Advaita Vedanta – A Bird's Eye View

Sankaracarya and Sureswaracarya and Others

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Table of Contents

Section 1 - Sankaracarya	3
1. Creation	3
2. Jiva	9
Section 2 - Sureswaracarya	14
1. Creation	14
2. Maya	16
3. Locus and content of Maya	
4. Debate about locus and content of Maya	18
5. Jiva	19

(Sankaracarya (9th cebtury A.D.). Sureswarcarya (disciple of Sankaracarya) (author of Taittiriya-Bhashya-vartika and Brahadaranyaka-Upanishad vartika, which are subcommentaries, in verse form, of Sankaracrya's bhasyas, Naiskaryasidhi Manasollasa etc.) (9th century). Vacaspati Misra (author of Bhamati, a sub-commentary of Sankaracarya's Brahmasutra bhashya) (9th century) Prakasatman (10th century) (author of Vivarana, a sub-commentary of Pancapadika of Padmapada which itself is a sub-commentary of Sankaracarya's Brahmasutrabhasya of the first four sutras Padmapada was a disciple of adisciple of Sankacarya. Prakasatman is the author of another sub-commentary of Brahmasutras . Vidyaranya, author of a prakarana granthas called Pancadasi, Drgdrsyavivivekaand Jivanmuktiviveka and also of Anubhutiprakasa, commentary in verse form, of Upanishads - Katha,Kena,Mundaka, Aitereya, Prasna, Chandogya and Brahadaranyaka and Vivarana-prameya-sangraha, a concise exposition of the topics covered by Vivarana of Prakasatman.) (14th century).

Section 1 - Sankaracarya

1. Creation

1. In TUB 2.6.1 (commenting on the passage in Tu which describes creation — 'idam sarvam asrjata....satyam ca anrtam ca satyam abhavat') Sankaracarya talks of three orders of reality — Brahman as the sole absolute reality (ekam eva hi paramaartha satyam brahmaa....satyam jnaanam anantam) from which everything in creation is born and of creation consisting of relative reality, i.e. empirical phenomena like water which has a higher order of reality compared to mirage (vyavahaaravishayam aapekshikam satyam) and absolutely false things like mirage (anrtam) (Satyam ca vyavahaaravishayam-adhikaaraat-naparamaarthasatyam. Ekam- eva hi paramaarthasatyam brahma. Iha

punah-vyavahaaraharavishayam-aapekshikamekam satyam, mrgatrshnikaadi-anrta-apekshaya-udakaadi-satyam ucyate. Anrtam ca tat-vipariitam. Kim punah 'etat sarvam abhavata'? satyam paramaartha satyam. Kim punah tat? Brahma, satyam jnaanam-anantam brahma-iti prkrtatvaat). Thus, Sankaracarya explains this part of Taittiriya II.vi.i as the pramaanam (authority) for the Advaitic doctrine of three orders of reality –

- (a) absolute reality (paaramaartika satyam) which is the unconditioned, attributeless, non-dual Brahman (nirupaadhika, nirguna, advidiiya Brahman),
- (b) empirical reality (vyaavahaarika satyam) which is the entire universe of nama roopa including the qualified Brahman (saguna Brahman, Iswara), Maya and the bodies and minds of living beings(c) subjective reality (praatibhaasika satyam), which is the kind of things like the dream world (swapna prapanca), the mirage etc.
- 2. (a) In the first chapter of BSB, Sankaracarya starts talking of Brahman as the material and intelligent cause of the universe (upaadaana kaaranam and nimitta kaaranam respectively and as the omniscient and omnipotent source of the manifestation of name and form (naama roopa) that are associated with diverse agents and experiences, actions and results, with well regulated space, time and causation and as the ordainer and designer of the manifestation. But all this is in the context of refuting the Sankya thesis that pradhaana (equated with Maya), an insentient entity, is the material cause of the universe, Later, however, in BSB 1.1.12, he clarifies that Brahman is known two aspects one as qualified by the upaadhi in the form of the varieties of modification of name and form (nama-roopa-vikaara-bheda-upaadhi-visishtam) and the other free of all upaadhis (sarva –upaadhi-varjitam). When he comes

to the second Chapter of Brahma Sutra, he points out that Brahman cannot undergo change, and explains, in BSB 2.1.14, that the one becoming many as nama roopa is an empirical (vyavaharika) phenomenon conjured up by Avidya; all notions of differences and of the division of the experiencer and the experienced are due to unreal nama roopa conjured up by Avidya and are there only in a state of ignorance and that rulership (iisritatvam), omniscience (sarvajnatvam) and omnipotence (sarvasaktitvam) are relevant only in the empirical plane; in the plane of absolute reality (paaramaartika), there are no empirical transactions. . In BUB 3.8.12 and AUB 3.1.3, he says that the transcendental Brahman, devoid of all attributes and all action, pure, non-dual, eternal becomes, by the association of the upaadhi of extremely pure knowledge (atyanta-visuddha-prajna-upaadhisambandhena) becomes the Omniscient, Iswara and is known as antaryaami by virtue of his activator and controller of the activity of the unmanifested seed of the universe (sarvajnam iiswaram-sarvasaadhaarana-avyaakrta-jagat-bija-pravartakam niyatrutvaat antaryaami samjam bhavati); when it has the upadhis of the bodies and minds and sense organs, characterised by ignorance, desire and action, It is called the transmigrating individual (samsaari jiva). In TB 9, he defines Iswara as Brahman conditioned by Maya. (In VC, the synonyms of Maya are given as avvaakrta, avvakta, and ajnaana. (The word, prakriti is also a synonym. The term, pramaanam used in Sankhya philosophy also refers to the material cause of the universe, but there, it is as real as Brahman, whereas in Advaita, Maya is of a lower order of reality).

(b) In BSB 2.3.42 and BSB 3.2.38, while he deals with karmaphalam, he introduces it as the vyaavahaarika aspect of Brahman in the form of the division between the ruler and the ruled and says that the ordainer of

karmaphalam is Iswara; logically, it is Iswara who is the ordainer of karmaphalam. For it is He alone who presides over everything and because of his knowledge of the variegated environments, time and events involved in the process of creation, preservation and dissolution, He alone is in a position to ordain karmaphalam in accordance with the karma of Jivas; the inequality in the karmaphalam of jivas is due to the differences in their karma; Iswara is only an instrument for apportioning karmaphalam in accordance with the karma of jivas and (as he clarifies in BSB 2.1.34) there is no question of partiality or cruelty on the part of Iswara. In TB 9, Sankaracarya defines Iswara as Brahman conditioned by Maya

- (c) In BSB 1.4.3, Sankaracarya refers to the power called avyakta without which the creatorship of the supreme God (parameswara) cannot be logically explained and to its subservience to and dependence on parameswara; the dependence of Maya on Brahman is mentioned also in Tattvabodha 7.1., 7.2 and 7.3, BSB 1.4.3 and BSB 1.2.12. In PB 105, he makes a distinction between Maya and Avidya; he says that Maya is dependent on Brahman and Avidya is dependent on jiva (maayabrahmopagataa-avidya jiivaasraya prokta).
- (d) Citing Mundakopanishad 2.1.2 and Swesvatara Upanishad 4.10 ('Know Maya to be Prakriti and Maheswara, the great God to be maayii, the master of Maya, Sankaracarya reiterates Brahman's superiority over avyakta which is the seed of nama roopa. The lower of reality of Maya is also indicated in his bhashyam on Mundakopanishad 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 'The nature of this Maya is to be inferred from the fact of its being the limiting adjunct (upaadhi) of that higher Immutable the Purusha....formless, birthless...without a second.

- (e) In TB 7.1, Maya, depending for its existence on Brahman, is said to be of the nature of the three gunas, satva, rajas and tamas. In VC 113, 115, 140, 141, 144, 145, 146, Sankaracarya says that Maya brings forth the universe with moveable and immoveable (objects); he talks of the projecting power (vikshepa sakti) of Maya, pertaining to rajas and the veiling power (aavarana sakti) of Maya, pertaining to tamas; the vikshepa sakti is of the nature of activity (i.e. creation of the world); it is also the cause of the wrong projection by jiva and the human activity and jiva and the mental modifications like attachment, pain, grief, etc.; like raahu concealing the orb of the sun, the aavarana sakti envelops the infinite, eternal, non-dual Brahman; By ignorance caused by the aavarana sakti, man takes unreal things to be real and is caught up in bondage (samsaara).
- (f) In VC 111 and PB 99 Sankaracarya says that Maya is neither existent nor non-existent, neither different (from Brahman) nor non-different (from Brahman), neither with parts or without parts. It is very wonderful and of a form which is inexpressible (sannapyasannaapyubhyaatmikaa no bhinnabhyabhinnaapyubhyaatmikaa no sangaapyaasangaapyubhayaatmiko no mahaatbhootaa-anirvacaniiyaroopaa).
- (g)In VC 200, Sankaracarya says that Avidya and its effects are beginningless.
- (h) That Maya is of a lower order of reality than Brahman is indicated by Sankaracarya in MUB 2.1.2 (Mu "Purusha is transcendental.... He is pure and superior to the superior immutable (divya hi amoortah

purushah sabaahyaantarah hi ajaah apraanah hi amanah subhrah hi aksharaat paratah parah) (MUB – akshara-naama roopa-bijopaadhi-lakshita-swaroopaaat sarva-kaarya-karana-biijatvena-upalaksshyamaanatvaatt-param tattvam tat-upaadhi-lakshanam avyaakrtam-avyayam –aksharam sarva-vikaarebhyah tasmaat-paratah-aksharaat-parah nirupaadhikah purushah iti-arthah).

(i) The unreality of the world i.e., the superimposed nama roopa is mithya, as distinguished from the adhishtaanam, Brahman, as Existence) is brought out in many parts of Sankaracarya's commentaries and in his other works - e.g., BUB 2.1.20 - The relative conditions of the transcendent atma are erroneous, like the notion of that a crystal is red or any other colour owing to its association with its upadhis. US 17.13 -This universe is unreal. Existence-Consciousness alone is real. It is the forms only that are unreal. US 19.10 – Unreal like the circular form of a burning torch (alaatacakravat), superimposition has no existence independent of that of the non-dual Atma. BSB 2.1.33 – The Vedic statement of creation does not relate to any reality.....such a text is valid only within the range of activities pertaining to name and form conjured up by Avidya and the purpose is to teach the fact that everything is Brahman. US 16.35 - All the modifications of Maya are to be understood to be unreal on the basis of Sastra which says that they are nothing but words. US 17.29, 30 – Just as a magician comes and goes on an elephant (created by his own magic), so also, Atma, though devoid of all motion, appears to be undergoing conditions such as Hiranyagarbha, waking, dream, deep sleep etc., none of which has real existence.

3. From a harmonious construction of what has been cited above, we can conclude that according to Sankaracarya, the attributeless Brahman (nirguna Brahma) is neither the intelligent cause (nimitta kaaranam) nor the material cause (upaadaana kaaranam) of the universe; the intelligent cause of creation and the guiding factor for Maya being the material cause of creation is a qualified Brahman (saguna brahma), Brahman with May as upaadhi; Maya is the material cause of creation, in the sense of seed of nama roopa evolving into manifested nama roopa and being superimposed (adhyastam, aropitam) on the reality, the nirguna Brahman.

2. Jiva

three prakriyas. TUB 2.6.1, he talks of jiva as being perceived in the cavity of the intellect, as possessed of such distinctions as being a seer, a thinker, a knower etc. In BUB 2.1.14, he talks of Brahman conforming to upadhis, like space conforming to pots, jars, etc. (The example of space in pot, jar, cave etc. is also given in BSB 1.1.5, BSB 2.3.7 and MUB 2.1.1 for the conditioning of the consciousness by the intellect whereas in US 12.1, he talks of the intellect as being pervaded by a semblance of pure consciousness. In US 5.4, he says that the modifications of the intellect are pervaded by the reflection of consciousness and in BUB 1.4.7, he says that atma is perceived in the as a reflection of sun etc, in water and the like. In PB 114, he says that the Pure Consciousness which is reflected in the intellect is called the jiva and the jiva causes the

manifestation of (the sense) of "I" in the body. In PB 117 and 118, he says that just as the light of the sun which is reflected in the vessels made of bell metal and the like, having entered into the interior of a house, illumines other objects, the reflection of pure consciousness in the intellects which has become the jiva, illumines the objects outside through the paths of the eyes and other senses. In 4.3.7, he talks of atma imparting its luster to the intellect like an emerald dropped in milk. In MUB 3.2.7, both the comparison of pot space and reflection in sun, moon etc. in water appear in the commentary on the mantra which talks of the fifteen constituents of the body going back to their sources. The various terms that he uses are caitanya-pratibimba (reflection of consciousness – US 5.4, drasht-aabhaasa (semblance or false replica of the witness-consciousness – US 12.1, chaaya (shadow – US 14.33), caitanya aabhaasa (semblance or false replica of consciousness- US atma-aabhaasa (semblance or false replica of atma) – US 18.53 aabhaasa (semblance or false replica) – US 18.107, 18.120).

- 2. Even though it seems that Sankaracarya does not preclude from the teaching any of the three prakriyas, the weight seems to be in favor of aabhaasa vaada, and not pratibimba vaada or avacceda vaada. The extracts below would support this view.
 - (a) In BUB 1.4.7, the opponent asks" If Paramatma has entered, the jivas entered into being subject to samsaara, Paramatma will also become subject to samsaara and will be happy, miserable and so on.

 Sankaracarya's answer is "No, the perception of (of misery) etc. are the objects of only the particular form that Paramatma takes owing to the Its being the support of Its upaadhi (i.e., the intellect.).
- 3. In CUB 6.3.2, the opponent asks "Is it not incongruous for the omniscient Deity, not being a samsaari, to deliberately wish and enter into the body and subject Itself to sorrow?" .The answer is "Yes, if the

Deity had desired 'I will enter in my unmodified form and I will experience sorrow'. But it is not so. As the Upanishad states expressly, the 'entry' is in the form of several jivas. A Jiva is merely a semblance (aabhaasamaatram) of the Deity. ...It is like the reflection of a person seeming to have entered into a mirror and like the sun in water etc. The contact of the Deity with the intellect results in a semblance of consciousness (Jivah hi naama devataayaa aabhaasa-maatram).The Deity does not Itself become connected with the human happiness, sorrow etc.....

- 4. BUB 3.4.2 The atma is the witness of vision. Vision is of two kinds, worldly and paaramaartika. Worldly vision is a mode of the mind...... It arises as a reflection of the atma. It has a beginning and an end
- 5. In MUB 3.2.7, the atma consisting of knowledge identified with the intellect etc. entering the different bodies is talked about
- 6. In PS 125, Sankaracarya asks, "When one vessel (made of bell metal and the like in which the light of the sun is reflected is broken by chance, does the sun perish? Des the sun become a moving object on account of the moving nature of the reflected image?"
- 7. In BUB 2.4.12 and 2.4.13, (the commentary on the passage "na pretya samja asti"), in the dialogue between Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya, there is a clear distinction between the eternal, all pervading consciousness and the differentiated, individual consciousness (i.e., the objective consciousness). Yajnavalkya tells Maitreyi "In the one who is freed of the body-mind complex, there is no more the differentiated (i.e. individualized) consciousness such as 'I am the son of so and so; this is my land and wealth; I am happy; I am miserable, because it is engendered by Avidya. Since Avidya is absolutely destroyed by knowledge of Brahman where is the possibility of differentiated consciousness for the knower of Brahman who is established in his

nature as Brahman? Even when the body is there the particular consciousness is not there; where is the possibility of its being there, when he is absolutely freed of the body mind complex?" In BUB 2.4.13, Maitreyi says, "By talking of opposite features in the same entity, Brahman, you have confused me." (Atra-eva ekasmin-eva ekasminvastuni brahmani viruddha-dharmarnatvam-acakshanena bhagavatah mama moha krtah....) Having said first that atma is homogenous (eternal) consciousness, then you say when the body dies, consciousness is no more there. How can it be homogeneous consciousness and after death cease to be consciousness? (Poorvam-vijaanaghana eva-iti pratijnaaya punah na pretya samina asti iti; katham vijnanaghana eva? katham va na pretya samjna asti it?). Yajnavalkya's significant reply is," I did not attribute them to the same entity. You have mistaken the same entity to have opposite attributes. (Na maya idam ekasmin dharmini abhihitam. Tvayaa eva idam viruddha-dharmatvena-ekam vastu parihgrhiitam bhrantyaa) What I said was this: When the differentiated forms of the atma associated with the body mind complex engendered by Avidya is destroyed by knowledge, the differentiated consciousness connected with the body mind complex characterized by a vision of otherness is destroyed when the upaadhi, the body mind complex is dissolved, like the destruction of the reflection of moon and the reflected light etc when their support, water etc. are destroyed. But there is no destruction of the transcendental Brahman, the homogenous consciousness, just as there is no destruction of the real moon etc. (Yasya-tu-avidya-prasrtyupaapitah-kaarya-karanasambhandii-aatmanah-khilyabhaavah tasmin-vidyayaa nasite, tannimittaaa yaa viseshasamjnaa sariiraadi-sambhandinii- anyatvadarsana-lakshanaa, saa kaarya-karana-sanghaata-upadhou pravilapite nasyati hetu-abhaavaat udakadi-aadhaara-naasaad-iva candraadi-

- pratibimba- tvannimitta-ca-prakaasaadi. Na punah paramaarthacandraaditya-swaroopa-anaasavad-asamsaari-brahma-swaroopasya vijaanghnasya nasah)
- 8. US 18.32, 18.33 The semblance of the face is different from the mirror because it behaves as the mirror does. The face which does not depend on the semblance of the face is different from the semblance in the mirror. Similarly the reflection of atma is held to be different from atma. The ego is also regarded like the reflection of the face which is different from the face. The pure Self is considered to be different from its reflection like the face. (Mukhaat-anyah mukha-aabhaasah yatha adarsah anukaaratah. Aabhaasaat-mukham-api-evam-aadarsaananuvartanaat. Ahamkrti-aatamani-bhaasah mukha-aabhaasavatishyate. Mukhavat-smrta aatma-anyah-avibktou tou tathaiva ca). In US 18.114, the semblance of consciousness in the intellect is compared to the appearance of snake on the rope. US 18.37 - The reflection of the face (mukha aabhaasa) in the mirror is neither a property of the face nor of the mirror. If it were either, it would continue even if the other was removed. US 18.38 – It cannot be the property of the face, because it is not seen even when the face is there (and the mirror is removed). US 18.39 - It is not the property of both, because it is not seen when both are present (but improperly placed.) US 18.43 – The atma, Its reflection and the intellect are comparable to the face, its reflection and the mirror. The unreality of the reflection is known from the scriptures and reasoning. (Atma-aabhaasa-aasraya-ca-evam mukha-aabhasa-aasraya yatha. Gamyante sastra-yuktibhyaam-aabhaasa-asattvam-eva ca). US 18.114 – If you say that there will be changes in the intellect in case the reflection is accepted, we say 'No'. For we have already said that the reflection of Consciousness in the intellect is an unreality like a snake appearing to be a rope and like the reflection of the face in the mirror

- appearing to be the face itself. (Aabhaase parinamah cet na rajjvaadinibhatvavat. Sarpaadi-ca tatha-avocaama-aadarse ca mukhatvavat).US 120 The ego which is pervaded by the reflection of the Consciousness (aabhaasena sampvyaaptah) is called the knower or the agent of knowing. One who knows oneself (the sakshi) to be different from all these three (the agent, the object and the instrument) is a (real) knower of the atma.
- 9. BSB 2.3.50 It is to be understood that the jiva is only a semblance of Paramatma like the sun in water. The (empirical) Jiva is not the atma itself. (Aabhaasa eva ca esha jivah paramaatmanah jalasooryaadivat-pratipattavyah na sa eva saaakshaat). US 18.27 On account of the constant proximity of the atma (the consciousness described in US 18.26 as self-effulgent, seer, the innermost, Existence, free from actions, directly cognized, the Self of all, Witness, One imparting consciousness to others, Eternal, devoid of qualities and non-dual), the ego becomes its semblance (samnidhou sarvadaa tasya syat tat aabhaasah abhimaanakrt).

Section 2 - Sureswaracarya

1. Creation

effect. It is the cause of time. It has no parts. There is no material external to Brahman working on which Brahman can create anything. Brahman has no organs of perception and is devoid of intellect, desire and will. To talk of creation of the universe by Brahman of such a nature is illogical (TUBV II. 140, 142,143,144,375, BUBV Vol. 1.2.1.385,2.4.244, M II 54). The Sruti (Kathopanishad 1.2.14) which says that nothing originates from atma nor does the atma originate from anything negates

- (the idea that atma is the) cause etc. (BUBV Vol. 1 2.4.24). To imagine in Parameswara, in the One Self-luminous Existence, the relation of cause and effect is like imagining the head of Rahu. (M.VIII. 5-6). Plurality of forms is not tenable for Brahman which is without parts. (TUBV II 375).
- 2. Brahman, in Itself, is not the cause of the universe nor is It the inner controller (antaryaamin) or the witness of the world process. Without avidya, desire cannot arise. Brahman can be the cause of the universe only when Brahman is considered as having the upaadhi 'of ajnana (avidya, Maya). It is nama roopa that constitutes the limiting adjunct (upaadhii) of Parameaswara. (BUBV2.4.10). Iswara is a semblance (aabhaasa) of Brahman¬consciousnes in Avidya also known as Maya (BUBV 3.7.43,44). Iswara, the semblance of Brahma caitanyam in Maya, is the cause of the universe, is the Inner Controller and is the witness of the world process. Iswara is omniscient (sarvajna) and omnipotent (sarv3saktimaan). Having deliberated, Iswara created the universe, taking into consideration the proper order, colour, previous karma of all beings (TUBV 373~. Iswara's creation of the universe is all a display of Maya. Ajnana is the material cause of the universe. From Maya, with Brahma caitanyam reflected in it (maayaam- pratibirnba- anusangatah)jivas come into being. Avidya with a semblance of Brahma caitanyam (caitanya-aabhaasastha) is the cause of sthoola and sukshma sariras. Primary avidya (moola avidya) appears as the manifest and the unmanifest. (BUBV, 5 -1.4.1, I - 1.2.27, 1-12.26, TUBV II 373;377, IvIII 56, M II 32), Pranava-vartika 39.
- 3. The world which is composed of names and forms has no existence of its own. Brahman is existence. The existence in all phenomenal things proceed from the eternal Iswara. Everything has its being in the being of atma. The names and forms - ahamkaara and other objects - are

superimposed on Bralunan. The gross and the subtle (vyaavahaarika satyam) and the illusory like the mirage (praatibhaasika satyam) have sprung from avidya. (TUBV II 407,408,416,417,418, M III 2,3, NS II 45). That is real which never attains another form different from that in which it has once been known. (NS iII.56). Since this universe along with the ego appears and disappears, it is false. (NS II. 95) It should be known through reasoning that the world of duality which is a false appearance, which has no reality of its own, which is caused by avidya and defies understanding, is different from atma (NS II. 44)

4. From the extracts given above, we can say that, according to Sureswacarya, the cause of the universe is not nirguna Brahman but Iswara, constituted by the semblance of Brahma caitanyam in Maya which is mithya. The reality is Brahman as existence. The mithya names and forms displayed by Maya are superimposed on Brahman, the reality, the existence. Iswara who is omniscient and omnipotent is the intelligent cause of creation.

2. Maya

Maya is designated as Pradhana, A vyakta, A vidya, Ajanana, Akshara, A vyakrta, Prakrti and . Tamas. C1'1 iI.31). The name 'Maya' is given to an appearance which cannot be accounted for ,Maya is a thing that defies understanding (avicaritasiddha) (BUVB 1.4.332,444; 2.3.224 NS sambandhokti 1.1.) It is not non-existent because it appears; It is not existent because it is negated.(M. VIII.13). It is mithya. It is not different from Brahman inasmuch as it is located in Brahman. Nor is it. non-different from Brahman, because Brahman is non-dual and avidya is not a real entity. It is said to be notrnade of parts, because no parts caused it. It is not devoid of parts because its effects are made up of parts.
 (M.VIII. 15). (pranava-vartika 39-43). It is beginningless (anaadi) (in

the sense that its beginning is not in time and it has no cause) (NS Introduction to Chapter I, M VIII 13, 15, Pranava-vartlka 39-43, BHBV Vol. 2¬4.3.5). Ajnaana is the material cause of (upadhaana kaaaranam) of the universe, the false appearance of duality (BUBV 1 -1.4371). \~'hatever exists is manifested by avidya. Sruti clearly says so, vide Swetasvatara Upanishad, "Understand that Prakriti is Maya and that Maheswara is the possessor of Maya. (BUBV vol. 1- 1..4.382). Avidya, though not really existing, appears as name and fomm (BUBV .1 - 1.2). Primary avidya (mooIa avidya) continuously appears in the fonn of the manifest and the unmanifest (BUBV 1 -1.2.5.).

3. Locus and content of Maya

- 1. Any mithya has to have a real sub-stratum (adishtaanam). Not-Sdf (anaatma) is mithya. And it is a product of Maya. Cause is antecedent to effect. Therefore anatma cannot be the locus of Maya. Apart from anaatma, there is only Brahman and Brahman is satyam and, being eternal, It is not an effect. Therefore Brahman alone is the locus of Maya. (I1JBV II 64, Introduction to NS Third Chapter). . Brahman is also the content of Ajaanam(Avidya).
- 2. Anaatma cannot be the content of ignorance because it is a product of ignorance. What is a product cannot be the content of its cause. If anaatma was the content of ignorance, when ignorance is removed by knowledge, knowledge would be tantamount to knowledge of anaatma and not knowledge of atma.. Falsdy perceived silver is the product of shell. Silver is not the content of ignorance of shell. It is shell the ignorance of which is removed when silver is negated. \Vhat is concealed from jiva is Brahman. For these reasons, Brahman alone is the content of Ajnaana. (paraphrase ofIntroduction to Chapter III ofNashkarmyasiddhi).

4. Debate about locus and content of Maya

1. *Objection*: Brahman cannot be the locus of Maya (A vidya), because (a)
Brahman is of the nature of knowledge, whereas A vidya is of the nature of ignorance and (b) Brahman is without a second.

Answer: When we talk of locus of Avidya, we are not referring to knowledge as the opposite of ignorance (pramaana jnaanam) but to consciousness which is Brahman's nature (swaroopa jnaanam). Swaroopa jnanam is not opposed to. ignorance. It is pramaana jnaanam that is opposed to ignorance. As for the second objection, A vidya is only a superimposition on Brahman; it is not a real entity. So the question of non-duality of Brahman being violated does not arise.

2. *Objection*: Brahman cannot be the content of Avidya> because ignorance> like knowledge, is in someone and it is about something else. So, locus and content have to be different. If Brahman is the locus, the same Brahman cannot be the content. Since Brahman is partless, you cannot even say that one part of Brahman is the locus and another part is the content.

Answer: Jnanottama, the commentator of Manasollasa, provides the answer. It is a matter of common experience for us to say« I know myself' and also" I do not know myself'. Thus, the content of knowledge or ignorance and the person who has it are the same entity. "I know myself", as applied to anna, means that the existence and conscious aspect are known (- no one can deny that one exists and that one is a conscious being) and "I don't know myself' means that the non-duality and bliss aspects are not known. So the view that ajnaana is not only located in hut has Brahman as its content is tenable.

5. Jiva

(The distinction between the changing consciousness and the changeless conscxiousness is also discussed in this portion)

- 1. He, the Supreme Lord, the Magician, having created the universe through Maya, entered that very universe in the same way as a garland (1s said to enter) the illusory serpent> etc. (TOBV II 378). Brahman which is without differentiation is cognised in this (the intellect) which is thesource of all differentiation. Since in the luminous intellect we perceive Brahman as the seer, hearer and so on, due to illusion (mohaat) the entry by Brahman is imaginarily suggested by Sruti Hence, the entry of Brahman into the intellect is an imaginary representation. It is not conveyed in the literal sense. (rUBV II 397, 398).. The entry of one who by nature cannot have entered (into the universe) is stated in such a way as if it has entered with a view to teach the oneness of atma and Brahman by discarding the distinction between kshetrajna (sakshi) and Iswara,(TUBV401). The non-dual reality appears through avidya in the fonns of kshetranja (sakshi) and Iswara. (TUBV 530).
- 2. Plurality of fonns in the real sense is not valid for Brahman which is impartible, The pur; ility is an apparent plurality (I1JBV II 375). By removing avidya, we must realise the oneness of kshetranga and Iswara. The non-dual Seer (atma) appears as many in several bodies, because of the presence of the antahkarana.
- 3. Just as a rope appears in the fonn of a snake through avidya, though it is not really competento become that, so also, atrna appears as the jiva consisting of the five sheaths (pancakosas) and suffers, as, it were, in the form of jiva (TOBV II 250). The distinction

- between jivatrna and paramatrna is caused by the upaadhi of the body. (M III.9).
- 4. The "J" does not exist without the atma; Without the atma, it will cease to be. (The "I" cannot exist on its own. It is mithya; \vithout its substratum, it will cease to be (NS II 56). If, in the objective consciousness, the thinker were not to manifest himself as "I" the whole world be like one asleep. (1'.1. IV 2). If the insentient objects were to shine by themselves, everything would present itself to everyone's consciousness. (M IV 4-5). If the sentient and the insentient be alike self-luminous, each will perceive and, in turn, be perceived by the other and so on.. And the sense organs, being unrestricted in their scope of perception, taste would be known by the eye and so on. (M IV 5-6).
- 5. Ignorance of atma on the part of jiva is the root cause of suffering. Ignorance conceals bliss which is the nature of atma, (Introduction to N.S. Chapter I). Though the Inner Self (pratyagatrna) whose light ever shines and never sets is the ,vitness of a'\;.dya, it is nevertheless obstructed by avidya, (rUBV II 438). Just as the mirror is dimmed by a stain attaching to it, so consciousness is veiled by avidya and, thereby creatures are deluded. (Ajnaanena-aavrtam jnaanamtenamuhyantijantavah).(M. III. 8). Maya is responsible for non-apprehension (agrahana or ajaaana), misapprehension (anyathaa jnaana or vipariitajnaana) and doubtfuJ cognition (samsayajnaana). Misapprehension is the result of non-apprehension. (BUVB 1.4..)
- 6. Like a rope becoming a serpent through avidya, separating himself from the non-dual¬Brahma caitanyarn, through avidya,jiva makes himself an agent and enjoyer. (TIJBV II 463). The text "When there is duality, as it were. . . . one knows something" (Brhadaranyaka 2.4.14) etc,.have conveyed to us that the notion of duality (dwaya-aabhaasam) in the form of enjoyment and enjoyershiop is caused byavidya. (TIJBV III. 68).

- Owing to the conceit (abhimaana) "I am the knower", the jiva, indeed, performs the acts of cognition. Again, on account of the delusion" I ani the thinker", he does all mental activities". (TUBV II 225).
- 7. By ignorance, attributes of the insentient, unreal and the finite body are ascribed to the conscious atma and the reality, consciousness and bliss of atma are ascribed to the body, just as the mother of pearl is mistaken for silver which is quite a different thing.. (M VII 21-22). The following is said with a view to showing how, owing to avidya, there is mutual superimposition between the atrma which is self-established (swatasiddhah) and the not-self (anaatma) which is established by another (parata-siddhah), in the same way as there is mutual superimposition between the empirical rope and the (illusory) snake:-: Just as the movement of clouds is superimposed on the moon, even so the qualities of the intellect such as pleasure are thought of as in the atma. (NS 101). Just as an ignorant man ascribes the burning nature of the fire to the (red-hot) iron, even so consciousness which belongs to the atma is ascribed to the agent (i.e. the internal organ - antahkarana) due to delusion. (NS II 102) All this false appearance (aabhaasa) is due to delusion (avidya) (moha¬maatra-upaadhaanatvaat). (NS 51). All our
- 8. The ego-consciousness, the feeling of mineness (aham-mamatvam) and desire are not the attributes of atma, for they are experienced as objective and and they are subject to cessation NSII 22).

mundane experience iis a display of Maya (M.VIII.12).

9. Without change there can be no sufferer. How can that which changes be the witness (of the changes)? Therefore, the atma is the unchanging witness to the thousand modifications of the mind (NS II 77).to. The mind cognises objects by fragments. If it does not change in this manner, it will be omniscient like the atma (NS n. 87).

- 10. The atma is the witness to the momentary modifications of the mind.
 Indeed in the absence of the immutable consciousness, the appearance and disappearance of the mind cannot be established. (NS II 82)
- 11. The intellect which contains the semblance of atma caitanyam is the agent (karta); atma is not the agent, because It is immutable. (Atmacaitanyaroopa dhii kartru na dhruvavtatah) (TUBV II 308). The agency of the unchanging atma is an illusion, in the same way as the ascription of motion to the trees is an illusion due to the movement of the boat (NS II 63)
- 12. The body, the senses, the mind and the determinative modes of the intellect are rejected as not-Self, because they are perceived and are subject to origination and cessation The internal organ (antahkarana) which has the 'I' notion also is perceived and appears and disappears; it is also, therefore, not-Self (anaatma) (NS II 82).
- 13. The intellect which contains the semblance of atma caitanyam is the agent (karta); atma is not the agent, because it is immutable (NS II 63). If the 'I' notion was an attribute of the atma, it would be eternal, like the atma; that is, it will continue during sushupti and even in the state of liberation.
- 14. Knowledge and ignorance which inhere in the mind are cognised.
 Therefore neither is the attribute of the atma; they belong to the sphere of name and form (fUBV II 578).
 16. Brahman, in Itself, is not the individual cogniser (pramaata) or agent (karta), or enjoyer (bhokta). These are characteristics of the jiva, constituted by the semblance of consciomsnes in the intellect. (BUVB. 5
- 15. If the ego is an attribute of anna, it would be eternal, like consciosness (Braluna-caitanyam) and continue, not only in deep sleep, but in liberation and scriptural texts which speak of liberation (from duality)

(1) 4 (1).

- will certainly become futile. Since it does not continue, the ego must belong to something else (ie. the mind NS II.32, 33).
- 16. The object of being burnt and the agency that bums co-exist in the fire and the fuel. In the same way, the property of being the knower and that of being the object known coexist in the knlower ands the ego (NS III 59).
- 17. One who wakes up from deep sleep says, "I did not know anything in sleep". Here, the term, "I", signifies the Paramatma, as the ego is suspended in sleep. (NS II 54).
- 18. Viewing the atma as conditioned by the agency of the adjuncts (upaadhis) such as the intellect which are caused by ajnaanam, it was said, on the basis of anvaya-vyatireka that the notions of "1 am happy", "1 am miserable" etc. of the ego are the qualities of the not-sdf (anaatma). If it is accepted that the atma is unconditioned, It cannot be involved in any experience, for it is not fit enough for that; nor can any &uit accrue to It. Now, by presupposing the witness-nature (saakshitvam) of the atma which is a pmjection of avidya, the following is said with a view to denying (of the atma) all kinds of transformation such as agency:-

There is no such thing as the act of illumination. The approach of the object to be illumined within its range is figuratively spoken of as the act of illumination on the part of the atma.

(NS II. 68).

19. Question: If the atma in all bodies is one, would not a person who has realised the atma not experience the sufferings of all? Answer: Even prior to gaining knowledge of our real nature as atma, the suffering in other bodies does not affect us. How can it affect a person who has disidentified ...vith the suffering of his own body? (NS II 90).

- 20. Jiva is it semblance ofBrahma caitanyam (cit-aabhaasa) in the intellect.

 An aabhaasa is different from the original but is resembles the original (cidvilakshanatve sati cidvat¬bhaasamaanatvam cidaabhaasatvam) (BlJBV 4.3.1320).
 - Nescience (avidya) blended with a semblance of atrna caitanyam is the cause of sthoola and suksma swas (Caitanya-aabhaasaswacittamm sariiradwayakaaranam). (pranava-vartika 39)
 - The mind has the power of cognizing owing to the influence of that unchanging consciousness (NS III.IS).
 The atma which does not see... .does not change.. ..does not hate,

does not get angry, does notsuffer, does not enjoy ..is unmoving, is timeless, immutable, is relative, id the inner undivided Reality and is infinite perceives in all bodies the mind which sees, hears, desires, hates, gets angry, suffers, enjoys, . .is subject to time, past, present and

future, perishes every moment, is relative... ..and is finite (NS II 71-75). A radiant jewel remains changelessly the same, whether (it is illuminimg) an object like pot when it is in its proximity and (it is not illumining) when the pot is not its proximity (NS II 64, 65). In the same way, the supreme Self (paramatma) which is of the nature of illumination, remains immutable in the presence as well as in the absence of the modifications of the intellect (NS II 66). The unchanging I is the wi?1ess of the thousand modifications of the mind (NS II

- 21. This seer of inextinguishable and undivided awareness witnesses the insentient dance of the operations of all the minds, though in reality there is no such thing as the act of witnessing on his part (NS II 58).

 A radiant jewel remains changelessly the same, whether it is illumining an object like the pot when it is its proximity or not illumining it when it is not in is proximity. Like that, Paramatma, remaining immutable in the presence as well as the absence of the modifications of the intellect reveals (illumines) the intellect. (NS II 66). In the atma, there is no such thing
- 22. Talking of jiva, Sureswacarya uses all the three terms 'aabhaasa',
 'pratibitnba' and 'conditioning of Brahma caitanyam' while defining
 jiva as, seen from the extracts given
 below
 - Like unto a clear mirror, the intellect (buddhi) because
 of its predominance of sattva in it and in virtue of the
 reflection of atma in it receives images of external
 objects. (1-'lanasollasa
 IV.8,9).
 - 2. Jiva is a semblance ofBrahma caitanyam (cit-aabhaasa) in the intellect. An aabhaasa is different from the original but is resembles the original (cidvilakshanatve sati cidvat-bhaasamaanatvam cidaabhaasatvam) (BUBV 4.3.1320).
 - 3. The non-dual Seer (atma) appears to be many in several bodies, because of the presence of the internal organ (antahkarana), just as the sun appears to be many in different water vessels (NS II 47).
 - 4. As the space within a jar is marked off from the infinite space by the upaadhi of the jar, so is the distinction

- between jivatma and Paramatma caused by the upaadhi of the body (M III 9).
- 5. Manifesting Himself by way of reflection (pratibimbe sphuran) in the kriya-sakti and jnaanasaktii, in the antahkarana, the Lord (Iisah) is spoken of as the doer and knower. (M IV 7-8).
- 23. However the preference of Sureswaracarya is, like Sankaracarya's, seems to be aabhaasa vaada which in essence is the positing of a secondary consciousness, which functions along with the mind and is of a lower order of reality than Paramatma, the eternal uncchanging consciousness. We have to infer this since the teaching is a combination of a sakshi being aware of the modifications of the mind and the absence of any such thing as the act of illumination on the part of the atma as the act of illumination. The approach of the object to be illumined within its range of illumination is figuratively spoken of as the act of illumination. (NS 67).