers this objection. He points out that the entire phenomenal world does not exist for him who has realised his identity with Brahman for him there is no distinction of God - the ruler and the
individual soul and the world - the ruled. The author of the *Brahma-Sūtra* advocates the *varta-vāda* i.e., the theory that the world is an appearance of Brahman and therefore not real from the standpoint of the liberated soul. But so long as the knowledge of Brahman has not risen, the entire complex of phenomenal existence is taken as truth even as the phantoms of a dream are taken as true until the sleeper awakes. It is from this standpoint that the author of the *Brahma-Sūtra* holds the *sar nānāvāda* i.e., the theory that the world is a transformation of Brahman. The world is treated to be real, God is considered to be omniscient and omnipotent, and the soul is taken to be different from God. This theory therefore preserves empirical activity which requires the difference in the form of means of knowledge, objects of knowledge, the act of knowing, etc. The world is treated as real and the injunctive and prohibitive Vedic texts and also the Vedānta texts dealing with the nature and means of release are fully significant. But these are all real until the rise of the knowledge of Brahman.

As regards the contention that the Vedāntic texts are not real as they belong to the phenomenal world which is not real, and hence they cannot convey the truth of identity of the individual soul with Brahman, the Advaitins suggest that in order that a factor may be practically efficient what is necessary is that the object and practical efficiency in regard to
it must belong to the same level of reality. Dream-water is apparently real. Thus both the objects and the practical efficiency in respect of them belong to the same level of reality viz., apparent reality. In the same way, both the objects of the waking states and their practical efficiency belong to the same level of reality viz., empirical reality. Thus the Vedantic texts which are empirically real could give rise to the knowledge of the identity of the individual soul with Brahma, the knowledge which by being a mental state is also empirically real.
Brahman the transcendental entity is existence, consciousness, bliss and absolute and is identical with Atman - the true nature of the individual soul. Brahman is absolute in the sense that it is free from objectivity and duality. And its absolute nature would hold good only if the world which is presented in the cognition is a false appearance. Advaitins maintain that the world is nityā or indeterminable, either as real (sat) or as unreal (asat), on the analogy of the silver that appears in a piece of shell. The world is nityā because it is presented in cognition (pratyakṣa) like silver that appears in a shell.

An analysis of the true nature of silver that appears in a shell shows that silver is nityā or indeterminable. It cannot be real on the ground that it is sublated by the cognition, "this is shell and not silver". It cannot be unreal, that is an absolute nothing, for it is perceived. An absolute nothing like a square circle will never be perceived. It cannot be real and unreal at once for that is discrepant notion. Thus, as silver cannot be characterised either as real or as unreal, or as real and unreal at once, it is termed nityā. Another term synonymous with this is anirvacanā. Since silver appears in a shell, and since appearance requires material cause, the material cause of the appearance of silver must be referred to - the material cause must be of the same
order as the object silver. It cannot therefore be either real but should be \textit{mithrā} like silver itself and that cause is modal ignorance present in the consciousness (\textit{gīt}) delimited by substratum - shell that is misapprehended.

An exactly similar consideration applied to the world. The latter is not real, for it is said to be annihilated by the direct knowledge of Brahman. It is not unreal, for it is presented in cognition. It cannot be real and unreal at once, for it is a self-discrepant notion. Hence it is indeterminable either as real or unreal. But it does appear and there must be a cause for its appearance, and that cause must necessarily be of the same order as the effect, viz., the universe. That cause is admitted to be \textit{kārī} which is also indeterminable either as real or as unreal. The \textit{āu-vedic passage} "The cause of the world is neither an absolute nothing nor a real entity", states that cause of the world is something that is neither real nor unreal. This is exactly what is meant when it is said that the cause of the world is indeterminable either as real or as unreal.

\textit{Kārī} has a two-fold power of consolvent and projection. The former is known as \textit{ārama-śakti} and the later \textit{vikṣema-śakti}. \textit{Ārama-śakti} is that power which gives rise to usages such as Brahman does not exist or Brahman is not manifest. \textit{Vikṣema-śakti} is that power which give rise to the erroneous
notion such as I am an agent, enjoyer etc., and also to the appearance of the world. The Upanishadic texts "know Maya to be pridal cause of the world and the substratum of Maya", states Maya to be a material cause of the world. The word nāmāvārah in the text means unconditioned reality i.e., Brahman. The Ṛg-Vedic passages "Ishvar (Brahman-Ātman) assumes several forms through śūrya speaks of śūrya as an entity in making Brahman the cause of the world. Further, the Upanishadic text the sages absorbed in meditation discovered a creative power which is present in Brahman and which consists of the three strands of satya, kriya and karma", introduces the principle of Maya which account for the appearance of Brahman in the form of the world.

śāṅkara uses the two terms Maya and avidyā as synonyms. In his commentary on Brahman Śūtra, he says the root cause of the world is of the form of avidyā. It is designated by the word avyakta. It is great sleep and in it the souls not aware of the identity with brahman, rest. In his commentary on the Viṣṇu-kārikā, śāṅkara says: "The beginningless Maya is in the nature of avidyā." These two passages clearly show that śāṅkara treats Maya and avidyā to be identical.
The author of the Vivāraṇa makes a reference to the view of some Advaitins who make a distinction between māyā and avidyā on the ground that māyā is that which does not delude its abode and conforms to the desire of the agent, while avidyā is that which deludes its abode and does not conform to the desire of the agent.

The distinction between māyā and avidyā made on the above basis cannot be held to be valid. If such a distinction is maintained, then māyā must be located in Iśvara (God) and avidyā is to be located upon the soul. In the sequel we shall explain that the soul can never be the locus of māyā and this explains that the distinction between māyā and avidyā by locating avidyā in the soul is not valid.

The author of Vivāraṇa however explains that the above distinction between māyā and avidyā could be made by admitting the two as two aspects of one original source which is called prakṛti. He argues that prakṛti consists of two powers āvāraṇa and viṣkṣema. It is operative in its viṣkṣema-phase, in respect of God, and its āvāraṇa-phase in respect of the soul. This means that in respect of the soul, the prakṛti conceals its identity with the suprema self. Hence it is said that the āvāraṇa-phase or prakṛti is active in the case of the soul. The āvāraṇa-phase is known as avidyā. Since it is active in respect of the soul, it is usually said that soul has avidyā
as its limiting adjunct. In the case of God the Ānava-phase is not operative, for the truth of non-duality is never concealed from God. In his case, the Vksapa-phase is active. For, God perceives the world of duality presented by the Vksapa-phase of prakṛti. This Vksapa-phase is known as māyā. Since it is active in respect of God, God is spoken of as having māyā, as His limiting adjuncts. Thus māyā and māyā-dvā are not two distinct entities. But they are two phases of one prakṛti. Therefore Sāṅkara uses the words māyā and māyā-dvā rather interchangeably.

Pādmapāda and others in his line of thinking admit that māyā-dvā is one. The admission raises one question viz., what is the material cause of the illusory appearance of shell as silver etc. It cannot be said that since māyā-dvā could be removed, only by the direct knowledge of Brahma, the appearance of shell-silver would continue till that time, because this is contrary to the experience of the removal of silver by the direct experience of the true nature of its substratum viz., the shell. Hence it is admitted that māyā-dvā has seeming derivatives known as Amrthāhās, a mental ignorance and these serve as a material cause the illusory appearance of shell-silver. They are present in the consciousness delimited by shell, etc., and they are removed by the direct experience of shell, etc.

This theory is not identical with the theory of Vacaspati Mīśra who holds that there is plurality of māyā-dvā. According to
Vāsaspati Miśra, a-dvā the primal nescience is manifold, but according to the followers of Padmapāda, primal nescience is one, while its seeming derivatives known as avastā-bhūmān are manifold.

The notion of a-dvā would be complete only if we refer to its locus and content. All preceptors of Advaita agree on this that the content of avidyā is Brahman-ātman, which is pure consciousness. It is the very nature of a-dvā to conceal an object and concealment is possible only with reference to a self-luminous entity, which is Brahman. Everything else is itself insentient and needs no external cause for being obscured. Hence Brahman alone can be veiled and thus it is the content of a-dvā.

As regards the locus of a-dvā, Advaitic writers differ. The followers of the Viśisṭatattva school are of the opinion that Brahman as pure consciousness is the locus of avidyā, but the followers of the Bhāratī tradition are of the view that it is only the soul that is the locus of a-dvā. Their view is based upon the fact that the locus of a-dvā should be one from which the true nature of Brahman is veiled. The true nature of Brahman is veiled from the soul who has the experience that Brahman is not manifest to him. Hence the soul alone is the locus of a-dvā.
The view that the soul as the locus of avidvā is not favoured by the followers of Īśvarasūra tradition and also by those of the Śuresvāra tradition. According to them if the soul were to be the locus of avidvā, then there should not be the manifestation of avidvā in the absence of the manifestation of soul which is considered to be the substratum of avidvā. In the state of deep sleep, however, there is an experience of avidvā but since mind which is the limiting adjunct of soul is provisionally merged in avidvā in the state of deep sleep, the notion of the soul is absent then. There is thus the direct experience of avidvā even in the absence of the notion of the soul. This suggests that something other than the soul must be admitted to be the locus of avidvā. What we have in the state of deep sleep is the ākāśa element associated with avidvā and not the soul as such. And it is this ākāśa element which is pure consciousness, that must be the locus of avidvā. Thus on the basis of the experience of avidvā in deep sleep state in the absence of the notion of the soul then, the followers of Śuresvāra and Vivaranā argue that it is not the soul, but pure consciousness that is the locus of avidvā. As we have already stated pure-consciousness itself is the content of avidvā.

Avidvā is removed by the knowledge of the true nature of its content viz., Brahmāntaran. When we speak of knowledge of Brahmā we must make a distinction between Brahmā as knowledge
and knowledge of Brahman. The latter is a mental state or a
modification of the mind which arises from the major texts of
the Upaniṣads, according to Vīvarāṇa tradition, or mind accord-
ing to Vīvarāṇa tradition, or mind according to the Śiṅga
tradition. Brahman as knowledge is the true nature of Brahman
which is absolute consciousness, absolute bliss, etc., while
knowledge is subject to destruction.

Brahman as knowledge is not opposed to avināś or on the
other hand it is its witness. But knowledge of Brahman which is
a mental state is opposed to avināś. In the mental state arising
from the major or mind, Brahman which is knowledge is reflected.
Thus the mental state inspired by the reflection of Brahman is
known as the knowledge of Brahman and it is opposed to avināś.

To the question as to how Brahman which is of the nature of know-
ledge is the witness of avināś and the reflection of Brahman in
the mental state arising from the major text of the mind is the
annihilating factor of avināś, it is answered by citing the
illustrative example of the rays of the sun which normally illu-
mines like cotton, etc. but which burned the very same objects
when passed through a lens.

When the knowledge of the self arises, the īśvara-vakti
of avināś is removed and the vīknāśakti of avidyā continues
to exist thus allowing room for the state of jñāna-sakti in the
systems of advaita. This we shall explain in the sequel.

Thus the mental state inspired by Brahman which removes avidyā is not the content of avidyā; and Brahman which is the content of the avidyā is not the annihilating factor of avidyā. On the other hand, it is its witness. When it is said that avidyā is removed by the knowledge of the self, the question arises: as to what exactly is the nature of the removal of avidyā. The question would naturally arise, for if the removal of avidyā were real, then there would be the removal of avidyā as a real entity from Brahman. Thus the contention of advaita that Brahman is non-dual, would be lost. If, on the other hand, it were held that the removal of avidyā is anirvānuma, then in order that it may be viewed as anirvānuma, it would require the existence of avidyā for as avidyā no object can be considered to be indeterminable in nature. To hold that the removal of avidyā is anirvānuma, is to admit the existence of avidyā, which would be a contradiction. Since avidyā-nivṛtti, is achieved by the knowledge of Brahman, it cannot be an absolute thing; for, an absolute-nothing like square circle is never achieved by any factor. Hence the necessity to discuss the exact nature of the removal of avidyā.

Sri Sankara in his comment, Mahatmya - is of the view that the removal of avidyā is identical with Brahman. It is because the removal of a superimposed entity is but its being removed to its substratum. The illusory snake that appears in a rope when it is sublated by cognition - ‘this is a rope only’
removal of avidyā which is superimposed upon Brahman is reduced to a substratum, viz., Brahman.

One question may suggest itself as regards the conclusion arrived at in the earlier paragraph. If the removal of avidyā were identical with Brahman, then like Brahman it would be ever existent and no attempt need be made to achieve that through the knowledge of the self. The answer to this question lies in the definition of sādhyā, i.e., a thing to be achieved. Y is considered to be the effect of X, if it exist when X exist and if it does not exist when X does not exist. When viewed in this light the removal of avidyā exist, when the knowledge of Brahman exists and it does not exist, when the knowledge of Brahman does not exist. Therefore, the removal of avidyā is considered to be the effect of the knowledge of Brahman although it is identical with Brahman.

The second view is that avidyā nivṛtti is different from Brahman and yet it is not apiyāvāpita but of a fifth kind. This position is explained thus: avidyā nivṛtti, and cannot be considered to be eternal, by being apart from Brahman; for there would be another eternal entity viz., avidyā nivṛtti, and this would be against the spirit of Advaita that Brahman is the reality. It cannot be an absolute nothing, for an absolute-nothing like square circle cannot be achieved by
the knowledge of Brahman and so it is not an absolute-nothing. Nor can avidyā nivṛtti be considered to be real and an absolute-nothing at once, for this position violates the law of contradiction. It cannot be considered to be anirvacaniya, or indeterminable for an entity in order to be indeterminable requires the existence of avidyā. If avidyā nivṛtti were indeterminable, then it should be related to avidyā which amounts to saying that avidyā nivṛtti and avidyā must co-exist. And this is impossible. Hence, avidyā nivṛtti cannot be viewed as indeterminable too. Thus, since avidyā nivṛtti cannot be real or an absolute-nothing or real and absolute-nothing at once or indeterminable it must be of a fifth kind, different from the four alternatives given above. This view is usually attributed to Viśuṭṭhātan, the author of the Lalita-singha. Appayya Śikṣṭa however attributes this view to Aṇḍadaboda.

This view however is wrong for, avidyā nivṛtti must be directly experienced and direct experience means relation to the non-dual self and that which is related to non-dual self should necessarily be indeterminable in nature. For, the self being non-dual, there is no other real entity apart from it and any other entity which exists, should necessarily be non-real or indeterminable. Thus avidyā nivṛtti, if it is different from Brahman, should be indeterminable. To say that it is different from Brahman and yet it is not anirvacaniya is a contradiction
in terms.

There is another view which holds that a-dvē-mivrit is a positive change of a-dvē, and it is only momentary and so there arises no question of its being either identical with Brahman or different from Brahman. Those who favour this view argue thus: with reference to a pot that is being created, there is a verbal usage that pot is originated (Gatāh utpadāta). The verbal termination is in utpadāta is a present tense suffix, with reference to a pot that is already being created and with reference to one going to be created there are respectively the verbal usages pot was created (Gatāh utmadh) and pot will be created (Gatāh utmūtara) involving past tense and future tense suffixes. Therefore it must be held that origination is only momentary as the present tense suffix is used only with reference to that. In the same way with reference to the pot, that is being destroyed and with reference to one that has already been destroyed and in respect of one that will be destroyed later, there are respectively, verbal usages, viz.,

Maḥ (being removed) niyātah (already removed), ——e aṁa (will be removed) involving respectively the present tense past tense and future tense suffixes. Thus the present tense suffix would be used with reference to destruction only when the pot is being destroyed, it must be understood that destruction is only momentary and hence there is no need for the discussion as to whether it is identical with the Brahman or different.
To sum up, ādīrī is the transformative material cause of the world. It is identical with rājā. It has seeming diversifications known as modal ignorance. It consists of two powers, the power of concealing and the power of projection. Brahman-ātman, the pure consciousness is its locus and content. It is reached by the knowledge of Brahman which is only a mental state or the modification of mind inspired by the reflection of Brahman in it.
It is clear from the foregoing discussion that in Brahma which is non-dual consciousness and bliss, three factors are superimposed viz., the characteristic of being a prototype, i.e., the form of Isvara (śivamāna), the characteristic of being an agent, enjoyer etc., the form of jīva (jīva) and the world.

Bondage consists in being the substratum of the above three factors owing to avidyā. When the latter which is the cause is removed, the above three factors which are its effects will be removed. Brahma then, would remain free from avadyā and the above three factors which constitute bondage and would manifest in its true nature of non-dual consciousness and bliss. And, this is liberation. Liberation is thus identical with Brahma and so it is ever-existent and eternal. Yet in order that there may be a manifestation of Brahma in its true nature which is liberation, the removal of avidyā is necessary. Since the latter is effected by the knowledge of Brahma, liberation is also spoken of by courtesy as being attained. Attainment of liberation thus is only figurative.

Removal of avidyā thus has a vital bearing on the attainment of liberation. While discussing the annihilating factor of avidyā, it is said that avidyā could be removed only by the
knowledge of Brahman. The latter is viewed either as the mental state inspired by the reflection of Brahman in it or as Brahman reflected in the mental state. Knowledge of Brahman is, therefore, the sole means of liberation.

According to Advañine, Karma is not a means to liberation. Sankara in his commentary on the Brahma-sûtra and Suresi in his cañkara-siddhi classify the fruits of Karma into four (1) effected (utpūnya), (2) obtained (ārya), (3) ceremonially purified (sañskārya), (4) modified (vikārya). If it is admitted that liberation identical with Brahman is the fruit of Karma, then Brahman must be admitted to be either effected or obtained, either ceremonially purified or modified. None of these holds good in the case of Brahman which is identical with liberation.

According to them it cannot be regarded as effected or modified. They say that if these positions are admitted, then the non-permanence of Maya would certainly follows. Thus in the ordinary experience one finds sour milk and the like which are the modifications, and jams and the like which are effects, to be non-eternal.

Then again, it is said that liberation which is the natural condition of the soul, be regarded as a thing to be obtained; for being one's self, it is not something to be attained. Even if it is held to be different from one's self,
still it would not be somthing to be attained, for, as it is
all pervasive like ethereal space, it must be understood to
be ever present to everyone in its essential nature.

Her can liberation identical with the self be regarded
as the state of the soul purified and therefore as depending
on activity, for, purification of an object is the result of
addition of some excellence to, or removal of some blashm from
that object. It cannot happen in the case of liberation through
addition of excellence; for, liberation being the natural state
of the soul needs nothing to be added to make it more perfect.
And it cannot be happened through removal of some blashm, for
the soul is naturally pure.

Thus, it follows that liberation which is identical with
the self cannot be brought about directly by karma and it is
wrong to say that is karma is a direct means to liberation.

According to advaitins, karma cannot be ignored; for
ignoring that would render the ritualistic section of the Veda
purposedless. So they discard karma as a direct means to liberation for the reasons stated above. But they do admit that it is
indispensable as a means of preparing the ground for attaining
the direct experience of Brahman which is the sole means of
liberation. In other words, karma helps the rise of the direct
experience of Brahman only indirectly and not directly and
finally. Advaïtic writers like Śrīvaṁśa, Prakāśātman and others have discussed in great detail the relation of to

They hold the theory that kárma when performed without any desire for its fruit is distantly conducive to the rise of the knowledge of Brahmān. They determine this sort of relation of kárma to jñāna on the authority of the Upaniṣadic texts: "the Brahmans seek to realise Brahmān through the study of the Vedā, through sacrifices, through gifts, through austerity and fasting", and on the authority of the Gītā text 150 "perform kárma as an offering to God". These texts prescribe the performance of kárma with reference to the knowledge of the self.

Advaïtins hold that performance of kárma serves either of the following purposes.

(1) It gives rise to merit which, by removing the sin present in the mind of the aspirant, generates therein the desire to know the self (vivid sā), and causes to exist thereafter.

(2) It gives rise to merit which, by removing the sin present in the mind of the aspirant, generates therein the desire to know Brahmān and ensure till there arises the knowledge
of Brahma.

Of these two views, the former is known as
and it is advocated by Suresvara, Sarvajhatman and Vasaspati
Mitra, while the latter is known as yedamaksha and it is
advocated by Prakasatman.

According to Suresvara, Sarvajhatman and Vasaspati
Mitra, in the scriptural texts referred to above, it is not
the direct knowledge of self, but merely the desire for the
same i.e., said to result from the study of the Vedas, the
performance of rituals, etc. The Sanskrit term for the
"desire to know" in the text is "vividigant". This consists
of the root "vitra" and the desiderative suffix "sand" and it conveys
that one's karma has its object the desire to have knowledge
of the self which is the sense of the desiderative suffix. It
is a general rule that the sense of the suffix is primary to
that of the root. Here one's karma is therefore employed with
reference to the desire for the knowledge of the self which is
the sense of the suffix and not with reference to the direct
knowledge of the self which is the sense of the root.

Prakasatman, on the other hand, holds that the performance
of karma is responsible for giving rise to the knowledge of
self itself. He holds that the rule that the sense of suffix
is primary to that of the root is a general one. It is
superseded by the special rule that when the two words signifi-
cative of desire and what is desired are placed side by side
it is only the sense of what is desired that is primary to the
sense of desire. This special rule we arrive at by considering
the import of the well-known Vedic text - "One who desires
heaven should perform (yajña) the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice".
Here the potential suffix affix to the root "yaj" signifies
that the sacrifice is a means to a desired end. When there
arises the desire to know about the desired end it is only
heaven that is related to the sacrifice as its fruit or the
desired end. Here it is to be noted that heaven, as it is not
the sense of suffix, is not primary but it is related to the
sacrifice as its fruit. Moreover in worldly usages also where
the desiderative suffix is involved, it is only to the objective
of desire that the sense of the other word that is juxtaposed
is related. For example, in the usages such as "he desires to
go on horse" and the like, the sense vis., horse is understood
to relate only to the object of desire, that is, going and not
to desire itself. In the same way the Upaniṣadic text "the
Brahmins seek to realize", etc., relates the performance of
's yajña to the direct knowledge of Brahman which is the
object of desire and not to desire itself as Suresvāma,
Sarvājñātman and Vaiśnava Miśra hold.
As regards this view of Prakāśātman, the following objection suggests itself. The view of Prakāśātman that the performance of karma is responsible for giving rise to the knowledge of the self is in direct conflict with the view that the abandonment of one’s karma is the means of attaining the knowledge of brahman. This objection is however answered by the followers of Prakāśātman that one must perform one’s karma till there arises in the mind of the aspirant the desire to know self (vivididā) and is to be given up only after that state is attained.

It might be said that there is barely any difference between the views of Prakāśātman on the one hand and Suresvara, Sarvajñātman and Vaiṣṇava Miśra on the other, as according to both the views, performance of one’s karma must be given up, after there arises the desire to know the self. There is however, one important difference which distinguishes the two views from each other. According to Prakāśātman, performance of one’s own karma gives rise to direct knowledge of the self through the desire to know the self and hence in this theory the error generated by the performance of one’s karma persists till the knowledge arises, whereas according to Suresvara and others the error generated through the performance of one’s karma disappears with the mere emergence of the desire to know the self. Hence according to both the views, one’s
should be pursued till there arises the desire to know the self and after that one's karma must be given up.

The distinction, therefore, between the views of Prakāśā-stman, on the one hand, and Suresvara, on the other is this: according to Prakāśā-stman the merit that arises from the performance of one's karma endures till there arises the knowledge of Brahman; according to Suresvara and others such a merit endures till there arises the desire to know the self.157

Karma thus occupies a prominent place in the scheme of practical discipline of Advaita, as it is distinctly conducive to the rise of the knowledge of the self bringing about purity of mind without which knowledge of self cannot arise. This method of performing karma as an offering to God is known as

Karma-yoga gives rise to the purity of heart and through that to the four qualities which are indispensable to the aspirant who enters upon the Vedantic study. These qualities are as follows.

(1) the knowledge of distinction between what constitutes reality and what does not (sāttva-āsattva-patya-prakāśa),

(2) the renunciation of desire for the enjoyment of fruits of one's actions in the shape of desirable object in this
and in the other world (the samsāra-sṛthā-dhala-dhara-rīsā).

(3) The acquisition of the means beginning with the control of mind, control of external senses etc., (ātm-āśā-śāy-ana-samāti),

(4) desire for final release (manasūtva).

The third quality comprises of the following: (1) āśa - control of mind. (2) ārtha - control of external senses.
(3) ārūpya - abstention from works. (4) titiṅga - endurance of opposites like cold and heat etc. (5) anāhāra power of concentration (6) śraddhā - faith in the teachings of the Upaniṣads as imparted by the preceptors.

Ārūpya is taken by Pāṇḍarāś to mean sannyāsa or abstention from works as the interprets the word sannyāsa to mean a sannyāsa who is freed from all worldly desires. Prakāśātman interprets the word to mean abandonment of one’s karma following Śaṅkara. Vācaspati Miśra however interprets the word to mean turning away from objects.

Karma sannyāsa or abandonment of one’s karma along with other qualities like nitya-anāmitya-yoha, etc., must be pursued by the aspirant till there arises the knowledge of self. Karma sannyāsa is one of the proximate means and nityā-etc. constitute the other group of the
proximate means. The Pudārāvanaka text prescribes these as the means to the knowledge of the self.

Śravaṇa, Maṇana and Nididhyāsana constitute the other group of proximate means and they are set forth in the Upaniṣadic text. "It is fit to be realised; for that one must pursue Vedantic study, reflection and meditation." śravaṇa is enquiry into the Upaniṣadic text under a competent preceptor. It is a mental activity leading to the determination of the import of the Upaniṣadic text. Maṇana is mental activity in the form of arguing within oneself after knowing definitely the Upaniṣadic teaching, with a view to convince oneself that that teaching alone is true. Nididhyāsana is a mental operation helpful to turn away the mind from external objects in order to maintain the continuity of knowledge in the form "I am Brahmā", that has arisen from śravaṇa and maṇana. śravaṇa, maṇana and nididhyāsana are mental activities and this is the view of Prakāśāntara.

Vācasyāti Miśra on the other hand defines and nididhyāsana as of the form of knowledge. śravaṇa means mediate knowledge of Brahmā arising from the study of the Upaniṣads, maṇana means the inferential knowledge that the import of the Upaniṣads is true, and, nididhyāsana is only uninterpreted knowledge in the form "I am Brahmā" that has arisen from śravaṇa and maṇana. In order to maintain the continuity of knowledge in
the form "I am Brahman", one must strive hard to turn one's mind away from the external objects. Thus according to Vacaspati Miśra śravaṇa, seva and nididhyāsana are of the form of knowledge.

Sannyāsana according to some preceptors gives rise to either the suprasensible merit without which knowledge of self cannot arise or it gives rise to the visible result of freedom from distraction and adequate leisure, which facilitates the continual pursuance of śravaṇa etc., that lead ultimately to the knowledge of the self.

The possession of nitya-nāitya-vāyu-riva etc., remove the latent impressions that arise out of enjoyment of object of objects. śravaṇa removes the false notion that the Upaniṣads do not teach the non-dual Brahman. This false notion is termed brahvaś-asamśedvac. Even after the removal of this notion there may linger doubt in the mind of an aspirant whether the Upaniṣadic teaching is true or not. This is termed śravaṇa-asamśedvac and mana removes this. Now although the aspirant is quite convinced that his true nature is only Brahman, yet he is not able to have an immediate experience in the form, "I am Brahman". It is the contrary notions in the form, I am agent, enjoyer etc., that prevent him from having such an immediate experience. This false notion is known as
we shall now deal with the instrumental cause of the knowledge of the self. According to Vācaspati Miśra the texts of the Upaniṣads cannot convey precisely the kind of knowledge required for the removal of āvāra. Being in the form of words, they must necessarily partake of the character of all verbal testimony and signify that is unrelated and mediate. But self in truth is neither, so that the knowledge imparted by the Upaniṣads has to be transmitted into one of the required kind before the removal of āvāra is possible. Thus the Upaniṣadic knowledge which is mediate has to be followed up by a course of bhāvanā or meditative discipline, which is only a function of ātman. Thus according to Vācaspati Miśra the direct knowledge of Brahmān arises from mind.

According to Prakāśātman, the question whether verbal statement refers to the absolute or related, a mediate or immediate depends entirely on the āvāra. Because Brahmān the unrelated absolute is one with an immediate self, the major texts of the Upaniṣads can well be means of imparting an immediate knowledge of it just as it is.

Thus in the case of one whose mind is free from all impediments by the pursuit of proximate means mentioned above, the direct knowledge of self arises from mind according to
Vācaspati Miśra and from the major texts of the Upaniṣads according to Prakāśatman. The method of mind-control through concentration and meditation, known as Rāja-Yoga, is an auxiliary discipline to the path of knowledge. In the Upaniṣads and the Bhārata-gītā, the yoga technique of controlling the mind is taught. The most important concept of yoga is that of citta (mind). Citta is all-pervading and is called the kāya-citta (the causal mind). When it is associated with a body it contracts and is called kāya-citta (the effect-mind). The object of yoga is to make the citta assume its original, pure unadulterated status, and this releases the puruṣa (soul) from its travel.

It is through the functioning of the citta that the puruṣa acts, enjoys and suffers. The functioning produces latent tendencies which, in turn, give rise to other tendencies; and thus the cycle of prajñā revolves. The individual ego is restless and knows no peace because of the intense desire and passions. Hence it is subject to the five afflictions of ātman, viz., māra (erroneous identification of the self with the mind, body etc. (2) abhava (attachment), (3) abhijna (aversion) and abhin vṛti (the instinctive clinging of life and dread of death). In order to free the self from the stranglehold of prakṛti (primal nature), the modifications of the mind must be quelled. The modifications are pravṛti (valid knowledge), prabhava.
Vācaspati Misra and from the major texts of the Upaniṣads according to Brāhmaṇa. The method of mind-control through concentration and meditation, known as ājīva-yoga, is an auxiliary discipline to the path of knowledge. In the Upaniṣads and the Bhāṣāyana-Sūtra, the yoga technique of controlling the mind is taught. The most important concept of yoga is that of citta (mind). Citta is all-pervading and is called the ātman-citta (the causal mind) when it is associated with a body it contracts and is called kārma-citta (the effect-mind). The object of yoga is to make the citta assume its original, pure unmodified status, and this releases the pāyuna (soul) from its travel.

It is through the functioning of the citta that the puruṣa acts, enjoys and suffers. The functionings produce also latent tendencies which, in turn, give rise to other tendencies and thus the cycle of saṃsāra revolves. The individual age is restless and knows no peace because of the intense desire and passions. Hence it is subject to the five afflictions of avidyā, viz., abhinavā (erroneous identification of the self with the mind, body etc. (2) dharma (attachment), (3) ārjava (aversion) and abhināma (the instinctive clinging of life and dread of death). In order to free from the self from the strangulation of nākṣetra (primal nature), the modifications of the mind must be quelled. The modifications are pāpa (sinful knowledge), pāpa.
(false knowledge), vīkṣaṇa (verbal knowledge), māna (sleep and sleep) and saṃjñā (memory). These must be abolished by removing the affliction.

This can be removed only through continued endeavour (abhyāsa) and dispassion (vairāgya). It is only by long practice that a person acquires the habit of detachment which will impart to him the discriminative knowledge of the self and the not-self. This is known as the jñāna-yoga. The eight steps are known as yama (abstentions), nīyama (observances), āsana (posture), dhyāna (control of breath), prānāyāma (withdrawal of sense from their objects), dāyāna (fixed attention), dhāraṇā (meditation) and samādhi (concentration. Thus a perfectly controlled and concentrated mind is essential for the inquiry into the nature of brahman.

"Meditation, however, should be distinguished from inquiry which is the path of knowledge", says Dr T.K.R. Mahadevan. "Meditation is a mental act which is different from knowledge. It is prescribed for those who are not fit for the path of knowledge. It asserts the current of the mind which courses its way to object of sense, and causes it to contemplate brahman. Meditation on brahman may be compared to a delusion that becomes fruitful. A delusion which yields a fruitful result is called māyā-dhiṣṭi-bhūma. Viśva-dhiṣṭi-bhūma is opposite, in a delusion which does not lead to any fruitful consequence. Both
the light of a lamp and the light of a gem may be mistaken for a gem. Both are cases of delusion. But the man who mistakes the lamplight for a gem approaches it, gains nothing, whereas the man who mistakes the light of a gem for a gem itself gets the gem. Meditation on Brahman is like the latter. There is meditation on Brahman with attributes (saññā), there is also meditation on Brahman, without attributes, without qualifications (nāma). It is the same reality as endowed with attributes (saññā), that is called God when viewed in relation to the empirical world and the empirical soul"...

Meditation on Brahman with attributes is known as nāma. Here the object of being devoted to God is to gain His grace, and to achieve one-pointedness of mind. Whereas meditation on Brahman without attributes is known as nāma-nāma. It usually takes the form of meditation on the sacred syllable Om, which is known as pranava. Gaṇeśa, in his verse-commentary on Māndukya Upaniṣad, explains it. Pranava is the name given to the sound "Om". It is also called the mystic syllable "Om", as it is the prop for meditation. The Katha Upaniṣad says, "The word (or goal) which all the Vedas declare, that which all penances proclaim, and desiring which people lead an austerer life, that word (or goal) I tell thee in brief, It is Om." The Māndukya Upaniṣad compares the "pranava"
to the bow, the target is to be unerringly hit; thus is union with Brahma attained. The fifth question of the "Praśānḍhānīsad relates to the meditation on Īśvara, as a means to the realisation of the higher and lower Brahma i.e., the unconditioned Brahma and Brahma as conditioned. It is stated there that by means of Oṃ kāra, the wise one arrives at the Highest, which is quiescent and free from decay, death, and fear.

Meditation of Īśāna, is defined by Śaṅkara thus: "the process of taking hold of some stay or āśāpāṇa, established as such in the sacred texts, and directing a continuous flow of even access of the mind towards it, without the intervention of any other cognition contrary to it, is Īśāna." There must be some point of attention for concentration. This is the Āśāpāṇa (support). It is of service in steadying the thought-current and making it flow in one direction. The pratikṣa or images are useful in this way. The centrifugal tendency of the mind is arrested and it becomes unflinching and one-pointed like the flame of the lamp kept in a still place. The images which are miscalled idols have a place in spiritual discipline, because they help to turn the mind of the aspirant Godward.

The direct knowledge of the self is directly opposed to avidyā and hence it dispels avidyā by its mere rise. The soul is thus freed from the bonds of saṃsāra. The Upaniṣadic
texts are explicit in this that the direct knowledge of self enables one to attain freedom from the bonds of samsāra here and now.

Then there arises the question whether the aspirant who has attained the direct knowledge of self is disassociated from his physical and psychical accompaniment at once or he continues to live in the body until his past deeds which have started yielding the fruit in the form of the present body are exhausted. If the latter position is held then such a one is known as jīvan-sūkta or the one who is liberated and yet alive, and this state is known as jīvan-sūkti.

The prerogative of a jīvan-sūkta is to keep alive the Advaita tradition for the benefit of posterity. The Upanishadī text "one who has a teacher directly experiences the self" and the Bhāṣya-ādi text "the preceptors who have the direct experience of self impart the knowledge of self" are clear in stating that a preceptor is necessary in order to preserve and propagate the Advaita-tradition. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka text cited above is more specific in stating that the preceptor must be a realised soul. The truth of Brahman cannot be conveyed by one who has not realised that truth or by one who has realised that truth but is disembodied. It follows from this that he who has the direct experience of self and is disembodied at the same time could impart the knowledge of self.
to others - the bound souls; such a one is known as \textit{Ātman-mukta}. The Upaniṣadic text "One who has got the direct knowledge of self has to wait to be Brahma-Ātman till the final fall of one's body and after the form of the body, one remains as Brahma-Ātman", expressly states the concept of \textit{Ātman-mukti}.

In the case of one who has attained the direct knowledge of self, the merits and demerits accumulated in the immeasurable previous births and also in this life before the rise of the direct knowledge of the self are annihilated. The Upaniṣadic text "just as the upper part of a reed thrown into the fire is completely burnt so also all his sins are burnt away" and the Upaniṣadic text "He transcends both merits and demerits" states that merits and demerits accumulated in the past life and also prior to the rise of the knowledge of the self in this life are annihilated by the knowledge of self. Further there is no possibility of the rise of merit or demerit in future to the knower of Brahma; for, merit and demerit would arise by performing the prescribed and interdicted respectively with attachment in the form "I am the agent of this action", but the one who has the direct experience of self has no idea of any agency whatsoever with regard to any action that may occur in future. Hence there is no possibility of the rise of any merit or demerit in future in his case. It is with this in view that the text of the Čāndogya Upaniṣad passage "As water does not
stick to a lotus leaf, even so sin does not cling to one who has realised Brahman, states that a future sin that might be expected to arise by performance of activity does not arise in the case of one who has realised Brahman. The word 'sin' in the Upanishadic text must be taken to convey the sense of merit also; for, the result of merit like that of a sin is inferior to the fruit of the direct experience of the Self.

It follows from the above that the knowledge of the self destroys past merit and demerits and since it removes the sense of agency no future merit or demerit is added to the one who has realised Brahman.

There is one important point to be noted in this connection when it is said that past merits and demerits of a person are destroyed. We have to make a distinction between two kinds of past merits and demerits viz., as-cita, the merits and demerits which have not fructified, and bhūka - a portion of as-cita which has started yielding fruit and which has produced the body through which a person has attained the knowledge. The 153 Brahman states that the merits and demerits which have not fructified are annihilated by the direct knowledge of self but the merits and demerits which have started giving their results and which have produced the body through which a person has attained the direct knowledge of self are not annihilated.
by the latter. Such an individual who is free from the accumulated merits and demerits that have not fructified and who is living out only his fructified merit and demerits is called a jīva-pūjita - one who is liberated while embodied. The body continues to exist by the merits and demerits that are fructified.

Being thus associated with the fructified deeds, the direct knowledge of self does not remove avidyā in its entirety, but it removes only certain aspects of it. That aspect of avidyā which is not annihilated is termed avidyā-leśa and it is this that sustains the fructified deeds.

The prevalent view in Advaita is that the direct knowledge of self annihilated the āvarana-sākṣi of avidyā and it does not annihilate owing to the presence of fructified deeds, the vyākopa-sākṣi of avidyā and, it is this, the vyākopa-sākṣi of avidyā that is known as avidyā-leśa. The āvarana-sākṣi of avidyā is removed by direct knowledge of Brahman i.e., the mental state. Then Brahman remains free from concealment and this Brahman itself which is free from concealment, that removes avidyā associated with vyākopa-sākṣi after the fructified deeds are exhausted by experiencing their fruits. Thus according to this view, avidyā in its aspect of concealment is removed by the mental state inspired by the reflection of Brahman and in
its aspect of projection it is removed by Brahman itself which is free from concealment.

There is another view as regards the nature of avidyā-
leaśā. Avidyā possesses a three-fold power, viz., the power that gives rise to the notion that the world is absolutely real, the power that gives rise to the notion that the world is empirically real, and the power that gives rise to the notion that the world is apparently real. The direct knowledge of self annihilates the former two powers of avidyā and it is only avidyā associated with the power that gives rise to the notion that the world is apparently real that is known as avidyā-leaśā. And when the fructified deeds are exhausted by experiencing their fruits, the avidyā-leaśā is removed by the direct knowledge of self that endures till then. 182

For the understanding of the concept of Ṣivarāṇa-mukti, it is essential to consider the stages that precede its rise. Ṣivarāṇa-mukti arises at the end of a series of stages. Sage Vasistha in the Ṣivarāṇa-Vaśiṣṭha distinguishes six stages on the way so that Ṣivarāṇa-mukti becomes the seventh in gradual process. 183

1. The first stage is the performance of karmas by dedicating the fruits to God. This is known as ārama-yama. It cleanses one's heart and makes one fit to pursue the

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2. The second stage is the observance of āśrama and the two of the three constituents of ādāna-yoga. These two, as we have explained earlier, remove pramāṇa-avasthā and pāṇe-sabāyanta respectively.

3. Hidāhyāsana marks the third stage. This as has been set forth already, removes viparīta-dvārānā.

4. The mind of the aspirant is thus free from all impediments and the major texts of Upāniṣads contemplated at this stage gives rise to the direct knowledge of self. The rise of direct knowledge of self signifies the fourth stage.

One who has attained this stage is known as brahma-vid or jīvān-nuṣṭa and this stage is termed jīvān-sūkṣma.

The first three stages are known as jāgṛta-avasthā, since the world of duality, in as in the ordinary waking state presented as real in these stages. The fourth stage is known as āsmaāvasthā, since as in dream state the world of duality, although indeterminable, is manifested.

The life of a jīvān-nuṣṭa or brahma-vid has two phases; it is either sāmbhādi when he turns inward and loses himself in Brahman or the condition known as sukhāsana or reversion to empirical life when he wakes back to variety.
5. The state of saṃādhi in initial stage is known as sānubhūti or deep-sleep because as in deep sleep here also duality does not appear. A jīva-sukta comes back to empirical life from this stage of saṃādhi on his own accord. Such a one is known as brahma-vid-vārya. This is the fifth stage.

6. The sixth stage is also a state of saṃādhi which is intense; and the jīva-sukta who has entered this stage of saṃādhi comes back to empirical life only when prompted by others. The stage of saṃādhi is known as intense deep-sleep, sānubhūta, and jīva-sukta who is in this stage is known as brahma-vid-vārya.

7. The seventh stage is the most advanced stage of saṃādhi. It is known as turiya and one who has entered that stage will set no account revert to empirical life. He is known as brahma-vid-variṣṭha – one who is permanently and irrevocably fixed in the realization of self. It is only with reference to this brahma-vid-variṣṭha that the Lord promises in the Gītā that He looks after his welfare.¹²⁴

The fifth, sixth and seventh stages are only the sub-divisions of the stage of jīva-sukti. Of these the seventh stage is the most advanced one. Madhusūdana Sarvāvati in his commentary on the Gītā states that the one who is in the seventh stage
is referred to as avat Attempt to, ath tattva, vishnu-shakti, uttara
ma\'na\'I, i vanamukta, and utaman. He further states that
such a one has attained what all one should attain in one's
life and the Vedic text consisting of injunctions and prohibi-
tions do not apply to him.

It is said that the avat Attempt in the sixth and seventh
stage would come back to empirical life on his own accord and
as prompted by others respectively. On reversion to empirical
life the world of duality beginning with mind, sense organs,
etc., does appear to him but he is not deluded by it as he has
once for all realized its falsity. Shankara in his commentary
on Brahma-sutra says "one who has realized one's identity with
the self does not have the worldly experience just as he once,
where one who considers the world to be real and deluded by it
has not realized one's identity with the self. Such a one who
has the direct knowledge of self and who sees the world as illu-
sory does not have the sense of agency in the form 'I am the
agent'. He sees the world beginning with mind, etc., as one
which is superimposed upon as so manifested by the self - his
true nature which is supra-relational. He has the knowledge
in the form "I am not the agent; on the other hand, I am the
witness of the mind and the other factors which act". He begs
for food just enough to sustain his body, and this also he does
without the sense of agency. In fact from the standpoint of
ignorant only, that, the $i\text{ll}i\text{var}-\text{mukta}$ is spoken of as doing something, but from his own standpoint the $i\text{ll}i\text{var}-\text{mukta}$ is a non-agent.\textsuperscript{186}

The $i\text{ll}i\text{var}-\text{mukta}$ who is a $\text{prehva}-\text{yid}$ or a $\text{prehva}-\text{yid}-\text{varm}$ has a specific duty of maintaining the $\text{oka}-\text{mukra}-\text{h}$, that is, preventing men from swerving into an unrighteous path. He should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant by imparting the knowledge of self. On the other hand, in order to infuse faith in the ignorant in the performance of ritual acts without which one cannot attain the knowledge of self, the $i\text{ll}i\text{var}-\text{mukta}$ should cause the performance of ritual acts. But since he does not have the sense of agency, no result clings to him. As Sankara points out: that karma performed by a $i\text{ll}i\text{var}-\text{mukta}$ is not a karma at all, as he does not have a sense of agency and does not desire for its fruits.

Such a one known as $i\text{ll}i\text{var}-\text{mukta}$, in order to be Brahman waits for nothing else but the extinction of merits and demerits that have already begun to fructify by experiencing their fruits; and then a $\text{adhva}-\text{laya}$, the sustaining factor of fructified merits and demerits, is annihilated by the continuing knowledge of self. The body of the $i\text{ll}i\text{var}-\text{mukta}$ then falls off and he remains
as Brahmā itself and this is vidya-mukti. Brahmā which is pure consciousness and absolutely bliss is free from avidya and bodily organism then. This is liberation.