

SUREŚVARA'S VIEW ON KNOWLEDGE (*JÑĀNA*)

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Abstract. *The article deals with the soteriologic function of knowledge (*jñāna*), according to the non-dualist school of Vedānta (with a special reference to its classic author, Sureśvara) and with its phenomenological and semiotic aspects, in the view of the same school of thought. In its first part, it stresses on the role of knowledge in liberation, both in the system of Advaita Vedānta and in comparison with other schools of Indian philosophy. The second part deals with the great formulations of the salvific knowledge and with the attempts to analyze their meaning. Hence, the study also approaches the semiotics and the epistemology of Advaita Vedānta.*

Keywords: *Indian religion, Brahmanism, Advaita Vedānta, Sureśvara, mokṣa, jñāna, mahāvākya.*

On the whole there is a remarkable agreement between the *mokṣa*-oriented philosophies of India as to the means of attaining *mokṣa*. They agree that finally it is *tattva-jñāna* that enables one to realize that radical freedom, which goes by the name of *mokṣa* or *apavarga*. This *tattva-jñāna* can be tentatively defined as insight into the true nature of reality. It is only for the Cārvākas that the question of the means of attaining *mokṣa* does not arise: for them there is no such thing as *mokṣa*. As was shown in the previous chapter, the attitude of Mīmāṃsā to *mokṣa* is by no means unambiguous so that this school cannot be unreservedly considered *mokṣa*-oriented. Also, for the most part of its history it did not accept *jñāna* as a method or means of attaining liberation. As for the other schools of Indian thought what differs is the content of their respective notions of *jñāna* as well as the nomenclature they use for liberation.

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In Jainism bondage is affected by the influx of karmic particles into the self due to attachment, hatred and such like mental afflictions, which proceed from ignorance (*avidyā*). It is checking of the influx that is required for attaining liberation according to Jainism. But that is not achievable as long as one, obscured by the influx of karmic particles, entertains a wrong notion of oneself. Therefore, Jainism prescribes *samyag-jñāna* (right knowledge) combined with *samyag-darśana* (right conviction) and *samyak-caritra* (right conduct) as three component parts of its method meant to be practiced simultaneously. The right knowledge, besides other things, includes the knowledge of nine *tattvas*, the fundamental categories of Jainism.¹ Its highest type is *kevala-jñāna* which is direct (*pratyak'ā*) and dependent on nothing but the capacity of the self alone.² It sublates all other types of knowledge that are limited and imperfect compared to it.

It is possible to say that the influx of karmic particles is the immediate cause of bondage in Jainism, while ignorance is its indirect cause. That makes the checking of influx the immediate cause of liberation and right knowledge its indirect cause. The knowledge of the self is said to eliminate *karmas*.³ Its highest type is identical with the essence of self and is not analyzable into the knower, known etc.

According to *Sūtra* and *Yoga* bondage is unreal since *Puru'ā* and *Prakṛti* – the two entities that constitute Reality – are immaterial and material respectively and can be associated only due to ignorance. This allows these schools to put particular stress on knowledge and orient their entire method towards its acquisition. Knowledge, labeled in these schools '*viveka*', stands for that discriminative wisdom, which enables one to distinguish the self from *buddhi* (a part of *Prakṛti*) and thus understand their distinctness from each other. This discriminating insight can be summed up in the following words: "*n stī na me n haṁ ityavi e' am*."⁴ These three expressions aptly convey the essence of *viveka* – the direct experience of being different from *Prakṛti* and its evolutes. The detailed enquiry into what constitutes

¹ Shivkumar, 1984, 96.

² *Tattvārtha-sūtra*, I.11-12; *Sthāna-lakṣaṇa-sūtra*, 2.1-7.

³ *Yoga-sūtra*, 4, Gopani&Bothara, 1989, 124.

⁴ *Sūtra-Kaṇikā*, 64.

Prakṛti and what are the phases of its evolution initiated by these schools serves the same purpose – to drive a wedge between *buddhi* and the self. S I khyā and Yoga stressed that liberation results from knowledge alone,⁵ seeking no reliance on rites or worship due to the imaginary nature of bondage, anticipating and echoing some of the Advaitin's arguments to that effect. In Yoga it is again discriminating insight reinforced by concentration that destroys bondage: “*viveka-khy tir aviplav h nopayaB*”.⁶

The closely related schools of Ny ya and Vai e'ika are likewise unanimous in ascribing salvific role to knowledge, which they naturally interpret within their respective conceptual frameworks. Naiy yikas opine that the knowledge of sixteen categories admitted by their school results in liberation. The foremost among them are *pram Ma* (the means of valid knowledge) and *prameya* (the objects of knowledge including tman).⁷ The exclusive potency of knowledge to yield liberation is stressed repeatedly: “ *tm deB khalu prameyasya tattva-jñ n n niB reyas dhigamaB*.”⁸ Knowledge is viewed in these schools as the absolute destroyer of bondage: “*h nal tattva-jñ nam*”⁹ and is obtained from the scriptures only.¹⁰ Vai e'ikas believe that it is the knowledge of the categories accepted by their school (six in number) that is ultimately salvific.¹¹ Their list of categories likewise includes tman, which both schools consider knowable like any other *pad rtha*. By knowledge they mean the insight into the very essence of the category: “*yasya vastuno yo bh vas tat tasya tattvam*.”¹² This knowledge was later augmented by certain other factors like *dharma* and grace of God,¹³ but its crucial role remained undiminished.

It has to be noted that the theorizing and debating about the number and nature of categories engaged in by the followers of Jainism, S I khyā, Ny ya and Vai e'ika can hardly be imagined fruitful for attaining liberation if it is indulged in as an

⁵ *Jñ n n muktiB*; S I khyā S tra, III.23.

⁶ *Yoga-s tra*, II. 26.

⁷ *Ny ya-s tra*, 1.1.2.

⁸ *Ny ya-bh 'ya*, 1.1.1. and *Ny ya-v rtika*, thereon.

⁹ *Ny ya-v rtika* on *Ny ya-bh 'ya*, 1.1.1.

¹⁰ *Tasyop yaB stram*, *Ny ya-bh 'ya*, 1.1.1.

¹¹ *Vai e'ika-s tra*, 1.1.4.

¹² *Ny yakadal* and *V tsy yana-bh 'ya* on *Vai e'ika-s tra*, 1.1.4.

¹³ *Vai e'ika-s tra*, 1.1.4.

intellectual exercise akin to cataloguing and processing information. Studying the categories constituting the world per se cannot be suspected to be salvific as was observed by Daya Krishna.¹⁴ Yet, if the same study is directed towards proving, locating and realizing the difference between what is to be liberated (Self) and what it is mistakenly identified or confused with (non-self), then its usefulness for liberation becomes understandable. Indeed, the painstaking analysis of various categories makes sense if it is meant for establishing what constitutes the self and what is foreign to it, since the *mok'a*-oriented endeavour will remain unsuccessful if it is based on a flawed conception of the nature of what should be liberated. Therefore, it is the non-discrimination between the self and aught else that constitutes *avidyā* that keeps generating bondage (real or imaginary) if not uprooted.

Most schools of Buddhism agree that it is insight into the nature of reality (*prajñā*) that delivers the practitioner. This insight cannot appear in the mind that is impure and unfocused. Therefore, it is held that moral discipline (*śīla*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are essential for the arising of *prajñā* but this does not mean that they can result in liberation, having superseded *prajñā*. Generally speaking, *prajñā* can be described as the realization of the three characteristics of the world: impermanence (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*) and insubstantiality (*anātman*) that happen to be inextricably linked. The earliest Buddhist sources stress that a liberated person is the one who is fully aware of these fundamental facts of existence.¹⁵

The Mahāyāna tradition went to great lengths to elaborate this point. According to the Mādhyamika school the knowledge of the absence of the inherent or autonomous existence of things (*svabhāva*) has a truly transformative power.¹⁶ It consists in continuous perception of the fabricated nature of things or the realization that their permanence and satisfactoriness is a misconception. All phenomena are empty (*śūnya*) – i.e. nonexistent independently from the causal chain of dependent origination (*pratitya-samutpāda*).¹⁷

¹⁴ Krishna, 1991, 29-30.

¹⁵ *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, III. 134; also *Dhammapadam*, 20. 5-7.

¹⁶ Burton, 2004, 83.

¹⁷ *Mādhyamika-kārikā*, 24.1-6.

Their existence as independent and lasting entities is a fabrication, while in reality there is no unfabricated agent or basic changeless stuff.¹⁸ Craving, which is a fuel of bondage, is, on the M dhyamika assumption, bound to cease the moment the essential emptiness of things is understood. It also follows that on this realization the desire to know things as having independent substance becomes obsolete because the impossibility of such knowing is comprehended. Skepticism is also believed by the followers of M dhyamika to have savoury effect. It can be viewed as a kind of position and, therefore, knowledge having certain content but not simply the absence of position altogether. Having no positive thesis to proffer, no view of the world to adhere to, knowing that things are not knowable by conventional means turns out to be liberating according to M dhyamikas.¹⁹ Non-establishment of any thesis and the behavioral pattern based thereon would be the method of the Pr saJgika-M dhyamika, while developing the bare minimum argumentation is accepted as the method in the Sv tantrika-M dhyamika.

The authorities of Yog c ra opine that *tathat* (suchness, the state of things as they are) is identical with the complete absence of any objective entity even when it is cognized. Instead it implies the reality of cognition only, “*dharm M l param rtha ca... saiva vijñapti-m trat*”.²⁰ Yog c ra’s main premise is that experience is real and can be possible even in the absence of the concerned external objects, which are treated as fabricated by the ignorance-confounded mind. On this view even the admission of still objective *dharmas*, the building blocks of external objects, is ignorance-influenced.²¹ Knowledge of the above, reinforced by yoga-practice, results in liberation. It does so precisely because the practitioner becomes aware that his craving is directed towards the ultimately non-existent entities, and then the whole scheme of duality gets relegated to the level of relative reality (*paratantra-svabh va*).²² In fact, the very knowledge that the perception of duality as real is a mere fabrication of a confused mind *constitutes* liberation. In interpreting the

¹⁸ *BodhicittavivaraMa*, 55, Lindtner, 1982, 201.

¹⁹ *Yukti' a' "ik* , 49-51; Lindtner, 1982, 115-7.

²⁰ *Tril oik* , 25, Chatterjee, 1980, 123.

²¹ *Vil atik* , 11, Chatterjee, 1980, 12.

²² *Trisvabh va-nirde a*, 3, Anacker, 2005, 291.

knowledge of reality as not merely instrumental to attaining of liberation but identical with it, Yog c ra comes close to Advaita, as will be demonstrated below.

The leading Therav da schools – Sautr ntika and Sarv stiv da – did not share the antirealistic tendency of Mah y na, although their view was certainly antisubstantialist. The thinkers of these schools reduced the objectively existing world of a realist to a flow of *dharma*s – material and mental entities responsible for the perception of the apparently constant objects either by themselves (according to Sarv stiv dins) or with the help of mental images (*k ra*) (according to Sautr ntikas). The direct access to these fundamental, further indivisible entities results in the realization of the purely nominal existence of things. Once a thing is subdivided into *dharma*s its very awareness ceases²³ and the craving for it stands undermined. Thus, insight into the constituents of things is believed to result in liberation.

Paradoxically as it may sound, even the method of M m l s , which originally attempted to be entirely *karma*-based, cannot be considered free from *jñ na*, if we for a moment abstract from the above given definition of *jñ na*. It may be remembered that even before the development of *samuccayav da* by some M m l sakas and Ved ntins there was a widespread conviction reflected in the Br hmaMas that the fruit of the ritual accrues only to such a person who *knows* the mythological background of the ritual and that too not in an abstract way but rather by meditating on it during the performance of the ritual which is supposed to reenact the story supplied by the tradition of the Br hmaMas. Narrating various mythological episodes, the authors of the Br hmaMas repeat at the end of each of them “*ya evam veda*” – he who knows it (meditates on it while performing the rite) is eligible for the fruit of the ritual. Considered from this angle, *jñ na* is not just an acquaintance with the nuances of the ritual without which, no doubt, its successful performance is impossible. *Jñ na* here is the knowledge of the intricate connection between things, especially the words of Vedic hymns and their referents, the sacrificial utensils and what they signify, Vedic deities and what is offered to them. This connection and even identification of things is known as *bandhut* . It is undoubtedly different from what developed philosophies meant

²³ *Abhidharmako a*, 6.4.

by *jñ na*, but it can still be considered as an insight into the nature of the world, since all things in the Brahmanical ritualism were supposed to have their symbols (*bandhu*); which meant that the whole universe, with things animate and inanimate constituting it, was the subject of this “*bandhut* -philosophy”. This insight into association of various things bordering on identity may be viewed as introduction to the monistic tendency of Vedānta, particularly Advaita²⁴ but this is outside the pale of the present discussion. Since *Mīmāṃsā* is based on the ritualism of the Brahmanas, it is possible to say that the *Mīmāṃsā*’s view of *samuccaya* owes something to the Brahmanical combination of ritual and the meditation on or steady awareness of its mythological underpinning and that *Mīmāṃsā* is not so irreconcilably opposed to *jñ na* as some of its advocates may have claimed.

Jñ na in Advaita is quite different from what most of the above mentioned schools of Indian thought meant by it. To begin with, Advaitic *jñ na* covers several distinct and yet closely related things. Apart from not specifically Advaitic meaning – objectified, empirical knowledge – at least three meanings of *jñ na* are discernible in the Advaitic context:

- a. Pure consciousness identical with Brahman (as in “*Satyam jñ nam anantaḥ Brahma*”, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1). Here *jñ na* is coeval with Ultimate Reality.
- b. Psychosis resulting in liberation (*akhaṇḍaḥ kṛāṇḍaḥ*).
- c. The path leading to the advent of such a psychosis encompassing all preliminary steps, disciplines and prerequisites (also called *jñ na-yoga* or *jñ nam rga*).

Since the first of them was discussed in the previous chapter, here we shall focus on the remaining two.

The Advaitin considers liberation achievable only through self-knowledge, awareness of the non-dual ātman-Brahman that

²⁴ Belvalkar&Ranade, 1997, 63.

is supposed to eradicate wrong notions of the self²⁵ and the world and all behavioral patterns based on them. This knowledge arises in the mind of a properly trained and eligible student as a result of the operation of *abda-pram* Ma. Here the Advaitin is obliged to explain what he means by *abda* and how it produces saving knowledge.

Not entirely discarding the secular aspect of *abda*, the Advaitin recognizes only the potency of the Vedic word when it comes to the question of attaining *mok'a*. His interpretation of Vedic *abda* is in complete opposition to the M m l saka's. Firstly, in order to draw the line between his and non-Vedic schools the Advaitin emphasizes that Brahman is known from Vedas only.²⁶ This implies that the knowledge as propounded by *n stikas* (non-believers in *ruti*) cannot be salvific and moreover, any search for *mok'a* outside the framework of scriptures is at least fruitless. Secondly, the Advaitin specifies that it is not the scripture as such but only a purposeful portion of it (*t tpariyavat rutiB*) that should be taken as productive of liberation.²⁷

Pram Ma is supposed to convey the knowledge that was unknown previously, that cannot be obtained from alternative sources²⁸ and remains uncontradicted.²⁹ For the M m l saka, Veda is a *pram* Ma because it discloses the nature and means of *Dharma*. The Advaitin does not intend to contradict this.

Rather he goes a step further, claiming that apart from *Dharma* Veda teaches about Brahman as well: "*Dharma-brahmaM vedaikavedye*".³⁰ This finds confirmation in Sure vara who comments that Veda, having a purely revealing nature, throws light, just like the sun, on a variety of objects that may possess contradictory nature, i.e. *siddha* (existent entity) and

²⁵ At one place Sure vara says that knowledge consists in the realization that one is not the agent, *Taittir yopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.739.

²⁶ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, II.1.27; II.3.1; *Nai'karmya-siddhi*, III.67; *Taittir yopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.1.3 and V *rtika* thereon.

²⁷ *Bh mat*, Roodurmum, 2002, 12.

²⁸ Sure vara says *pram* Mas have their special fields where each of them is unchallenged just like eye, ear, etc. "*rotr divat pram M n m as dh raMa-meyat* " (*Bh had raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.3.48).

²⁹ *Ved nta-paribh '*, p.4.

³⁰ *mgveda Bh 'ya*, *Bh mik*; p.24; Also *Bh had raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.3.70-1.

s dhya (ritual activity).³¹ Both of them cannot be ascertained through perception and other related *pram* *Ma*s and that justifies the status of Veda as *pram* *Ma*. There is a certain similarity between Brahman and *Dharma* as objects of philosophical reflection which may explain their being capable of being ascertained through the same *pram* *Ma*: both possess no form and no relations.

That much, however, does not put them on entirely equal footing. For the Advaitin Brahman, which is identical with *mok' a*³² is of ultimate importance while *dharma* has significance on the *vy vah rika* level. As long as ignorance is not dispelled, all sorts of actions, ritual and secular, are not simply advisable but even unavoidable, which makes *karmak M; a* a subject of arch-importance. But the importance of *jñ nak M; a* is far greater. It appears that in general for the Advaitin Veda is an all-covering guidebook that communicates the ideas of *Dharma* and Brahman along with the means of their acquisition (*karma* and *jñ na* respectively) in two distinct portions (*karmak M; a* and *jñ nak M; a*). *Dharma* and Brahman as human goals are of relative and absolute value respectively and are meant for different kinds of disciples.

Due to the Advaitin's contention that realization of Brahman is incomparably more important than following the dictates of *Dharma* and enjoying its limited results, it is sometimes stated that knowledge of Brahman is in fact the only subject of the Vedas.³³ As this knowledge actually consists in removal of ignorance and its projections, this removal is described as the objective of the Veda: "*avidy -kalpita-nivltti-paratv c ch strasya*".³⁴ In this passage aJkara calls Veda *stra* but his understanding of this term is entirely different from the Pr bh kara's. In Advaita Veda is *stra* not because it inspires to act but because it has an authority to teach the nature of Self which is or is conducive to liberation – *tmajñ notp danam*.³⁵ On this view Veda has no unquestionable authority beyond the capacity to generate the knowledge of the self – only in this

³¹ *Bh had raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.3.77.

³² *Brahmabh va ca mok' aB, Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.4.

³³ *Upade a-s hasr , padya*, XVII.9.

³⁴ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.4.

³⁵ *Bh had raMyakopani' ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.4.7.

sphere is it truly unquestioned as a *pram* Ma.³⁶ The self-knowledge identical with *mok'a* dwarfs *dharmā* as *puru' rtha*, since the self is dearer than anything else (*preyo'nyasm t sarvasm t*) and more interior than anything else (*antaratama*) and the dearest deserves utmost affection and exertion as aJkara says.³⁷

To support this view the Advaitin has to challenge the classification of scriptures advocated by M m l sakas. Nobody, least of all the Advaitin, can deny the significant role played by injunctions contained in the Veda or reinterpret them to suit their purposes. However, it is possible to criticize the M m l sakas' construing of *mantras* and *arthav das* invariably as additions to injunctions. Even construed as secondary to injunction *arthav da* has got to convey some independent information. The *arthav da* "V yur v k'epi''h devat ", for example, first of all communicates that there is an entity called V yu, and only later is construed as serving the purposes of injunction it is attached to.³⁸ This may be correct from the hearer's point of view who at first hears a statement of plain fact and the next moment interprets it in accordance with the intention of the speaker as useful for some action or as having motivational force. It is the Advaitin's conviction that statements of facts or statements regarding existent things (*bh t rthav das*) do not forego their nature of informants by just being useful for something else. Some *arthav das* and even *mantras* (as long as they do not restate what has already been stated) are to be understood as *bh t rthav das* having independent authority and, therefore, have to be counted as *pram* Mas.

Further, the Advaitin claims that alongside *vidhis* and *arthav das* there is the third type of the Br hmaMa texts, which is absolutely irreducible to the other two and wields an independent authority – *mah v kyas/ ved ntav kyas*. They have their sole purport in teaching the non-dual tman-Brahman.³⁹ Behind this assertion there is a view that not only action but also awareness can be the purport of a sentence. Although *mah v kyas* do not fall in the category of *bh t rthav das* (as a subdivision of

³⁶ Arapura, 1986, 115.

³⁷ *Bhāṭṭa Rāmānjanīya* ad- aJkara-bh 'ya, I.4.8.

³⁸ *Brahma-s tra-* aJkara-bh 'ya, I.3.33.

³⁹ *Brahma-s tra-* aJkara-bh 'ya, I.1.4.

arthav das), the whole polemics around the separate nature of the latter have been initiated by the Advaitin to demonstrate that *mah v kyas*, few as they are, do not comprise a unique minority in the Vedic corpus as far as conveying unsubordinated meaning is concerned. The Advaitin is even keen to distance himself from proper *arthav das*. aJkara, for instance, concedes that some *arthav das* like “*sa arod t, yad arod t tad rudrasya rudratvam*” are inauthoritative because they do not result in knowledge which is certain and fruitful. Sure vara goes even further by admitting that *mantras* and *arthav das* are subsidiary to injunctions. He, however, states in the same breath that *mah v kyas* do not fall in either category thus acknowledging them as a separate group of Vedic texts.⁴⁰ It is conceded that *mantras* and *arthav das* do not generate fruit independently from injunctions.⁴¹

When the Advaitin says that Brahman is known only from the scriptures he means exclusively Upani’adic texts, the *ved ntav kyas*:

“*Tad Brahma... ved nta- str d ev ’vagamyate.*”⁴²

Thus, unlike M m l s , Ved nta as a *dar ana* has its main source of inspiration in the Upani’ads. It is the Upani’ads that constitute the truly purportful portion of the scripture for the Advaitin.

These conclusions are strengthened by the Advaitin’s theory of language. Again, the Advaitin does not try to deny the obvious importance of motivational utterances of which injunctions are the typical example. Rather he states that assertive sentences may and do have value of their own. The charge that knowledge-conveying statements are fruitless and do not facilitate acquisition of anything tangible is incorrect. Awareness can result in relief from tension like in the case of the tenth rustic who was told that he was the tenth⁴³ or in elation like in the case of one who is told he has got a son.⁴⁴ The experience of joy and cessation of tension may not be as tangible as physical objects but are nevertheless direct and undeniable. In the same way fear along

⁴⁰ *B\had raMyakopani’ad- aJkara-bh ’ya*, I.4.7 and Sure vara’s *V rtika* thereon.

⁴¹ *Sambandha-v rtika*, 564-5.

⁴² *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh ’ya*, I.1.4.

⁴³ *B\had raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, I.4.7.600-3.

⁴⁴ *Sambandha-v rtika*, 578-9.

with its physical accessories goes when one realizes that the snake one erroneously perceives in darkness is in reality just a rope.⁴⁵ Cessation of suffering following the arrival of right cognition is certainly desirable and is worth attaining. Statements of facts have their immediate benefits that cannot be contraverted or played down. Moreover, the way the existence of a thing predates its utilization, the statement regarding its existence should come prior to injunction to use it. Even in the Veda there are texts that merely state the existence of sacrificial materials and these become indispensable preconditions to injunctions. The injunction to use a thing and a statement of its existence are not to be confused: “*Kriy rthatval tu prayojanal tasya, na cait vat vastvanupadi*”⁴⁶ *al bhavati*”.⁴⁶ Injunctions and even actions initiated by them do not affect the nature of existent thing which according to the Advaitin cannot be surrendered. Says Murty: “An existent thing does not cease to be existent, merely because a statement is made about it for the sake of some activity.”⁴⁷ It is the very nature of words to signify what they mean – the objects as they are (*bh t rtha*) unaffected by injunctions: “*bh te ‘rthe ‘vadhltā- aktayaB abd B.*”⁴⁸ The denotative power of words is eternal and not dependent on anything including injunction for its function. Words cannot cease meaning what they are supposed to mean and sentient beings endowed with the knowledge of language cannot help grasping the ideas conveyed by words. As Sure vara puts it, even the crows of M m sakas cannot snatch the denotative power of words.⁴⁹

Equally deficient is the attempt to interpret all sentences as expressing subject-predicate relation and requiring a verb to connect them. Just because the majority of sentences follow this model does not give one license to generalize that all sentences follow or should follow it. This model suits the examples that illustrate the relation between two independent, even if connected, substantives. The meaning of such sentences is bound to be relational. But this ignores the identity statements (both in Vedic and secular context) which are an undeniable fact of language.

⁴⁵ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.4.

⁴⁶ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.4.

⁴⁷ Murty, 1974, 22.

⁴⁸ *Bh mat on Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.4.

⁴⁹ *Taittir yopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.693.

Identity statements refer to single entities underlying the apparent difference of subject and predicate. Their meaning is non-relational and their usage is not purposeless: they result not only in recognition (*So'yal DevadattaB*) but even in cognition (*Da amo'si*). As they provide new information we are obliged to count them as a part of *abda-pram Ma*. It is ultimately true that all sentences contain or presuppose verbal forms. But this does not allow one to conclude that every sentence is related to action directly or indirectly. Certain verbs describe pure existence which cannot be interpreted as activity on the part of an existent entity.

The Advaitin's insistence on the independent character and significance of existential statements springs from the general orientation of Vedānta as a philosophical system towards ascertainment and acquisition of the already existent entity (*bh ta*),⁵⁰ while *M m l s* strives after what is to be yet affected and brought into existence (*bh vya*). In the ultimate sense Brahman is the only existent entity. It is not to be affected or created by one's effort but rather discovered through successive or instant removal of the veil of nescience that obscures and distorts its experience presenting it as the world of multiplicity and making the latter cognizable only in the context of division into knower, known and empirical knowledge. Brahman is *pariMi' "hita-vastu*, an entity of unchangeable nature that does not depend on nor gets affected by human will or cognition. The belief that Brahman is realizable in this very life is the cornerstone of the concept of *j vanmukti*, which is not found in *M m l s* or even in *Ny ya-Vai e'ika* with which it shares much in the sphere of metaphysics. As if to counter the position of *M m l s* that liberation is attainable only in the afterlife *aJkara* stresses: “*Sa ca vidv n... ihaiva brahmabh taB... na ar rap tottarak lam*”⁵¹.

In the field of syntax the Advaitin once again distances himself from the *Pr bh kara* lending his support to the *abhihit nvaya* view.⁵² There are certain reasons behind it. According to the Advaitin's theory words express universals that

⁵⁰ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.2.

⁵¹ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, IV.4.6.

⁵² See *Sure vara*: one does not understand the meaning of the sentence if one does not know the meaning of words constituting it (*Taittir yopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.715).

are, naturally, unrelated to one another. Advaita agrees with Mīmāṃsā that the relation between the word and its meaning is natural and beginningless. From this it has to follow that words cannot be divorced from their eternal meanings and nothing can prevent them from expressing what they signify. This makes the Prabhākara theory of the meaningfulness of words only when related superfluous. The word-meanings are necessary building blocks of the sentence meaning: “When the two words combine together, their universal meanings become limited and particularized and this results in a new meaning (of a sentence).”⁵³

The *abhihit nvaya* theory provides the Advaitin with a more flexible framework to express his views. The Advaitin does not share the idea of the primacy of action in the fields of language and epistemology. The Prabhākara views word-meanings as related to one another and as hinging upon the meaning of the imperative verbal form. For the Advaitin the relation with imperative is not ubiquitous and words can well stand and function by themselves. He finds more sense in the Bhāṭṭa theory, provided the idea of the primacy of verb is expunged from it. For the Advaitin the meaning of words like *ātman*, *Brahman* etc. can well be non-relational (*asatīkā*) which goes against the conviction of the Prabhākara that the meaning of words in the sentence is always relational (*satīkā*). This lends further support to the Advaitin’s point on the independence of purely descriptive sentences. Such sentences, whether Vedic or secular, cannot be written off precisely because words cannot be prevented from expressing their meaning (even by the fiat of Mīmāṃsā) and therefore have to be taken to mean what is understood from the combined meaning of the words constituting them. Construing them as subordinate to injunctions is not necessary to understand them.

To sum up, *abda-pramāṇa* is a declaration in speech or writing consisting of one or more sentences.⁵⁴ Sentence is a unit of *abda-pramāṇa*. In its Vedic aspect it may be injunctive as well as declarative and Advaita is primarily interested in the latter.

⁵³ Grimes, 1991, 124.

⁵⁴ Satprakashananda, 2005, 173.

According to the *Pr bh karas* perception is immediate: “*S k' t prat tiB pratyak'am*”,⁵⁵ while for *Naiy yikas* perception alone is endowed with immediacy (*aparok'atva*). This is acceptable to the *Advaitin*⁵⁶ but he is also eager to prove the immediacy of the word-generated knowledge. Immediacy, on the *Advaitin*'s contention, is not caused by the contact of sense-organ with object. The only criterion of immediacy is the unity of consciousness limited by the object and the consciousness limited by the *vltti*. When both coincide outside the percipient's body it is the case of perception. But this unity needs not be caused exclusively by the sense-organ. *Vltti* should coincide with the object of perception but this can be caused by the authoritative person's statement as well. This being so, the statements “*So' yal DevadattaB*” and “*Tat tvam asi*” can be counted as perception yielding vivid, immediate knowledge. In both cases there is a unity between what is limited by the *vltti* and what is delimited by the object, in the latter case the object being coincidental with the subject.⁵⁷ It may be added here that according to the *Advaitin* the possibility of such an immediate knowledge can be explained with the help of the underlying unity of subject and object. In *Advaita* “the purely epistemological question of perception... is erected on a metaphysical theory of the basic identity of the subject and the object. Man knows because objects are knowable.”⁵⁸ The immediacy of knowledge is even less questionable when we come to the identity statements which are meant to convey the identity of the percipient and the object of knowledge. As a result of hearing such sentence, the hearer realizes himself to be the content of the sentence, as in the case of the tenth rustic who did not know he was the tenth until he was informed about it. This knowledge is even more immediate since its content is identical with cognizing consciousness, which is even stronger proof of immediacy.⁵⁹ Knowledge so interpreted stands for self-experience. Indeed, experience is sometimes

⁵⁵ *PrakaraMa-pañcik* , pp.131-2.

⁵⁶ See *Ved nta-paribh '* on perception.

⁵⁷ *Ved nta-paribh '* , pp.33-4.

⁵⁸ Sundaram, 1984, 36.

⁵⁹ Murty, 1974, 108.

described as culmination of knowledge⁶⁰ or the fruit of knowledge – “*anubhav r ; hal tu jñ na-phalam*”.⁶¹

The attainment of the non-dual experience of Brahman is explained along the same lines. This experience (*anubhava*, *s k' tk ra*) is the result of metaphysical knowledge (*jñ na*) identical with liberation (*mok'a*). aJkara states rather unambiguously that there is no interval between knowing/experiencing Brahman and being liberated: “*rutu dayo brahma-vidy nantaram eva mok'am dar ayanto madhye k ry ntaral v rayanti*”.⁶² This is an integral experience of Brahman as one's own self⁶³ where Brahman is known immediately (*aparok' t*). Sure vara explains immediacy as the absence of distinction between knowing subject, known object and empirical knowledge: “*dl' "a-dar ana-dl y rtha-sambheda-vi' ayasya hi ni' edh y parok' d g r abhinn rtha-grahaM ya tu*.”⁶⁴ Here knowledge of the thing is identical with the thing. Strictly speaking, immediate knowledge is impossible if the object is something foreign to oneself because consciousness alone is immediate. As Sure vara puts it, objects may seem to be immediate being ascertained through mental acts that entirely depend on immediate consciousness.⁶⁵

It has to be noted that the expression “Experience of Brahman” is figurative. tman-Brahman is experience, self-luminous pure awareness which admits no distinction into experiencer and the object of experience. To convey this idea Sure vara chooses to use the word “*anubhava*” not only while describing the nature of tman but even as a synonym of tman in the works of his later period.⁶⁶ The content of this experience is described as blissful pure consciousness: “*Tasm t sarva-duBkha-vinirmukta eva caitany tmako' ham itye' a tm nubhavaB*”.⁶⁷

The immediate cause of *anubhava* according to aJkara and Sure vara is the realization of the import of *mah v kyas*. The

⁶⁰ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, II.1.14.

⁶¹ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, II.3.32.

⁶² *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.4.

⁶³ Murty, 1974, 112.

⁶⁴ *Bh had raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, III.4.17.

⁶⁵ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.115.

⁶⁶ *Taittir yopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.614; SV, 151, 189, 190, 1001, 1002, 1005; *Bh had raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.4.873.

⁶⁷ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, IV.1.2.

number of *mah v kya*s is usually put at four: “*Prajñ na| Brahma*” (Aitareya Upani’ad, III.1.3), “*Aha| Brahm smi*” (Bḥhad raMyaka Upani’ad, I.4.10), “*Tat tvam asi*” (Ch ndogya Upani’ad, VI.8.7), “*Ayam tm Brahma*” (Bḥhad raMyaka Upani’ad, II.5.19; M M; kya Upani’ad, 2). The preceptors of Advaita find “*Tat tvam asi*” the most appealing probably because it is addressed directly to the listener. They make it a stock example of *mah v kya*s. Sure vara likewise prefers it whenever he comes to the explanation of the meaning of *mah v kya*s. At times, however, he analyzes the other: “*Aham Brahm smi*”⁶⁸, “*Ayam tm Brahma*”.⁶⁹ Each of these four is traced to one of the Vedas.⁷⁰ Discovering one *mah v kya* in each Veda seeks to support the claim that every Veda contains and culminates in the teaching of non-duality of individual and universal consciousness. Apart from these four even the famous *via negativa* method of the Bḥhad raMyaka Upani’ad is sometimes used to arrive at this identity. The *neti-neti* method is meant to eliminate the limiting adjuncts (*up dhis*) of Brahman. Once everything other than Brahman including time and space is withdrawn, the identity is automatically established and the intellect rests in tman alone.⁷¹ Formally, however, it is not treated as a *mah v kya*, although it is harnessed for the same purpose. Sure vara, for example, claims that it can bring about liberation, “*netityuktaB kaivalyam sthitaB*”⁷² and in his main treatise labours to interpret it on the pattern of *mah v kya*s,⁷³ saying besides other things that the purport of the *neti-neti* passage of the Bḥhad raMyaka Upani’ad is to indicate Brahman, which is what *mah v kya*s are supposed to do.

*Mah v kya*s are essentially the same in meaning and this meaning constitutes the purport of the Upani’ads: “*Ita ca tat tvam asi v kyaṃ vastu-param evety ha sarvopani’ad iti*”.⁷⁴ The Advaitin is convinced that Vedic revelation in order to justify the name of *pram Ma* should convey a uniform message. If there is no unity of meaning in the Vedas they cannot produce any

⁶⁸ Bḥhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ‘ya-v rtika, I.4.1428-30.

⁶⁹ Sambandha-v rtika, 861.

⁷⁰ Satprakashananda, 2005, 200.

⁷¹ Bḥhad raMyakopani’ad- aJkara-bh ‘ya, II.3.6.

⁷² Nai’ karmya-siddhi, II.116.

⁷³ Bḥhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ‘ya-v rtika, II.3.214-34.

⁷⁴ Ch ndogyopani’ad- aJkara-bh ‘ya, VI.16.3.

definite knowledge, in the absence of which one cannot treat it as a *pram Ma*. In the Advaitin's view knowledge of the self is what runs through all the Upani'adic texts making them a source of valid cognition.

The Advaitin claims that liberation can be of only one type.⁷⁵ It does not differ from person to person. It is not associated with particular space and time.⁷⁶ Nor it depends on the embodied or disembodied condition. The difference between *j vanmukta* and *videhamukta* is only in the presence or absence of mind and body, not in the content of realization.⁷⁷ This becomes clearer if one remembers that on the Advaitin's view bondage likewise has a single and uniform nature – ignorance – and there cannot be any liberation other than eradication of this ignorance.⁷⁸ The Advaitin's method is to a great extent based on his metaphysics. The only thing that can help attain liberation is knowledge since it is antagonistic to ignorance and there is no source of this knowledge other than Veda. Ignorance is destroyable while in body (and probably only while in body).

Sure vara often treats ignorance as a mere absence of knowledge (*abh va*).⁷⁹ It is a non-entity and hence cannot be revealed by *pram Mas*, which by their nature establish the previously unknown yet existent entities.⁸⁰ *abda* as a *pram Ma* is applicable to the self because it is unknown in its entirety, the "I"-feeling being just a pale shadow of the true self. The only thing *pram Ma* can do with respect to ignorance is to cancel it.⁸¹ Ignorance gives rise to non-self which is explained by Sure vara as consisting of the empirical knower, knowledge and the objects

⁷⁵ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, III.4.52.

⁷⁶ *Na de a-nimitta-vi e'am api sal k rtayati, Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, III.4.51.

⁷⁷ *B\had raMyakopani'ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, IV.4.6.

⁷⁸ Says Sure vara: *Muktau tamotirekeMa n ntar yo'nya i'yate/ yato'to jñ navidhvastau muktaB sanna vimucyate (B\had raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, IV.4.559).

⁷⁹ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.7, sambandha. Here Sure vara has his master's backing who at times calls *sal s ra*, the projection of ignorance, "aviveka", the lack of discriminating knowledge (*Upade a-s hasr*, padya, XVI.61). The later Advaita insists on the positive nature of ignorance and declares it *bh var pa* to distinguish it from the *ajñ na* of Naiy yikas. Vide *Ved ntas ra*, p. 52.

⁸⁰ *B\had raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I. 4.258.

⁸¹ *B\had raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.4.257.

of knowledge.⁸² The way existent things like pots are first unknown and then revealed through the operation of perception etc., the self, previously unknown, is revealed with the help of Vedic testimony when non-Self is sublated. In this respect *abda* is radically different from other *pram* Mas. It does not reveal Brahman as object since it cannot be known the way objective entities are known. Rather it empties it of what it is not – ignorance. Sure vara stresses that the knowledge of Absolute consists in the removal of ignorance obscuring it. It is not an arrival or creation of something new since Brahman is of the nature of ever-present awareness. The knowledge of eternal entity identical with consciousness cognizing it makes sense only if it is interpreted as removal of ignorance.⁸³ The negative function of Advaitic means is expressed in that it removes the obstacles (*pratibandha*) to knowledge and liberation.⁸⁴ The obstacles are in the long run imaginary – ignorance and different misconceptions regarding the self. The identification with non-self having been stopped, there is nothing to further obstruct one's natural identity with the self.

Removal of ignorance is achieved with the help of *akha'*; *k ra-vltti*. *aJkara* describes what is probably the nature of this *vltti*, although he does not use the term – it is a modification of the intellect which is both pervaded by the reflection of consciousness (the way any *vltti* is in the act of cognition) and directed towards consciousness. The self is known with the help of *vltti* which is, in a way, not different from it: “*dl ir ev nubh yeta sven nubh v tman* ”.⁸⁵ In it internal organ expands to correspond to what it is trying to objectify. Sure vara highlights the difference between the final *vltti* (although he does not call it *akhaM*; *k ra-vltti*) and ordinary *vlttis*. The latter are conditioned by their objects while the former has only self for its support: “*bodho' yam... tmaik lambanaB*”.⁸⁶ He also mentions that in it self is known without being objectified⁸⁷ and it is free from *rajas* and *tamas*.⁸⁸

⁸² *Bh*had *raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.4.282.

⁸³ *Nai' karmya-siddhi*, II.105.

⁸⁴ *Bh*had *raMyakopani' ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, II.5.15.

⁸⁵ *Upade a-s hasr*, *padya*, XVIII.205.

⁸⁶ *Nai' karmya-siddhi*, IV.55.

⁸⁷ *Ity aj nan vijan ti yaB*, *Nai' karmya-siddhi*, IV.53.

⁸⁸ *Taittir yopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.108.

As a result of the operation of this *vltti* ignorance veiling tman-Brahman is dispelled. All the same, being itself a product of ignorance, the final “suicidal” modification of internal organ⁸⁹ also disappears.⁹⁰ So, by knowing Brahman the Advaitin means cancellation of *avidyā* with the help of *vltti* corresponding to Brahman in which process the *vltti* itself perishes. What destroys *avidyā* is not the modification of internal organ per se but the reflection of consciousness in it. *Vltti* is not contradictory to ignorance, while consciousness is. Nevertheless, *vltti* is indispensable in this process as it channels the stream of awareness, directing it towards what is being ascertained. Appaya D k’ita illustrates it with a simile of a straw and a lens. The light of consciousness focused with the appropriate *vltti* destroys ignorance the way sunlight focused with a lens burns a straw.⁹¹ Pure consciousness, the very stuff of Brahman, is the foundation of both empirical knowledge and ignorance: “*Bodh bodhau yato dl'au sv nubh tyanus rataB.*”⁹² It is the locus of *avidyā* and cannot be its remover. But the mental modification saturated with the reflection of consciousness is contradictory to ignorance, not being its locus:

“*Ajñ na-virodhi jñ na| hi na caitanyam tra| kintu vltti-pratibimbita| , tacca na'vidyā rayaB, yacc 'vidyā rayaB tacca n 'jñ na-virodhi*”.⁹³

As Brahma remarks, transcendental knowledge or pure consciousness “...is not only not opposed to ignorance but is its substratum. It is only the modalized consciousness of Brahman (*brahm k ra-vltti*) that opposes itself to ignorance (*avidyā*) and removes ignorance by generating knowledge of Brahman”.⁹⁴ This is exactly what Sure vara means when he says that the self becomes capable of dispelling ignorance only when erected on the pedestal of *pram Ma*. Without *pram Ma* it tolerates, as it were, ignorance, although it is of the nature of illumination:

⁸⁹ Chatterjee, 1993, 64.

⁹⁰ With its cause destroyed, it cannot persist long, says Sure vara: “*Ni'edhya-hetau pradhvaste ni'edho'pi nivartate.*” (*Bḷhad rāMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.3. 196). Also *Taittir yopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.607.

⁹¹ *Siddh nta-le a-saḷ graha*, III.12.

⁹² *Sambandha-v rtika*, 548.

⁹³ Madhus dana Sarasvat , *Advaita-siddhi*, Sastri, 1917, 557.

⁹⁴ Brahma, 2005, 190-1.

“Pram Ma-phalak r ; hal svatamo hanti n nyath / vastu
mey bhisambaddhal m nal tadvat tamopanut// Avabuddha-
svabh vo’pi sahate n vabuddhat m/ vastutv n na tamo hanti
tath pi pramitil vin //”.⁹⁵

AkhaM; k ra-vltti, therefore, is purely transitional.⁹⁶ It marks a transition from cognition (which naturally yields to analysis along the subject-object lines) to the experience of Brahman (which does not admit of subject-object distinction and does not stand analysis). It is characterized by immediacy borrowed from Brahman which it unveils.⁹⁷

What remains unclear, however, is the precise mechanism of mind’s ascertaining Brahman. The later tradition opines that Brahman is vltti-vy pya (ascertainable through the vltti), although not phala-vy pya (ascertainable without the assumption of particular form by mind).⁹⁸ This makes Brahman knowable in principle, even with the medium of mind, yet not the way empirical objects are. What is beyond doubt is the indispensability of vltti. Experience of Brahman is the only epistemological means of identification with the object. Therefore, identity with Brahman cannot be established without vltti.⁹⁹

It may be asked here why at all verbal testimony is capable of revealing Brahman. There may be two possible replies to it. On the one hand, there is an observation that knowledge of anything, not necessarily Brahman, is possible only in the framework of language. Empirical world is a conglomerate of name and form (n ma-r pa) which are glossed by Sure vara as the statement and the stated.¹⁰⁰ Their close interrelation presupposes that access to the one is automatically access to the other. On the other hand, there is a conviction – as old as Indian thought – that speech in its highest aspect is rooted in Brahman. Already in the Sal hitas speech was eulogized as having its supreme abode in Brahman¹⁰¹ or having its three fourths

⁹⁵ Bṛhad rāmyakopani’ ad-bh ‘ya-v rtika, IV.3.181-2.

⁹⁶ Sinha, 1983, 145.

⁹⁷ Pañcada , VII.49.

⁹⁸ Pañcada , VII.90-2.

⁹⁹ Chatterjee, 1993, 35.

¹⁰⁰ Bṛhad rāmyakopani’ ad-bh ‘ya-v rtika, I.4.391.

¹⁰¹ Brahm ‘yal vacaB paramal vyoma, mgveda, I.164.35.

concealed therein.¹⁰² In the Upani'ads speech is sometimes identified with Brahman – “*V g vai Brahmeti*”.¹⁰³ The variety of philosophical traditions based on Vedic revelation praise speech as a gateway to liberation¹⁰⁴ and for any orthodox Indian philosopher the argument that speech is a self-revelation of Brahman precisely because it is rooted there sounds quite convincing.

What kind of knowledge has liberating capacity? How can a verbal communication, even if it conveys a fact, affect the hearer's understanding and behavior so profoundly? It is often stated by aJkara and Sure vara that a mere grasping, albeit thorough, is sufficient to achieve the goal: there is nothing to be done apart from remaining merely in the knowledge of the meaning that is revealed by words themselves.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, much remains undisclosed here and it can hardly be the preceding discipline that is supposed to prepare the disciple's mind that makes the difference. Those who advocate direct agency of the relevant ruti texts do not go beyond stating that experience is the crown of knowledge. The verbal knowledge one receives every day hardly results in one's experiencing what is communicated. One's understanding of the expressed fact remains superficial and one's old convictions contrary to the newly learnt fact may well persist on the subconscious level and even resurface when the circumstances are suitable. In any case understanding cannot be a substitute for direct experience.

In the attempt to solve the problem Burton applies the division of knowledge into knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance proffered by some modern epistemologists (like Bertrand Russell) to liberating knowledge in Indian context. His analysis is largely restricted to various Buddhist schools but is likely to offer valuable clues considering the consensus among the traditional Indian philosophers on the role of knowledge in attaining liberation. According to Burton knowledge by description comes from a trustworthy authoritative source and produces belief in some fact. It is a propositional

¹⁰² *mgveda*, I.164.45.

¹⁰³ *B\had raMyaka Upani'ad*, IV.1.2.

¹⁰⁴ *Tad dv ram apavargasya – V kyapad ya*, I.14.

¹⁰⁵ *MuM; aka-Upani'ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.5.

knowledge which does not have epistemic primacy, which rightfully belongs to the knowledge by acquaintance.¹⁰⁶

It is still a controversial issue whether or not knowledge can be equated with experience/acquaintance but what matters is the inextricable link between knowledge and experience in the context of liberating knowledge advocated by various Indian traditions. The scriptural statement displays its power when it is internalized, when its content is actualized by the hearer. Put in different words, the liberating potency lies not in merely remaining in the knowledge of the words of relevant scriptural passages but in remaining in the existential knowledge of the meaning of these words.¹⁰⁷ This seems to agree with aJkara's interpretation of *jñ na* and *vijñ na*, which he distinguishes as the understanding of the meaning of scriptural words as such and conversion of this understanding into personal experience:

“*Jñ na| strokta-pad rth n | parijñ na| vijñ na| tu jñ t n | tathaiva sv nubhava-karaMam.*”¹⁰⁸

It is also remarked that to be liberating the knowledge of one's identity with Brahman should be as certain, vivid and presumably uninterrupted as the perception of and identification with the physical body in the state of bondage:

“*Deh tmajñ navaj jñ na| deh tmajñ na-b dhakam/ tmanyeva bhaved yasya sa necchannapi mucyate*”.¹⁰⁹

Thus, it is clear that in the Advaitic context *jñ na* is not a mere illumination based on the distinction between subject and predicate.¹¹⁰

The method advocated by Sure vara (*jñ na* in the third sense in the above given classification) presupposes that the aspirant discriminates between eternal and non-eternal, is indifferent to the rewards he might reap here and hereafter, is desirous of liberation and has acquired six mental disciplines: *ama* (physical restraint), *dama* (mental restraint), *uparati* (satisfaction), *titik'* (strength in the face of hardships), *sam dh na* (concentration) and *raddh* (faith). Sure vara

¹⁰⁶ Burton, 2004, 33.

¹⁰⁷ Comans, 2000, 315.

¹⁰⁸ *Bhagavad-g t - aJkara-bh 'ya*, VI.8.

¹⁰⁹ *Upade a-s hasr*, padya, IV.5.

¹¹⁰ Nayak, 1995, 75.

mentions them¹¹¹ usually abbreviating them as *am di-s dhana*.¹¹² He refrains from discussing them in detail probably considering his master's rather detailed treatment of them sufficient. He saves his energies for the analysis of the comprehension of the meaning of the *mah v kya*s that alone have the power of producing savoury knowledge: "*Sarvo' ya! mahim vedyo v kyasyaiva yathoditaB*".¹¹³ At one point, however, he gives graphic descriptions of the misery of lying in the womb, the craze of youth, the suffering and ignominy of the old age and the travails of the journey in the afterlife saying that this will generate one's desire for liberation (*mumuk' utva*),¹¹⁴ which happens to be one of the practitioner's prerequisites according to aJkara. So, this may be regarded as his "*mumuk' utva* methodology".

Sure vara first enquires into the reasons of non-comprehension of the meaning of the *mah v kya*. The main reason is non-comprehension of the meaning of words constituting it, since Sure vara believes that sentential meaning is nothing but the combined meaning of words constituting it. He identifies the main impediment as not knowing the meaning of "*tvam*" and the words corresponding to it in other *mah v kya*s. It is the host of wrong notions like "I", "mine" etc. that obscure the true meaning of "*tvam*", "*aham*" etc. *AhaJk ra* – ego, the mistaken notion of the self – is called the root of evil since it is here that the self and the non-self meet and their mutual superimposition takes place.¹¹⁵ Sure vara focuses on the meaning of "*tvam*" also because it is something one can relate to more easily than to abstract "*tat*" or "*Brahma*". It is also easier to analyze than something outside one's experience. It echoes the opinion of aJkara who says that the meaning of "*tat*" is already known¹¹⁶ and it is the meaning of "*tvam*" that needs to be ascertained.¹¹⁷

To ascertain the meaning of "*tvam*" the *anvaya-vyatireka* (agreement and disagreement) method is employed. The earliest

¹¹¹ *D nto bh tv tataB ntaB tata coparato bhavet, B\had raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, IV.4.1203.

¹¹² *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.4.120.

¹¹³ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.1.

¹¹⁴ *Taittir yopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.190-221.

¹¹⁵ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.53.

¹¹⁶ *Upade a-s hasr*, padya, XVIII.193.

¹¹⁷ *Upade a-s hasr*, padya, XVIII.180.

stric usage of the method was probably made by the Grammarians and is traceable to Patañjali.¹¹⁸ In grammatical tradition the method of *anvaya-vyatireka* “...used to establish the meaningfulness of components to ascribe individual meanings to components, then, consists in observing the concurrent occurrence (*anvaya*) of a certain meaning and a certain linguistic unit and the absence (*vyatireka*) of a meaning and a unit.”¹¹⁹ As is not uncharacteristic of Indian thought, the method was borrowed by other major *stras* and utilized in their linguistic and other theories. Advaita applies this method in its ascertainment of the true nature of the self as pure awareness.

But the Advaitin’s usage of *anvaya-vyatireka* is different from its usage in the grammatical *stra*. The method is usually applied to illustrate the cause-effect relation between two things (*k rya-k raMa-sambandha*) as well as their mutual existence and non-existence (*vy pya-vy paka-sambandha*).

In Advaita, however, it is used to demonstrate the existence of two entities (the self and the non-self) independently from one another: when X occurs Y occurs (*anvaya*); when X occurs Y is absent (*vyatireka*).¹²⁰ In the Advaitin’s opinion “What is invariably present in all our experience and what is not subject to change is *anvaya*”.¹²¹ Sure vara makes extensive use of the method explaining the process of disidentification of the self and the non-self. The process starts with what is the most external and the easiest to discard as the non-self – physical body. The body is perceived by the same organs that perceive purely external objects with which identification is unimaginable. In experience it is found adventitious since it is not cognized in dream and sleep. Thus, body is known and seen while it is insisted that self is the knower and the seer.¹²²

Sure vara then proceeds to draw distinction between the self and subtle body. In the absence of discrimination mental states along with the notions “I” and “mine” are routinely transferred to transcendental self and in some schools are counted as its properties. However, since they keep changing they are

¹¹⁸ *Mah bh 'ya*, II.346, I.219.

¹¹⁹ Cardona, 1967-8, 337.

¹²⁰ Comans, 1996, 60.

¹²¹ *Nai' karma-siddhi*.

¹²² *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.19.

impermanent and what is impermanent cannot be construed as a property of a permanent entity. Moreover, they cannot be considered properties of the self for the simple reason that they are perceived or known as objects of knowledge (*karmatvena upalabhyatv t*) whereas in the Advaitin's opinion transcendental Self stands for ultimate subjectivity.¹²³ Sure vara identifies inwardness (*pratyaktva*) and consciousness (*bodha*) stressing its unobjectifiability.¹²⁴ So, "I"-feeling is the property not of the transcendental but of the empirical self.

There would be a chance of compromise here if we were to admit the possibility of the self's being both subject and object as reflected in the expression "I know myself". Besides reiterating that the self cannot be subject and object simultaneously Sure vara states that even if the self were assumed to have parts, qualitatively part could not be different from the whole and would be bound to be pure consciousness.¹²⁵ It may be proposed that self is subject and object in succession. However, for the Advaitin there is a radical discontinuity between the seer and the seen. The knower can never be reduced to the known. The self is *alupta-dl''i* – of uninterrupted vision.¹²⁶ On the other hand, nothing can turn the unconscious known into the conscious knower. Being opposed to one another they cannot exchange places even for a moment. Besides, the succession would imply the incongruity of there being the seer without the seen and vice versa alternatively – something, which is not found in common experience.

Internal organ submits to the same argument as a physical body: it is adventitious since it is not found in deep sleep and hence cannot be claimed to be a quality of eternal self. Sure vara renounces the Ny ya-M m l s theory that the self can be sometimes endowed with consciousness, sometimes free from it just like a mango fruit that is seen to be green first and mellow later. It is unacceptable to anyone who bases his thought on the Upani'adic tradition which presents the self as an entity of homogeneous nature. Mango changes its colour because it is of composite nature so that the comparison with self falls through.¹²⁷

¹²³ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.22.

¹²⁴ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.14.

¹²⁵ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.26.

¹²⁶ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.41.

¹²⁷ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.34.

The adventitious character of internal organ makes it impossible to consider it an attribute (*vi e' aMa*) of the self. Attribute is invariably connected with the object it qualifies. Blueness, for example, cannot be taken away from the blue lotus even for a short while. Quality and the qualified belong to the same ontological level. Were internal organ as real as the self, even *ruti* would not be potent to annihilate it. But the experience of sleep disproves its reality and its invariable association with the self. Internal organ as well as the multitude of objects it cognizes appear and disappear. Therefore, they cannot be as real as what witnesses their appearance and disappearance. Therefore, internal organ has to be treated as *up dhi* (adjunct) of the self.¹²⁸ Adjunct's association with what it is superimposed upon is dependent on the lack of discrimination and ends with the advent of discrimination.

Thus, the method of *anvaya-vyatireka* helps to gradually divest "I" from "this" and to ascertain the element of pure subjectivity in what is a blend of objectivity and subjectivity. Sure vara does not catalogue the varieties of *anvaya-vyatireka* the way Madhus dana Sarasvat does. The latter lists altogether five varieties of this method: *dl g-dl ya-*, *s k' -s k' ya-*, *gam p yi-tadavadhi-*, *anuvltta-vy vltta-*, *duBkhi-paramaprem spada-anvaya-vyatireka*.¹²⁹ Except, perhaps, for the last one Sure vara utilizes them with correctness and efficiency: *dl g-dl ya-* (*Nai' karma-siddhi*, II. 19; 22; III. 56), *s k' -s k' ya-* (*Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II. 4.343), *gam p yi-tadavadhi-* (*Nai' karma-siddhi*, III. 55), *anuvltta-vyavltta-anvaya-vyatireka* (*Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II. 4.125).

He also uses it for reasons other than identification of true self, i.e. to establish the preeminence of *pr Ma* over other sense-organs¹³⁰ and the relation between *pr Ma* and *d man* etc.¹³¹

Yet Sure vara is acutely aware of the limitations of reasoning and devotes considerable time to proving that it can be at the most valuable and indispensable link in the chain of

¹²⁸ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.94.

¹²⁹ *Da a lok*, p.70.

¹³⁰ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.3.19.

¹³¹ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II. 2.21.

Advaitic method¹³² and not a means of attaining *mok'a*. He unambiguously states that the only result of reasoning (and by reasoning he means *anvaya-vyatireka*) is discrimination of the self and the non-self: “*Sarvasyaiv ' num na-vy p rasya phalam iyad eva yad viveka-grahaMam.*”¹³³ It does not, unlike in S l khya, result in liberation. The quest should proceed beyond discriminatory vision towards the unitary experience which is obtainable from *mah v kya*s alone. Discriminatory cognition is necessarily characterized by difference (*bheda*) which the Advaitin does not admit in his conception of the ultimate reality. Perception of difference is a vestige of ignorance that has to be rooted out. Reasoning cannot remove the dualistic world of bondage and suffering. It only helps to identify the self in the stream of non-self. The very cognition of difference between the self and the non-self arises in what is non-self. If it remains rooted in the seed of bondage how can it be expected to uproot the bondage. In reality discriminatory cognition is not better than even erroneous cognition and one who relies on it in the struggle out of bondage is like a hare who thinks he might escape death by merely closing his eyes.¹³⁴ The self's existence and nature can be inferred but its special features like non-duality and blissfulness cannot be experienced through inference. Sure vara claims that inference can yield only mediate knowledge – mediate because of the mediation of the *liJga* – while the goal of the Advaitin's method is attainment of direct insight into the nature of the self. So, inferring the self, however precisely, does not make one happy.¹³⁵ Reasoning, forever limited and capable of being only a preparatory step, cannot leave the hearing of *mah v kya* without scope. To him who has been convinced, in however abstract a manner, of the opposition between the self and the non-self the *ruti* not only says what the self is but generates a direct insight into its nature – the insight that is free from the least doubt: “*S k' d aparok' t karatala-nyast malakavat pratip dayati.*”¹³⁶

¹³² *Anvaya-vyatirek bhy l vin v ky rtha-bodhanam ... na sy t, Nai' karma-siddhi*, II. 9.

¹³³ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II. 96, sambandha.

¹³⁴ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, IV.15,16.

¹³⁵ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.57.

¹³⁶ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.47-8, sambandha.

Mah v kya is addressed to someone who has mastered the above-mentioned six mental disciplines and applied the inferential method of *anvaya-vyatireka*. The process of understanding of *mah v kya* has, according to Sure vara, three phases:¹³⁷

1. *Sam n dhikaraMya-jñ na* (which is the knowledge of grammatical coordination).

Grammatical coordination gives one a hint that two words, although having different denotation, may have one referent. Bringing of two words together with the help of grammatical structures is a necessary precondition of the realization that they signify one entity. As was suggested, grammatical coordination propounded by Sure vara was probably the influence of his master.¹³⁸ In his analysis of the *mah v kya* aJkara mentions co-reference of the words “*tat*” and “*tvam*” indicated by the word “*asi*” which he calls “*tulyan ; atva*”(collocation).¹³⁹

2. *Vi e'aMa-vi e'ya-bh va-jñ na* (the knowledge of the relation of the qualifier and the qualified/ subject-predicate). In the *mah v kya* the word “*tvam*” is the subject qualified by the word “*tat*”. When two words enter the subject-predicate relation their meanings are transferred to one another and the opposing qualities are negated. The stock example of this relation is “*n lam utpalam*” (blue lotus). Once the two are combined, it is understood that what is blue is lotus and what is lotus is blue. On the other hand, non-blueness is removed from the meaning of “lotus” and non-lotusness from the meaning of “blue”. In the same way the meanings of “*tvam*” and “*tat*” become blended and mutually qualified. In the process the word “*tvam*” comes to acquire the meaning “free from suffering” due to its proximity to and its being qualified by the word “*tat*”, while the latter acquires the meaning of inwardness being juxtaposed with and related in the above-mentioned way to the word “*tvam*”.¹⁴⁰ Thus, *vi e'aMa-vi e'ya-bh va* is “a stage of unitary judgement” when otherwise disconnected words are apprehended as connected as substantive and adjective.¹⁴¹ However, the subject-predicate relation has its limitations when applied to the *mah v kya*. It gives rise to the

¹³⁷ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.3.

¹³⁸ Mayeda, 1980-1, 151.

¹³⁹ *Upade a-s hasr*, padya, XVIII.169,194.

¹⁴⁰ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.10.

¹⁴¹ Roodurmun, 2002, 215.

sentential, related meaning where the two – blueness and lotusness – are distinguished. They represent two independent things combined but also found outside each other's boundaries: lotuses can be white while blueness can belong to a pot.

3. *Lak'ya-lak'aMa-jñ na* (the knowledge of implication and what is implied). Application of *lak'aM* is of arch-importance for the Advaitin who is determined to extract non-relational (*asal sl''a*) meaning from *mah v kya*. In general, *lak'aM* is important for any philosophical school that believes in anything either completely ineffable or at least not easily expressible in popular parlance. This explains why *lak'aM* being quite understandably a mainstay of any manual on poetics, also found its recognition in almost every major school of Indian philosophy. The detailed theories of *lak'aM* are found with Naiyayikas,¹⁴² Grammarians¹⁴³ and M m l sakas.¹⁴⁴ There is also some discussion on the topic in the writings of M dhyamikas¹⁴⁵ and Vijñānavādins.¹⁴⁶ The early interest of Indian philosophers in *lak'aM* can be explained by the necessity to explain some Vedic passages that are obscure and contradictory to what is obvious. For M m l s *lak'aM* has a purely exegetical value. Advaita goes several steps further. It admits the ineffability of Brahman and recognizes *lak'aM* as the only possible device to enable one to have a discourse about it. It also makes *lak'aM* a vital part of its method without which Brahman is not realizable.

There are two major conditions that sanction the use of *lak'aM* :

(1). The inapplicability or the unsuitability of the primary meaning in the context (*mukhyartha-bheda*). The mere contradiction of the primary sense does not sanction the use of *lak'aM*. Some cases can be solved by resorting to inference and presumption. All the same, the Advaitin insists that when it comes to grasping the meaning of the *mah v kya*s, the inapplicability of the primary sense necessitates the application of *lak'aM*.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² *Nyaya-sutra*, II.2.62.

¹⁴³ *Mahabharata*, II, Kielhorn, 1962, 218.

¹⁴⁴ *M m l s -sutra*, I.4.23.

¹⁴⁵ *Vigraha-vartan*, Johnston&Kunst, 1978, 43,56.

¹⁴⁶ Sthiramati on *Trilokī*, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Bhat, 1973, 132.

(2). Some relation between the primary meaning and the implied referent of the word.¹⁴⁸ These are agreed upon by both rhetoricians and philosophers and stipulated by the representatives of the Advaita tradition.¹⁴⁹ It is also noteworthy that since word has secondary meaning only when used in a sentence, *lak' aM* is a function of a sentence, not of a single word.¹⁵⁰ Before applying *lak' aM* it is necessary to look into the reasons for its usage in respect of tman-Brahman. The Advaitin is convinced that no language other than a figurative one is applicable to it. No word is capable of denoting it. It is said to be not of the nature of word – *a abd dy tmaka*.¹⁵¹ Sure vara lists the conditions for denotation and proceeds to demonstrate that they are not found in case of Brahman. *Sambandha* (relation of the sixth case type) like in *R ja-puru' a* (king's man) is inapplicable to Brahman which is self-existent and does not serve someone else's purpose. Strictly speaking, it is not related even to its own M y , the very question of their relation being possible only in the state of ignorance. Class feature (*j ti*) is not found in Brahman which is unique and has nothing alongside it to be compared with. Quality (*guMa*) is likewise alien to Brahman which is a qualityless and attributeless entity not admitting internal division along the substance-quality lines. Action (*kriy*) is impossible for Brahman, which is viewed as a multiplicity of agents only due to superimposition, remaining all the same *akriya* (actionless) and *ak raka* (free from the factors of action).¹⁵² The last reason for denotation is convention (*r ; hi*). The reason why it is denied vis-à-vis Brahman is perhaps that convention is possible with respect to what is a tangible object of daily transaction (*vyavah ra*). The unknown cannot, in principle, be an object of convention, which depends for its function on regular and collective dealing with its object.¹⁵³

There are some additional reasons why primary sense should be abandoned in the case of *mah v kya*. Firstly, it is opposed to what the sentence attempts to establish. The Advaitin

¹⁴⁸ Raja, 2000, 231-2.

¹⁴⁹ *V kyavltti*, 47; p.243.

¹⁵⁰ Bhattacharyya, 1983, 85.

¹⁵¹ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.4.7.839.

¹⁵² *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.57, See also “*ni' kriyo' k rako' dvayaB*”, *Upade a-s hasr* , padya, XVII.80.

¹⁵³ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.103 and *Candrik thereon*. Also *Taittir yopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.596, 598.

tries to prove that *mah v kya* conveys the knowledge of non-dual blissful self. If this knowledge does not arise from the sentence interpreted in the primary sense, it should be discarded in favour of implied sense. Secondly, it is not conducive to the attainment of liberation, which is likewise taken to be a purpose of *mah v kya*. If the primary meanings of “*tvam*” and “*tat*” are maintained, the words will not be able to be related at all as there is a glaring contradiction between their primary meaning and the identity conveyed by their grammatical coordination and the finite form of the verb (*asi*). If identity is not established, *avidyā* will remain undisputed and liberation unattained. Thirdly, primary meaning does not add to what is supplied by other *pramāṇas*. If it is insisted upon, *mah v kya* will be reduced to a tautological statement. One can know oneself as suffering and limited even without resorting to *rūti*. By the same token mediacy (*pṛokṣya*) and otherness-than-self or duality (*sadvit yatva*) are understood the moment one hears the word “*tat*” outside the Vedic context.¹⁵⁴ The words “*tvam*” and “*tat*” convey the ideas of the immediate transmigratory self and anything remote in space and time respectively. If these are preserved, then the words will not be combined into a sentence, as the condition of *yogyatā* (semantical compatibility) will be unfulfilled. One cannot appeal to the example “*nā lam utpalam*” because the primary meanings of “*nā*” and “*utpala*” are not incompatible. Therefore, to enable a *mah v kya* to convey sense and to prove the *pramāṇa*-status of *rūti* one has to sacrifice the primary meanings of words and to apply *lakṣaṇam* while interpreting it.

This proved, it is necessary to define the primary meaning of “*tvam*” before discarding it altogether, since the opponent (presumably the Naiyāyika and the Mīmāṃsaka) tries to salvage his view of the self as possessed of qualities like cognition etc. and to prove that such a self is identical with Ultimate Reality. Sureśvara is obliged to reiterate that “I”-notion (*aham-pratyaya*) is not a quality of self but of internal organ. He claims that the illustration “I know myself” advanced by the opponent does not prove the latter’s point at all. The self cannot be imagined to be capable of knowing its qualities. If the self had qualities it would not be able to perceive them since it is indivisible (*abhinna* *t*), homogeneous (*sama* *t*) and partless (*nirāl* *atv* *t*). The quality

¹⁵⁴ *Nai’ karmya-siddhi*, III.23-4 and *Candrikā* thereon.

perceived implies that it is perceived outside self in some object (however proximate to the self). Internal organ is such object for the self – proximate yet different from self and therefore knowable.¹⁵⁵ The opponent may modify his stance by trying to distinguish between the “I”-notion and what he held to be qualities of the self (cognition etc.) and is now ready to consign to the domain of internal organ. Empirical usage sanctions the connection between the self and “I”-notion. But if it had been so, says Sure vara, self would have been ascribed many a quality on the basis of empirical usage which is absurd. Just because one says “I am fair” one cannot infer that fairness is the quality of self.¹⁵⁶ Sure vara is trying to stress the limitations of *vyavah ra*, which, ultimately, belongs to the realm of nescience. Linguistic communication and suchlike transactions are possible only in the context of superimposition. If one indulges in metaphysical speculations relying on linguistic conventions that are ignorance-ridden the results will be as ridiculous as the one mentioned above. So no portion of the empirical self is meant to be identical with the Absolute in the *mah v kya* and in the process of disidentification internal organ fares no better than even gross body. Thus, the primary meaning of “*tvam*” is found unsuitable and has to be discarded.

For *lak'aM* to function, there should be some relation between the primary and implied meaning of the word. The word “*GaJg*” in “*GaJg y l gho'aB*” (the cowherds’ hamlet on the Ganges) implies the bank of the river because of the proximity of the two. Implication is not altogether arbitrary. There has to be some sort of association like in the case of the river and its bank; otherwise implication will be too abstruse to serve as means of conveying one’s idea. In the context of the *mah v kya*, then, there should be a relation between the primary meaning of “*tvam*” (the empirical self plagued with suffering and subject to transmigration) and what it implies – the transcendental self or Brahman. That presents some problem for the Advaitin since he denies any relation between the self and the non-self on the *p ram rthika* level. The non-self is reducible to *avidy*, and the Advaitin, as was illustrated in the previous chapter, feels uncomfortable when he faces the related problems of the origin,

¹⁵⁵ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.26.

¹⁵⁶ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.28.

object and substrate of *avidyā*. The charge that there is no relation between the self and the non-self threatens to demolish the whole concept of Veda as revelation since in that case *lak' aM* will be inapplicable and *mah v kya*s as interpreted through the prism of denotation will be reduced to mere restatements of what can be known otherwise. Hence, Sure vara has to concede that such relation exists. He acknowledges that there is a relation of the *avabh saka-avabh sya* type between the self and the internal organ signified by the word “*tvam*”. The self enables and illumines in a rather disinterested way the modifications of internal organ superimposed on and wrongly ascribed to it in common experience.¹⁵⁷ The self, Sure vara says, observes the dance of the internal organs: “*e'a sarvadhiy | nlttam... v k'ate' v k'am Mo'pi*”,¹⁵⁸ which calls to mind danseuse-spectator metaphor of the *S | khya-k rik*.¹⁵⁹ If that qualifies to be called a relation, then there is a relation between them. Although even here Sure vara is careful enough to add “*av k'am Mo'pi*” hinting that from the ultimate standpoint the self does not witness anything and that there is a difference in ontological levels between the activities of internal organs and the self-contained, uninvolved, actionless presence of the Absolute.

This apparent connection between the internal organ and the self serves as a reason for employing *lak' aM* and helps Sure vara to avoid the charge that the self cannot be implied because it cannot be denoted. With the latter Sure vara certainly agrees, saying that the self is free from the reasons for the use of words: “*vidh ta-sarvakalpan -k raMa-sv bh vy d tmanaB*”.¹⁶⁰ Here Sure vara harks back to the Upani'adic view of the ineffability of the self: *upa nto' yam tm*.¹⁶¹ In Sure vara's mind implication is possible even in the absence of denotation on the basis of the discussed connection. Sure vara establishes the invariable concomitance between implication and connection with the primary meaning (*mukhy rtha-sambandha*).

The concomitance between implication and denotation is invariable as long as we do not attempt to imply the self, while

¹⁵⁷ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.60.

¹⁵⁸ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, II.58.

¹⁵⁹ K ., 59.

¹⁶⁰ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III. 99, sambandha.

¹⁶¹ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, III.2.17.

Sure vara-proffered concomitance covers even the self and can, therefore, be taken as a universal rule.¹⁶²

To justify the choice of the word “*tvam*” or “*aham*” for signifying the self Sure vara draws our attention to the similarities between the transcendental self and internal organ. Although doubtlessly material, internal organ is experienced as more inward than material external objects. In the state of wakefulness it is possible not to be aware of external objects while reminiscing or day-dreaming but in both these states internal organ is engaged in creative activities on the basis of impressions stored in it. The same continues in the state of sleep only with more profound abstraction from the world of external objects. Even while the contact with external objects is severed internal organ persists and functions, which demonstrates its inwardness vis-à-vis them. Compared to the self, it still remains external but that does not affect its inwardness in respect of external organs. It is always midway between the self and the objects and in that it is partially inward and is comparable to the self. Sure vara mentions that the inwardness of internal organ is relative while that of the self absolute.¹⁶³ The word “I” denoting primarily internal organ conjures up not only personal associations and feelings that are a legitimate domain of the internal organ but is capable of reminding one of one’s selfhood on a much deeper level. “I”, says Deutsch, “calls for a radical particularity. Its use affirms an inviolable subjective – and finally free – consciousness as the centre of personhood”.¹⁶⁴ The other feature of internal organ that likens it to the self is its extreme subtlety. Unlike external objects it is not known through perception. It is present in all empirical experience except sleep, and from the way it is presented it is understandably treated as immediate. When it operates, no additional cognition is required to know it, since it is obvious, and perceptual activities happen as a result of its activity. It is also true that like the transcendental self it is inward and cannot be grasped by organs of perception that are directed outwards.

There is one more apparent connection between the self and internal organ mentioned by Sure vara. In the method of Advaita internal organ is utilized for self-realization. In fact, it is

¹⁶² *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.98-8 and *Candrikā* thereon.

¹⁶³ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.12.

¹⁶⁴ Deutsch, 1992, 84.

indispensable in the struggle for liberation, which is attained the moment adequate mental modification arises. So, whatever is useful in discovering the self should be, in a way, connected with the self, at least from the practitioner's angle.¹⁶⁵

Finally, being a product of *avidyā*, internal organ is so utterly dependent on the self for its relative existence and operation that it can certainly be viewed as a kind of relation, although a one-way one, between them.

All this gives the Advaitin sufficient ground to choose words denoting empirical self, "T"-notion or internal organ to imply the transcendental self.

The possibility of implication in the case of *mahāvākyas* having been proved, the question arises as to the type of implication that would fit best. There are just three types of implication: Exclusive (*jahallak'āṁ*) as in "*GaJg y l gho'aB*" when primary meaning is completely abandoned; Inclusive (*ajahallak'āṁ*) as in "*Kunt B pravi anti*", when primary meaning is preserved while something else is indicated, and Exclusive-cum-inclusive (*jahad-ajahallak'āṁ* or *bh galak'āṁ*) as in "*So' yal DevadattaB*" when the part of a primary meaning is shed while another is retained. Although this classification is not found in the writings of *aṅkara* or *Surevara*, it is quite clear that they advocate indicative interpretation of the *mahāvākyas*. The choice in favour of the third type of implication was made on the later stage of Advaita.¹⁶⁶ It became the most popular method of interpreting *mahāvākyas*, as it is, indeed, quite comprehensive when it comes to bringing out the essential nature of the object. *Surevara*, however, seems to have a predisposition towards the first type. By way of illustrating the type of implication in the *mahāvākyas*, he mentions the sentences that decidedly contain the *jahallak'āṁ*: "*mañc B kro anti*" and "*Agnis samyag adh te*". The former is a stock example of *jahallak'āṁ* and is similar to "*GaJg y l gho'aB*". In the latter student is compared to fire in which case there is a qualitative transfer (*gauṁ vltti*). Qualitative transfer is justified by the similarity of qualities and does not require retention of the primary meaning of the word. At least in the example in question

¹⁶⁵ *Nai' karmya-siddhi*, II.55.

¹⁶⁶ *Pañcadaśa*, VII.74, *Tattvamasya div kye'u lak'āṁ bh galak'āṁ / so'yam ity div kyasthapadayor iva n par*; Also *Vedāntasāra*, Jacob, 1995, 126.

the primary meaning of the word “Agni” is not retained when the student is indicated by it.

Sure vara’s preference for exclusive implication can be indirectly seen in his treatment of the mechanism of *lak’aM*’s operation. He states unambiguously that in the sentence “This snake is a rope”, snake, albeit spoken of, is not meant to be conveyed. What figures in the *lak’aM* is not the message of the indicative sentence – it is there only to point to something beyond it. *Lak’aM* has only one thing that is desired to be conveyed (*lak’ya*), the rest being barely the means. What indicates and what is indicated are related as the sublated and the sublator. The function of erroneously cognized, ultimately non-existent snake is to point to the rope wherein it is imagined. The sublation of the erroneous cognition of the snake makes the sublation of its substrate possible. Thus, the rope is cognized when the snake superimposed upon it due to superficial similarity and lack of proper conditions for the operation of *pram Ma*, is sublated. In the same way, the “I”-notion denoted by the word “tvam” causes one to cognize transcendental self not otherwise but through its own dissolution, so that the way nothing of the snake remains in the corrected cognition of it as a rope, nothing of a limited, suffering, transmigrating self remains when it is realized to be Brahman.¹⁶⁷

Sure vara is quite clear that the words constituting *mah v kya* surrender their primary, popularly known meaning in their entirety since these are not what *ruti* wishes to convey while establishing identity between them: “*an liJgita-s m nyau na jih sita-v dinau... tattvamau...*”¹⁶⁸ While Sure vara was in favour of Exclusive indication, his disciple Sarvajñ tman acted like a middle link between him and the later tradition that threw its lot with the Exclusive-cum-Inclusive type. Sarvajñ tman seems to be quite ambivalent as he gives his master’s view¹⁶⁹ quoting the examples of what is decidedly Exclusive indication, “The boat makes noise”, “The iron burns”, “The poisonous rope in front” and also applies the third type of indication.¹⁷⁰

Sure vara analyses *mah v kya* into restatement (*anuv da*) and predication (*vidh na*). Technically, restatement plays the role

¹⁶⁷ *Nai’ karma-siddhi*, III.27,43.

¹⁶⁸ *Nai’ karma-siddhi*, III.75.

¹⁶⁹ *Sal k’epa- r raka*, I.169-70.

¹⁷⁰ *Sal k’epa- r raka*, I.151.

of subject (*udde ya*) so that the sentence might follow the subject-predicate pattern. “*Tvam*” constitutes a restatement and the subject of the sentence. According to Sure vara’s interpretation it does not convey any information that could not be procured through alternative means of knowledge. It carries with it the whole host of already familiar associations. Tautological as it might seem, it is, nevertheless, important in producing the desired understanding. It is indication that conveys qualitatively new information, but in the absence of however wrongly understood subject it is bound to remain distant and unconnected with anything known to the hearer. Subject is introduced only to be substituted by the predicate, which alone cannot sublimate the subject unless there is a juxtaposition of and grammatical connection between the two. As Sure vara says, repeat as often as we may the predicate “stump”, we cannot eradicate the erroneous idea of man unless two cognitions (of stump and of man) are brought together and arranged as the sublator and the sublated.¹⁷¹ This also explains why there can not be contradiction in the *mah v kya*. Contradiction is likely to occur between two predicates but not between subject and predicate shorn of their primary meanings. Thus, *ruti* reveals the self by sublating its imperfect perceptual knowledge: “*api pratyak' a-b dhena pravlttiB pratyag tmani*”.¹⁷² But this happens only after the restatement is made, which is necessary to sum up the wrong cognition before it is cancelled.

At this point it is necessary to say more about sublation (*b dha*). What gets sublated is not the object but the wrong notions thereof. Sublation does not necessarily imply disappearance of the object. It is rather percipient’s getting new perspective on the object. As Sarvajñ tman says, nothing changes except the disappearance of *avidy* : “*tava bodha-janmani pur na punas tava ka cid apy ati aya bhavati*”.¹⁷³ This may explain why some aspects of the liberated person’s behaviour remain the same as before self-realization. He perceives the world of duality even after the disappearance of *avidy* , although he considers it in a different light. This prompted Deutsch to redefine sublation (which he on this occasion calls subration) as the mental process

¹⁷¹ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.74.

¹⁷² *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.95.

¹⁷³ *Sal k' epa- r raka*, II.239.

whereby one disvalues some previously appraised object or content of consciousness because of its being contradicted by new experience. Thus, it is not a disappearance of the object, but only its relegation to a lower level in one's value system.¹⁷⁴

The method has to be adjusted to the disciples who differ in their abilities (*adhik ri-bheda*). Sure vara distinguishes four kinds of disciples. Vir j realized the unity of the self by rejecting all the non-self, having been purged of all the impurities that might have obstructed his understanding.¹⁷⁵ Although Sure vara advocates the unavoidability and crucial importance of the *mah v kya* in Vedantic discipline he admits that in the case of Vir j nothing remained to be communicated.¹⁷⁶ The commentator, however, presumes that there was hearing of the *mah v kya* even in the case of Vir j, if Vir j is to be believed to have attained liberation, since there is a qualitative difference between the realization of the absence of non-self and the realization of the self as unsurpassed bliss etc.¹⁷⁷ A certain Pi caka went to the forest for some work and by chance heard the *mah v kya* recited. Since he possessed a certain supersensory power (*at ndriya- akti*) due to some merits accumulated in previous lives, he realized the meaning of the *mah v kya* instantaneously apparently without going through the rigours of spiritual discipline. Then there are the likes of *vetaketu*,¹⁷⁸ who heard the *mah v kya* and understood its import having resorted to the *anvaya-vyatireka* reasoning. It is believed that for *vetaketu* the process of reasoning sufficed and he moved from hearing of the sentence to reasoning and the realization of the sentence-meaning, while typically the sentence is recited to the one who has already gone through the process of reasoning. The fourth category consists of all those aspirants who require additional discipline. Their accumulated merit is limited and does not undermine ignorance sufficiently to allow a single hearing of the *mah v kya* to dispel it. Even though they have already inferred the difference between the self and the non-self with the help of the *anvaya-vyatireka*

¹⁷⁴ Deutsch, 1988, 15; See also the critique of this interpretation of sublation in White, 1981, 190-1.

¹⁷⁵ *Bhāṣya rāmāyaṇa Upaniśad*, I.4.1-2.

¹⁷⁶ *Nai' karmya-siddhi*, III.64.

¹⁷⁷ *Candrikā* on *Nai' karmya-siddhi*, II.4.

¹⁷⁸ *Chāndogya Upaniśad*, VI.1.

method they require repeated hearing (*ravaMa*), an additional course of reasoning (*manana*) and concentration (*nididhy sana*) to bring about the desired result. In this Sure vara follows aJkara who says that the sentence-meaning is not realized as long as the ignorance shrouding the meaning of the constituents of the sentence is not dispelled. The repeated hearing and reasoning help clarify the meanings of *Tat* and *Tvam*. With each repetition a certain wrong notion or doubtful cognition can be shed so that coming out of ignorance becomes a gradual process. It is only the advanced disciples (those who are free from obstructions like ignorance and wrong notions) on whom can dawn the realization of the sentence-meaning after a single hearing.¹⁷⁹

ravaMa is the first and indispensable step in the process of realization of the meaning of the *mah v kya*. aJkara glosses *ravaMa* simply as hearing the *mah v kya* from the Scriptures or teacher.¹⁸⁰ It appears to be a rather simple, unsophisticated interpretation and aJkara is obliged to immediately add that Brahman is realized not through hearing alone but through the combination of hearing, pondering (*manana*) and contemplation (*nididhy sana*).¹⁸¹ From what Sure vara supplies below as well as from the commentarial tradition and the opinion of the members of Sure vara's line,¹⁸² it is clear that Sure vara does not share this simplistic view of *ravaMa*, although at the first instance he ignores the pressing demand to define it.¹⁸³ The oversimplified view of *ravaMa* will be unjustified if we consider the etymology of the word: although the suffix "*ana*" does not in itself suggest repeated action or process and only stresses the meaning of the root, which is action of a particular type, the very idea of action as a process and not a single act or event is subscribed to by Indian grammarians. If we follow the etymology of the word and the opinion of Sure vara and the tradition subsequent to him, *ravaMa* should be taken as a mental activity in the form of enquiry into the import of Upani'adic texts. It first of all implies an apologetical attempt to prove the independent significance of the

¹⁷⁹ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, IV.1.2.

¹⁸⁰ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, II.4.5.

¹⁸¹ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, II.4.5.

¹⁸² Vide nandagiri on the above and *Sal k'epa- r raka*, III.344.

¹⁸³ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.214.

Upani'ads. In a way, most of the Advaitic polemics about the possibility of non-action oriented sentences and statements of facts in secular and Vedic contexts may be viewed as assisting those on the level of *ravaMa*. Sure vara alludes to the six factors assisting in determining the import of Vedic passages current in the *M m l s* tradition:¹⁸⁴ *ruti* (direct scriptural statement), *liJga* (indicative power), *v kya* (syntactical connection), *prakaraMa* (context), *sth na* (position), *sam khy* (name).¹⁸⁵ In *M m l s* these are utilized to determine the precise use of each utterance of the Veda or of the thing/action in the ritual context as well as which of them is subservient to which. Sure vara certainly does not want to get involved in the explanation of ritualistic minutiae and restricts the utilization of these factors to textual interpretation trying to create an independent domain for the *mah v kyas* and related passages in the corpus of the indisputably ritual-oriented Vedic texts. He, however, refrains from explaining how exactly he applies these factors while interpreting the texts. It may be supposed that since on the *M m l s* view each preceding factor is more authoritative than the succeeding ones, Sure vara tries to convey that as direct assertion of the scripture has ultimate authority in the field of *Dharma* and Brahman, there is no reason to doubt the validity of scriptural statements regarding the underlying unity of *j va* and Brahman.

ravaMa is to be followed by *manana*. Once the meaning of Upani'adic passages has been ascertained, one should convince oneself about the plausibility of the heard message. Reflection is called for to establish the truthfulness and non-contradictory nature of what is communicated: “*gam rtha-vini cityai mantavya iti bhaMyate*”.¹⁸⁶ This stage is psychologically important for the aspirant: if one retains doubts about the plausibility of the message, if one is not convinced about its actuality, one cannot proceed towards its realization. It is the nature of human mind to seek justification for anything it is involved in. As Brahma aptly remarks: “Reflection or *manana* implies a rational justification of the subject, without which it can never have a permanent hold on the mind”.¹⁸⁷ It does not follow

¹⁸⁴ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.214.

¹⁸⁵ *M m l s -s tras*, III.3.14.

¹⁸⁶ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.214.

¹⁸⁷ Brahma, 2005, 217.

that Ultimate Reality should be necessarily rational. This was never a conclusion of the Advaitic tradition. What it implies is that there is nothing impossible in the content of Vedānta, nothing downright absurd that might discourage the seeker from lending his ear to the Upaniṣadic sayings.

Manana gains in importance when considered in the context of one's practice. For a proposition to become true, or for a thought to become knowledge, there should be no evidence to the contrary supplied by other *pramāṇas*. If there is a conflict with another evidence, one should resort to *manana* to investigate whether the conflict is genuine or apparent. A thinker, particularly if he is also a practitioner, cannot commit himself to something that is in contradiction to what is already known. Thus, *manana* becomes an indispensable stage of one's progress. Referring to the definition of *manana* supplied in *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* (*prayojana-pariccheda*) Ghosh says: "*Manana* is a kind of mental act which gives rise to some favourable arguments for justifying some conclusion if there is possibility of conflict with other evidence... whether the conflict with other evidence can be removed with the help of some arguments or not is to be shown through the process of *manana*".¹⁸⁸ Sureśvara does not stop on giving definitions of *rāvaṇa* and *manana*, but proceeds to discuss what constitutes them.

Firstly, the purport of scriptural passages is not to present the self as involved in causality. The idea is not to affirm the causal aspect of the self, having denied its effectual aspect, but to deny completely any causality in the self which is the devourer, as it were, of cause-effect relation and has nothing preceding or succeeding it. The cause-effect relation is a product of ignorance, it is not proved by *pramāṇas*. Secular *pramāṇas*, themselves products of ignorance are bound to cognize everything as non-contradictory to their nature. They cannot but structure everything according to the cause-effect pattern, which, however, does not prove that everything they reveal follows this pattern in actuality.¹⁸⁹

Secondly, the scripture intends to convey knowledge of the self as the unchanging essence (*tattva*) in the stream of

¹⁸⁸ Ghosh, 1992, 137.

¹⁸⁹ *Bṛhadāraṇyakaopaniṣad-bhāṣya-vṛtika*, II.5.242-3 and nandagiri's commentary thereon.

changing cognitions. This knowledge is capable of dispelling ignorance that gives rise to changing cognitions by the strength of its object (internal self) – *antarmeya-bal t*. Knowledge of the invariable entity is itself invariable (*avyabhi-ri*) and is, therefore, capable of canceling nescience and its effects that are variable. It is only the knowledge based on the strength of the internal entity (*antarmeya*) that can be considered a sublator (*b dhaka*) and is, therefore, right/proper (*samyag-jñ na*), not the secular knowledge based on ignorance of the self alone (*pratyaj-mohaja-sal rayam*) and, as a result, non-contradictory to it. The fruits of these two knowledges are liberation and bondage respectively.¹⁹⁰

Lastly, *ruti* teaches about the self that is the most inward consciousness and the witness of a variety of mental acts and identifications: “*pratyaktvena ya bh ti pratyak-buddhi-pram MakaB*.”¹⁹¹ And it is only this self that should be understood identical with Brahman.¹⁹² These lines of reasoning, according to *Sure vara*, come under the caption of *ravaMa*.

This is immediately followed by an extensive discussion on *manana*. First of all, *Sure vara* sets out to prove that the phenomenal world’s being of the nature of pure consciousness is a possibility. In the introductory remark he points out that consciousness pervades phenomenal manifestation and thus enables the objects to be known. Its pervasion of the world is also clear from the fact that it is the only unvarying thing amidst varying mental states.¹⁹³ The self is presupposed in every cognition pervading it through and through. The *Upani’ad* contains three parallel illustrations to clarify the same point: the sound of drum, of conch and of lute.¹⁹⁴ The cognition of the particular (drum sound) presupposes the cognition of the universal (sound). In fact, the former is impossible without the latter, even though the cognizer may remain unconscious of it. However, *Sure vara* is quick to add that the illustration is not

¹⁹⁰ *Blhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.255-260 and *nandagiri’s* commentary thereon.

¹⁹¹ *Blhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.79. *Sure vara* is fond of using “*pratyak*” (the inward) in the sense of consciousness treating them as synonymous. Vide *Blhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.79.

¹⁹² *Blhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.79.

¹⁹³ *Blhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.264-6.

¹⁹⁴ *Blhad raMyaka Upani’ad*, II.4.7,8,9.

precise, since the pervasion by the self of external objects is not like in the case of two different entities belonging to the same ontological level (for example, the sword and the sheath). Concomitance (*vy pti*) presupposes difference which is not found in the case of the self and what is imagined in it. Even the method of *anvaya-vyatireka* does not prove the coexistence of the self and the non-self as belonging to the same level of reality. The self is not found outside the non-self since it is always its substrate. On the other hand, particulars cannot be viewed as independent from the universal (as sounds of drum are not imaginable alongside the sound *per se*) and therefore, the non-self cannot be established as existing independently beside the self.

Particulars are said to be of the same nature as the universal containing them and so, when universal is cognized they are cognized too, by extension.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, when the former is present, the latter are present and vice versa. This, however, does not mean that there is only *anvaya* relation between them to the exclusion of *vyatireka*. *Vyatireka* can be admitted but with proviso: it will have to consist in the fact that it is only through ignorance that something is viewed as the universal encompassing particulars.¹⁹⁶

Throwing more light on the difference in the ontological level between the self and the non-self Sure vara states that the existence of non-self in the ultimate sense stands unproven. The non-self is established only by the self in the garb of agent/knower (*kartitva-kañcuka*).¹⁹⁷

Sure vara concludes his commentary on the drum-illustration saying that as particular sounds of the drum exist in drum-soundness, which along with other universals exists in the mega-universal of sound, particulars characterized by different name, form and action ultimately exist in the universals (*s m nya*) which, in their turn, finally exist and merge in the great universal (*mah s m nya*). In the same way the elements beginning with the gross merge in the subtler ones, the chain ending in consciousness.¹⁹⁸ In the process, Sure vara says, they cease to be themselves (*pratyag tm vas na*), presumably

¹⁹⁵ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.279.

¹⁹⁶ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.282.

¹⁹⁷ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.284.

¹⁹⁸ *Ch ndogya Upani'ad*, VII. 25

surrendering their characteristics and, therefore, not affecting the substrate of their merger.¹⁹⁹

The merger of particulars into the universal, however distinct they may appear at the first glance, is possible since both belong to the same category (*ekaj ti*) like fire and its byproducts (smoke, sparks, etc.).²⁰⁰ That obliges Sure vara to restate the basic proposition of *Satk ryav da* – the ultimate non-difference of the nature of cause and effect.²⁰¹ *Satk ryav da* also helps to explain how production of the effect does not compromise the self-sufficiency (*ptak matva*) of the cause, pure consciousness. The cause does not require any means or effort to produce the effect, which is not different from it in nature.²⁰²

This is followed by the discussion regarding the spontaneity and eternity of Vedic revelation, which is like *niB v sa*, exhalation of the Absolute. Like any other apparent effect, Veda is not produced with reliance on means and as a result of some effort, the way the creations of human intellect are. This proves its superhuman nature and trustworthiness as a source of valid knowledge (the validity of Veda is also proved by the absence of reasons to mistrust it). Being a breath-like, effortless, although apparent, expression of Absolute, it is eternal and unproduced.²⁰³

Itih sas and Pur Mas, according to Sure vara, are included in the Veda but have certain limits as *pram Mas*. They are, ultimately, products of human mind. Secondly, they do contain statements contrary to the spirit of the Vedas (as interpreted by Advaitin) which should be discarded.²⁰⁴

Commenting on *B\ihad raMyakopani'ad- aJkara-bh 'ya*, II.4.11, Sure vara offers further deliberations on the matter of merger of various elements into their causes, which is possible due to identity of their nature. Objects of sense organs – varieties of touch etc. that are of the nature of air etc. and have as their

¹⁹⁹ *B\ihad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.294-5.

²⁰⁰ *B\ihad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.300.

²⁰¹ *B\ihad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.302.

²⁰² *Sv rtha-s dhana-yatn d n anapek'ya*, *B\ihad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.303.

²⁰³ *B\ihad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.307.

²⁰⁴ *B\ihad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.319-22.

modifications sense-organs²⁰⁵ – merge into qualities (*guMa*)/*tanm tras* (touch etc. in general referred to by words “*tvac etc.*” in the text of the Upani’ad); these merge into *manas*, *manas* into *buddhi* and *buddhi* into pure consciousness.

Buddhi is said to be the universal of the organs of knowledge (*jñ nendriya*), while *pr Ma* – that of the organs of action (*karmendriya*). Both powers – of grasping and acting – proceed from the internal organ in its aspects of *buddhi* and *manas* respectively.²⁰⁶ The development of these two powers culminates in the acquisition of body by the *j va*, since sense-organs require a receptacle (*yatana*).

The principle of merger is then summed up: effects get restored to their respective causes and ultimately to their root-cause – *mah k raMa*, Brahman. They cannot merge into the effects belonging to the same level: sense-organs that are varieties of elements do not merge into elements. Instead, being the effects of *guMas*, they merge into their respective *guMas*.²⁰⁷ The same is true about the objects. Objects merge into *guMas* and not into senses. It is also proved by the fact that *ahaJk ra*, reflected in the thought “I am this” and standing for identification with the objects, is not seen to function when there is no sensation, no presentation of the objects and no identification with the body. This proves that objects merge into *guMas* and not into sense-organs which are their modifications.²⁰⁸ The merger of the varieties of action into their generalities follows the same pattern.

The merger is held to be of two types. The type described above following natural cause and not caused by human endeavour is called common (*s dh raMa*). It is temporary and is invariably succeeded by the remanifestation of the merged

²⁰⁵ If sense-organs did not belong to the same category as their objects they would grasp all objects indiscriminately; the sense-organ and the object are said to be related like the lamp and what it illumines, *Bḷhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.364-5.

²⁰⁶ This demonstrates that *Sure vara* follows the *S l khya* pattern of analyzing internal organ into three – *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaJk ra/ahal vltti*. Earlier he states that *ahaJk ra* is just a function of intellect which pervades the body and cognizes the sensation the moment there is some external irritation, sensation of touch etc. This is how one gets experience “I am being touched”, “I have heard” etc. *Bḷhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.350-1.

²⁰⁷ *Bḷhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.372-3.

²⁰⁸ *Bḷhad raMyakopani’ad-bh ’ya-v rtika*, II.4.354-55.

phenomenon in the reverse order (from *buddhi* to the objects of sense-organs). It is natural in the sense that it occurs in everyone's case, which warrants its name – common.²⁰⁹ The other type is identical in order but has different cause. It is caused by mental operation (*buddhi-p rvaka*) and directly results from the destruction of ignorance.²¹⁰ It is not followed by a recurrent cycles of cosmic and individual manifestation since its cause has been destroyed. Since it is of rare occurrence it may be called as *dh raMa*. The name is also warranted since this kind of merger results from the meddling with the “natural” ignorance-propelled flow of things.

The topic of merger and evolution reveals the influence of S l khya on Sure vara. However, there are significant differences between what Sure vara states and the scheme of classical S l khya. Firstly, Sure vara's account has to follow the text of the Upani'ad that, if followed closely, cannot be treated as an illustration of the S l khya cosmogonical theory. Secondly, *manas*, although a derivative of *ahaJk ra*, does not play the role of the merging point of senses in S l khya, while according to Sure vara it does. Thirdly, S l khya does not treat senses as products of the elements, while aJkara's commentary and the *V rtika* on it agree that they belong to the same category and share common nature, while nandagiri adds that senses are the products of objects.²¹¹ Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, Sure vara allows all evolutes to merge into pure consciousness and not into *Pradh na*, as per the view of S l khya.

This is how, according to Sure vara, tman should be pondered over – with the help of illustrations like drum, lute and conch, applying logic and making considerable effort.²¹² Thus, Sure vara gives an extensive explanation of *ravana* and *manana* unparalleled in the history of early Advaita. It cannot be treated as a gallop of his imagination since he bases his opinion on the text he is commenting on. Nonetheless, his creativity cannot be denied. The original source being quite obscure and terse, Sure vara rather willfully interprets its portions as illustrative of *ravaMa* and *manana*. According to him *Blhad raMyaka*

²⁰⁹ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.389.

²¹⁰ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.331.

²¹¹ On *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.255.

²¹² *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.395.

Upani' ad, II.4.6 explains *ravaMa* and *Blhad raMyaka Upani' ad*, II.4.7-11 discuss *manana*. Questionable as Sure vara's methods might be, he certainly succeeded in creating a more or less clear picture of the Vedantic method out of cryptic sayings of the *Upani' adic* seers open to a wide range of interpretations due to their ambiguity both intended and natural.

Next Sure vara defines *nididhy sana*. He glosses it as *apar yatta-bodha* – realization not dependent on anything else.²¹³ The second line of the definition – “*p rvayor avadhritvena tadupany sa i'yate*”²¹⁴ that describes *nididhy sana* as the limit and culmination of the two previously mentioned mental practices, led the translator interpret *nididhy sana* as dependent on them.²¹⁵ This was scarcely Sure vara's intention. Several verses after he mentions *anany yatta-vijñ na*, awareness independent of anything else, probably of the knower, the object known and the mental operation²¹⁶ and yet later identifies *nididhy sana* with *vijñ na*.²¹⁷ Thus, he denies that *nididhy sana* is a mental act and affirms that it, being identical with *vijñ na* has liberation as its direct and unavoidable result and exists for itself: “*sv rtham eva tu vijñ na| muktim tra-phala| smltam.*”²¹⁸ It would be more correct then to further identify *vijñ na* with liberation since that would explain sufficiently why *vijñ na* is *sv rtha*, in contrast to *ravaMa* and *manana* that are obviously *par rtha* – practiced for the sake of attaining the liberated state.

Sure vara widens the rift between *ravaMa* and *manana* on the one hand and *nididhy sana* on the other hand by admitting the possibility of injunction in respect of the first two and its impossibility in respect of the latter is concerned. Injunction is possible in case of what depends on human effort, be it physical or mental action. This includes *ravaMa*, *manana*, *ama*, *dama*

²¹³ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.217; Elsewhere he strikes a similar cord equating *nididhy sana* with “right knowledge” which is a modification of internal organ in accordance with the cognized object: “*nididhy sana- abdena samyag-jñ na| vivak'itam*”. *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.4.7.890,899.

²¹⁴ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, I.4.7.890,899.

²¹⁵ Sure vara's *V rtika on Y jñavalkya-Maitrey Dialogue*, Hino, 1991, 179.

²¹⁶ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.221.

²¹⁷ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.233.

²¹⁸ *Blhad raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.234.

and presumably the entire *up ya-catu'aya* introduced by aJkara.²¹⁹ *Nididhy sana* is conspicuously absent from this list.

This represents a somewhat visible departure from the view of aJkara who seemed to consider *nididhy sana* as sustained meditation, a mental endeavour, which, like *ravaMa* and *manana*, fell in the category of action and could therefore be the object of injunction. He treats it at par with *up sana* in that both are repetitive acts: “*api cop sanal nididhy sanal cetyaM t vlttiguMaiva kriy 'bhidh yate.*”²²⁰ He also draws a clear line between the realization of Brahman and the complex of mental activities inclusive of *nididhy sana* connecting them as the goal and the means respectively: “*avagatyarthatv n manana-nididhy sanayoB.*”²²¹ Besides, the etymology of “*nididhy sana*” suggestive of activity and process and its being mentioned in the context of *ravaMa* and *manana* sanction aJkara's interpretation.

Seeing the dangers inherent in his view, Sure vara adds, rather belatedly, that he has nothing against the contention that the knowledge of Brahman arises from meditation and the rest (presumably *ravaMa* and *manana*): “*vijñ notpatti-hetutval dhy n deB...*”²²² But that upsets his own scheme of the *mok'a*-attainment, since, *ravaMa*, *manana* and *nididhy sana* having been defined, there is no scriptural justification for the introduction of *dhy na* into the method. The reason for the disagreement with aJkara in this instance is probably that Sure vara is too eager to prove that liberation results from the awareness of the Ultimate Reality alone and not from actions, be they physical or mental. It is not that aJkara held a different view, but rather Sure vara felt it necessary to put more emphasis on it. His solution to this problem, however, does not seem to be workable. Having bridged the gap between *mok'a* and *nididhy sana* by interpreting the latter as *vijñ na*, Sure vara has to face a similar problem explaining how *manana* (undoubtedly an action, even though mental) might result in Brahman-awareness. The introduction of *dhy na*, too, seems to be a hasty move in contradiction to the original text that contains no mention of it, unless *dhy na* is interpreted as preceding *ravaMa* etc. and

²¹⁹ *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.122.

²²⁰ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, IV.1.1.

²²¹ *Brahma-s tra- aJkara-bh 'ya*, I.1.4.

²²² *Blhad raMyakopani'ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II.4.234.

made a part of the list of prerequisites (*ama* etc.) as was suggested by the commentator.²²³

Sure vara also dwells at some length on the nature of the meaning acquired from the *mah v kya*. He calls it “*av ky rtha*” (non-sentential meaning) to distinguish it from what arises on hearing a secular sentence. When the meanings of the members of the *mah v kya* have been ascertained through the *anvaya-vyatireka* method that divested them of their incompatible elements, and when they have been found to be co-referential, when *lak' aM* has been applied and the meaning has been found non-contradictory with the help of *manana*, there arises a non-sentential meaning which is beyond mind and speech: “*Tadaiva v ky rthat m pratipadyate g r-manasoB sltil na pratipadyata iti.*”²²⁴ The reason why Sure vara calls it non-sentential is perhaps that ordinary sentence conveys the subject-predicate relation which can be considered its meaning, while the *mah v kya*, according to the Advaita tradition, does not convey such relation. Besides, observes Sure vara in passing, Brahman cannot be known from an ordinary sentence (or even expressed by a word) because sentence communicates information on the basis of similarity / difference of the object about which statement is made therein with/from other objects, while Brahman predating anything else is beyond difference and similarity: “*na v kya-padayor artho bheda-s m nya-varjan t*”.²²⁵

There are indications that Sure vara viewed non-sentential meaning identical with the nature of the self and, therefore, with liberation. He says, for example, that on realizing the meaning of the *mah v kya* one recognizes himself as being of the non-sentential (inexpressible with the help of sentence?) nature “*...niravidyo vidv n av ky rthar pa eva kevalo' va i'yate...*”²²⁶ This constitutes a valuable addition to the teachings of aJkara who is uncharacteristically laconic regarding the final stages of the Ved ntic method. It is not unlikely that the *av kyartha* theory of Sure vara became a foundation of the later Advaita theory of the *akhaM; k ra-vltti*.²²⁷

²²³ *straprak ik on B\had raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, IV.4.1217.

²²⁴ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.2, sambandha.

²²⁵ *B\had raMyakopani' ad-bh 'ya-v rtika*, II. 3. 21.

²²⁶ *Nai' karma-siddhi*, III.29, sambandha.

²²⁷ Sengaku Mayeda, 1980-1, p.160.

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