CHAPTER \frametitle{1

- INTRODUCTION.
SURESWARA is a tough problem in Advaita Vedanta. Tradition holds him at one and the same strain to be an adherent Māṁsaka and a staunch Advaitin, the zealot of mechanical Karma and an idealist with complete disregard to all that of the world. From the standards of modern criticism it is not only difficult but beyond all possibilities to establish a correlation between these two standards of thought. Yet perhaps it is possible for a man like Suressvara with his inward thought, self-criticism and discipline and a continuous search for truth to make shifts in his theories. It is again possible and evident that he maintains a running and logical current between the two extremities. It is my attempt in the following pages to discern this current.
IN the context of discussing Mandana-Suresvara equation, scholars like Prof. Hiriyanna and Prof. Rupaswamy Sastri, hold the theory that both differ entirely and Suresvara's views are primarily those of his Master. Prof. P.P.S. Sastry however tries to read analogies between Mandana and Suresvara and establishes that the views, as well as verbal readings of certain passages of both are same. Prof. Amantakrishna Sastri draws similarities between Mandana and Saikara and refutes the thesis that the Advaita of the former is different from that of latter. In all these views however there is an attempt to equate Suresvara's views to those of either his preceptor or his disputed former self Mandana. The actual contribution of Suresvara in the field of Advaita was not either recognised or not adequately stressed in the midst of the dust raised by gallops of discussions on his identity with Mandana or it is allowed to fade away in the glowing light of Saikara's dissertations.

Prof. Mahadevan observes "Although Suresvara follows Saikara closely and interprets him faith-
fully, it does not mean that he does not differ from his master on points of doctrine. These differences, however are of minor importance and do not amount to a difference of philosophical views.¹ But these difference represent Suresvara’s own individuality to such an extent that it gives him a very important place among the Advaita teachers and some of the great thinkers of a latter date like Vacaspati, Vidyārānya and Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī have drawn inspiration from him to plan and present a novel way of Advaita. Hence they can not perhaps be considered minor and in a sense Suresvara has his own school of thought, if not philosophy, in Advaita.²

The salient features of this thought that make to give a definite status to Suresvara as an Acārya are listed below and they are discerned and discussed further in the following Chapters.

¹ The primordial Avidyā is not a projection or Abhāsa of the Supreme. Consequently it is not Anivavacāntya but only Avicārita Siddha.
2. At the time of final Realisation, Avidyā is not merged in the Supreme but it is not simply cognised by the seeker.

3. Kūtastha is no Sākṣi, in the strict sense of the term; there is saksītva assumed from the stage of Isvāra down to Jīva. The supreme all pervasive cognitive consciousness of Kūtastha is objectless.

4. There is difference between Kūtastha and the Supreme bliss. In the former, there is an outward explicit consciousness whereas in the latter the same is inward and identifies itself with the Supreme existence, both flowing into the unit of Bliss.

5. The Avidyā withdraws even as the Kūtastha stage is attained in the process of involution and as such there arises the notion of a non-existence of Avidyā.

6. The evolution of Isvāra is Gūtratma, an equilibrium of cognition and materiality from which Hiranyagarbha and virāt, the universal Consciousness and Existence respectively, emerge as two branches.

7. The division of Avidyā into primordial Avidyā with reference to Brahman, Nāyā with reference to Isvāra and Ajñāna with reference
to jīva as far as cognitive aspects is concerned, is acceptable but there are no two or more Avidyās as such.

8. Avidyā resting upon Supreme produces the projection of Īśvara and the same resting on self produces the cognition of the mundane world.

9. For the Seeker, Karmas are necessary for Cittasuddhi, mental discipline for Citta-pravapta and Vedānta Vākyas only present the realisation at the last stage; but for the enlightened the former two may not be essential.

10. Vividisa śāmyāsa is prescribed for those who realise the uselessness of the world and all the mental and physical disciplines are for such a Śāmyāsin. The Vidvat-Śāmyāsin is he who reaches perfection after such discipline and who is ready for realisation on presentation of Mahāvākyas.

11. Brahman is the Upādāna as well as Kāma Karana of the Universe and in being the former, operates through Avidyā.

12. Only Jahallaksana need be accepted in explaining Mahāvākyas; but the primary sense itself is adequate strictly speaking.
There is need for Vedanta Vakyas as a Pramaña to know the real nature of personal self.

A close study of these conclusions indicate that Suresvara differs Mandana Misra with whom he is traditionally identified and also from his preceptor Saṅkara. In fact his stand on ontology represents a development on Mandana but in the matter of Sādhana it leaves a gap. He tries to build a bridge between the so called Bhāvadvaita and the pure Advaita and in this process shows anxiety to give a larger extension to the conclusion of his preceptor.

The theory of Avidya being Avicāritisiddha and not being Anirvacanīya is a large digression which Suresvara made from his predecessor. As a result of this he is not prepared to accept the dissolution of Avidyā and its effects into the Supreme Bliss at the Final Realisation but they simply get negated. This negation too cannot be there because the seeker in the Final Bliss is not simply aware of it. This theory is a development on Bhāvadvaita which recognises the continuance of negation too
at the level of Supreme Bliss at Final Realisation. Suresvara does accept this stage of negation but at a lower level i.e., Kutastha where there is not the personal cognitive consciousness and as a consequence the negation of the locus-standi i.e., Avidyā has to be assumed to exist but he does not assume this as the finale. So, Suresvara tries to establish a connection between the Bhāvādvaita and Śīśādvaita in this.

ANOTHER point of such building the gap in his theory is that Avidyā rests or exists both in the Supreme as well as jīva. As the consequence of this is that he has a unique way of explanation of the causality by the world. In the involution he is not prepared to accept Avidyā or its negation, at the stage the Supreme Brahman which is Bliss and Bliss alone. In the next stage, Kutastha, too the negation of Avidya may be there but the impersonal cognitive consciousness of it is not aware of the same. It should be noted here that Suresvara does not speak of the negation of Avidyā continuing in Kutastha stage in so many words. If so how can the world
arise at all? The answer is that the world starts as a projection of Brahman caused by the Avidyā. To arise primordially Avidyā need not rest on the supreme. It gets a being due to non-discrimination and in this process of Avidyā raising in the fālā, the supreme has no part to play. When such a being is once assumed to Avidyā, the supreme gets projected as the first being of the world, Īśvara, through this thin curtain of Avidyā. The consequence is that the universe starts and there is the illusory appearance of admixture of Brahman and the Universe. Hence to Suresvara the primary Ābhāsa, is an objective conception by the Vivarta process on Kūstāsya which is but a subjective conception. From this stage again the Supreme and Avidyā, which are joined together due to the illusory cognition transform into the latter stages of evolution, where again each is an Ābhāsa of its predecessor. Thus there is Vivarta up to Īśvara and then Parināma beyond down. Here there is an attempt at filling the gap and connecting the Vivarta of Saṅkara and Parināma of Mādāna.
JIVA himself is the projection of Isvara through his Maya. But since this is the projection of an admixture of the Supreme and Avidyā i.e., a primary projection, it is more concrete and Avidyā is more firm. Before the primary projection Avidyā is cause, in the primary one it is an effect and in Jiva it is an effect of the effect. Hence it is there in the form of wrong cognition producing further wrong or false cognitions.

As a corollary to this position, Suresvara is also prepared to accept the need of Karmas for Cittasuddhi, an Apūrva type of injunction for Vividisa Samayasa and necessity for Sravana and such other physical and mental disciplines after resorting to Samyāsa, all leading to the negation of Ajñāna and consequently primordial Avidyā too. This negation is the final dawn of the Supreme Bliss according to Mandana but Suresvara is not agreeable to this. Following his preceptor, he finds the need for Mahāvākyas, the presentation of which alone reveal the Supreme Bliss, after attainment of this stage representing
the negation of Avidyā, and simultaneous inward and impersonal consciousness. So here again he tries to develop on Mandana and follow Saṅkara.

It is not intended in this dissertation to develop deeply on the theory of Mandana Suresvara equation. But "it is pertinent for us to note that even the scholars who reject the Mandana-Suresvara equation do not dispute that part of the tradition which believes that Suresvara was a hardened Mīmāṃsaka, upholding the supremacy of the ways of the works and that he became Advaitin afterwards under the influence of Saṅkara."  

The late Prof. S. Ruppuswamy Sastri, in his learned introduction to Brahmasiddhi tries to establish the theory of non-equation of Mandana and Suresvara and among other things, he lays stress on doctrinal differences of both some of which have been examined by the additional introduction of Prof. P.P.S. Sastri and by Prof. Ananta Krishna Sastri subsequently. To establish the identity both draw attention to similar passages between the works.
of Suresvara and Mandana. But the arguments of Prof. Ananta Krishna Sastri are more based on comparing the theories of Mandana to that of Saikara and concluding that there is no divergence in the opinion of both. Some of the points on which Prof. Kuppuswamy Sastry based his arguments and which need a closer scrutiny are herein examined. The view points of conclusions of Suresvara enunciated in this book.

1) Mandana is said to give an honorific place to the theory of Anyathakhyāti of Bhattas and considers "this theory has to be reduced inevitably to a form in which it becomes hardly distinguishable from the Anirvacanīyakhyāti of Advaitins." Hence there appears a gradation even in Mandana from the stand of Bhattas to Advaitin in the matter. Suresvara's conception of Avidyā as Avicāritisiddha and not strictly Anirvacanīya, has perhaps a basis, in his subconscious preference to Anyathakhyāti, because prior to primary projection, he is not prepared to connect Avidyā and Supreme and the very primary projection results in the cognition of the Supreme as possessing a nature opposite of its own. But Suresvara does not so
equate his conception of vicāritisiddha to anyathākhyati, because in the latter the object of illusion has a definite existence somewhere else but the avidyā ceases to exist on final realisation of the seeker.7

2) Not to take into account the non-cognition (Agrahana) aspect of avidyā is not to recognise its dual function of Avarana and Viksepa and no Advaitin, and never Suresvara does so. What he denies is many varieties of avidyā because it is possible to assume them on account of the different fields of its function. In fact Suresvara does recognise distinctions in avidyā depending upon its fields of operation, viz., the avidyā, which is primordial, the Maya of Isvara, the Ajñāna of jīva and Mithyājñāna, which is the consequence of the last.

3) Prof. Anaktakrishna Sastri mentions3 and explains two schools of thought in Advaita with regards to the place of Mānūṣayāsas means of realisation: Sabḍaparoksa-prasthānā and Sabḍa-paroksa-prasthāna. Suresvara in following his preceptor gives prominence to
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the former but does not leave the importance of the latter for a Vividishā-Samyāsin.

4) Suresvara's interpretation of Upaniṣadic texts is all comprehensive and two such instances are discussed in this dissertation. He does not reject any view as unauthoritative but has his own preference to one among these and he does not hesitate even to differ from his preceptor some times in such context. It is hence reasonable to conclude that this position of Suresvara only represents a development on that of Mandana.

5) Suresvara does recognise the need for Karma for Cittasuddhi and the mental and physical disciplines of a Samyāsin for cittapravaranā. He even suggests Manana and Nidhiyāsana at this stage. The only difference of opinion he holds is that he does not consider all these necessary for all, the exceptions being the enlightened.
6) WHATEVER may be the conception of Jīvanmukta according to Sankara, Sureśvara does accept the view that the forces of surviving traces of Avidyā, can, at the most, lead only to the persistence of Jīvanmukta’s body for some time and this force, like the force of a dartered arrow, can be and in actuality impeded and greatly mitigated by Brahman realisation. It is perhaps useful to clarify a point here. Sureśvara’s conception of Jīvanmukta is a state when effects of Avidyā are dropped and Avidyā cannot or possibly does not exist in such a stage and so it is but logical, as Maṇḍana is credited to do so, that there can be the possibility of a Mukta only. However, Sureśvara, had to recognise a Jīvanmukta too for practical reasons.

7) Maṇḍana’s attitude towards Śaṅkara, as far as it can be made out of Brahmaśiddhi is that of a self confident and self-complacency Advaitic teacher towards a rival Advaitic teacher, holding divergent views on certain questions, whereas Sureśvara’s attitude towards Śaṅkara,
is, as frankly admitted by Suresvara himself, that of devoted disciple to his God-like master. But this change of attitude can also be caused by a change in views about these questions.

8) THE thesis of Mandana advancing Bhāvadvaita has been exploded by Prof. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, Prof. P. P. S. Sastry, and Pandit Ananta Krishna Sastri as well. But even assuming the thesis to be so, the conception of Suresvara about Avidyā and its negation being simply not cognisable at the level of Salvation inspite of the Supreme impersonal cognitive consciousness of Śaṅkara that Avidyā too is "Brahmanised", so to say, at the Final Realisation.

Keeping all those points in view it is perhaps not too much if Mandana-Suresvara equation is accepted. It is possible that Mandana represents an Advaita theotrician in Garhasthya since he cherishingly considers
that Karma has a place in the attainment of non-duality.  
Suresvara represents the same theotrician as Vividisha
Samnyasin with not-a-clear conception of the final goal
and trying to bridge the gulf between his earlier views
and doctrines of his preceptor. The tradition says that
the crucial subject of controversy between Saṅkara and
Mandana is in the matter of interpretation of a passage
of pseudo-injunction to Brhadāraṇyaka "Yametam Vedānu-
vacanam" etc., and the different interpretations ex-
plained by Suresvara in Brhadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya Vārtika
should have been enunciated in this controversy. The
conclusion is that even before coming into contact with
Saṅkara, the shift from Mandana of Viśhiviveka to Mandana
of Brahmāsiddhi (through Viśrama Viśveka perhaps) should have
been completed and Suresvara represents further shift
towards Saṅkara.

Regarding the works of Suresvara there is
no dispute about his master-piece Brhadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya Vārtika,
Taittiriya Bhāṣya Vārtika and Naiṣkarmya Siddhi. All
those three amply represent his enormous and deep study,
richness of faculties of discussion, firm expression, and
strong conviction. Tradition holds that both these vār-
tikas were written at the instance of his Guru, the one
on Bhādaranya Bhāṣya because Suresvara was a Śuklayajur-
vedin and Taittiriya Bhāṣya as Śri Sāṅkara himself is
Krishna Yajurvedin. It is also said that the other dis-
ciples strongly objected to the first proposal of Śāṅkara
that Suresvara should write a Vārtika on his monumental
work, Dāharmaṭra Bhāṣya, because the views of latter do
not only not confirm to the details of Śāṅkara's thought
but vastly differ and so he would misrepresent the entire
philosophical policy of his Guru. Perhaps these fears are
borne out to be true when a closer analysis of Suresvara's
work is obtained.

Another work of Suresvara, the authorship
of which is less questioned is his Vārtika on Panditvarṣya
of Śri Śāṅkara. The latter is a work particularly prescribed
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for a Vividisa Samnyasin and deals with the "Laya-Yoga" or the process of concentration and consequent graded merger of the gross into the subtle. Suresvara's hand in this Vartika is generally denied on the ground that he is against any Sadhana or effort as a way to complete Realisation. Suresvara of course propounds this view for purpose of dialectical discussions, especially to refute the stand of staunch Mimamsaka in the matter. But at the same time he does not hesitate to recognise the need for an effort on the part of the seeker in the matter, eventhough, it falls within the purview of Avidya.

Here arises the context of this work. Even from the language point of view the vartikas in this book tally with those in the other two and perhaps there is more clarity of expression depending on the comparative simplicity of expression depending the subjectmatter free from dialectics, which perhaps Suresvara considered unnecessary at the stage of Vividisa-Samnyasin.

Manasollasa, a commentary on Daksinamurty stotra of Sri Sankara is another work that is traditionally
attributed to Suresvara. It is not easy to accept this tradition after a perusal of the contents as well as perhaps language of this book, especially when the basic principles of Advaita Philosophy are kept in view. Sri R.B. Amarnath Ray attributes the Daksināmurtī stotra and this Vārtika to Abhinavagupta and his disciple, on the ground that both reflect Pratyabhijñā School of philosophy and not Advaita.  

In this context Prof. Kuppuswamy Sastri observes, "It must be remembered that Sri Saṅkara was the greatest of the teachers who inherited the philosophical heritage of an old type of Śaiva-Advaita which was represented in the Upaniṣadic period by basic texts like Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad and in the post-Upaniṣadic period by authoritative works like Sundarā Pāṇḍya-Vārtika and Saṅkara's own Bhāṣyās and devotional hymns. The parallelism between pratyabhijñā literature and the Daksināmurtī Stotra which the author of this article points out, will show, if pursued further, that the pratyabhijñā philosophy
itself is a bye-product of the blend of Śaṅkara's Advaita and Upanisadic Saivism. "Sāksattvamāśi Veda Vacaś- yō bodhayatyasritān". This line refuses to yield to the pratyabhijñā-occupation; and this is clearly fatal to conclusion set forth in this article.

While this observation is true as far as the Daksināmurti stotras is concerned, the points raised by Sri Ray with regards to the authorship of Mānasollāsa require deeper scrutiny. They are so examined hence:

1) "The questions with which Vārtika starts are not such as one willing to acquaint himself with Advaita Vedānta. Verses 4 to 7 in Ullāsa I are referred to here. The basic question here mentioned is about the nature of Existence and Experience. The nature and scope of these conceptions are those with which essentially the Advaitism deals with and it is not clear as to why this question and the subsequent ones based on this do not relate to Advaita school. It is not hence correct to say that "they are directed towards eliciting
knowledge about ultimate reality possessing omniscence and omnipotence.

2) The reference to the 36 categories of Śaiva School at various places in the vārtika speaks that it relates to pratyabhijñā School;— In the second Ullāsa the other schools of thought with regards to the process of creation, the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika view, the Saṅkhya view and Paurāṇika view are enunciated and this is followed up by the Śaiva view. It has also been explained that all these disputed modifications (Vikalpa) existed in the Supreme and they are manifested through the Nyāya. The verse 45 in ninth Ullāsa refers to the five 'Brahmas' according to Kashmir Śaivism and this conception is considered strange to Advaita. But Śri Śaṅkara also appears to be aware of this conception of ontology of five Brahmas. But the list of these five Brahmas as given by Śaṅkara is according to the Southern school of Śaivism whereas the author of Mansollāsa enumerates them according to the Kashmir School. Presumably each is not aware of the other
school or by the time of Śaṅkara the Kashmir School might not have such an impact as to have been cognised at all. But after his death, it might have forced itself to be of sufficient significance. The attempt of the author of Manasollāsa is directed to explain that these thirty six categories of Kashmir Saivism are included in the Advaita conception. Thus a synthesis which is left unaccomplished by Śaṅkara is attempted in this Vārtika and the tradition appears to have been based in holding that a stalwart like Suresvara alone could attempt at such a synthesis.

3) AS to the so called interpolations of some verses, there appears to be no definite reason to consider them to be so, except that they speak of the strict Advaita tenants. It may be pointed out here that each of these passages, when read with their preceding ones, are intended to point out that the different conceptions of Saiva thought lead to the Advaitic view of ontology of Śādhana. A commentary on Daksināmurti stotra,
which is purely Advaitic, cannot perhaps be otherwise. This
might have been commented earlier as signifying Kashmir
Saivism by some of its zealots and a man like Suresvara
had to write this Manasollasa to retaliate if not contro­
vert it.

Another work that is attributed to Suresvaracarya is Kesimrti Moksavicara. The argument against
this authorship is that it quotes a verse from Sanksepa
Sarlraka, which is written by Sarvajnatma of latter date.
But the editor of this text Sri Suryanarayana Sukla, holds
that this verse is a latter interpolation. The con­
text is that the author quotes passages from Smrtis
like Uttaravajistha, Saivagama, Kasikhanda etc., and it
perhaps does not suit the context to quote a verse from
such a late work like Sanksepa Sarlraka. Hence this
verse is an interpolation by all standards.

In the beginning of this work, the author
explains clearly that the method of emancipation in this
work is for those who have not followed the path of
Advaïta and become Jīvān-muktas or Vidyāmuktas. In other words those who follow the path of Karma and worship as Saguna Brahman have to resort to this shorter course of salvation viz., the death in Varanasi when Śiva imparts the Tarka. So evidently the first and most desired path, according to the author is the pure Advaïta, and this work is only a concession and consolation to such of the seekers who cannot resort to the Advaïta discipline. However such a dilution is perhaps inconceivable in an original thinker like Suresvara.

SUREŚVARA's personality is reflected in different angles in each of his works. In Maśkaraśya-siddhā he is highly belligerent towards the pure Karma-Vādingeven to the extent of vociferous abuses. In Tai-ttiriya Bhāṣya Vārtika he is the ardent and true disciple of his master not allowing an inch from what the latter said. In Panchakarana Vārtika we see him as a Śādhaka. His monumental and all comprehensive work in Advaïta is his Brhadārayakopanisād Bhāṣya Vārtika. Here he unleashes his versatile genius, expands many fold on the words
of his master, of course drawing from his other texts, affably and convincingly puts down the arguments of the opponents, and finally keeps high the flag of Advaita. The speciality of this work lies in that Suresvara draws, expands and elucidates all arguments for Advaita and against the other school of thought scattered in different Bhāṣyas of Saṅkara into one single compendium in the matter of content. "What is here is not there and what is there is not here."25

BUT with regards to language there is vast difference between both. The free flow, sweetness and art of presentation of arguments of Saṅkara are of course inimitable. In Suresvara we come across many redundances, un-pāṇinean grammatical forms, and the defects of Dārvāvaya. For a novice who has no deep contact with fundamentals and arguments of Advaita lore, it may some times prove impossible to follow Suresvara clearly. However, as Prof. Hiriyanna observes "when we take this feature into consideration along with easy command which our author
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has over the language and the general purity of his style, we should, it seems, attribute it to his habit of writing in Sanskrit with freedom and confidence of a master using a living idiom."