

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF ŚAṆKARĀCĀRYA —A REAPPRAISAL—

### I

First of all let me express my sincere gratitude to the authorities of Poona University, particularly to Professor Barlingay, for having given me this opportunity to exchange my thoughts with those of the learned scholars here regarding the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya which occupies a unique place in the history of human thought.

The Advaita as propounded by Śaṅkara is as old as the Upaniṣads and yet it has such a charming freshness about it which attracts the thinkers all over the world. In India itself numerous interpretations of Śaṅkara Vedānta have evolved during the generations of the past. It becomes really difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint the exact significance of Advaita. Any approach to Advaita may be considered inadequate for that matter. And what is more, there is some strangeness about the Advaita doctrine. On the one hand the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara has been extolled as one of the most perfect manifestations of philosophical genius. In the words of Thibaut, "the doctrine advocated by Sankara is, from a purely philosophical point of view and apart from all theological considerations, the most important and interesting one which has arisen on Indian soil."<sup>1</sup> And according to Radhakrishnan, "its austere intellectualism, its remorseless logic, which marches on indifferent to the hopes and beliefs of man, its relative freedom from theological obsessions, make it a great example of a purely philosophical scheme."<sup>2</sup> Tradition honours Śaṅkara's Advaita by comparing it with a lion to be contrasted with other systems of thought which are nothing but jackals as it were.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand the Advaita of Śaṅkara has been caricatured to an extent when one begins to suspect whether the caricature itself may not be the reality. Only a few days back during an All India Seminar in philosophy at Viśva

Bhārati University where I was one of the participants, one scholar remarked that the māyāvāda of Śaṅkara with its unswerving allegiance to the authority of the Vedas is mainly responsible for the sad plight of Indian philosophy today. The statement of Śaṅkara "Ślokārdhena pravakṣyāmi yaduktam granthakoṭibhiḥ, Brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ." made perhaps in a lighter vein just like the popular interpretation of Einstein's theory of relativity, has been taken too literally by many. If the whole of Śaṅkara's Advaita can really be summarised in catchwords such as that the world is mithyā or māyā, one can very well imagine to what a ridiculous stature the Ācārya is reduced. The poet's remarks in another context, "One word is too often profaned for me to profane it, one thought too falsely disdained for thee to disdain it", can easily be seen to be true of Advaita as of no other philosophy of the past. But is there anything more than this popular interpretation of Advaita? Sometimes people professing to be more serious about Indian philosophy and culture feel dissatisfied with this popular representation of Śaṅkara and declare that Śaṅkara has been gravely misunderstood, that there is something deeper, something more subtle, about his philosophy, but when they are asked to pinpoint the exact significance of Advaita they simply flounder, and do not know their way about, lost in an intransigent forest as it were, and what is more, sometimes they also revel in this situation and call it mysticism, wisdom and what not. Plato's remarks concerning the sad plight of philosophy at the hands of its followers are so true also of Advaita Vedānta. "Not that the greatest and most lasting injury is done to her by her opponents, but by her own professing followers."<sup>4</sup> There is thus a strangeness about Śaṅkara's Advaita which has attracted the great intellectuals of the past and present while at the same time repelling many, but the situation all along seems to be somewhat as the Bhagavad Gītā says; "Āścaryavat paśyati kaścid enam, āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ, āścaryavaccainam anyah śṛṇoti, śṛutvāpyenam veda na caiva kaścit."

For my part, since my post-graduate days at the University of Allahabad, when I was doing a special study of the

Advaita Vedānta, when the greatness of Śaṅkara was almost literally being injected into our minds because of the prevalent tradition in that University of A. C. Mukerjee, a name well known and held in a high esteem in the history of Indian philosophy, I have been incessantly worried about the exact significance of Śaṅkara Vedānta and the value of his contribution. Even now I remember my feeling of dissatisfaction in these days, when I had a chance of going through the original works of Śaṅkara, with the arguments put forward by him in his commentary on the first aphorism of the Brahmasūtras in order to establish the self-evident character of the self. "Every one", says Śaṅkara, "is conscious of the existence of his self, and never thinks 'I am not'. If the existence of the self were not known, everyone would think 'I am not'!" His own words in this connection are: "Sarvo hyātmaṣṭitvaṁ pratyeti, na nāham asmīti, yadi hi nātmā stitvaprasiḍdhiḥ syāt sarvo loko nāham asmīti pratiyāt". I still remember having raised my doubts regarding the implication of this argument. This very doubt was later on confirmed and it gradually dawned on me that Śaṅkara has been misunderstood by one and all in so far as they have taken him to have discovered some new fact, albeit of a different kind. His was not a factual discovery in the sense in which a scientist may discover some new level of facts for it was not his concern. This I did point out, through a linguistic analysis of certain statements of Śaṅkara, in my paper "Doctrine of self in Absolute Idealism (An Examination of the views of Śaṅkara and Bradley)" which was read before the Cuttack session of All India Philosophical Congress. Even the argument for the undeniability of the self, when Śaṅkara argues for example that the self cannot be denied because it is the very self of the denier (Ātmanaś ca pratyākhyātum aśakyatvāt, ya eva nirakartā tasyaivātmavāt) is some-what queer and has a certain deceptiveness about it like the cartesian "cogito ergo sum", although this is the very argument which was made much of by Professor A. C. Mukerjee in his **Nature of Self**. That this does not prove the existence of an immutable self, that this does not point to any indubitable fact except in a trivial sense is what occurred to me even long before I got

acquainted with the Ayerian criticism of the "Cogito" and this constitutes the subject matter of my above mentioned paper. To put it in the language of Ayer, what Śaṅkara "thought that he had shown was that the statements that he was conscious, and that he existed, were somehow privileged, that for him at least, they were evidently true in a way which distinguished them from any other statements of fact. But this by no means follows from his argument. His argument does not prove that he, or any one, knows anything.....It is of interest only as drawing attention to the fact that these are sentences which are used in such a way that if the person who employs them ever raises the question whether the statements which they express are true, the answer must be yes. But this does not show that these statements are in any way sacrosanct, considered in themselves."<sup>5</sup>

But now very naturally the question comes to the mind—Is that all about Śaṅkara? And in that case, where does his greatness lie? Perhaps, it may be said, he is simply a mediocre on whom greatness has been unduly thrust or his philosophy is too great to have been properly understood or appreciated by any of us. How to decide? What is the criterion? The first alternative is no doubt difficult to swallow, but at the same time a sort of mystifying greatness also will not do. During all these years when I have gradually matured due to my association with the great thinkers of both the present and the past it has throughout been a cause of genuine worry to me and I cannot say that even now I have comprehended the real significance of the writings of the Ācārya. For one thing, his style though lucid and not very difficult to understand leaves so many issues undecided and as open questions. It is in this background that one can understand how philosophers of very different and even sometimes antagonistic outlook have professed their allegiance to the master. Padmapāda, Sureśvara, and Vācaspati are as different in their approach from one another as philosophers can be and yet they all acknowledge Śaṅkara as their guide. Śaṅkara's Philosophy has been interpreted both as a grand system of metaphysics and also as anti-metaphysical in character. It is not for nothing again that some have read nihilism between

the lines of Śaṅkara. His writings are no less open to an interpretation from the standpoint of value, or even from the existentialist point of view. Recently an interpretation from the linguistic stand-point has also been attempted on Śaṅkara.<sup>6</sup>

I do not know whether this is a sign of greatness, whether, as Potter says, "the greatness of a piece of writing, be it philosophical or literary, is proportionate to the number of different meaningful interpretations which can be found to be consistent with the text"<sup>7</sup> But this surely testified to the highly thought-provoking and richly suggestive character of the writings of Śaṅkara. He seems to leave many things to be filled up by our own imagination and that is why it makes the task of anyone who is keen to be true to the significance of his writings, without colouring them by his own ideas, a very challenging one. In what follows, I shall try my best to strictly adhere to the original writings of Śaṅkara, as far as possible so as to find out the real significance of his thoughts, but I cannot guarantee that some of my own ideas, belonging to a much later generation as I am, may not colour my description and evaluation of Advaita, and I hope to be excused for any such un-intentional transgression on my part. At least, I may hope that my work will be of interest as a fresh approach to the philosophy of Śaṅkara.

## II

### The Concept of Liberation

Almost all systems of Indian philosophy as is well known consider mokṣa or liberation to be the ultimate end of human existence.<sup>8</sup> It is considered to be the niḥśrey sa i.e. the highest good as distinguished from the abhyudaya i.e. the worldly prosperity. It is called by different names in different systems of Indian philosophy, e.g. mokṣa, apavarga and kaivalya. Like other Indian philosophers Śaṅkara also concerns himself with this question of liberation. He starts his commentary on the Brahmasūtra with a description of avidyā or adhyāsa only because through its destruction mokṣa can be realised. His Upadeśasāhasrī begins with an explanation of the method of instructing the means to liberation. His opening

words run as follows: "Atha mokṣasādhānopadeśavidhiṁ vyākhyāsyāmo mumukṣuṇām śraddadhānānām arthinām arthāya." All this shows what the primary concern of the Ācārya as a philosopher was. Considering the general trend of the Indian Philosophy and philosophers this of course is nothing new or startling. But the conception of liberation which we find in the writings of Ācārya is undoubtedly unique in the history of Indian philosophy, next only perhaps to that of Yājñavalkya in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. Yājñavalkya's conception of liberation however requires much of excavation work before it can be rightly grasped and I have tried to do some of this work myself in my presidential address for the History of philosophy section of the Indian philosophical congress to be held at Kanpur this year.<sup>10</sup> But what Yājñavalkya wanted to hint at during the age of the Upaniṣads was firmly grasped and unerringly pointed out in very clear terms by the Ācārya alone who therefore may in this sense be regarded as a true heir of the Upaniṣadic tradition. Liberation all along throughout the history of Indian philosophy, barring certain exceptions, has been regarded as a sort of ideal and covetable state to be attained hereafter either through action, devotion or knowledge. Some have taken it to be a state of bliss while some others take it to be a state where there is cessation of all sufferings (cf. Sāṅkhya-Sūtra,<sup>11</sup> atha trividhaduḥkhātīyantanivṛttiratīyānta-puruṣārthaḥ). Some Indian thinkers have taken it to be a sort of spiritual, religious, goal where the individual spirit is united with the universal self or the Jīvātmā is in communion with the God. Some other thinkers consider it to be a state of isolation (kaivalya) for the self when the self gets dissociated from the clutches of Prakṛti as it were. But howsoever it may have been conceived it is a state to be attained, or better the highest value to be realised, by us through our work, religious devotion, or right knowledge. Even knowledge is supposed to be a mere means for the attainment of this practical goal. Indian philosophy is thus distinguished as being practically orientated from the philosophies of the West which pursue knowledge for the sake of knowledge and are therefore considered theoretical. Indian philosophy is either condemned or extolled

mainly on this ground according as it suits one's purpose. But this emphasis on the practical character of Indian thought, though not entirely baseless, is due to a lack of proper to appreciation of Śaṅkara's contribution to Indian thought. Śaṅkara is emphatic on the point that philosophy is concerned with mokṣa only in the sense of Brahmajñāna which is vastutantra, that is it must be in accordance with the thing as it is, not with dharma which is a practical goal to be attained by our personal efforts through some practical guidance (Puruṣa-vyāpāra-tantra and codanā-tantra). Jñāna which is the proper concern of Philosophy has an inexorable character about it which is lacking in any practically orientated study (na vastuyāthātmyajñānaṁ puruṣabuddhyapekṣam, puruṣādḥinātmayābhāc ca kartavyasya, kartumakartum anyathā vā kartum śākyam laukikam vaidikam ca karma, Jñānam tu pramāṇa-janyam, pramāṇam ca yathābhūtvastuviṣayam, ato Jñānam kartumakartum anyathā vā kartum asākyam). Śaṅkara's concern for liberation thus is reduced to his emphasis on Jñāna. Mokṣaśāstra or Philosophy is concerned with what is and not with what ought to be performed, with Brahman, which is bhūtavastu as distinguished from dharma which is bhavya. Śaṅkara's most significant contribution thus lies in giving a theoretical, philosophical, turn to the practically orientated conception of mokṣa. He for the first time teaches that liberation is not a state to be attained or achieved, that it is neither heya nor upādeya (aheyānupādeya-avastuviṣayatvāt), that it is natural (svābhāvika) and unchangeably eternal (kūṭasthanitya). No specific type of activity or devotional practice is needed to attain liberation, for it is not the result of any activity or devotion (Tasmā jñānam ekam muktva kriyāyā gandhamātrasyāpy anupraveśa iha nopapadyate).

Brahmajñāna, knowledge of Brahman, even is not a means for liberation in any ordinary sense according to Śaṅkara for jñāna itself is liberation. Brahmabhāvaś ca mokṣaḥ, Śaṅkara tells us, and "Brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati" is quoted by him in support of his view that there is no gap between Brahmavidyā and mokṣa. It has often been misunderstood that according to Śaṅkara, jñāna is a mere means of



liberation. But it is more appropriate to say that liberation, according to Śaṅkara, is nothing but jñāna or illumination. Śrutayo Brahmanavidyānantaram mokṣam darśayanty madhya kāryāntaram vārayanti, as Śaṅkara would tell in his commentary on Brahmasūtra, I.1.4. It is true that at places Śaṅkara speaks of jñāna as a means to liberation e.g. when he says "Niḥśreya-saphalaṁ tu brahmanvijñānam" in his commentary on Brahmasūtra I.1.1 or when he says "mokṣasādhanaṁ jñānam" in Upadeśasāhasrī. But there it should be taken as a mere concession to the popular way of expressing the idea and moreover the context in which such statements are made should never be lost sight of. In the Upadeśasāhasrī for example jñāna as an instrument of mokṣa can only mean the bookish knowledge of Brahman or Vākyaḍ vākyaṛthajñāna obtained through Śravaṇa only which is to be firmly entrenched in the mind of the listener through manana and nididhyāsana finally culminating in Brahmajñāna in the sense of Brahmā-vagati or the full comprehension of Brahman. Tadidaṁ mokṣa-sādhanaṁ jñānam..... tyaktaputravittalokaīṣaṇāya pratipanna-paramahamsa pārvirājyaya ..... vidhivad upasannāya śiṣyāya..... parīkṣitāya brūyāt punaḥ punaḥ yāvadgrahṇam dṛḍhībhavati, says, Śaṅkara in that very context, or as is wellknown, "Śro-tavyo śrutivākyebhyo mantavyaś copapattibhiḥ, matvā ca satatam dhyeyaḥ ete darśanahetavaḥ." And in the commentary on first sūtra "Athāto Brahmajijñāsā" Śaṅkara being primarily interested in showing the difference in fruits of dharmajijñāsā and Brahmajijñāsā naturally talks of mokṣa or niḥśreyas as the fruit of Brahmajijñāsā, just to contrast it with abhyudaya or worldly prosperity which is the fruit of dharmajijñāsā. As a matter of fact however, there is nothing more to be aspired for beyond Brahmajijñāsā, be it a vaikunṭha, a state of kaivalya, ānanda (bliss) or nirvāṇa (extinction). Illumination or jñāna is freedom and it itself is bliss or ānanda. Where jñāna is used in Śaṅkara Vedānta as a mere means or pramāṇa for Brahmāvagati as for example when Śaṅkar says jñānena hi pramāṇena avagantum iṣṭam brahma, there jñāna to my mind should be taken as a mere word to word, bookish, understanding of Brahman from the śāstra i.e. vākyaḍvākyaṛtha jñāna. In that sense alone, Brahmajijñāsā and Brahmāvagati



can be distinguished from each other, for otherwise jñāna in the sense of aparokṣa jñāna is certainly indistinguishable from avagati, and brahmāvagati or jñāna in this context should mean an immediate and full comprehension of the nature of Brahman which constitutes the puruṣārtha or the end of man and is identical with mokṣa or liberation (Brahmāvagatiḥ puruṣārthaḥ).

Now the question naturally arises, what exactly is the nature of Brahmāvagati which is identical with mokṣa and constitutes the puruṣārtha? At another place Śaṅkara speaks of Brahmajñāna culminating in anubhava (Anubhavāvasānatvāt Brahmajñānasya). Vacaspati takes both anubhava and avagati to mean sāksātkāra.<sup>11</sup> But is it Brahmasāksātkāra in the sense of a sort of mystical vision of a being called Brahman? This seems to be the popular notion prevalent in the history of Indian thought. Radhakrishnan for example speaks of anubhava as an intuitional consciousness.<sup>12</sup> Thibaut also translates anubhava as intailion. But I fail to see why the words avagati and anubhava used by Śaṅkara or even sāksātkāra of Vacaspati be interpreted to mean a sort of direct perception through a third eye (Divya Drṣṭi) as it were. It is simply due to the misconception of Brahman as a sort of supramundane object to be known only through an intuitive mystic experience. But Śaṅkara's Brahman, it should be borne in mind, is not at all an object, whether mundane or supramundane. It is aviśayāntahpati. The distinction drawn by Śaṅkara between mere jñāna and avagati or anubhava of Brahman can be properly understood not by reference to mystic intuition over and above the ordinary understanding of objects but by bearing in mind that Śaṅkara was distinguishing between mere understanding of the meaning of the Śruti passages (ie. mere book-learning) and the full comprehension of their import culminating in an immediate apprehension of the truth. That is how one can understand his condemnation of the Vidvas (one who knows) one who is learned in the Vedānta (vedānta-nayāntadarśin) as he calls him) in Vivekacudamaṇi<sup>13</sup>, while in another sense vidvas may also refer to a Brahmajñānī in the sense of one who has Brahmānubhava, for example when he speaks of viduṣaḥ

sarvapravṛttīyasambandhaḥ in his commentary on Brahmasūtras I. I. 4. It is of course true that Śaṅkara himself speaks of Brahmadarśana on certain occasions which one may be inclined to take in the sense of mystic vision of Brahman, as for example when he says in his commentary on Brahmasūtra, I. I. 4. "Bramadarśana-sarvatmabhavayormadhye kāryāntaravāraṇāya". But we have not to forget that Śaṅkara takes the Upanṣadic passages like "Yatra tvasya sarvamātmāivabhūt tatra kenakaṁ paśyet kena kaṁ vajāṇīyat" very seriously and therefore Brahmadarśana here can only be taken to mean an immediate apprehension and full realisation of the truth, and this realisation or comprehension is attained according to Śaṅkara not by any intuition but by the consideration of the meaning of the Vedantic statements or vākyaṛthavicāraṇa as Śaṅkara would have it. For, to say that somebody knew something by intuition is, as Ayer would let us know, "to assert no more than that did know it, but that we could not say how... Words like 'intuition...' are brought in just to disguise the fact that no explanation has been found."<sup>14</sup> Śaṅkara far from being mystical in his approach to Brahmāvagati states in clear terms that the comprehension of Brahman is effected by the ascertainment, consequent on discussion, of the sense of the Vedānta statements, not either by inference or by other means of rihgt knowledge (Vākyaṛthavicāraṇapādhyavasānanirvṛttaḥ hi brahmāvagati nānumānādi pramāṇāntaranirvṛttaḥ). The significance of these remarks of Śaṅkara to my mind have have not been properly understood and assessed, for the proper understanding of this statement of Śaṅkara should dispel once and for all the illusion that Śaṅkara is a mystic philosopher talking of a sort of supramundane reality to be known by intuition. That Śaṅkara here is drawing our attention to the philosophical enlightenment which can be only obtained through an analysis of the function of language can easily be seen once we get rid of the deep-seated misconception on Śaṅkara as a mystic philosopher. The emphasis on vākyaṛtha vicāraṇa is to my mind an emphasis on linguistic analysis as a means of philosophical enlightenment called Brahmāvagati which liberates us.

A sort of picture thinking is associated with any form of

mysticism or a metaphysical system traced on speculation. That Śaṅkara was dead against any such speculative metaphysics is evident from the fact that he frivolously deals with different metaphysical systems of his time and sometimes one wonders how he chooses the analogies and examples that are better suited to either parīṇāma doctrine or the līlā theory of creation with which he has no genuine sympathy with a view only to refuting the speculative systems of his opponents. For example, he in his commentary on "Lokavattu līlākaivalyam" in Barhamasūtras 2. 1.33 speaks of the world as being created by Brahman in sport as it were and compares it with the sport of a king whose desires are all fulfilled. He gives the examples of the unconscious hair and nails growing on the body of conscious human beings in his commentary on the aphorism "Dṛśyate tu" in Brahmasūtras, 2.1.6. The way he speaks of the spontaneous transformation of milk to curd or of water to ice just to explain how the aidless Brahman can be the cause of the world in his commentary on Brahmasūtras 2.1.24 can only be understood if we bear in mind that he was simply setting one system of speculative metaphysics against another, viz, that of Sāṅkhya, just to point out how different self-consistent metaphysical systems can be made intelligible on the basis of different assumptions, and that is why there was no sufficient reason according to him why any system of metaphysics be considered superior to the other. It is true that he had a greater sympathy with the theory according to which an intelligent creator i.e. Brahman is both an efficient and material cause of the world (Abhinnanimitta upādāna kāraṇa) on the basis of which he refuted other systems of speculative metaphysics like that of Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika. But this sympathy with Brahma-kāraṇavāda, with the theory of Brahman as the cause of the world, lasted with him so long as he could criticise other systems of speculative metaphysics on its basis and find internal inconsistencies of those systems. But when the internal consistency of Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda itself was in question we find in almost all cases two distinct strands of thought in him. He wants to prove that there is no inconsistency in the Vedānta philosophy, na hi asmākaṁ

darśane kincid api asāmañjasym asti or anatiśaṅkaniyam idam aupaniṣadam darśanam as he tells us, by taking resort, at first and as it appears to me playfully, to certain examples and analogies as against the counter-examples of the opponents as is evident for example from what he does in his commentary on Brahmasūtras 2.1.13. Here he tries to show that the ordinary distinctions between the enjoyers and the objects of enjoyment do not vanish altogether even if the world is nondifferent from Brahman just as the waves, forams, and bubbles etc. do not pass over into each other although they are non-different from the seawater. But this is only a half-hearted attempt on his part to defend his philosophy as against the attacks of his opponents. It is as if Śaṅkara declares in a lighter vein—If you can cite examples and give analogies from the empirical world to prove your system of speculative metaphysics to be the most valid one, I can cite as many counter examples and may give as many counter analogies to prove Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda. But that is not all. There is always a second and a more significant strand of thought in Śaṅkara. And this comes to our view when we find him, in the face of his opponents, switching over to what is well known as his pāramārthika viewpoint, i.e. his genuine philosophic stand, when, for example, he propounds the theory of Brahman as the only reality, leaving no scope for Brahmakāraṇavāda or any speculation for that matter about the origination of the world, be it from Brahman or from some other source.<sup>15</sup> That may be regarded as the Brahma-Vāda of Śaṅkara. This knowledge of Brahman which Śaṅkara propounds as the highest knowledge is arrived at by looking into how different varieties of language function, not by searching in the empirical world for examples supporting a system of speculative metaphysics. Śaṅkara's Brahmavāda is no doubt based on certain assumptions of his own as will be evident in the sequel, but it is definitely not a system of speculative metaphysics or mystic thought. Potter's following remarks about the Advaita of today are true of the master's own writings more than of any one else:—"As Advaita develops there is a growing awareness that the only proper function of the philosopher's tools is the production of greater maturity — greater

readiness for freedom-by the use of negative dialectic and subtle readings of the scriptures. Positive theories or systems become **passe**. With this development Advaita begins to take on the look that it has come to have today, that of an eschewal of systematic philosophy rather than an espousal of it".<sup>16</sup> But to me it appears that it is Śaṅkara himself rather than any one else in particular belonging to his camp who is responsible for this eschewal of systematic philosophy rather than an espousal of it. The search for absolute certainty in knowledge which Śaṅkara puts in an ontological mode of speech as a search for the reality which is never sublated in past, present, and future (Trikālābādhitā)<sup>17</sup> makes him arrive at Brahmajñāna as the highest form of knowledge through an analysis of language which is intended to make us free from the jungle of words, śabdajālaṁ mahāraṇyaṁ cittabhramaṇa-kāraṇaṁ as Śaṅkara would say,<sup>18</sup> and the illusion of differences (bheda) created by them. It is only in the light of what has been stated above can one understand the exact significance of Śaṅkara's criticism of tarka in his commentary on the Brahmasūtras 2.1.11. To my mind it appears that Śaṅkara here is only criticising tarka in the sense of speculation or metaphysical logic leading to the establishment of a speculative metaphysical system. His own words in this context are very significant indeed. Niragamaḥ puruṣotprekṣāmātranibandhanās tarkā apratiṣṭhita bhavanti, utprekṣāyā niraṇ kuṣatvāt, says Śaṅkara. Utprekṣā therefore or bare speculation, looking up as it were in imagination (Utprekṣaṇa), not reasoning, which is being denounced, here. Śaṅkara very clearly points to the controversial and inconclusive nature of such metaphysical reasoning, or Tarkajñāna as he calls it, leading to diverse rival systems of metaphysics as distinguished from what he calls samyak jñāna which never fails.<sup>19</sup> This clearly shows what according to Śaṅkara is the aim of philosophy or philosophical knowledge. Philosophical knowledge must give us absolute certainty and the before it can only concern itself with that which never changes. This one can not get through speculation about the origin of the world or something of the sort but only through vākyārthavcāraṇā. The remarks of Wittgenstein in another context may not be

quite in appropriate even here. "A picture held us captive and we could not get outside of it". We certainly cannot get out of it by setting up a rival picture but may hope to get out through an analysis of how language functions, that is through linguistic analysis or *vākyārthavicāraṇa*.

### III

#### The significance of *vākyārthavicāraṇa*

What then are we to understand by *vākyārthavicāraṇa*, the consideration of the meaning of the statements. It is of course the Vedāntic statements that are meant to be analysed here because Śaṅkara's immediate preceding statement runs as follows: *Vedāntavākyāni hi sūtrair udāhṛtya vicāryante*. If *Brahmajñāna* which constitutes the highest end cannot be obtained either through speculation, perception or inference, are we then to understand that a mere study of the Vedānta scriptures will give us that knowledge? Śaṅkara seems to favour the idea of *śāstra* being the source of the knowledge of Brahman. His remarks like *śāstrā-deva pramāṇāt jagato janmādi kārṇaṁ Brahmādhigamyate, śabdāmulam ca brahma śabda pramāṇakam nendriyādipramāṇakam tad yathā śabdān abhyupagantavyam, Āgamamātrasamādhigamyaṁ eva tu ayam artāḥ, Tattvajñānaṁ in vedāntavākyebhya eva bhavati, Āgamavaśeva āgamānusāri tarkavaśena ca etc.* seem to betray him as an authoritarian philosopher believing in the supremacy of authority over independent reasoning. And this exactly is how he has been taken by most of his successors, the only difference of opinion being there about the relative position of authority and reasoning in Śaṅkara. Scholars go on arguing whether reasoning has any significant role to play in his system at all. As Śaṅkara is somehow supposed to be a great philosopher, he is just allowed to escape by a sympathetic remark that according to him reasoning is not entirely useless, it has only a subordinate position to authority, being permitted to remain as a handmaid of *śruti*. But this can at best mean a pyrrhic victory for Śaṅkara the philosopher and nothing more, for once we take such a stand he can no longer be considered a free thinker, and then the question will be only to determine the degree and extent to which he was authorita-

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rian, that is, to find out how much of his philosophy was fettered by the tradition. But to my mind it appears that Śaṅkara was not at all authoritarian in his outlook. It is true that he refers to śruti passages from time to time and explicitly states that śrutyavagāhyam avedam atigāmbhiraṁ brahma na tarkā-vagāhyam. But he can at the worst be said to have an ambivalent attitude towards śruti. And 'ambivalent' of course is not the proper word for his attitude, for it should be noted that throughout his work he uses the words śruti, āgama and śabda in two different senses without making them explicit because of which there is a scope for lot of confusion. In one sense of the word whatever is said in śruti is evidently not acceptable to him as such. This is the sense in which Śruti is taken as authority, a group of revealed texts coming down to us from time immemorial. In this sense of authority wherever Śruti comes to clash with other means of valid knowledge he suggests that it be taken in a secondary sense." This explicitly shows that Śruti in the sense of authority is merely subordinate to other means of valid knowledge according to Śaṅkara. But there is another sense in which śruti alone can give us that enlightenment which is called mokṣa or liberation. Śruti in this sense is a critical study of different forms and functions of language. Śaṅkara speaks of different types of language such as vidhi vākyas or sentences concerned with codanā inducing one to activity, samsargāvagāhi vākyas which are relational and judgemental in character, and akhaṇḍārthaka vākyas or identity-statements. In this context the vedāntic statements are taken for consideration with a view to be enlightened and this critical study is said to be āgamānusari tarka that is reasoning following the logic of language as it comes to us from time immemorial. That it need not necessarily be a critical study of the language of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, that even a study of ordinary language makes us see the same truth is evident from the fact that a similar linguistic analysis is made in Vedānta of such secular statements like sōyam Devadattaḥ, daśamas tvamasi etc. to draw our attention to the same truth. The upaniṣadic statements as also such secular statements are approached with the same end in view, i.e. for distinguishing between the referring and



the descriptive use of language so that one can arrive at absolute certainty by concentrating on the statements that refer only without describing and thereby liberate oneself from the vicissitudes (saṁsāra) associated with the descriptive use of language. Vākyārthavicāraṇa thus in the context of Śāṅkara means a consideration of the Vedāntic statements by which we distinguish the prescriptive and even the descriptive statements from identity statements such as Tat tvam asi which without any description simply refer or point to the reality thereby giving us absolute certainty. From the standpoint of absolute certainty attained through tat tvam asi the multiplicity created by the descriptive language is said to be based on ignorance. Thus it is not merely the understanding of the **explicit** meaning of **any** sentence of the scriptures that gives us enlightenment. Vākyārtha ultimately comes to mahāvākyārtha and vicāraṇa is a critical study where we take into consideration not only the explicit meaning but also the implicit significance of a statement, not merely vākyārtha but also the lakṣyārtha is considered. All the statements of the Upaniṣads are not of the same status. Whenever scriptural passages speak of creation in detail or of Brahmapariṇāma with all its paraphernalia their actual purport according to Śāṅkara is something quite different from what they explicitly stand for. After defending Brahmapariṇāma with the help of the analogy of milk etc. being transformed to curd etc. in his commentary on Brahmasūtra 2.1.25, after explicitly stating that Brahma kṣīrādivad deva divāc canāpakṣya bāhyasādhanaṁ svayaṁ pariṇamamānaṁ jagataḥ kāraṇaṁ iti sthitam, when he is confronted with a dilemma of kṛtsnaprasakti (scope for the entire Brahman being transformed) on the one hand and niravayavataśabdakopa (violation of the scripture declaring Brahman to be partless) on the other, he finally takes resort to his genuine philosophical stand and speaks of Brahmapariṇāma as avidyākālpa or a creation of nescience. All such scriptural passages speaking of pariṇāma are significant according to him only in so far as they make us realise the non-dual self or the identity of the Brahman and the Ātman which alone makes us free. To put it in his own words: Na ceyam pariṇāmaśrutiḥ pariṇāmapratipādanārthā, tatprati-

pattau pha'navagamat, sarvavyvahārahīnabrahmātmabhā-vapratipādanārthā tveṣā tatpratipattau phalavagamāt. This of course they cannot do by themselves but through the help of other scriptural statements like "Sa eṣa neti nety ātmā (not this, not this)", "Tat tvam asi" etc. The identity—statements therefore have a privileged status in Śāṅkara Vedānta so far as Brahmanubhava is concerned. They are called akhaṇḍārthaka vākyas to be contrasted with the saṃsargāvagāhi-vākyas, though relational in form they simply point to an identity of meaning of the expressions used (anyonya-tādātmya). As Śāṅkara says in his Vākyavṛtti, "Saṃsargo [vā] viśiṣṭo vā vākyārtho nātra sammataḥ, akhaṇḍaikarasatvena vākyārtho viduṣāṃ mataḥ". The direct meanings of the words 'Thou' and 'That' for example in the statement 'Thou art That' being mutually incompatible, Śāṅkara suggests that bhāga-lakṣaṇā should be adopted for the proper understanding of this statement. 'Thou' directly signifies Śvetaketu who is consciousness connected with the internal organ and is also an object of the idea and word 'I'. 'That' on the other hand directly signifies the omniscient Being having māyā as its upādi who is the cause of the universe and is mediately known. There is thus an apparent contradiction here. The true meaning of the statement is reached only by sublating these differences and arriving at an indivisible meaning (akhaṇḍārtha). Here language is used in such a way that in the process language is lost as it were, for the only function that is left for it is to point at or gesture towards the fact without giving any information about it. It is an approximation towards speechlessness, and is therefore free from incompleteness and uncertainty which are the characteristics of a descriptive language. It is language that creates multiplicity, vacārambhāṇa as Āruṇi of Chāndogya fame puts it, for certain practical purposes and when we get rid of these multiple forms created by language through an analysis of the meaning of the mahāvākyas like Tat tvam asi we realise the advaita or non-duality, the unity of all existence, whose knowledge alone is absolutely certain and self-complete.

But<sup>22</sup> as professor Ayer would point out to us, security thus attained is sterile. "Philosophers", says Ayer, "have

been attracted by the idea of a purely demonstrative use of words because they have wanted to make the best of both worlds. They have sought as it were to merge their language with the facts it was supposed to picture; to treat its signs as symbols, and yet bestow upon them the solidity which belongs to the facts themselves, the facts being simply there without any question of doubt or error arising. But these aims are incompatible. Purely demonstrative expressions are in their way secure; but only because the information which they give is vanishingly small. They point to something that is going on, but they do not tell us what it is."<sup>23</sup> This criticism of Ayer is alright as far as it goes, and it can also be of immense value as a criticism of the Advaita in so far as it is mistaken to be a type of speculative metaphysics giving us important informations about a world of reality beside the empirical world which all of us know. But it has little force, it may be said, when applied in the present context, for the *Tat tvam asi* here is not meant to be informative at all in the sense in which ordinary language is so. There is thus no question here of trying to make the best of both the worlds. The aim of the philosopher here is to attain a knowledge which is self-complete and absolutely certain, and the knowledge of advaita or the unity of all existence obtained through *tat tvam asi* seems to fulfil these demands satisfactorily. Nor can Śaṅkara be taken to task for having only pointed through *Tat tvam asi* to the nondual reality without giving any particular informations about it, for merely saying that it exists without saying what it is, for this precisely is what he is interested in and what can possibly be achieved in this context. Any knowledge other than what we derive from **Tat tvam asi** through *vākyārthavicāraṇā* is incomplete and insecure.

But the charge of sterility is still here, it may be said, and there is the further question whether the knowledge obtained through **Tat tvam asi** by *vākyārthavicāraṇā* is knowledge at all? Far from being complete knowledge it seems to run the risk of losing the title of knowledge altogether. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* Śvetaketu after hearing the instruction of his father is said to have known the reality. *Taddhāsyā vijāñāviti*, says the *Chāndogya*. Śaṅkara while commenting on this uses

vijñātavān. But the question is whether Śaṅkara can meaningfully speak of vijñātavān or vijajñāu as the Chāndogya would have it in this context. Can Śvetaketu strictly speaking be said to have **known**? The question here is whether an indeterminate apprehension can be taken to be a case of knowledge. If knowledge means knowledge through concepts the possibility of there being an indeterminate, unconceptualised knowledge is ruled out at the outset. It seems queer that someone be said to have knowledge while at the same time being not in a position to tell what it is that he knows. But whatever may be the problem in taking nirvikalpaka as knowledge, there is no such corresponding difficulty in regarding it as a kind of jñāna. For the Sanskrit word 'jñāna' seems to have a wider connotation than its supposed equivalent, 'knowledge', in English; in fact, 'jñāna' is used as a synonym of 'buddhi' and upalabdhi in the Nyāya Sūtras of Gautama<sup>25</sup>. If jñāna is taken in the sense of upalabdhi or awareness nirvikalpaka or niṣprakāraka jñāna or awareness of something not characterised in any way will not be a logical impossibility even if indeterminate unconceptualised knowledge would be logically impossible in so far as knowledge is taken in a strict sense to imply knowledge through concepts.<sup>25</sup> I am therefore to conclude that there is nothing wrong in Śaṅkara using the term vijñātavān or the Upaniṣad speaking of vijajñāu in the context of the realisation of the non-dual reality by Śvetaketu, whereas it will be wrong if the English equivalent 'knowledge' is substituted in its place. We may speak of Brahmajñāna or Brahmanubhava but not of the knowledge of Brahman.<sup>26</sup> When this is understood, the further question whether such a jñāna (not knowledge) of which Śaṅkara talks is sterile or not is of comparatively lesser importance from the philosophical standpoint, and more a matter of opinion than anything else, for it will depend on the value one attaches to it. Uninformative it definitely is, and what is more, it cannot profess to be informative in the sense in which our ordinary empirical judgments concerning matters-of-fact are. It is vijñāna in the sense of realisation or awareness and it makes little sense to speak of such awareness going wrong or being doubtful which, properly speaking, can only be applied to

statements. If I desist from making a statement, how can I go wrong? It is this peculiar immunity from error and uncertainty which makes it covetable from one standpoint while making it appear sterile from another.<sup>27</sup>

#### IV

#### The Riddle of Māyā and Avidyā—A solution

In this context it may not be out of place to say a few words on the famous doctrine of māyā of the Ācārya. This doctrine has been a source of great confusion in the history of Indian philosophy and also a source of amusement for the layman, and yet it is my humble opinion that the significance of māyāvāda has been seriously misunderstood by a number of scholars as also laymen so far as māyā has been taken as an explanatory theory propounded to explain the origination of the universe from the Brahman and consequently Śaṅkara has been accused of intellectual dishonesty in trying to hide his ignorance by the blanket term māyā. One of the great Vedāntins of this century, Raadhakrishnan even, seems to have mistaken māyā to be an explanatory theory and consequently finds fault with it "The theory of māyā," says Radhakrishnan, "serves as a cloak to cover the inner rifts of his system"<sup>28</sup> But to me it appears that this is due to a complete misunderstanding of the programme of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara was not interested in giving an explanation of the origin of the universe. Others have got nothing to do with cosmology or cosmogony "The Vedānta", says prof. Dasgupta, another scholar of eminence, "is both unwilling and incapable of explaining the nature of the world-process in all its details, in which philosophy and science are equally interested"<sup>29</sup> But this again is due to a misdirected approach to the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya, and this mistake of course is quite natural in view of the fact that Śaṅkara was the first and the only philosopher to have realised that it is not the proper business of philosophers to explain the nature of the world-process in all its details and to revel in theories concerning how it all came about. The question therefore of his unwillingness or incapability for explaining the world-process does not

arise, for he considered the whole thing to be philosophically irrelevant. In his *Aitareya Bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara explicitly states that different theories of creation are to be taken as mere anecdotes and stories (ākhyāyikā), and are therefore to be taken only as arthavāda. He very lightly disposes of the objection raised by the imaginary opponent (purvapakṣa) regarding certain point in the theory of creation propounded in the scripture on the ground that all other details of creation are also as disputable as the point in question. The Śruti asserts that Brahman after creating the world in all its details entered into the body through the head (Sa etam eva śimānam vidārya etayā dvārā prapadyata) and the opponent finds this idea not very easy to digest for it makes Brahman appear like an ant entering into a hole as it were, to which Śaṅkara says that there is no point in dilating only on this issue when all other details in the theory of creation propounded by the scripture are equally open to question. All this is not nonsense (anupapanna) however, for the intention of the scripture here is merely to make us realise the Ātman, says Śaṅkara, and we are asked not to take these anecdotes seriously. Ācārya's own words in this context are very illuminating indeed:—"Sarvagatasya sarvātmano valagramatramapravistaṁ nastiti katham śimānam vidārya prapadyata pipilikeva suṣiram

Nanu atyalpamidaṁ eodyaṁ bahu cātra codayitavyam. Akaraṇaḥ sannikṣta, anupādāya kincidlokānasrjata, adbhyaḥ puruṣaṁ samuddhṛtya murchhayat, tasyabhidhyānān mukhādi nirbhinnam, mukhādi-bhyaścāgnyādayo lokapalastesam cāśa-nāyāpipāsadisamyojanam.....etat sarvaṁ simavidaranapravesasamameva

Astu tarhi sarvaṁ evedam anupapannam.

Na, atrātmāvabodhamātrasya vivakṣitatvāt sarvasyam artha-vāda ityadoṣaḥ.....na hi śratyākhyāyikādi pariñjanat kincit phalam iṣyate". All this shows that according to Śaṅkara philosophy is entirely neutral to any theory of creation and has got nothing to do with an explanation of the world process in all its details. So there was no question in Śaṅkara of giving or trying to give an explanation of the origin of universe through māyā. When māyā was not meant to be a theory of explanation,



the question of its adequacy as a theory does not arise. True, if it were meant to be a theory it would be one of the worst theories of all, for instead of explaining it simply shifts the problem from the mystery of creation to the mystery of the creator. It is of course true that Śaṅkara at many places speaks of māyā as a power of the Lord.<sup>30</sup> But this to my mind is simply a concession on the part of Śaṅkara to the popular opinion and nothing more, for the entire conception according to Śaṅkara is avidyākālpa and is therefore to be taken only as loka-vyavahāra. It is Śaṅkara's view that even the Lord depends as Lord upon the limiting adjuncts of name and form, the product of nescience.<sup>31</sup> When the conception of the Lord itself has its basis in ignorance then the ascription of maya to the Lord as his śakti can simply be based on ignorance also. It is the descriptive language which is practically orientated and creates multiplicity where there is a nondual reality. Adhyāsa or avidyā consists in this confusion of taking the one nondual reality as many.<sup>32</sup> Ignorance of how language creates something where it is not, makes us involved in the multiplicity which has its origin in speech only.<sup>33</sup> Our practical life however is dependent on such a use of language and is therefore called vyāvahārika.<sup>34</sup> Vyāvahārika is not nothing, it is practically useful. We classify, discriminate, and categorise for our own practical convenience; the nondual reality however simply remains untouched by all this. (Yatra yadadhyāsaḥ tat kṛtena doṣeṇa guṇena vā apumātrenāpi sa na sambadhyate). Ignorance of this nondual reality is all-pervasive and affects one and all, as Śaṅkara says, "vyutpattimatam api puruṣaṇām pratyakṣādivyavhāras tatikālaḥ samānaḥ," and this universality of ignorance is at times pointed out by Śaṅkara through the terminology of māyā. For example, Śaṅkara in his commentary on Kathopaniṣad speaks of māyā as very deep-rooted, incomprehensible, and strange only in the sense that everybody though identical with the ultimate reality is ignorant of such identity.<sup>35</sup> The fact that every one sees multiplicity where there is unity, is deceived by varieties of linguistic forms, is called māyā. The further question such as—To whom in particular does this māyā belong or wherefrom does it originate?—is not philosophically significant.



The answer to the question whether māyā is identical with avidyā or different from it again should be very simple from the standpoint of Śaṅkara although it is a fact that the later Śaṅkarites have raised a storm over this issue. When we concentrate on the ignorance or error of someone in particular we may speak of him as being affected by avidyā. When on the other hand we are required to point to the ignorance as it affects everyone in a mass scale there seems nothing wrong in speaking of the whole world being under the spell of a universal magic (māyā) as it were so long as we remember that any further reference to a magician (God) wielding this magical power should not be taken too seriously. If there is māyā (magical power), there should be a māyāvī (wielder of the magical power) no doubt and this māyā has no power over the māyāvī although it may affect all others and in this respect it may be distinguished from avidyā or ignorance which affects the person in whom it is found. But all this is picture thinking, one picture leading to another which may be of value only in so far as it clarifies the point that there is an all-pervasive ignorance, the original sin as it were of christianity, which seems to have a compelling character about it. This does not however permit us to delight in further speculations about its source and its relation, to individual ignorance (avidyā), for that will be entering into what Śaṅkara would call the domain of utprekṣā (metaphysics) a look beyond which he denounces in very clear terms. The talk of māyā or magical power of God is in Śaṅkara Vedānta only an indirect way of saying that everyone is numbed and dumbfounded as it were by the compelling language-habits which create multiplicity. There was thus nothing mystical or mysterious about the māyā vada of Śaṅkara. The conception of māyā as an "indefinable mysterious stuff", as Prof. Dasgupta<sup>36</sup> calls it, might have found a place in the later Advaita; it certainly has no place in the writings of the Ācārya himself.

Now coming to vidyā we find that the controversies in later Advaita philosophies regarding the object and locus (viśaya and āśraya) of avidyā have absolutely no place in the writings of the master himself. He is interested simply in pointing to an avidyā or ignorance which is all-pervasive and on which the

whole of our practical life is based to the fact that distinctions are created by language which describes and discriminates where actually there is non-duality. What is important from his point of view is to detect this linguistic error, this confusion created by language, or the **linguistic bondage** as we may call it and to try to get rid of it through speechlessness or at least through referring language which approximates to a speechless state. It is simply pointless in that case to ask, To whom in particular does ignorance belong?, whether the error is mine, yours, or has its origination in a superior being called God. One who raises such questions has simply misunderstood the entire programme of Advaita philosophy, for the genetic and metaphysical questions leading to a sort of picture—thinking are of no concern to the philosopher. The question about the locus of avidyā is as fanciful in its implication as the poet's question about the locus of fancy—"Tell me where is fancy bred, or in the heart, or in the head?" But this certainly is not a philosophically significant question. That the question is not philosophically significant is evident from the frivolity with which the Ācārya sets aside the whole issue in his *Gītā Bhāṣya*. The most illuminating discussion between Śaṅkara and the imaginary opponent in this context runs as follows: "Whose is this avidyā? By whomsoever it is seen. By whom is it seen? As regards this we say—there is no gain in asking the question 'By whom is avidyā seen?' For if avidyā is perceived, you perceive also the one who has that avidyā. When its possessor is perceived it is not proper to ask, 'whose is it?' When the possessor of cows is seen, there is no occasion for the question 'whose are the cows?' The illustration is not analogous to the case in point. Since the cows and their possessors are objects of immediate perception their relation is also an object of immediate perception and so the question has no meaning. But not so are avidyā and its possessor, hence the question is not meaningless. What will you gain by knowing the relation of avidyā to its possessor who is not directly perceived? Since avidyā is the cause of evil, it should be got rid of. He who has avidyā will get rid of it. Why, it is I who have avidyā. Then you know avidyā and the self who has it. (So that your question is mean-

ingless)". (Atrāḥ sā avidyā kasy eti. Yasya dṛśyate tasyaiva Kasya dṛśyate iti. Atrocyate—avidyā Kasya dṛśyate iti praśno nirarthakaḥ. Katham. Dṛśyate ced avidyā tadvāntanapi paśyasi, na ca tadvaty upalabhyane sā kasyeti praśno yuktaḥ, na hi gomaty upa'abhyamāne gāvaḥ kasyeti praśno arthavān bhavet. Nanu viṣamadṛṣṭāntaḥ, gavām tadvataśca pratyakṣatvāt sambandho'pi pratyakṣa itipraśno nirarthakaḥ syat. Apratyakṣenāvidyāvata vidyāsambandhe jñate kiṁ, tava syāt, Avidyāya anarthahetutvāt parihartavyā syāt. Yasyāvidyā sā tam parihariṣyati. Nanu mamaivāvidyā, Jānāsi tarhy avidya tadvāntam cātmānam.) Gītā Bhāṣya. 13-2.

A similar lack of philosophic concern characterises Śaṅkara's use of pictures such as those of ghaṭākāśa and mahākāśa or of the bimba and pratibimba to illustrate the relation between the jīva and Brahman. Put in the formal mode this is a question of comparison between descriptive I or thou statements such as 'I am intelligent,' 'you are healthy' etc. and identity statements such as 'I am that' (Ahaṁ Brahmasmi) or 'Thou art that' (Tat tvam asi). Since the later are self-complete in sense and absolutely secure from error, language may be said to have reached its perfection in such statements. And if the identity-statement is taken, as is done by Śaṅkara, to be the ideal limit of language then in comparison descriptive I or thou statements would be nothing but defective or degenerate forms of this ideal limit. Once this is understood, it is immaterial whether one speaks in the ontological mode of jīva as a limitation (avaccheda), reflection (pratibimba) or appearance (ābhāsa) of Brahman. Any picture should do so long as it only helps us understand this and is not allowed to mislead us to make further speculations in the metaphysical domain. The later Advaitins, however, failing to grasp the true purport of the master's writings, search in vain for a picture which can serve as the model for Advaita and finally stake the validity of their theories on one of the pictures or the other. Advaita which may be regarded as a consistent "battle against the bewitchment of intelligence", to use a terminology from Wittgenstein, by means of picture thinking has fallen into disrepute at the hands of lesser geniuses by an admission of picture-thinking through the back-door while

refusing its entrance in the front. It is no wonder, therefore that Śaṅkara indiscriminately uses the analogies of reflection, limitation, and appearance just to illustrate his point without taking them too seriously. Even Vācaspati who is regarded to be an advocate of limitationism (*avachheda vāda*) also uses the analogies of reflection at different places. And this is quite proper when we understand that it is not the pictures that are significant in this context so long as we comprehend the nature of Brahman through a critical analysis of the meaning of *akhaṇḍārthaka vākyas* and get rid of the illusion of multiplicity created by the descriptive language. It is thus that the linguistic philosophy of Śaṅkara is supposed to give us liberation in the form of illumination (*Brahmāvagati*) not in any eschatological sense. This conception of *jīvanmukti* as being identical with philosophical wisdom (*jñāna*) obtained through the critical study of language (the meaning of the identity statements like *Tat tvam asi* is what is unique in the philosophy of Śaṅkara. One who attains this wisdom does not for that matter become unfit for practical life based on distinctions created by ordinary language; he can go on as usual with his duties and obligations in the world. The only difference is that he cannot be said to belong to the world of multiplicity as before (*Na yathāpūrvam Saṁsāritvaṁ śakyam darśayitum*). Because of his philosophic wisdom he will have a detached outlook towards the multiple objects of the world which will be taken by him as being only of practical value (*vyāvahārika*). *Vyāvahārika*, however, is not valueless it may be useful and the *jīvanmukta* does not fight shy of this practical utility, he only develops a philosophical detachment for all that is practically useful or *preyas* as distinguished from *śreyas* as the *Upaniṣad* would call it. To put it in the linguistic mode, the *jīvanmukta* is a philosophically enlightened person whose use of ordinary relational language is based not on ignorance but knowledge and full comprehension of the nature and function of language. He is simply free from the linguistic bondage, from being captivated by the pictures created by different forms of language. Such a conception of *mokṣa* has naturally got nothing to do with the fall of the body; one can be free through *jñāna* while alive, rather *jīvanmukti* alone is

intelligible in this content. To utilise certain expressions of Wittgenstein for making the point clear the fly is simply shown the way out of the fly-bottle and the question of its freedom after death is naturally irrelevant here.

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4. **Republic**, (Trans.) Jowett
5. A. J. Ayer, **The problem of knowledge** (Penguin Books, 1969) pp. 46-47.
6. Cf. G. Misra, Srimanta Pratap Seth annual lecture on Vedānta Dharwar session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, October, 1969. and his **Analytical Studies in Indian Philosophical Problems**, 1971
7. Karl H. Potter, **Presuppositions of India's Philosophies** (New Delhi, 1965). p. 164.
8. Cf. Vedānta Paribhāṣā, "Iha khaludharmārthakāmamokṣākhyesu caturvidha puruṣārthesu mokṣa evaparama puruṣārthah."
9. Cf. Adhyāsa Bhāṣya, "Asyānarthahetoḥ prahāṇāya atmaikatva-vidyā-pratipattaye sarve vedānta ārabhyante"
10. Cf. my paper "The philosophy of Aruni and Yajñavalkya—An Analysis" Presidential Address of History of philosophy section of the 46th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1972.
11. Cf. Bhāmātī, 1·1·1· "Na kevalam jñānamisyate kintvāgatim śak-satkāram jurvadavagati paryantam san" and 1·1·12· "Brahmānubhavo Brahmasākṣatkārahparamapururṣāthah"
12. Radhakrishnan, **op. cit.**, p. 510
13. Cf. Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, 162, "Dehendriyadāvasati bhramoditam vidvānāhatam na jahāti yavat, tāvāna tasyāsti vimuktivartāpyastvoṣa vedāntanayāntadarsī."
14. Ayer, **op. cit.**, p. 33.
15. Cf. commentary on Brahma sūtras, 2·1·14. "Anrātātva karyavastunah"—"Ekatvamevaikam pāramārthikam darśayati", "Mithyājñāna-vijrmbhitam ca nānātvam" etc.

16. Potter, **op. cit.**, p. 182.
17. Cf. Gīta Bhāṣya "Yad viśayā buddhih na vyabhicarati tat sat". Also Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya, 2·1·11. "Eka rūpeṇ hyavasthito yorthan sa paramārthan, loke tadvisayam jñānam samyagjñānamityucyate-yathāgnirūṣa iti".
18. Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, 60
19. Cf. Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya, 2·1·11, "Samyagjñāne puruṣaṇam vipratirānupapannā, Tarkajñānānam tvanyonyavirodhāt prasiddhāv iprati pattih."
20. L. Wittgenstein, **Philosophical Investigations**, Sect. 115.
21. Cf. Brahma sūtra Bhāṣya, 2·1·13, "Yadyapi śrūtiḥ pramāṇam svaviśaye bhavati, tathāpi pramāṇantareṇa viśayāpaharinyapra bhavitumarhati..... Ata idamayuktam yatpramāṇantaraprasiddhārthabādhānam śruteṇa."
22. Here I have utilised some of the materials of my Presidential address of History of Philosophy Section of the 46th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress.
23. Ayer, **op. cit.** p. 52.
24. "Buddhirupalabdhijñānamityanarthāntaram" Nyāya sūtras, 1·1·15
25. For a detailed analysis of the problem see my paper, can there be any Indeterminate perception (Nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa)?' **Darshana International**, Vol. X, No. 2, April, 70.
26. It is to be noted however that for the sake of convenience at some places in the present lecture the word knowledge is used in the wider sense of jñāna.
27. It is interesting to note that Śāṅkara himself anticipated and replied to some such possible objection when, for example, he remarks "Naceyamavagatiranarthiaka.....Śakyam vaktum, avidyānivarttipha'adarśanaṭ"..
28. Radhakrishnan, **Indian Philosophy** Vol. II .....
29. S. N. Dasgupta, **A History of Indian Philosophy** (Cambridge University press, 1952) Vol. II, p. 73.
30. Cf. Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, 108, "Avyaktanāmi, parameśaśaktiḥ ananayavidyā trigunatmika para, kāryānumeyā sudhiyayaiva māyā yayā jagat sarvamidam prasūyate."- and Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya, 2·1·14 "Sarvajñasyesvarasyātmabhūta iva avidyākalpīte nāma rūpe..... sarvajña syeśvarasya māyāśaktiḥ prakṛti iti ca śrutiḥ smṛtyorabhilāpyete."



31. Cf. Brahmasūtra bhāṣya, 2·2·14, "Avidyākṛta nāmarūpādhi anu-rodhiśvaro bhavati".
32. Cf. "Atasmin tadbuddhih" Adhyāsa Bhāṣya.
33. Cf. Brahmasūtra Bhasya 2·1·14, "Vacaiva kevalamastityarabhyate".
34. Cf. Adhyāsa Bhāṣya, "Tametamavidyākyamatmānātmanoritare-tarādhyāsam puraskṛtya sarve pramāṇa prameyaa vyavahāra laukikā vaidikasca pravṛttāh".
35. Cf. Kathopaniṣad bhāṣya, "Aho atigambhira duravagāhya vicitra māyā ceyam yadayam sarvo jantuh paramārthatah paramarthatatto vpyevam bohdyamānoham paramātmēti na grhnati.
36. Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 73.