

**BHĀMATĪ SCHOOL OF
ADVAITA VEDĀNTA**

SREE NARAYANA COLLEGE KOLLAM
DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT



CERTIFICATE

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Name of the Student	Candidate Code
Akhil. S.S	: 11221132003
Aswathy. S	: 11221132017
Kalyani. O	: 11221132027
Nandana. S	: 11221132032
Rajalekshmi. S	: 11221132037
Vishnupriya. U	: 11221132048

S. Sreeja

Dr. SREEJA PRIYADERSINI S
HOD & Assistant Professor
Department of Sanskrit
Sree Narayana College, Kollam

Anjaly B

Dr. ANJALY. B
Assistant Professor
Department of Sanskrit
Sree Narayana College, Kollam

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PREFACE

Vedānta the Culmination of Indian wisdom, is based on three authoritative scriptures: the upanisads, the Gita and the Vedānta sutras. The contribution of Vedānta to India's religious and spiritual arena, is the recognition and explication of the inwardness, sacredness and importance. The array of Vedānta teaches include Gaudapada, Sree Sankaracharya, Rama Krishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sree Narayana Guru, Sree Chattampi Swamikal etc.

The dissertation entitled "**BHAMATI SCHOOL OF ADVAITA VEDĀNTA**" contains five chapters: Chapter 1, Introduction, Chapter 2, Vacaspati Misra and his Bhamati, Chapter 3, Bhamati's concept of Brahman, Chapter 4, The Bhamati's concept of Jiva, Isvara and Jagat, Chapter 5, The Bhamati's concept of Moksa, and findings conclusion and references.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is a systematic study of general and fundamental questions concerning topics like existence, reason, knowledge, value, mind, and language. It is a rational and critical inquiry that reflects on its own methods and assumptions. Historically many of the individual science as physics and psychology formed part of philosophy. Indian philosophy combines the spiritual problem of how to reach enlightenment with the exploration of nature of reality and the way of arriving at knowledge. It consist of philosophical traditions of the Indian subcontinent. A traditional classification divides into Astika and Nastika schools of philosophy depending on one or three alternate criteria: weather it believes in afterlife and Devas. Advaita Vedānta is one version of Vedānta. Vedānta is nominally a school of Indian philosophy, although in reality it is a label for any hermeneutics that attempts to provide a consistence interpretation of the philosophy of the Upanishads or more formally, the colonial summary of the Upanisads, Badarayana's Brahma Sutra.

Historical background of Advaita Vedānta

Advaita Vedānta is one version of Vedānta . Vedānta is nominally a school of Indian philosophy, although in reality it is a label for any hermeneutics that attempts to provide a consistent interpretation of the

philosophy of the Upaniṣads or, more formally, the canonical summary of the Upaniṣads, Bādarāyaṇa's Brahma Sūtra. Advaita is often translated as "non-dualism" though it literally means "non-secondness." Although Śaṅkara is regarded as the promoter of Advaita Vedānta as a distinct school of Indian philosophy, the origins of this school predate Śaṅkara. The existence of an Advaita tradition is acknowledged by Śaṅkara in his commentaries.

i. PRE-SANKARA ADVAITA

Vedānta is a general term used to denote the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, which are themselves philosophical discourses held by the Vedic seers over a range of more than a thousand years. The Vedānta philosophy and that matters the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta , therefore cannot be anterior to the Vedic Scriptures as such.

ii. SANKARA ADVAITA

Adi Sankara also called Adisankaracharya was an Indian Vedic scholar and teacher. His works present a harmonizing reading of the sastras with liberating knowledge of the self at its core sunthesizing the Advaita Vedānta teaching of his time.

iii. POST - SANKARA ADVAITA

Though Sankara wrote profusely and clearly enunciating the main doctrines of his school, there are certain places in this writings where in the important aspects of certain doctrines are either vogue

or can have more than one interpretation. This has resulted in the growth of a voluminous post. The Bhamati as it is well known is the name of the commentary written by Vacaspati Misra on the Brahmasutra Sankarabhasya. The Bhamati assumed so much importance in the realm of Advaita Vedānta that the very trend of Advaita philosophy was given a new direction with their advent. Vacaspati Misra is believed,¹ belonged to a tradition of Advaita Vedānta known as the prasankhyānavāda which believed in the “Theory of Continuous Meditation” or “Meditation Theory”². According to this theory, contrary to what is propounded by the Samuccayavadins, the performance of karma-s doesn’t contribute to the attainment of Brahman-knowledge. The aspirant it claims should indeed have renounced all karmas before undertaking the practice of meditating on the meaning of mahāvākya, “Tat tvam asi”. It also believes that even ‘Right Knowledge’³ produced by Vedantic teaching may be sublated by incorrect knowledge⁴. As a true follower of Mandana Misra, Vacaspati Misra’s endorses the former’s view that no injunction is necessary for the practice of meditation, since there are instances in ordinary life of the repetition of knowledge giving rise to correct knowledge⁵.

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CHAPTER 2

VACASPATI MISRA AND HIS BHAMATI

Vacaspati Misra was a philosopher of the Advaita Vedānta tradition. Taking over the torch of Advaita from Mandana and following the same path paved by the latter, as indicated above, Vacaspati Misra carried Sankara Vedānta to a yet higher peak. It is believed that Vacaspati Misra lived between *A.D. 800 and 900* in either Bihar or Bengal, where it is said there exists a city called Bhama corresponding to ancient Mithila.¹ A tank of the same name is also supposed to have been found there. According to Advaita tradition, Sankara himself is believed to have incarnated as Vacaspati Misra “to popularise the Advaita system through his Bhamati². What is noteworthy of Vacaspati Misra is that he had devoted the whole of his life to the cause of philosophy, and therefore of knowledge, composing on all sastra-s commentaries like the Bhamati composed by him on the Sankarabhasya. “He is considered to be one of the greatest literary geniuses that India has ever produced and one of those rare scholars who have written authoritative commentaries on the standard works in all the Six Astika Darsanas.

Life of Vacaspati Misra

Vacaspati Misra was born into a Maithil Brahmin family in Andhra Tharhi , Madhubani, Bihar . He was a 9th century³ or 10th century Indian hindu philosopher of the Advaita Vedānta tradition, who wrote bhasya on key texts of almost every 9th- century school of hindu philosophy⁴. Little is known about Vacaspati Misra life, and the earliest that has been dated with certainty is from 840CE, and he was atleast one generation younger than Adi Sankara . However , an alternate date for the same text may be 976CE, according to some scholars, a confusion that is based on whether Hindu saka or Vikrama era calendar is used for the dating purposes. He was a student of Mandana Misra ,who was his main inspirator . He harmonised Sankara's thought with that of Mandana Misra . According to Advaita tradition , Sankara reincarnated as Vacaspati Misra "to popularise the Advaita system through his Bhamati ". He wrote so broadly on various branches of Indian philosophy that later Indian scholars called him the "one for whom all systems are his own," or in Sanskrit , a *sarva-tantra-sva-tantra*.

Vacaspati Misra is considered to be one of the great literary geniuses that India has ever produced . He was a versatile genius with encyclopedic learning. He had a wonderful exposition skill and presentation of whatever subject or system he chose to handle. He had a lifelong passion for

philosophic truth. A multisided philosophic genius as he was Vacaspati Misra expositions of all the Darsanas. He wrote on all the important system instancing his philosophic objectivity and width. His name is ever associated with the honorific title “Sarvatantrasvatantrah” which is a rare honour conferred only upon literay prodigies . He is also known as “dvadasadarsanakanapanananah. His literary productions bear ample testimony to the honour and dignity that are always associated with that little.

Vacaspati Misra is a colossus among the Indian philosophers , one of the great Maithila scholars of the period , Vacaspati Misra came from a family of Mimamsakas and made his fame as an authority on that topic , on which he says himself. He was the teacher of Smarta Vardhamana, author of Dandaviveka.

Vacaspati Misra’s family appear to have lived in several different villages of Mithila. Bhattacharya provides some telling texting arguments providing that Vacaspati Misra preceded most of the other early great Maithila Naiyyayikas such as Yajnapati, Paksadhara that it is likely that Vacaspati Misra wrote his Nyaya works in his youth ,suggesting that, when he found his own stature in his field eclipsed by that of Yajnapati and Jayadeva he retired from Nyaya and spent the rest of his writing on Mimamsa⁵. He died on unknown , 9th /10th century at Mithila.

Works of Vacaspati Misra

Vacaspati Misra has to his credit nine valuable treatises contributed to different orthodox systems of philosophy. On the basis of the internal evidences provided by these works, modern scholars arrange them in the following chronological order⁶.

- i. Nyayakanika: This is a commentary on *vidhiviveka*, a Bhatta Mimamsa work of Mandanamisra.
- ii. Nyayasutroddhara : This is a compilation of the Nyayasutra fixing the readings of the text of the sutras.
- iii. Nyayasucinibandha : This arranges the same Nyayasutra.
- iv. Nyayavartikatatparyatika : This work also known by its shorter and more popular name, '*tatparyatika*', is an extensive commentary on the *Nyayavartika* of Uddyotakara Bharadvaja.
- v. Tattvasamiksa : It is generally believed to be a commentary on the *Brahmasiddhi* of Mandanamisra. But it has been recently suggested that this is also an independent Mimamsa treatise of Vacaspati Misra. This work is lost.
- vi. Tattvabindu : This is also an independent Bhatta Mimamsa treatise of Vacaspati Misra.
- vii. Sankhyatattvakaumudi : This work known briefly as *Tattvakaumudi*, is a brilliant commentary on the famous Sankhyakarika of Isvarakrsna.

viii. Yogatattva Vaisaradi : It is also known by its shorter title Tattvavaisaradi. This work is a commentary on the Patanjalayogasutrabhasya of Vyasa.

ix. Bhamati : The full title of this work is perhaps Sarirakabhasya Bhamati . This is the earliest known exhaustive and complete commentary on the Brahmasutrasankarabhasya.

It is interesting to note that in a verse in the epilogue of the Bhamati, Vacaspati Misra gives a full list of his own works arranged exactly in the above order suggested by the modern researches. In the Indian tradition Vacaspati Misra is again perhaps the first writer to give a complete list of his works , that too in a chronological order. The manner in which these works are clubbed together by compound expressions and common terminology in the verse seems to indicate that the scholarly career of Vacaspati Misra consisted roughly of three phases. The first phase saw the author's contribution of the first three works, all being Bhatta Mimamsa treatises. The middle phase witnessed Vacaspati Misra's multi-sided contribution, i.e. the next five treatises to the Nyaya, Sankhya, and Yoga systems. The last phase was devoted solely to the 'Vedānta nam nibhandhana', i.e. the Bhamati . From the above it would appear that ever in the beginning of his scholarly career , this great philosopher commentator had set up the Advaita Vedānta treatises , Bhamati on the *Sankarabhasya* as his life's mission.

Main tenets of the Bhamati School

The main tenets of the Bhamati school as discussed earlier ,may be summed up as follows.

- i. Karma-s are useful for giving rise to the desire to know the self.
- ii. The realization of Brahman arises through the instrument of the mind.
- iii. There is no injunction in the vedic text “Atman should be realized ; for that purpose, it should be heard , reflected and meditated upon”.
(*“Atma va are drastavyah, srotavyah, mantavyah, nididhyasitavyah”*).
- iv. Meditation is the principal factor, and vedantic study and reflection are its subsidiary factors.
- v. Jiva is consciousness limited by ‘ajnana’ and ‘isvara’ is consciousness transcending the limiting adjunct.
- vi. The focus and content of ‘ajnana’ are different
- vii. The primal nescience is manifold.
- viii. It is only Brahman that is conditioned by the ‘vrtti’ that is the content of the direct knowledge of Brahman.
- ix. The first factor in the four fold aid is the discrimination between ‘what is real and non-real’.

- x. The injunctive text (*“Svadhyayo dhyetavyah”*) one’s own recension of the veda must be studied ; has for its fruit the knowledge of the meaning of the veda.
- xi. The world creation explained by adopting the theory of triplication.
- xii. The omniscience of Brahman is derive from the essential nature of Brahman.
- xiii. The mind is a sense- organ.
- xiv. ‘Avidya’ is locted in ‘Jiva’.
- xv. The nature of Jiva and Isvara is explained by the theory of *“avacchedavada”*.

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CHAPTER 3

BHAMATI'S CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN

The Bhamati declares from the very outset that the Supreme Being (Brahman) is Immortal ,and is of the nature of immeasurable Bliss and Knowledge . It is both the efficient cause and the material cause of this universe of sentient and insentient creatures of all kinds.The five elements –space, air, fire, water and earth are illusorily manifested from it¹. Vacaspati further says that the self alone is called Brahman because it is great or it is the cause of growth² .Brahman itself is indeed the inner self³ . Sankara says that such a discussion is necessitated by the fact that through Brahman is always manifest being Self-luminous. The Bhamati says in this regard that just as a person becomes aware to the presence around his neck of an apparently lost (or absent) necklace only on its being pointed out to him by somebody else, despite its having been there even before, in the same manner ,due to Nescience ,the self though always illumined and manifest ,is as through unknown an unrealized.

Raising a question regarding the very existence of such as entity as Brahman , Sankara says that Brahman should be either known or unknown to justify its being or not being the subject of investigation .The

unambiguous reply given by Sankara himself puts to rest all doubts whatsoever as regards the existence of Brahman .He declares further, that the concept of Brahman's having eternity, purity etc. Its essence is in conformity with the sense conveyed by the verbal root "Brh". Were the self not known to be in existence ,the whole world would have the cognition, "I do not exist"and that self, says Sankara , is Brahman verily.

Pre-empting a further query as to the proof of that existence of Brahman ,the Bhamati says that the Scriptures or Verbal Testimony i.e, the Vedas which are not of human origin ,should be understood to be the means of knowing Brahman, for no other means of valid knowledge is applicable to the knowledge about it. Clarifying this position taken by him as to the veracity of verbal Testimony ,Vacaspati Misra says that the concept of Brahman endowed with Eternity ,Purity. Vacaspati remarks in this context that the term "Brahman" used here is indicative of that knowledge only whose content is Brahman ,and not (Brahman as such) since that Brahman is known only through the proper inquiry. As to the terms such as "Eternal" and "Pure" used in connection with Brahman, the Bhamati clarifies that these are meant to exclude from the concept of Brahman such defects as non-eternality and misery resulting from association with adjuncts like the body etc. respectively ,while the term "intelligent" exhibits.According to the Bhamati School therefore, the study

of the Scriptures leads to the rise only of the knowledge about Brahman, and not to its realization as such.

Distinguishing between the “adjunctless” form of Brahman and its form qualified by the adjunct of Nescience, the Bhamati says that Brahman without adjuncts is always free and pure, but appears as through non-different from the body etc. Vacaspati observes that the attributes such as Omniscience, Omnipotence etc. project Brahman as the cause of the world through Nescience, it is clear from this that Bhamati views Brahman from two angles one, as Pure Brahman and other is causal Brahman. Sankara says in addition that the true nature of a thing itself. Clarifying this point, Sankara says that just as the cognition of one and the same post does not take the form, “this is a post or something else or a man, this being an illusory cognition, but takes rather the definite form, “This is certainly a post”. The validity of a cognition having an existent entity as content depends solely on that entity and not on the intellect. Therefore, the knowledge of Brahman is dependent on Brahman⁴.

Vacaspati says on his part that one cannot object to the nature of Brahman being defined by the knowledge of things coming within the range of human experience on the ground that such things are as per their nature opposed to the nature of Brahman. Vacaspati observes further, that objection to the effect, that when causality could be attributed to so many other entities such as Pradhana, Time, Planetary deities, Chance, Non-

existence etc. This says the Bhamati is indicated by Sankara by the use of the term differentiation, meaning thereby that what is characterised by name and form is verily caused by an intelligent entity as is seen in the cause of pot etc.

Strengthening the notion of Omniscience of Brahman as referred to above, Sankara says that Brahman is not only that cause of this material world of names and forms, but also of the vast body of Sacred knowledge which comprise the Rg Veda etc. The origin of such Sacred teaching as constituting the RgVeda etc. Itself of the nature of Omniscience, cannot be an entity other than an Omniscient beings, says Sankara . In the same way, that from which originates without the slightest effort, the ocean of all knowledge Rg Veda, constituting various branches of knowledge and which is the cause of distinctions such as gods, man, animals etc. has as its cause the Omniscient and Omnipotent Brahman.

The Bhamati says in conclusion that the unsurpassed Omniscience and Omnipotence of Brahman from which the Vedas originated. Moreover, what requires great effort on the part of divine beings to accomplish, does not require the slightest effort on the part of Brahman. Averring that the nature of Brahman is known through the Scriptures, Sankara says that the whole of the Vedānta literature also has its content the nature of Brahman. Sankara observes in this context that it would not be proper to assume something else as the main theme of the Vedānta .

Vacaspati says on his part, that the subject with which a statement starts and within which it ends. In Vedānta also, he says, because Brahman is the subject of discussion in the beginning and the same is the subject of discussion in the beginning and the same is the subject of discussion in the end, Brahman itself is the content of Vedānta . This is made more explicit by Vacaspati by referring to the Vedantic texts .Brahman is one, says Sankara and as such, it is not amenable to any injunction, involving duality such as action, ownership etc. Brahman being the object of the injunction of contemplation, would have been possible. Vacaspati says that as regards human goals, their attainment is an indirect result of the understanding of the Vedic injunctions regards Brahman.

Sankara concluding the discussion on the authoritativeness of the Scriptures as regards the nature of Brahman. Vacaspati says that the Non-dependence of Brahman-knowledge on injunction is also due to the difference in nature between the empirical means of knowledge and Verbal Authority. Making explicit that difference between Brahman and the world, the Bhamati says that the Self is absolutely Real. The Epics, the puranas, and by reasoning not in conflict with them. That which is Real, says the Bhamati, the material cause of this world, just like the real rope is the material cause of this world, just like the real rope is the material cause of the illusory snake, which is but a modification. In this manner, says the

Bhamati, amidst the multitude of modifications in the world, the self is the sole truth, the Infinite, the Imperishable.

Explaining further why Brahman cannot be associated with injunction of any kind, Vacaspati says that since the pure form of Brahman viz., that of the witness in contrast to the Jiva form, is not apprehensible through other means of knowledge, it has for authority the Sacred Texts, viz., the Upanisads alone. Refuting the Sankara view that insentient Pradhana is the cause of the universe, and not Brahman as is claimed by the Advaitin-s, Sankara says that is not acceptable as it is in opposition to what is taught by the Upanisad-s. The Vedānta texts are quite emphatic about Brahman's being the cause of the Universe. The Upanisads says also that in the beginning the universe was but the self itself, and that there was nothing else whatsoever that was in existence then. Sankara notes in this context that creation took place only after its being `visualized` by Brahman.

Vacaspati says on his part that Pradhana, atoms etc. Cannot be considered to be the cause of the universe since they differ from the effects. This is substantiated by the Scriptures themselves, says Vacaspati, which through texts such as, "One without second", "There is no plurality here whatsoever ", "From death he attains death etc. negates the existence of the universe, as existent apart from Brahman, thereby establishing a conscious cause of the Universe, even as the rope is the material cause of the

superimposed snake. According to Sankara , “Brahman is known in two aspects – one ,as possessed of the limiting adjunct constituted by the diversities of the universe which is a modification of name and form and the other, free from all conditioning factors and opposed to the earlier.

Vacaspati remarks on this that although Brahman is devoid of adjunct related forms, yet it cannot be deliberated upon merely on the basis of that Supreme form. The Bhamati says moreover that although the Self is one, Supreme and of the form of Knowledge and Bliss, yet due to the influence on beginning less Nescience, It appears to be as though unreal at one time and real at the other. For what reason is this so, asks Vacaspati. In replay to this he says that this is due to the varying influence of the blinding effort of Nescience. One Brahman is apprehended variously due to a variety of adjuncts under the influence of Nescience.

Sankara quoting from the Svetasvatara, Upanisads, says that Brahman is all knowing God, the cause of the Universe. The Bhamati says in the connection that all the Scriptures advocate the Omniscient and Omnipotent Brahman as the cause of the origin, sustennence and dissolution of the universe, and that there is no portion of the Vedānta - texts which says anything contradictory to the claim. Highlighting another aspect of Brahman, Sankara says that the Self is of the nature of Bliss as has been repeatedly asserted by the Scriptural texts such as, “The enlightened man is not afraid of anything after realizing the Bliss of Brahman”. Following

Sankara, Vacaspati says that the fact of Brahman's being of the nature of Bliss is also evident from the corroborating texts of the Mantra and Brahmana portions of the Veda-s. He says further that Bliss cannot be the essence of any other entity, such as Jiva, etc. due to the inappropriateness of such an assertion. Moreover, says the Bhamati, the Jiva as far as Bliss is concerned entails the sense of "attainer" as per scriptural texts such as "Jiva becomes happy on coming in contact with Bliss". The Bhamati says that it is true that in the absolute sense there is no difference of Nescience, there is the compatibility of the sense of 'attainer' and 'attainable', between Jiva and Brahman.

Hinting at the Omnipresence of Brahman, Sankara says that Brahman itself is the potency present in all the sense organs such as the eyes etc. as is reported in texts such as, "The One Purusa who is self, and who is Immoral and Fearless in Himself to be seen in eyes. "He himself is the self" (and) "That is art'. Sankara says that the Scriptures abound in examples where Brahman is described as "Immoral" and "Fearless". It therefore follows that Brahman itself and not a 'shadow being', or the intellect, or any divine being, is the force described here as "the one inside", says Sankara. Commenting on this, the Bhamati says that the "eyes" have here been alluded to a God's "abode" because of the fact that the eyes, just a Brahman are unattached. Through Brahman is Omnipresent, it has been alluded to as seated in the eyes. Vacaspati says in addition that Brahman is itself the cause of the good

results of the actions performed in the world, this is why the Scriptures refer to it as Vamani (“carrier of good results”). In the same manner, its being the source of light and effulgence, is called Bhamani in consonance with the Upanisadic declaration that ‘when that one shines, shine the whole universe; all this here is illumined by its very light.

Pursuing the discussion on the Omnipresence of Brahman, Sankara says that Supreme Self is also the internal ruler of all beings. In the text, “This is the Internal Ruler, your own Immortal Self”, the terms ‘immortal’ and self are meaningful only with reference to Brahman, says Sankara. The Bhamati says that all the Scriptures unanimously declare that ‘Omniscient’ and ‘Omnipotent’ Brahman to be the origin of the universe, and this fact cannot be falsified by more inference or reasoning contradictory to the Scriptures.

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चरमचरमुच्चावचमिदम् । नमामस्तद्ब्रह्मतापरिमितसुखञ्जानममृतम्” ॥ Bhamati –
Introductory verse (page no.1)
- 2 बृहत्याद्बृंहणत्वाद्वात्मैव ब्रहोति गीयते। Bhamati on Adhyasabhasya, Parimal Ed.,
page no.5
- 3 तदयं प्रकाश. एव स्वयंप्रकाश एक : कूटस्थो नित्यो निरंश : प्रत्यगात्मा । Ibid. Page no.37
- 4 Bhamati and Vivarna Schools of Advaita Vedānta . Page no.171.

CHAPTER 4

THE BHAMATI'S CONCEPT OF JIVA, ISVARA AND JAGAT

The notion of individual self (Jīva) emanates from the mutual superimposition of the self on the not self and the not self the mind sense body complex on the self Brahman as had already been discussed .This superimposition which has Avidya Nescience as its essence, results in the empirical experience of "I"- ness ahampratyaya, which in turn is the cause of agency , enjoyer ship ,etc¹. Expatiating on the concept "I", Vacaspati Misra says that in which the psychosis, the concept "I" occurs, i.e., the internal organ, that is the denotation of the concept "I" ahampratyayin ; that is superimposed on the inner self ,which an account of its intelligence and indifference is the witness of the process of internal organ². Vacaspati says further that "the inner self defined by the internal organ, etc. The intelligent being compounded of the "this" and the "not-this" is the Jiva ,the agent ,the enjoyer, the support of the cause ,-the substrate "I"-ness , the transmigrator ,the vessel of the entire host of woes ,the material cause of that again is superimposition³.

It is quite significant that the Bhamati considers Jiva to be the support of the two kinds of Nescience- Maya and Avidya ,for it is only the Jiva-s that are at the mercy concealing and projecting powers of Nescience which

render them finite(through only apparently). Isvara ,as will be seen, is not swayed by Nescience , being itself the “Lord” of Nescience. Maya indeed operates at the empirical level through its dual potencies at the behest of Isvara, resulting in the apparent plurality of souls. The Jiva-s therefore, owe their individuality to Nescience operating under the “Lordship of Isvara⁴”. As to the (wrong) notion that self (Jiva) is finite, etc. Vacaspati says that this is due to the apprehension of non-difference between the self and not-self i.e. , the mind –sense-body-complex, just as space is cognized as finite when it is apprehended as (apparently) limited by pot, ewer, basin, etc⁵. Throwing further light on the nature of the individuality of the soul ,i.e., of Jiva , the Bhamati declares that though the inner-self (Brahman) is self manifest ,and hence cannot be an object of cognition yet as Jiva ,it appear as though limited by the qualities superimposed by indeterminable and beginning less Nescience , such as intellect ,mind, body, sense, etc. In like manner though undifferentiated it appears as differentiated ; though not an agent , it appears as an agent; though not an object , it appears as an object; though not an enjoyer , it appears as an enjoyer of the “I”- cognition. This happens in the same manner as space appears differentiated by the adjuncts such as pot, ewer, basin, etc. though in reality it is devoid of any such differences⁶.

Vacaspati says furthermore, that even when at the empirical level intelligence is apprehended, nothing at the absolute level remains unapprehended as such, the self being the very essence of intelligence. It

cannot also be said (of the Jiva) that on the apprehension of its intelligence, its other essential qualities such as bliss , eternity, pervasiveness, etc. remain unapprehended for in reality . These qualities are not different from its essence of Intelligence. Though apprehended yet because of superimposed differences or adjuncts, they appear to be non-discriminated and therefore non-apprehended⁷.

It is moreover claimed by the Bhamati, that the difference existing between the self and the intellect, etc. cannot be said to be real, so that on the apprehension of the intelligent self that difference too is apprehended. For in effect the intellect being indeterminable, the difference subsisting between the self and the not- self also is indeterminable. The apprehension of difference between the self and the not -self would imply the reality of both the self and the not-self, which would be in violation of the Advaitic doctrine of one reality⁸. Vacaspati claims that it is non-apprehension of the difference between its real nature and the mind-sense-body-complex, appears as the finite Jiva as a result of superimposition on it of the attributes of the intellect, etc. the Jiva, says the Bhamati cannot as such possess the potency to act or to enjoy , being in essence the inner self which is indifferent to activity and enjoyment. It is thus that the self , though self-manifest yet due to its being confused with objects such as the intellect etc. become cognizable as the object of the “I” – cognition, which is the substrate of “I”-ness. It is hence that the self becomes known as Jiva or Jantu. It is

therefore evident that the Jiva is not different from the intelligent self, but in the intelligent self in reality. This fact has for support the scriptures which declare." in its own nature as that Jiva, etc.,

Vacaspati clarifies that the process of objectification of the self being the effect of superimposition ,as in the case with the seed and sprout , it can't be said that the theory suffers from the fallacy of reciprocal dependence , this being a beginning less process . Furthermore , Vacaspati says there is no inconsistency in holding that every subsequent superimposition has for its object that which was the content of each earlier superimpositions and its impression (Vasana-s), for this has been indicated by the commentor (Sankara) himself in the text- "this natural empirical usage (naisargikoyam lokavyavaharah)". It is therefore settled that the self (Jiva) is apprehensible as an object while in its conditioned form, though it is essentially intelligent and self-manifest, being non-different from the Intelligent Self⁹. As Vacaspati is in agreement with Sankara on this point, he simply observes that should the world be taken to be an actual transformation of Brahman (Vivarta), then like the Jiva-s everything else would be intelligent (i.e., conscious) ¹⁰. The individual souls, says Sankara owe their birth and death, etc. to God (Paramesvara) who is invested with Brahman's power of Maya. The individuality of the Jiva-s is due to the influence of Maya which is also known as Avyakta and which acts as limiting adjunct. Sankara observes further that Maya or Avyakta is of the nature of ignorance. Liberation , therefore is

possible only when the potential power of Maya is burnt away by knowledge¹¹.

Vacaspati notes on this that the Advaitin-s don't hold that there is only One Nescience Avidya) at the base of all the Jiva-s, but rather one Avidya at the base of each Jiva. Hence, the liberation of one Jiva on his attaining knowledge doesn't entail the liberation of the rest. He says further that this doctrine doesn't suffer from the fallacy of reciprocal dependence by arguing that the distinctness of the Jiva-s is due to the adjuncts of Avidya are dependent on the distinctness of the Jiva-s, for both are beginning less like seed and sprout. According to Vacaspati, Avidya, the substrate of the individuality of the soul, is dependent on Isvara either as the efficient cause therefore as object; in the same manner, Isvara is the material cause of the world - illusion, just as rope is the material cause of the snake - illusion. This is so, says Vacaspati because the insentient cannot on its own be active without being dependent on the sentient; hence, its dependence on Isvara, either because of Isvara being its efficient cause or its material cause, for Isvara is verily the substrate of the world-illusion, just as rope is the substrate of the snake-illusion.

Throwing more light on the Jiva -Brahman identity described by Sankara, Vacaspati says that there is no indication whatsoever in the scriptures with regard to the creation of the Jiva-s in the same way as fire is described as being an evolute (Prakrti). He maintains that there is no

relation of cause and effect between Jiva and Brahman. The Jiva – Brahman absolute identity being real, Vacaspati says further that if Jiva were a real transformation of Brahman , then as consequence of knowledge , meditation ,etc. on the Jiva merging back into its cause , there would be submit no hope whatsoever of it attaining immortality , defeating that very aim of life and this would be in opposition also to the teaching of the scriptures. In addition to this , the Bhamati declares that the defects such as birth, death ,fear, etc. associated apparently with the individual souls , all are negated by the scriptures in the text such as, Great, Unborn ,etc. and in the case of the doctrine of Parinama-vada also ,whereby the Jiva-s are considered to be real transformation or transfiguration of Brahman, the doctrine stands contradicted by scriptural texts establishing absolute identity of Jiva-s and Brahman as in. One without a second , etc. and by other scriptural texts condemning dualism as in “ Anyo anyo savanyo hamasmi”, etc.

Commenting on the nature of Jiva- Brahman identity, Vacaspati says using the example of reflection that just as the reflection of one clear object appear variegated due to intervening adjuncts despite the identity of the object and the reflections in the same may the Jiva-s too, though non-different from Brahman, appear differentiated due to intervening adjuncts such as intellect , etc. In the same manner says Vacaspati, in spite of the absolute man difference between the essentially Pure Supreme Being and

the Jiva-s. The Jiva-s appear to be different from Brahman due to the intervening influence of indeterminable and beginning less Nescience and consequently there are empirical usages of the like , “The Supreme Being is Pure ,Intelligence, Bliss and these Jiva-s are subjected to ignorance, grief, sufferings. Elucidating the nature of the individuality of Jiva, Vacaspati says that just as, with regard to the (one) object jewels ,swords ,etc. are “caves” (guhas), in like manner with regard to the one Brahman, the Avidya subsisting in each individuals Jiva is the cave. Just as the one object though non-difference from the reflections, appears hidden in them (and is therefore apparently unknown) in the same manner though One and Non-different from the Jiva-s, the one Brahman appears “hidden” in them all.

Moreover says Vacaspati, the purificatory facts such as Jatakarma, etc. are not meant for the removal of impurities associated with the Jiva but rather for the removal of impurities associated with the body, as it declared by the ‘Smrti-s’, “Thus is destroyed the sin the Bhamati that the Jiva-s neither born nor do they die with the birth or death of the body.Strengthening further its position on the question of non-origination of the Jiva-s, the Bhamti declares that the Jiva-s could have been said to originate like space, etc. if only they were any different from Brahman. But the fact is that they are non-different from Brahman, as is established by the scriptures. The Jiva-s cannot be said to be associated with birth, death, etc.

Refuting the views that Jiva is of atomic size, etc. Sankara says that it has already been stated that Jiva is but the highest Brahman, because there is no mention in the scriptures declare that Brahman itself entered (the created entities such as the Jiva) and also because of the instructions that there is complete identity of Jiva and Brahman. If Jiva is the highest Brahman, then it should be of the same size as that of the Highest Brahman and as the Highest Brahman has been declared by the scriptures to be all-pervading, Jiva, therefore can't but be all -pervading as well. The Bhamati says on its part that were the Jiva-s of atomic size, the all pervading Jiva can experience of cold, pain, etc. throughout the body through the sense of touch when the skin comes into contact with cold, water etc. But the Jiva of limited size would be able to experience cold ,etc. at only that spot in the body where it is located not throughout the body due to such Jiva not pervading the whole body.

Vacaspati says further, that the association of the feelings of desire, hatred,etc. with the Jiva-s also cannot be said to be natural for the Jiva-s being of the nature of Brahman, are unattached and eternal. This association is in effect the result of the superimposition on the Jiva-s of the attributes of the intellect, etc. due to non-apprehension of difference, just as through the reflection of the moon in the water contained in a jar, the moon is identified with the water-in-jar, so that when the water gets agitated there is the erroneous cognition that the moon is shivering. In the same way, the allege

atomic size of the Jiva-s is but the result of superimposition on the Jiva-s of the attribute of atomicity of the intellect, etc. just as a multitude size and form is superimposed on space due to intervening adjuncts in the form of pots, etc.

Sankara says at this point that it is necessary to consider with regard to agent ship, etc., of the Jiva - s which depends on the limiting adjuncts under the influence of Nescience, whether the Jiva - s are independent or whether they are dependent on the Isvara . Sankara says that during the condition of Nescience, when the Jiva - s are blinded by the darkness of ignorance and are unable to distinguish themselves from the mind--sense - body - complex , this transmigratory existence, characterized by Jiva-s being agents and experiences , deserves to be the result as sanctioned by Isvara who resides in all beings , presides over all their actions ,is the immediate witness of everything, and quickens intelligence in everybody, resulting in final Release by means of true knowledge, Sankara says further that 'though the Jiva - s are contaminated with faults and are equipped with all the necessary of means and though in the ordinary world it is not seen that Isvara is the means or cause of such activities as agricultural pursuits , etc., yet it is conclusively understood from the scriptures that Isvara is the motivating cause of all tendencies of the Jiva - s . The Bhamati observes in this context that it is not proper to hold Isvara responsible for engaging the Jiva - s in agent ship etc. When this can be conveniently attributed to

passion, etc., which is of the nature of action – instigation. Isvara also cannot be said to be responsible for engaging the Jiva-s in good and bad actions, for he bring just ,compassionate and impartial would rather cause all the Jiva-s to engage in righteous acts alone ,not in unrighteous would all be righteous and therefore happy, and none would be miserable. Further to the discussion on the relation obtaining between Jiva and Isvara , the Bhamati proceed with a discussion on the relation subsisting between Jiva and Brahman. Refuting the view that Jiva-s are “limbs” or part (amsa) of Brahman, the Bhamati says that it is not proper to assign to Jiva- Brahman. A relationship of Master and Servant or of controller and controlled or still of substrate and object, etc., there being a relationship of identity and non-difference of Jiva and Brahman.

Vacasapati notes moreover that if the Jiva-s were to be regarded as ‘limbs’ or ‘parts’ of Brahman, just as the pain occur in Devadatta’s foot, etc. is said to occur to him. In this eventuality, when an attaining release, the Jiva-s would attain Brahman, they would inherit suffering , etc., and in that conjuncture it would be better for them , says Vacaspati, to stay in the world itself after Liberation. For, while in the world they would experience their own sufferings only not the accumulation of sufferings of other Jiva-s as well as, would be the case in Brahman. Would result also from such a situation the futility of attaining liberation itself¹².

The Bhamati gives another reason for the rejection of the theory of 'parts and whole' relationship between the Jiva s and Brahman and for the claim of a relationship of identify-cum- difference between the Jiva-s and Brahman. Vacaspati says that the means of knowledge specially verbal authority are meant for the cognition of the hitherto unknown thing and difference between Jiva and Brahman) being unknown it is already to everyone cannot be the object of cognition of verbal authority. As for non-difference, that being unknown ,it is fit to be made known on the basis of what is known already in the form of difference. The Upanishads are therefore seen in this context to preach non duality from the beginning till the end, establishing that the Jiva-s though non-different from Brahman appear different from it due to the adjunct of the indeterminable and beginning less Nescience, in n the same way as reflections appear different from the same way as reflection appear different from the "prototype" due to the intervening adjuncts in the form of mirror, etc¹³.

Vacaspati observes in conclusion that Liberation also cannot be said to be meaningless for just as reflection are apparently endowed with qualities such as blackness ,brightness ,etc. in like manner the Jivas are associated with sufferings of all kinds, while Brahmin is absolutely free from any such defects very much like the "spotless prototype". Furthermore, just as on the removal of the mirror the reflections merge back into the same manner, on the removal of the adjunct of Nescience the Jiva-s are one with

Brahmin. Thus is established the fact that the Jiva-s are like the parts of Brahmin.

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CHAPTER 5

THE BHAMATI CONCEPT OF MOKSA

Sankara says that the determination of the true nature of Brahman through discrimination of the self from the non-self is called knowledge¹. Commenting on this Vacaspati says that Vidya is knowledge about the nature of Brahman , which does not contain any trace of doubt or contradiction². He says further that the non - apprehension of difference between the self and the non - self, which is the effect of Nescience, can be done away with only by the cognition of difference. The knowledge obtained through this instrumentality, claims the Bhamati, leads to the sublation of Nescience, and also to the ascertainment of the nature of Brahman which in reality stands forth in its own nature³. According to the Bhamati. therefore, Moksa is identical with ascertainment of the true nature of knowledge, obtained through Sravana, Manana etc. The study of Vedānta verily brings about such a knowledge which, simultaneously with its rise, occasions the aforesaid 'dissociation from the world' The Bhamati says moreover. that the knowledge of the true nature of Brahman. Vacaspati therefore, defines 'Moksa' as 'liberation' from world - misery on the one hand and as eternal Bliss, on the other.

As already described, 'Sankara prescribes certain qualification as a necessary condition for the study of Vedānta – the gate way to self – realization. Among these pre – requisites , he acknowledges “ svadhyaya” i.e, study of one’s portion of the Veda-s, as a precondition for a deliberation on Brahman⁴, Vacaspati says that what is meant here is that immediate succession to the study of the Vedas is common to the desire to know Dharma and to the desire to know Brahman . This is evident also from the (mimamsa) text , “Then therefore, the desire to know Dharma; Vacaspati says that here the word “Dharma” means by implication the entire Vedic scriptures, and since Brahman is equality the import of the Vedas, the teaching about immediate succession to the study of the Vedas applies to the contemplation on Brahman as well, or to the desire there of⁵.

The realization of Brahman is verily the sole goal in life, says Sankara; and this is so because that itself brings to an end all evils, miseries, etc. Of the world that are caused by Nescience. Brahman itself is therefore that for which one needs to have the desire to know⁶. Vacaspati notes on this that mere knowledge is not that which needs to be desired for the elimination of miseries, but rather such knowledge as will culminate in the realization of Brahman through intuition.

As regards Moksa as such, Sankara says that it ensues simultaneously with the knowledge of Brahman independent of any preceding act. This has for evidence scriptural texts such as , ‘He who knows Brahman becomes

Brahman itself. 'And his actions perish when He, the Higher and the Lower, is seen; " He who knows Bliss of Brahman has no fear anything or from anywhere, verily , thou hast , oh Janaka, reached fearlessness. "Therefore, one knew only the self in the form , I am Brahman." "From that all this sprang; Then what delusion is there, what sorrow is there for one who has uniformly seen this oneness?", etc⁷. With a view to be undertaken prior to the realization of Brahman, Sankara quotes other texts to support his view, such as, verily the sage Vamadeva seeing him, realized. I became Manu and the sun, Thou indeed art our father, Thou who carried us to the other shore of ignorance, To him whose sins are worn out , the revered sanatkumara shows the other side of darkness, etc⁸. These passages and yet many others too, says Sankara, show that the knowledge of Brahman means in reality the removal of all obstacles to Moksa, as discussed above⁹. Sankara quotes also another aphorism which lays down the succession of causes and effects till the attainment of final release.

Vacaspati observes in this connection that each subsequent member of the series is the cause and each preceding one is the effect. Hence, says Vacaspati Release consists in the manifestation of the true nature of Brahman which takes place by nothing but the removal of Nescience. The Bhamati , notes here that the manifestation of the true nature of Brahman nor is it the effect of any act, etc. Performed with regard to that . This is says Vacaspati, what is meant by the aphorism mentioned above.

Deliberating still deeper on the , nature of release, Sankara says that the cognition of the oneness of the self and Brahman cannot be said to be of the form of an “ imagined identification ,” because were it so, then there would be violation of the syntactical relation of the words in texts such as, “That thou art”, “I am Brahman” and “This self is Brahman”, the purport of which is to propound the identity of the self and Brahman. Furthermore this will contradict the scriptural claim that of Nescience, as in texts like , “The knot of the heart is severed and all doubts are removed.

Sankara says of the final release, that it is not the result of purification of any kind since that would imply activity with respect to Moksa; which is not acceptable. This is so because purification may be attained either through merits or through the removal of defects. Neither of these is applicable with respect to Brahman , since Brahman being most excellent , and eternally pure is not amenable to further excellence or purity, by additional excellence or by the removal of impurities¹⁰. Vacaspati says on this that, if the merit supposedly to be added to Brahman is of the nature of Brahman itself the question of its being added does not arise; and if it is different from Brahman, then being of necessity something produced, its causality with regard to final Release is untenable ,or else that would imply non – eternity of Moksa.

Vacaspati says in addition that it is due to the apprehension of non – difference that the attributes of purification as described above are applied

to the self. In truth , says he, the acts of purification do not apply to the self. And there is no other means by which it may be said that the final Release is the result of purification of any activity whatsoever. Hence, says the Bhamati , knowledge is the only means to Moksa¹¹.

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CONCLUSION

Advaita Vedānta has had a very hoary past, having within its fold a long tradition of philosophers and teachers. The basic doctrines of Sankara Vedānta, such as Maya, Brahman, Vivarta, etc. are found to have existed in seminal form in Rg veda and allied scriptures from where they developed in to full-fledged philosophical doctrines after receiving a masterly treatment at the hands of spiritual Masters such as Yajnavalkya, Badarayana, Goudapada, etc. Thereafter they were carved in to a rigorous and comprehensive system by Sankara in his Brahmasutrabhasya. Sankara's arguments marked with precision were so concise that they became the basis for the post-sankara philosophical speculations of a very high order that led to the bifurcation of the Advaita Tradition in to two streams, namely the Bhamati –Prasthanā.

In Bhamati the concept Avidya or Maya which in turn is the very foundation of Sankara's philosophy¹. Not Satisfied with the explanation given for the phenomenon of error by the non-Advaita schools, the Advaita philosophers came up with the theory Anirvacaniya – kyati as a rebuff to the other theories of error, viz., Anyathakhyati, Sadasatkhyati, Viparitakhyati, Vivekakhyati, Asatkhyati, Atmakhyati and Satkhyati though both Vacaspati Misra and Prakasatman believe that Adhyasa is beginningless and

indeterminable, yet they differ from each other as to the nature of Adhyasa or super imposition while the Bhamati defines Avabhasa or Adhyasa as non apprehension of the difference between the Real and the unreal which is sublatale by knowledge ; The Bhamati pronounced the view that Brahman is known only through the authority of the Vedas. And since the Vedas themselves have Brahman as their origin.

The meaning of the term “Brahman” also is known only through Scriptures, it being beyond the range of the empirical means of knowledge². Bhamati holds that the study of the scriptures leads only to the intellectual comprehension of Brahman, and not to the realization of its true nature. According to the Bhamati, there is no injunction for the realization of Brahman. To the Bhamati the apprehension of the difference between the self on the one hand, and the realization of the Jiva - Brahman identity on the other, constitutes the realization of Truth, with the former leading to the latter. The Bhamati defines Vidya as the knowledge about the true nature of Brahman without any trace of doubt or contradiction. This ascertainment of the true nature of Brahman is Itself Moksa. As for the Bhamati, it insists on the fact that the eradication of Nescience is a must for self- realization through the rise of intuitive knowledge in the form of a mode of the internal organ. It says that the true nature of Brahman becomes manifest with the very removal of Nescience . But here too, the Bhamati says that the manifestation of the true nature of Brahman is not the result of Vidya or

contemplation , etc. Or the even of any act whatsoever, for Brahman as such is always manifest . As a matter of fact, the Bhamati dismisses the contribution Of any act whatsoever to the realization of Brahman. But it does recognize the acquisition of the sampat - Catustaya, ie,... sama, dama , titiksa, uparati , etc., as a pre- requisite for the rise of the desire to know Brahman.

As to the Jiva and Brahman relation also, there are seen to be divergent views separating the Bhamati . As per the theory of Avacchedavada³ upheld by the Bhamati , Brahman though one and impartite appears as many in the form of the Jiva -s due to the intervening adjuncts of the body sense- mind complex, in much the same way as space, though one and undivided ; appears as many due to the intervening adjuncts of pots, jars, etc. The Moksa in real term is the eradication of Nescience , which according to the Bhamati is achieved through the practice of sravana, manana and nididhyasana, resulting in the rise of the desire to know the truth. The Bhamati touches upon the process through which there arises first through normal experience an aversion towards worldly pleasures followed by detachment, and eventually by a longing for release through the desire to know the true nature of the self .

The Bhamati assumed so much importance in the realm Of Advaita Vedānta that the very trend of Advaita philosophy was given a new direction with its advent .So, influential were that come to be known

eventually as an independent school of thought. Hence the applications of Bhamati Prasthanana by which they are respectively known today in philosophical circles.

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