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SRI SANKARACHARYA

BY

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PREFACE

Sri Sankaracharya is a great son of India, a towering personality who has ruled the minds of many all the world over from the time of his advent. His message, the Advaita, is the only system that appeals to thinking humanity as has been declared by Swami Vivekananda. The great Swami has also said that every Advaita-vadin in the world owes allegiance to Sri Sankara. His message is of abiding interest as it is based on the real nature of man. Kerala has the credit of being the birth place of the Master.

A satisfactory biography of Sri Sankara is a great need. But the materials for undertaking such a task are scanty. The Sankaravijayas and other Sanskrit poems that profess to deal with the life of Sankara have so much of the miraculous and the legendary that the critical mind cannot accept them. In the biographical sketch given in the present book, an attempt has been made to sift some facts and study them in the light of the relevant words of the Master himself. Free use has been made of the valuable testimony of the direct disciples of Sri Sankara scattered in their writings. The narrative,

however, is bound to be extremely fragmentary on account of the limitations and imperfections of the sources.

The second part of the book deals with the works of Sri Sankara. An account of some of the outstanding writings is sketched and it is hoped that the reader will make acquaintance with the original works which will be a constant source of inspiration to him.

In the third part, a few extracts from the writings of Sri Sankara on some leading topics have been given. But these extracts are merely illustrative and not exhaustive. The author hopes to bring out at an early date a comprehensive collection he has compiled.

The influence of Sri Sankara has been great on subsequent sages and thinkers. The selections from the works of Jnaneshwara and Ekanath, two great saints of Maharashtra, are given to indicate the nature of that influence.

P. SESHADRI.

INTRODUCTION

It is indeed gratifying that in the present day confusion of ideas, a life of the great Master of thought and spirituality, Sri Sankaracharya, is being published. It is a timely contribution for, in this creative period in the history of India, it is necessary that India should think of her great creators and builders to throw light on the path. To-day Indian life is being influenced by the thought waves and currents of the West and one should remember that the growth of life is not possible by discontinuity with the past.

Sankara was a great builder of Indian society—with the thought and inspiration of the Upanishads and the thoughtful India still lives with the strain of his thought and inspiration. He is still to-day the invisible inspirer of thought and spirituality.

This book is a much needed and useful publication. It puts forth the life of Sankara and develops the history of his thought and shows how he turned life's current from actuality to reality and established Dharma for the wider population, showing the path of

Abhyudaya and made prominent for the chosen and selected few, Jnana, indicating the path to liberation or Nisreyasa. India could hardly forsake the path of finer evolution and final liberation even at this day to save herself from the confusion of materialistic thought current and domination of materialistic values. India aspires at the life free from the earthly clings for, life cannot grow by attachment to earth.

In her hurry for new creation should India forget the spirit of silence and renunciation which confer instant Moksha? The author has given in a sentence the sound principle on which life should advance "Get the eye of knowledge and see the Universe as Brahman (p. 126)". This is the way to peace for the whole humanity and unless the life's expression in the world can get to this, it cannot reach the plane where life can be felt at its widest commonalty spread.

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SRI SANKARACHARYA

PART I

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

**"At this moment the whole of the national genius
awoke once more in Sankaracharya"**

SISTER NIVEDITA.

Great men are born at times of great crises. They rise up to the occasion and inaugurate a new era of progress in all lines. They set in motion a current which never spends itself and their influence is ever at work.

SANKARA, GREAT IN THOUGHT AND ACTION.

Thinkers are seldom men of action. Practical men do not often soar high in their thoughts. Sri Krishna was a unique ideal, a perfect combination of the highest thought and intensest activity. Sri Sankara, the subject of the present sketch also combined in himself these two aspects.

INDIA AT THE TIME OF SANKARA'S ADVENT.

The time of his advent was one of storm and stress in the history of India and we find

glimpses of the then prevailing conditions reflected in his own works. Politically,* Bharatavarsha had ceased to be an empire, though memories of such a glorious period of integral unity were still fresh in the minds of men. Many petty kingdoms had arisen on the grave of the empire, each having jurisdiction within its own confines. Enjoyment had become the ideal of many. It was also a time of social disruption and decay. Strange hordes of Scythians and other barbarous tribes had come and settled in the land. The mass-conversion of Buddhism admitted them into the fold of that religion, but they could not live up to its high ideals and brought back to their old images and forms of worship. Buddhism and Jainism openly revolted against the authority of the Vedas and denounced all traditions. The majority of the people were materialists, Charvakas or Laukayitas, holding to the commonsense view that the body is the soul. They ridiculed religion and morality as the creation of the priests who were fools or rogues or both. There were many sects in Hinduism itself, each clinging with obstinacy to its own faith. The devil

* 'Emperor' means one who rules over territories through his vassals, who obey his commands; or the word may mean 'Ruler of all Bharatavarsha.'

Sri Sankara's Bhashya on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

can and does quote scripture for his own purpose, and these creeds took some detached passage of the Sastras, torn away from its context and propounded their pet views as the whole of gospel truth. More than seventy such sects are noticed in the Sankaravijaya, ascribed to Vidyaranya. The lower type of men, could not rest without giving vent to their animal propensities. They formed secret societies and made a cult of bestial practices, as in the case of the followers of the Vamachara Tantras. Gross selfishness prompted many to give up their legitimate duties and functions in life and thus unrighteousness got the better of the long established dharma. The necessity for the Divine Manifestation arose to uphold righteousness as has been beautifully expounded by Sankara himself in his introduction to the commentary on the Gita explaining the need of the Krishna Avatar (1). Kerala, the southernmost part of India, had the privilege and blessing to be the holy field to receive this Grace of God.

ANCESTRY.

The Malayala Brahmans have been noted for their earnest piety, genuine guilelessness, deep scholarship and purity of life and conduct. One such Malayala Brahman family lived at Kaladi, in North Travancore, during the seventh

century A. D. Vidyadhiraja, the then head of the family, was famed for his attainments in learning. His son Siva Guru had an equally brilliant reputation for scholarship. He had also a spirit of renunciation manifested by his refusing to return to his parents even when bidden by his teacher to do so. This spirit of renunciation attained its highest culmination in the case of his son who fulfilled to perfection the deeply cherished though unrealised desire of Siva Guru and thus was a real putra* the fulfiller of the father's wishes as the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad explains the derivation of the word (2). It was only by the pressing entreaties of his father that he could be persuaded to return home. He was duly married to a worthy helpmate, Aryamba, the daughter of a renowned scholar, Magha Pandit. The devoted couple lived the ideal grihasthashrama life enjoined by the Sastras. But they had one poignant grief in not being blessed with a child even after many years of married life. They resorted as pious Hindus, to fasts and prayers, leading a more rigorous life of austerity and asceticism.

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

Their earnest prayers had the desired effect and in due time they rejoiced in the birth of a

son. The child was named Sankara, after the God who had blessed them. The father did not live long after this happy event. The boy was extraordinary and acquired an easy mastery of all that was taught to him at home by the loving care of his mother. In his fifth year, he was initiated in the Gayatri, the Upanayana having been performed even at that early age as ordained by the Smritis in exceptional cases (3). He was sent to a Guru to learn the Vedas in the traditional way. In the short space of three years he finished his scholastic career, having acquired a wonderful proficiency in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Vedangas, the Itihasas, the Puranas, the Darshanas, the Dharma Sastras, the Kalpasutras, Ayurveda and other branches of knowledge, as is testified by his writings. The following words of Sankara deserve attention in this connection. 'The capacity of one person is not to be measured by that of another. Natural capacity cannot be questioned. It is a fact and has to be taken as such'*(4).

SANKARA'S LARGE-HEARTEDNESS.

Not only was the intellect marvellously developed in the case of Sankara, but also the heart. During his tutelage, he used to beg his food according to the rules of Brahmacharya.

One day he went to a house where dwelt a poor woman who could afford to give only a few fruits. Sankara was touched. He prayed earnestly for the relief of her pitiful condition. Tradition has it that his prayer had the desired effect, the family continuing even now in ease and comfort under the name of Swarnathu Mana. It is his large-heartedness that breathes through the following prayer composed by him sometime later. "May kindness to all beings pervade everywhere. May all cross the ocean of Samsara". His admonition 'Wealth should be dispensed (by those who have means) to the poor' is actuated by the same spirit.

THE PASSION FOR RENUNCIATION.

A marked change was visible when Sankara returned home after his studies. Though but eight years old, he was fully ripe in wisdom. He was also seized with a burning passion for renunciation. From his deep and thoughtful study of the Upanishads, he had come to the conclusion that the end of human life was to realize Brahman, the Supreme Reality, the One without a Second. This passion for renunciation became more and more pronounced as days passed. The only consideration that stood in the way was the thought of his widowed mother, who would be alone and helpless if he left her.

But ardent desire cannot be quenched when once it has taken hold of an earnest and serious soul. It was the same spirit that drove Buddha from his life of unruffled enjoyment in the palace with all that the world holds near and dear. Gradually Sankara was able by his gentle persuasions and words of wisdom and love to make his mother consent to the great sacrifice. The affectionate boy assured her that he would be by her side during her last moments and discharge the religious duties of a son by performing all the necessary rites.

The Dharma Sastras enjoin that the various stages—the different Ashramas—are to be gone through, one by one like steps in a ladder and the last stage, Sanyasa, the life of renunciation, is to be taken up last of all. This is a safe rule that only by discharging the duties of a student and fulfilling the arduous obligations incumbent on a householder and a citizen will one be fit to embrace the life of renunciation. But some souls are born endowed with the genuine spirit of renunciation and the Sruti says that they are not bound by the ordinary rule and that they are qualified to become Sanyasins without passing through the interim stages. This point is discussed in detail by Sankara and his great follower Sureshwara. The conclusion arrived at

by them is that the rule holds good, in ordinary cases, but that the Sruti text prevails in the case of souls of exceptional merit. They have finished the preliminary stages and are born as perfect souls, having been purified by the merits acquired in many previous births.

In the commentary on the Taittiriya Upanishad, Sankara says that some are born with attachment and some with dispassion. It is natural that each man takes to the life of the stage suited to him. It would be unwise to force him to a mode of life which is quite against his temperament (5). Thus here as elsewhere Sankara respects the spirit of the scripture and does not blindly follow the letter. The promise given to his mother to perform the last rites a son has to do, is against the letter of the Smriti, denying a Sanyasin's obligation to any such duty. The mother was left to the care of the relatives to whom Sankara handed over his ancestral property.

SANKARA AND THE REQUISITES FOR BRAHMA JIJNASA.

In the introduction to his commentary on the Brahma Sutras, Sankara enumerates the qualifications necessary for one who wishes to take up the study of the enquiry into Brahman.

Without the preliminary qualifications, the study will be fruitless. If one is equipped with the needed qualifications, one can successfully enquire into and realize Brahman, even before or after an enquiry into Dharma. It can be legitimately inferred that Sri Sankara was endowed in full measure with these requisites which are four in number. "The discrimination of the eternal from the non-eternal is the first requisite. Next, the inquirer should not be distracted by the desire for enjoyment of the fruits (of work) here or hereafter. The third requisite is self-discipline. The external senses should be restrained, the mind should be at rest, heat and cold, pleasure and pain and all the other correlative pairs of opposites, the dual throng must be endured with an even mind. Peace, contentment and forbearance should be well-established. Lastly, there should be the intense desire for Moksha, release from Samsara" (6).

In a remarkable and oft-quoted passage of the Vivekachudamani it is said that three things are rare and can be got only by the grace of God ; human birth, the desire for moksha and the protecting care of a great Soul who has himself attained the goal of life. Sankara had the first two and now sought the third. Guided by an unerring intuition, Sankara marched straight to a hermitage on the banks of the

Narmada, to find his Guru there in Govinda, a great Yogin and Jnanin. The affectionate gratitude shown in subscribing at the close of all his works as Sankara, the disciple of Govinda Bhagavatpada testifies to his great reverence for his Guru.

In the very beginning of his *Vivekachudamani*, Sankara salutes his Guru thus:—"I bow to my Guru, Govinda, whose nature is Bliss Supreme who is the subject of the import of all the Vedanta and who is beyond the reach of the Senses including the mind (7)". Govinda, in his turn, was a disciple of Gaudapada, a sturdy thinker whose bold thoughts and realisations are embodied in his famous *Karika* on the *Mandukya Upanishad*. That Gaudapada belonged to the traditional line of the teachers of Advaita is evident from the reference to him as *Sampradaya-vid*, the knower of the traditional teaching, whenever Sankara quotes from his work in his *Sutra-Bhashya*. The efficiency of learning from an accredited teacher in the traditional line is expressed by Sankara in the following strong words—"Even though versed in all the Sastras, a person who does not know the traditional teaching, not being initiated therein, should not be followed" (8).

The grace of a Guru in bringing into fruition the efforts at realisation of a disciple is

constantly mentioned by Sankara in his works and may well be taken to be his own experience. That grace is second only to that of God.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A GURU.

The nature of the Guru is thus described by Sankara. He should have realised the truths taught in the scriptures. In fact, he should be a living embodiment of their spirit. He should be absolutely pure and stainless in his character. No selfish motive should prompt him at any time. He should ever rest in Brahman and be all peace and blessedness, all passions having been burnt out. He should be an ocean of infinite mercy without the least ruffle of any egoistic purpose. And he should be the friend and benefactor of the humble and good" (9). These great Gurus go from place to place, the harbingers of good like the spring season animating all. The deep devotion of Sankara to his Guru leads to the conclusion that Govinda was preeminently endowed with these excellences.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE STUDENT.

In the present instance, the disciple was an ideal pupil with all the virtues demanded of one such. His intellect was sharp and penetrating, able to analyse and understand the

subtlest truths. He had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. His powers of reasoning were uncommon (10). When such a master and disciple combine, the result is wonderful; the inspired truths of the Scriptures become living realities. The nature of the Sadhana, the discipline, practised by Sankara during this period is a sealed secret confined to the Guru and the disciple. But, a statement in the introduction to Sankara's commentary on the characteristics of the Stitha Prajna, the man of realisation, seems to slightly lift the veil in this matter. It is said therein that in spiritual matters the virtues of those who have attained the goal, are to be got by practice by the aspirant and hence they constitute his means to perfection. Those means are the characteristics of the Perfected (11). After three years of unremitting effort, Sankara realized his purpose and took loving leave of his Master whose happiness knew no bounds in having such a worthy disciple who was able within an incredibly short period to completely assimilate his teaching and attain to the highest end of man as declared by the Scriptures.

SANKARA'S REALISATION.

He had that realisation, which he has so eloquently and beautifully described in the Vivekachudamani:—"Where is the universe

gone? Who has taken it away? Wherein has it dissolved? It was but a while ago that I had seen it? Has it ceased to exist? It is indeed very strange! In the ocean of Brahman full of the nectar of Absolute Bliss, what is to be rejected and what accepted? What is other than myself, what is different? In this state, I see nothing, hear nothing, and know nothing. I am separate from everything else. I am the eternal bliss, my ownself.

Blessed am I? All my duties have been fulfilled and I have attained the goal. I am freed from the clutches of Samsara, transmigration. I am the essence of eternal bliss. I have become perfect by your Grace" (12).

Thus, he had the supreme experience mentioned in the scriptures, the transcendental Realisation, which cannot be expressed, being beyond the reach of words and mind. Sankara says "On reaching this state, one is no longer deluded; a person who attains to this state even at the last stage of life, attains Moksha. Such being the case, it is needless to say that one who renounces just after the student-stage (Brahmacharya) and dwells in Brahman throughout life attains the felicity of Brahman, the Brahma-Nirvana" (13). The latter part of the passage seems to refer to his own case of taking to the

life of a Sanyasin directly after the stage of Brahmacharya and attaining Brahman. The marvellous ease with which he was able to realise the supreme Reality seems to be reflected in the following passage. "No effort is therefore, needed to attain the knowledge of Brahman. What is needed is only to cease to regard the non-self as the self. Therefore the state of being established in the knowledge (of Brahman) is very easy of accomplishment" (14).

THE ADHIKARIKAS.

In the commentary on the Brahma Sutras, Sankara refers to a certain rare class of competent persons who are commissioned by the Supreme Lord to work for the welfare of the world even after their final liberation and attainment of the goal of life (15). Sankara's future career shows that he belonged to this type of persons who, though they have no selfish purpose in life, work incessantly for the betterment of mankind.

SANKARA'S STAY AT BENARES.

The first place to which he turned his steps after leaving his Guru was Benares, then, as ever, sacred to all Hindus. Very soon, he attracted the attention of many and a band of

devoted disciples gathered round him. Indeed he must have seemed a marvel. Young in years, but ripe in wisdom, self-confident and self-reliant, yet gentle and tolerant, his influence was irresistible. Though he had soared the highest pinnacle of realisation, he oned himself with the humblest and mingled in all harmless forms of worship, seeing Brahman everywhere, even in rivers and mountains, sacred ghats and other places. Thus objects sanctified by the devotion of ages were glorified by him in sweet and charming verses breathing the fragrance of pure and exalted emotion as is borne out by his stotras on Annapurua, and Viswanath, the Mother and Father of the Universe, the tutelary deities of Kashi, and on Ganga, Kashi, Manikarnika and others.

THE CHANDALA INCIDENT.

An interesting incident is recorded as having taken place during his stay at Benares. Once he and his disciples were going through a lane on their way to the Ganges when they encountered a Chandala accompanied by four dogs. The habits of the past asserted themselves for the time being and Sankara asked the stranger to clear the way for them. The Chandala retorted that this bidding was inconsistent with

the doctrine of Advaita, as the Soul is the One and the only Being that existed without a second and is the same in all. Sankara at once recognised the truth of the remark and proclaimed his profound conviction that he who has realized the Supreme Reality, Brahman, in all, is a Guru, a revered Teacher, worthy of worship, whether he be a Chandala or a Brahman. He saw the Lord Siva in that Chandala and the holy Vedas in the dogs. In the Gita, it is said that a truly wise man sees Brahman in a Chandala and a dog as well as in a Brahman endowed with knowledge and humility (16.) Sankara literally carried out the spirit of this teaching. This episode brings into bold relief a noble characteristic of the Master. He was ready to acknowledge his fault and to appreciate greatness in others. This is still more remarkable, considering the age in which he lived, the then state of society and the orthodox traditions and associations of his early years.

The same large-heartedness is seen in his Bhashya on the Brahma Sutras when discussing the question whether the non-dwijas have the right to the knowledge of Brahman. Though the Sutras seem to deny that right, Sankara remarks that the effect of such knowledge is absolute and admits of no exception. He cites

the examples of Dharmavyadha, Vidura and others, who were born with that knowledge acquired in previous births and that effect cannot be prevented from working on account of their present birth. Though the right to the study of the Vedas was barred in the case of the non-dwijas, they can get the same knowledge through the Puranas and the Itihasas which they could learn with impunity even according to the orthodox canon. Once, however, the knowledge is obtained, the result is inevitable. It may be mentioned that Sankara alone among the important commentators has interpreted in such a liberal manner making it clear that the non-dwijas' disabilities do not extend to the knowledge of Brahman, but only to the study of the Vedas. Elsewhere, he boldly declares:—"It has been established that everyone has the right to the knowledge (of Brahman) and that the Supreme good is attained by that knowledge alone"(17).

PEDANTRY OF SCHOLARS AND THE NECESSITY OF AUTHORITATIVE COMMENTARIES.

Benares has been from very ancient times a centre of orthodox learning and scholarship. From his contact with the scholars of the day, Sankara soon found that the spirit of the scriptures was not understood by many of them.

They learnt not for self-edification and real culture, but for mere display, name, fame and other material objects. As has been said in the Viveka Choodamani, "The scholarship of the learned, consisting in the rattling of words, the unremitting flow of language and the dexterity of interpretation, is for mere worldly enjoyment and does not conduce to Moksha. The network of words is a dense forest in which the mind wanders and loses itself" (18). Sankara also found that confusion was wrought in the minds of ordinary men regarding the purport of the scriptures on account of the diversity and diffuseness of the interpretations of scholars. He felt the need of authoritative commentaries on the acknowledged texts of Hinduism. He himself expresses this idea in the following words in his introduction to his commentary on the Gita. "I find that, in spite of many commentaries, explaining the words, sentences, the drift of the passage and the reasoning, men in general understand the import of the Gita in diverse and quite contradictory senses; I shall interpret it briefly with a view to determine its precise meaning" (19). It is evident from this passage that there were at the time many commentaries on the Gita. Allusions to other interpretations in his commentaries on the Brahma-sutras and the Upanishads prove the existence

of earlier commentaries on those scriptures. Sankara refers to Bhagavan Upavarsha as a revered commentator of the Brahmasutras. There seem to have been commentators belonging to Sankara's own line of teachers. In his gloss on the Chhandogya Upanishad Bhashya of Sankara, Anandagiri says that one Dravidacharya had composed an elaborate Bhashya on that Upanishad. In the commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Sankara refers to a story told by a teacher of his line and Anandagiri asserts that the teacher referred to is Dravidacharya. It is noteworthy that the same story is alluded to in a work, Srutisara Samuddharana by Thodaka, one of the direct disciples of Sankara. It is expressly stated therein that the story owes its origin to Dravida who used it to illustrate that the teaching Tattwamasi 'That art thou' is only to rouse one to a consciousness of his true nature of the Atman which he had forgotten through ignorance (20). The previous commentaries were not suited to the layman as they were too detailed. Sankara's aim was to explain as briefly and as clearly as possible without ambiguity or liability to misunderstanding.

THE COMPILATION OF COMMENTARIES.

To carry out this idea, he settled at Badarikashrama of holy associations, reputed to have

been the hermitage of Badarayana, the venerable compiler of the Brahma Sutras. Sankara lived there for four years with his disciples, engaged in the great work and the result was the writing of the masterly commentaries on the principal Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Gita besides the Compilation of many elementary works to educate the common man in the theory and practice of the principles of Sanathana Dharma. "The writings of the boy of sixteen are the wonders of the modern world"*. They are his permanent legacy to posterity.* The rapid and unqualified success of his Bhashyas may be inferred from the fact that no previous commentary has survived and no subsequent commentary has been able to supplant them. He consolidated the doctrines of Hinduism, basing them on the sure foundations of the Veda, the Supreme authority in matters spiritual, the Brahma Sutras, its organised system and the Gita, the Song Divine containing the essence of the Veda. All subsequent leaders of spiritual thought in India, Ramanuja, Madhava, Vallabha and others had to take up the same three works and interpret them anew to give currency to their systems.

* Swami Vivekananda "Sages of India".

STAY AT BENARES.

After accomplishing this gigantic and memorable work, Sankara returned to Benares. "When the lotus is full-blown, the bees come of themselves to drink the honey". He was soon recognized and acknowledged as the ideal master. Many flocked to him for advice and help and a few remained with him as his devoted disciples. A description of the Master given by Padmapada, one of his disciples is interesting. "He is an extraordinary Sankara, surrounded by the devoted group of Sanyasin disciples who have renounced all enjoyments. He has given up all pomp and power and true reasoning has chosen to abide with him for ever, becoming part and parcel of himself. He is calm and serene, having rooted out the mighty Kala, Time, the All-destroyer. He has no obstructions anywhere". "The eager, devoted and disciplined bees (disciples), drink deep the sweet and life giving nectar of the lotus of the Bhashya, springing from the pure Manasa lake of his mouth" (21). The disciples who had the goodfortune to listen to the exposition of the Bhashyas from his own lips felt him to be surcharged with divine power and Padmapada has given vent to this feeling in the following passage. "Hence, the words of Bhagavan Bhashyakara, the sole refuge of the knowers of Brahman, who has assumed a body

for propagating true knowledge for the good of the World, should be regarded as equal in authority to the Vedas" (22).

THE OCCASION OF THE "BHAJAGOVINDA" SONG.

Sankara lost no opportunity to impress on pedants the vanity of their learning. Once he went to a temple at Benares where he saw an old man with one foot on the grave repeating a Sutra from Panini. 'The master felt the humour of the situation and expressed his feelings in a beautiful song of exhortation with the rousing refrain "worship Govinda, worship Govinda, worship that Lord ever and ever, O thou of little understanding; when Death is at hand, (the repetition of) the Sutra will not be of any avail to save you" (23). 'The entire song awakens one to the sense of having wasted one's life in vain pursuits. It is popular in its appeal and is often sung with enthusiasm during Bhajana and San-kirtana. It may be noted in passing that this teaching was suited to the occasion and does not in any way indicate his discouragement of study in general or the learning of grammar in particular. In his commentaries and other works, he extols Vyakarana, the Science of grammar, as it helps to a correct understanding of the Vedas. In the incident mentioned above, the rebuke administered was a timely corrective. Many

such occasional compositions of Sankara are extant.

A WIDER CALL.

He stayed at Benares for several years, spending his time in the instruction of his disciples and of others who came to him to clear their doubts. *The then ruler of the place is said to have had unbounded admiration for the great Master and earnestly pressed him to make that sacred city his permanent abode. But Sankara felt a wider call, to work for the spiritual regeneration of the whole of India. Accordingly, he started on his mission. The first place to which he proceeded was Prayag (Allahabad). He bathed in the sacred waters at the Confluence of the Ganges and the Junna. It is noteworthy that the chroniclers narrate that Sankara tenderly and devoutly remembered his loving mother in his prayers at that time. The soft side of the great Master is revealed in the few glimpses that we get of his personality.

MEETING WITH KUMARILA BHATTA.

While resting with his disciples in the shade of the trees along the river bank at Allahabad

* Chidvilasa mentions this fact. It may be noted that the princes of India have never been chary in recognizing spiritual worth and paying homage to it.

Sankara heard * that Kumarila Bhatta, the valiant champion of the Purva Mimamsa, was about to immolate himself in fire, as an expiation of the sin of having once made a statement with an 'if', suggesting doubt in the truth of the Vedas. He had fulfilled his self appointed task of establishing the Karma Marga and stemming the tide of heterodox faiths like Buddhism which were overwhelming the mother faith. The fame of this veteran hero of innumerable contests with the opponents of Hinduism had reached Sankara who hurried to meet one who had done so much for the Sanatana Dharma. The young master desired to have a discussion with this elder teacher on the relation between Karma and Jnana, one of the fundamental problems constantly discussed by Sankara in his important works. But it was too late. Kumarila had already begun the great sacrifice and the body was half burnt. Having advised Sankara to meet and discuss with Viswarupa, a great

* Chidvilasa says that the news reached Sankara while he was in Rudrapura of which one Bhadrasena was the ruler. It is interesting to note that in two places viz., in his Bhashyas on the Brahma Sutras and the Chandogyopanishad, the name of one Bhadra Sena is cited as an example of general manager of the affairs of the King, who often referred to him as his very soul; Bhadrasena is stated to have become an ardent Advaitin by the inspired teaching of Sankara.

scholar and one of the foremost defenders of the Purva Mimamsa *, Kumarila passed away in glory, heroic in death as in life. This scene must have created an indelible impression on the mind of Sankara.

MEETING AND DISCUSSION WITH VISWARUPA.

Kumarila's advice was immediately followed by Sankara. He went to Magadha seeking Viswarupa to discuss with him the very important and vexed question. The Purva Mimamsa School had attained very great prominence at that time owing to the efforts of Sabara and others, including Kumarila, perhaps the greatest exponent of the system after Sabara. They held that Karma is the only topic dealt with by the Vedas and texts that seem to treat of other subjects like Upasana or Jnana are to be taken as subservient to Karma, as otherwise they will have no authority whatever. On the otherhand, Sankara contended that Karma and Jnana are entirely distinct and independent forming the subject matters of the Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda respectively and that true knowledge alone will confer the Supreme Beatitude, Moksha (21). Sankara returns to this question time and again, thus showing that it was a

* Kumarila's time is fixed as 590 - 650 A. D.
(Radhakrishnan's Indian Philosophy - Vol. II 377.)

burning problem of the day and hence had to be thoroughly dealt with in all aspects. Viswarupa was a scholar of no mean repute and the self-confidence of Sankara can well be gauged by his challenging him to debate with the stipulation that the defeated party should give up his Ashrama and adopt the stage of life of the other, becoming his disciple. It is even more surprising that Ubhayabharathi, the learned wife of Viswarupa, was chosen by Sankara himself to be the arbiter. This reveals not only the settled conviction of the Master in the irrefutable nature of his position but also his faith in the profound scholarship and unimpeachable impartiality of that gifted lady. It is also noteworthy as evidencing Sankara's attitude to women who were generally considered as having no right or capacity to study, not to speak of judging between two learned disputants. But Sankara is here seen assigning to a worthy woman the exalted and honoured position of being an umpire in a highly intellectual discussion with her own husband. As in the case of the Chandala, Sankara recognized no difference of sex or caste in the Atman.

THE DEFEAT OF VISWARUPA AND HIS REALISATION OF THE TRUTH OF SANKARA'S POSITION.

The discussion lasted for several days, and in the end, Viswarupa had to acknowledge

defeat which was ratified by the verdict of his wife. The nobility of Bharathi is seen at its highest in this, for she would be naturally partial to her husband and the consequence of his failure would affect her most of all. Sankara's magnanimity is also displayed by the fact that even after this, he allowed Viswarupa full freedom to do as he liked, without heeding the condition of the debate. Hasty or unwilling conversion will do no good. Sankara himself in many places of his Sutra Bhashya refers to the futility of arriving at the truth by mere discussion and reasoning. "A man with higher powers of dialectics will be able to unsettle the position held by one and the former again could be defeated by one of greater intellect (25)". Hence, the necessity of clinging to the Sastra, the Sruti, the accumulated treasure of spiritual truths discovered by Rishis, who had risen to the perception of supersensuous realities. Viswarupa meditated long and was convinced by his own realisation of the validity of Sankara's teaching. This seems to be the real significance of the statement of a biographer that, only after the assurance of Jaimini that the correct purport of the Vedas was what Sankara had propounded, could Viswarupa finally accept the teaching. But once he was convinced, he had no hesitation in acknowledging the boy teacher as his revered

Guru. The latter also openly and unstintedly commended his uncommon scholarship and powers of argument, the only defect which led to his defeat in the present instance, being the inherent weakness of his position. The strength of Sankara was in the absolute Certitude of his realisation. As he says in his Bhashya on the Taittiriya Upanishad "This indeed is a source of satisfaction to me that you speak of many dualists being arrayed against me, a monist. I will conquer them all; I shall begin the discussion"(26).

DISCUSSION WITH UBHAYABHARATI AND VISWARUPA'S SANYASA.

Viswarupa expressed his eager desire to take Sanyasa. But Ubhayabharathi interposed with the remark that the defeat was not complete as she, his wife and half of himself, according to the Sastras, had not been discomfited. All the parties concerned admitted the force of her contention and another hotly contested debate followed. Both were worthy combatants. In the end Ubhayabharathi had to yield and she proclaimed the Superiority of Sankara. It would seem that she also became a disciple and renounced along with her husband who was given the name of Sureshwara*. A remarkable

* Life and Times of Sankara P. 43.

dialogue woven out (in the classic Vartika by Sureshwara on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) on the slender frame of the story of Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi appears to be an unconscious reflection of the happy married life of Viswarupa and the conversation that took place between his wife and himself when he sought to renounce. A few *passages will bear out these remarks. "Maitreyi replied, "The desire you have expressed to renounce is worthy of you and appropriate. Kindly instruct me as to my duty in the matter.....How can a high souled one like you renounce, after leaving me, your devoted loving and virtuous wife in bondage, tied up to wealth, without having broken my bonds. If wealth can confer immortality, it is not fit that you renounce it. If it cannot help to gain immortality, of what avail, then, is it to me..... Why do you give me finite riches. The gift of illusory things is no gift at all". Yajnavalkya replied, "You have never spoken a word against my wishes and you have ever fulfilled the duties of a devoted wife. Now also, you follow my inclinations and are as dear to me as ever. Even his brothers desert the man who seeks Moksha. By your unsurpassed devotion to me, you do not

* The whole dialogue is given in the Appendix.

desire to leave me even now, when I renounce seeking Moksha.

“You cannot hear the idea of separation from me, as you are intensely devoted to me. You wish to follow me even in the path of Mukti, as you desire complete oneness with me. Uma, the great Goddess, on account of Her deep devotion to Her Lord, the Supreme God, resorted to become half His body. But you seek with your entire soul to become the whole of my soul”.

The name of Ubhayabharathi and her sacred memory are to be cherished by the admirers of Sankara. Her story is a shining example of the tribute paid by the Master to worthy womanhood.

SURESWARA'S BOOK “NAISKARMASIDHI”

Sureswara became one of the most eminent disciples. The Master instructed this highly gifted scholar in the theory and practice of Advaita. Finding that he had perfectly assimilated the teaching, Sankara inspired him to compose an original work summing up the principles of the system and the result is the Naiskarma Siddhi, an admirable text book on

Advaita. How thoroughly Sureswara had accepted the cardinal doctrine that true knowledge alone is the direct means to Moksha is evident from the title of the book. His admiration for his Guru was unbounded and he has recorded it in several passages. Thus he says, "Finding none superior to him, the superlative suffixes denoting the highest excellence returned and became established in that Guru. To him, the highest, the breaker of the bonds of the (primal) ignorance, I bow. The Guru has revealed the ultimate truths of the Vedas and I have no ability to say anything therein. When the sun is shining in all his glory, how can a glow-worm exhibit itself".

"By the devoted service of the lotus feet of Sri Sankara, I have obtained the pure knowledge, resorted to by sages, the knowledge which dissipates the darkness of the heart".

"Sankara, by the power of his Yoga, got the Ganges of knowledge, flowing from the abode of the all-pervading Vishnu, the sacred waters which wash out the stains of Samsara. I duly and with devotion served that Sankara, the omniscient, established in the Supreme Self and through his grace I have received from that supreme master, endowed with all excellent

qualities and surrounded by sages, the knowledge shining in the Vedānta.

“Our Guru, the teacher of Gurus, removed the darkness of my intellect, ignorance, the root cause of Samsara, this constant whirl of life and death. He blessed me with the divine and pure knowledge of the essence of the Vedānta, which penetrates into regions inaccessible to the senses. Salutations to that Guru” (27).

SURESWARA'S WORKS.

Sureswara expressly says that the Naish-karma Siddhi was composed at the instance of his Guru. When it is remembered that Sureswara himself was one of the foremost scholars of the day of acknowledged merit, the value of his tribute to Sankara cannot be over-estimated. He was undoubtedly the most intellectual of the disciples of the Master and contributed not a little in propagating the message by his masterly Vartikas on the works of Sankara, *viz.*, the Bāshyas on Brihadaranyakopaniṣad and Taittiriya Upaniṣad as well as the original compositions of Sankara, Dakṣhināmurti Stotra and the Panchikarāṇa. There is reverent reference to his Guru in all these works. Some extracts are given below:—

“Our revered Guru, following the footsteps of the venerable teachers in the line, composed a commentary on the Upanishad of the Kanva recension, which reviews and sums up the purport of all the Vedas for the purpose of conferring lasting peace on worthy aspirants. I salute my Guru, the pure and blessed Lord descended from the great sage Atri. The intellect of my master is a veritable ocean, the repository of countless jewels, gems, and other treasures. His reasoning and speech for the requisites for churning. Sraddha, firm faith and devotion make up the fast rope. Steadfastness is the strong post. Mercy to all is the effort. The result of the churning with the help of these materials was the nectar of knowledge, tasting which the mortals, buffeted by the waves of life and death, became immortal and attained Moksha.

“Our Guru composed a most excellent commentary on the Kanvopanishad which confers lasting good to the worthy aspirants, shines with many logical proofs and conclusions, incontrovertibly refutes the arguments of the faithless and harmoniously reveals the purport of all the Upanishads to be the oneness of the Atman. Following it, this substantiation has been made by me on that commentary depending on faith

and devotion to the Guru as my only help in the great task.

“The resplendent rays of his pure renown, like the soothing beams of the full moon on the cloudless sky have spread throughout. His infinite mercy brought relief to the suffering. The sophists had to disperse and run away hither and thither, routed by the thunderbolt of his mighty words. I bow down in all reverence to that most revered master and seek to analyse his commentary.

The leader of the pilgrims to Moksha is Sri Sankara, the prince of monks. His disciple, Sureswara, on account of his devotion to the Master was able to comprehend the deep meaning of his commentary and wrote this Vartika”(28).

SURESWARA'S ORIGINALITY AND INTELLECTUAL INDEPENDENCE.

In spite of this deep devotion and reverence for the Master, Sureshwara does not slavishly adhere to everything that the former has written. In not a few places, he interprets in an independent manner departing from the commentary of Sankara. Thus, a passage of the Brihadaranyopanisad is taken by Sankara as referring to the father's last dying testament to his son

while Sureswara tries to show the greater suitability of another interpretation. His explanation is that the passage refers to the parting injunctions of a person to his son before taking Sanyasa. The wide freedom given by the Master to his disciples is evident. He allowed them full freedom to think out for themselves and hold on to those opinions which they arrived at by the exercise of their chastened reason.

PADMAPADA AND HIS WORK THE "PANCHAPADIKA".

Next to Sureshwara in the work of the propagation of the Master's teaching was Padmapada, one of the earliest disciples, whose devotion was second to none. He wrote a gloss, the Panchapadika, on Sankara's masterpiece, the Sutrashashya. Only a fragment of the gloss is extant; but it is enough to show the deep, penetrating and comprehensive outlook of the author and his vast erudition. He had the privilege of studying the Bhashya thrice from Sri Sankara and hence the value and authoritative-ness of his Panchapadika, in understanding the inner import and implications of the teachings of the Master.

Viswarupa's instance may be taken as typical of the controversies Sri Sankara had to

engage in during the years of his active propagation of the Sanatana Dharma. By his unrivalled knowledge of the scriptures, inimitable powers of argumentation, sweet reasonableness and above all, the living realisation, back of all these, the master met with success wherever he went.

THE PASSING AWAY OF SANKARA'S MOTHER.

One of the most important incidents in his career, perhaps the most touching of them all, happened soon after. While living the calm and unruffled life of a teacher initiating and instructing his disciples, he suddenly had a premonition of his mother's impending death. At once he left everything and went in hot haste to his native place. His mother was in her last moments. Her delight knew no bounds, when she saw her beloved son, who had been absent from her for such a long time. Sankara's feelings could well be imagined. The mother had heard of the pure fame of her son, who had become a respected teacher to many and she asked him to do the last duties of a son. It is said that Sankara at first spoke to her of the ultimate Reality, the Nirguna Brahman and the oneness of the Atman and Brahman. She confessed that the teachings were too high and subtle for her.

He grasped the situation at once and like the true master came to her level. He then and there composed a moving song graphically describing the glorious form of Vishnu, listening to which the mother felt intense and ecstatic happiness and passed away in that mood. In the words of the Gita she had the blessed destiny of a Yogi who departs with concentrated mind, full of devotion to the Lord. Sankara performed all the rites enjoined by the Sastras, though the Sanyasin being above all Karma is not only not bound by any such obligations but is even forbidden to do them. The extraordinary filial piety and affection got the better of all such conventional rules, intended for the guidance of ordinary monks. Sankara went to the spirit of the laws, as he knew well their purpose, scope and limitations. The sacred spot where the funeral rites were performed is still pointed out to the pilgrim and bears witness to the loving homage of a dutiful son to his venerable mother. Sankara carried out into practice the teaching of the Sruti that the mother should be revered and honoured as God. The famous saying of Sankara about the unsurpassed unselfishness and pure love of the mother reverberates through the ages "There may be many bad sons, but not one single bad mother (29)".

SANKARA'S MARCH THROUGHOUT INDIA
AND HIS SPIRITUAL CONQUEST.

Sankara's life is thus an object lesson of intense devotion to and love for the mother. Then followed a period of intense activity for the spiritual revival and regeneration of the whole of India. He walked on foot from Rameswaram to the Himalayas halting for several days at important places* on the way meeting the representatives of the Sectarian faiths and discussing with them. His method was to let them explain fully their views and the proofs they could bring forward to substantiate their propositions. If they accepted the Vedas, he would show that their quotations were onesided and that there were many other passages which went against their conclusions and the sound principle was to harmonise all the parts of the authoritative

* Chidvilasa furnishes the following information regarding Sankara's sojourn in Ananthasayanam (Trivandrum) during the course of his travels. He went to Anantasayanam, a veritable Vaikunta on Earth. There the Lord Maha Vishnu reclines rapt in His own Mahatmya. The master, Sankara, adored with great devotion the God Ananthapadmanabha and praised Him in the following words :—

“ He stayed there for a fortnight. Ramaraja the Prince, most valiant, with his army, welcomed the master and revered him with deep respect.”

scriptures. Thus, the Sun-worshippers who insisted that the Sun alone was Brahman and cited the famous text 'this Sun is Brahman', were silenced by Sankara's numerous quotations from the Sruti, stating 'The Sun shines from fear of Brahman', 'the Sun shines not in Brahman, because it is through the light of Brahman that the Sun shines', etc. Then, he would show the way of reconciliation and point out that Brahman alone is the ultimate Reality, but that the worship of the Sun as Brahman will lead one to that higher, transcendent Realisation. Similarly, with the worship of Siva, and other Gods. The mistake lies in thinking that Brahman is the Sun or any other God and that God alone. That is but a partial view. It lowers the ideal, besides being the root cause of fanaticism and sectarian quarrels, even leading to the spilling of blood in the name of God. In this way, Sankara gave a wider view to the followers of Sectarian creeds, liberalising their outlook. At some time he supplied the rational justification for their modes of worship and thought and gave them a higher vision. This process is that which is employed in the Sutra Bhasya also. For instance, he accepts the Bhagavata position that the supreme Lord is the cause of causes, from Whom the world emanates, in Whom it runs for a time and finally withdraws and that

He is All-knowing and All-powerful, Ever-free and All-pervading. He also agrees with their view that devotion to the Lord brings down His Grace and leads to Moksha, by conferring true knowledge. But, the belief that Sankarashana, the jiva was born of Vasudeva and other peculiar doctrines following thereon cannot be valid, as they contradict the express declaration of the Sruti that the Jiva is not created (30). With those, like the Buddhists and the Jains, who did not accept the authority of the Vedas, Sankara argued on rationalistic principles alone.

THE PANCHAYATANAPUJA.

The then prevailing forms of worship were brought by the genius of Sankara under five heads he systematized, reformed and linked them to the truths of Advaita. Thus, the purified modes of the adoration of the Sun, Siva, Vishnu, Ganapati and Devi, which have come down to our own days, the Panchayatanapuja, as it is called, owe their origin to Sankara. The Mantras and the symbols of the Puja are well intended to bring Advaita into practice. The Master in this respect was true to the best traditions of the Sanatana Dharma, as proclaimed in the Gita. 'Who soever comes to Me (the Lord) through whatsoever path, I reach Him. All are

struggling through paths which, in the end, lead to Me'.

HIS STERN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE KAPALIKAS AND OTHER SUCH SECTS.

The great Master could, however, not tolerate the low, vile practices passing in the name of religion. There were horrible sects like the Kapalikas and the Bhairavas, to whose detestable methods of human sacrifice and bestiality in various forms, Sankara was a strong and uncompromising foe. They, of course, tried every means, fair and foul, to kill the Master. We hear of the attempts of the Kapalika, Ugrabhairava and the Bhairava, Krakacha and his followers in this direction. But the loving and devoted vigilance of Pàdmapada and other disciples prevented any untoward accident. The Master was successful in his untiring efforts and these sects could not raise their head for a long time after Sankara.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRAL MONASTERIES IN INDIA.

The need of organization was also felt by the Master to achieve solid and lasting results. Thus, we find him establishing Mutts in four of the cardinal points of India, Sringeri, Dwaraka,

Puri and Badari. The first to be started was at Sringeri, on the Tungabhadra, associated with the austerities of Rishyasringa of Ramayana fame. Sankara with his disciples reached there in the course of his wanderings and found it an ideal place for a monastery on account of its charming scenery and serene spiritual atmosphere. He placed Sureshwaraacharya as the first head of the Mutt. A temple dedicated to Sarada, the Goddess of Learning, was attached to the Mutt. Sankara stayed a considerable time there, training his disciples and teaching them the highest truths of the Vedanta by example and precept.

TWO MORE DISCIPLES:—HASTAMALAKA.

A few more disciples had joined the Master, and two of them attained to prominence. Their stories are interesting. During his travels, he had been to a place called Sri Bali, near Gokarna. Learned Brahmins formed the majority of the population of that place. One of them accompanied by his son came to see Sankara. The boy was peculiar in his ways and passed for a dunce. He would never utter a word and seemed dull and listless at all times. Hence he had not yet been initiated into Upanayanam, though he had long overpassed

the proper age. But the Master at once recognized the worth of the boy and asked him affectionately the reason of his strange behaviour which was misunderstood by others. The reply was a song of wisdom voicing the sure conviction, of the identity of the Soul with Brahman. The poem is extant and inspires in the reading. The father and other onlookers wondered. Sankara besought of the father the gift of his son, who ever lived in the highest scale of realisation like Jada Bharatha and could not descend to the level of ordinary life. The father was convinced of the truth of the Master's statement and allowed the extraordinary boy to stay with him, though he had the natural paternal grief to part with his son. Sankara gave the appropriate name of Hastamalaka to the boy, signifying that his realisation was as living and tangible as a fruit in one's hand. He was given the charge of the Mutt at Dwaraka.

TODAKACHARYA.

The last, though not the least, of the four great disciples, was Giri. At first, he appeared dull-witted and slow of speech. The redeeming feature in his character was his exemplary devotion to the Master. He delighted in serving Sankara and attending to all his needs. The Master loved him tenderly and would not begin

his instructions to his disciples until Giri could be present. Some of them did not understand the reason of the Master's conduct, as they slighted Giri's capacity to grasp the teachings. Sankara was aware of this and once asked that simple and humble disciple to express what he had learnt that day. To the astonishment of the scoffers, Giri answered in a few verses composed on the spot in the charming Thodaka metre. In commemoration of this incident, he was called Thodakacharya by the Master. His conception of Sri Sankara is evident from the following extracts from his simple, inspired verses.

“The glow of the glorious Sun of knowledge, my Guru, dissipated for good the darkness of my soul, caught in the whirling wheel of constant birth and death. The devoted groups of disciplos, taking refuge at his feet, became endowed with knowledge, self-control, modesty and all other excellent virtues and established themselves in freedom from the bonds of Samsara. To that Great Guru, the supreme benefactor, I bow down for ever and ever”.

“Thou art the refuge of the teachers of the most excellent teachers. None, however, wise can equal thee. Thou art the treasury of the

highest truths and lovingly blesseth those who take refuge in thee. O, gracious Master, Sankara, be thou ever my refuge'. The great lights, assuming various forms, wander about to protect the world. Thou shineth in full glory and splendour like the Sun; O, gracious Master, Sankara, be thou ever my refuge (31)''.

His own ideal seems portrayed when he says that the disciple after being illumined by the grace of the Guru and attaining the Supreme goal of life, desires only one thing, that he should pass the rest of his life in true joy and real happiness in the company of his Guru, the sole duty left for him being the devoted service of his gracious master for ever and ever (32).

Thodakacharya has an honoured place among the chief disciples of the Guru, who placed him as the head of the Math at Badari. It may be noted in passing that the Rawal, the revered priest of Narayana, the Guardian Deity of the place, has ever been a Malayala Brahmin, nominated by the Maharaja of Travancore. Such a practice from time immemorial shows the loving remembrance by Sankara of his motherland.

The Math at Puri was placed under Padmapada, who was unsurpassed in his devotion to the Master.

These four Maths are still flourishing even after twelve centuries and there has been not even the shadow of a quarrel or jealousy between them. Each keeps to its own jurisdiction, fixed by the Master and never interferes in the province of the other. The heads of these monasteries keep clear of secular power and this explains their retaining the pristine purity and prestige. They still exert their beneficent power for good.

THE MASTER'S MISSION FULFILLED.

The master was now but thirty two years in age. But he felt that his mission had been accomplished. He had made the Sruti, the backbone of the Sanatana Dharma, easily accessible by his lucid and authoritative commentaries. The meaning of the Sariraka or the Brahma Sutras, a sealed secret to many, had been disclosed. The message of the Gita had been made popular. Several smaller works, suited to the layman, had been composed. The whole of India had been traversed and the purification of institutions and men was going on in full vigour. Disciples had been trained and equipped to carry on the work. Monasteries had been started to perpetuate the traditional teaching. Sureswara's

description of the Master seems to refer to the glorious period of the consummation of his work.

“The entire earth has become enveloped by the shining rays of the pure renown of the disciples of Sri Sankara. Even the Sun, the giver of light to the universe, pales into insignificance before the resplendent rays of that Sun of spirituality and knowledge. To that most glorious Sun, Sri Sankara, I bow with all my heart and soul (33)”.

Great men pass away as mysteriously as they are born. There are several versions of the last days of Sri Sankara. The following is one of them.

Sri Sankara felt that his mission had been fulfilled. One day he announced to his disciples that he had determined to lay down his body and that they might ask of him any of their doubts. Then all the Sanyasin Sishyas had a strange experience. They looked at the glowing face of their beloved Master to put to him the questions for which they wanted solutions; but they felt that the doubts had been fully cleared from within and that there was no need of any formal verbal questioning. Seeing them silent, Sudhanwa, the royal disciple who had served

Sankara throughout with exemplary devotion, besought that the Master might deign to sum up his essential teachings so that they may hold on to the same at all times. Sri Sankara replied that, at his own revered Master's bidding, he had once summarised the substance of the Vedanta which he would repeat to them. This final message runs as follows:—

THE FINAL MESSAGE.

The five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether express not my real nature. I am neither these nor the senses and I am not a compound formed of the elements and the senses. They are ever changing and disappear completely in deepsleep. I am above and beyond all changes, and I persist for ever. I am the One without a second, the Blissful, the Ever free.

I am above all castes, creeds and duties. For me, there is not even the need of concentration, meditation, and other practices enjoined by the Yoga Sastras. All that is non-self, depends on me. The super-imposition being removed, I alone persist, the One, the Blissful the Ever-free.

I own no father, mother, nor the shining Gods. I do not seek the celestial regions,

acquired by merit. The scriptures themselves proclaim that I have no need of the Vedas, the Sacrifices or pilgrimages, as evidenced by the state of deep sleep, where these do not exist or Samadhi, superconsciousness, where they are transcended and I stand as the eternal witness. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

The different sects, religions and philosophies, the Sankhya, the Saiva, the Pancharatra, the Jaina, the Mimamsaka and others do not disclose my real nature; they are but partial views of my becomings and look not deep at my pure being. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

Above, below, within, without, middle, east, west, or other parts do not comprehend my real nature for I pervade throughout like ether and have no parts. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

I am neither white nor black, neither red nor yellow nor of any other colour. I am neither stout nor lean, neither a giant nor a dwarf, I have no form, light alone being my form. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

I have no teacher nor scripture, no disciple nor teaching; there is neither thou nor I nor this universe. I am beyond all changes, the knowledge Absolute; I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

I am beyond the three states, the waking, the dream and deep sleep. I am above the consciousness which accompanies these states. These states are within the pale of ignorance and I am beyond them. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

I pervade everywhere, the eternal Reality, Self-evident, self-existent and depending on none else. Everything other than me, this entire Universe, sinks into nothing in my presence, as it depends on me. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

I cannot even be termed the one, for that implies the idea of two. Then how can there be two. I am neither the Isolated nor the non-isolated. I am neither the void nor non-void, for I am without a second, the non-dual, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free”.

Then Sankara assured them that he^r would be present whenever they remember him and wherever Vedanta was taught, practised and propagated. Soon after he gave up his body. The disciples felt the presence of his immortal spirit all the more and continued vigorously their beneficent spiritual ministry.

PART II.

SANKARA'S WORKS.

The works of Sankara consist of commentaries on ancient sacred texts and original treatises, both in prose and poetry. The commentaries constitute the major part and are models in style and arrangement. They are a valuable asset to Sanskrit literature.

The important commentaries are those on the Brahina Sutras, the principal Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita.

Sankara is an ideal commentator. He gives at the very outset a bird's eye view of the whole work so as to acquaint the student with its contents. The brief remarks introducing each of the sections of the text commented upon are of great help to an intelligent understanding of the passages. The connection of the preceding and the succeeding passages is shown in every instance to facilitate a correlated grasp of the subject. No obscure or difficult word or sentence is slurred over. Alternative explanations are suggested where they appear to be reasonable and necessitated by the passage

under consideration. This has stimulated the students to original thinking and his own direct disciples have been thus inspired to think for themselves and find out interpretations other than those given by the Master. The important topics of the book are brought up for discussion in appropriate places and the conclusions are impressed on the mind of the teacher. Fundamental propositions are stated in brief wherever necessary and detailed explanations follow. Padmapada calls them the Sangrahavakya and the prapancha, that is, formulas and explanations.

Some characteristics of his works may be noted. As his disciple Padmapada says, they are clear, sparkling in style and deep and suggestive in sense. This opinion is endorsed by Vachaspathi Misra, one of the acknowledged masters of classical Sanskrit who himself wrote effective and charming prose. In his admiration, he goes so far as to say that his own gloss on Sankara's commentary is like the dirty drain water which becomes pure when connected and made one with the pure Ganges water of the Bhashya of Sankara (34).

Sankara is never verbose. He chooses the right word and expresses the maximum of thought in the minimum of words. Yet, he is

never obscure. There is no mistaking his meaning. The force and vigour of his expressions and the clarity and depth of thought reveal the Master.

The method generally followed is that of a dialogue in the form of questions by an intelligent and earnest student and answers to clear his doubts. Thus the whole subject is threshed out and made easy to understand in all aspects. The position of the opponent is stated so very ably and fairly that it would seem there is no way out to escape from the conclusions urged by him or to meet the objections raised. Sankara himself speaks of the utility of this method and its superiority over the dry reasoning followed by logicians (35).

Padmapada has the following account of the master's method of exposition. "In his treatment of subjects, the commentator adopts the following method for the easy comprehension of the students. The person who objects is deemed to be present there and his objections are put forth in the form of questions by that person. Then the objections are met by answers set forth by the commentator expounding his own views. First, an objection is introduced and then the answer follows. This is the

method of exposition invariably adopted in such treatises (36)".

The sturdy independence of Sankara is revealed by the fact that there is no mangalacharana or invocation to God in the beginning of most of his works. In the Sutra-Bhashya, he himself says that a word or phrase like *Atha* can be used only when it stands in logical connection with the sentence and not otherwise for the mere consideration its sound is considered to betoken good. That the practice of mangalacharana was in vogue in the days of Sankara is evident from the gloss of Padmapada where he discusses this very question as regards the Sutra-Bhashya. He says in substance that when the commentator has, in the very beginning, treated of the Atman, the sentient One, free from all kinds of obstruction, there can be no hindrance in the progress of the work and its successful conclusion". The purpose of the Mangalacharana is, in fact, only to ward off all obstacles in the path and bring to fruition the work attempted". He concludes "Bhagavan Bhashyakara (Sankara) is in the forefront in following the virtuous practices of the good (37)".

GITA-BHASHYA.

“The great glory of Sankaracharya was his preaching of the Gita. It is one of the greatest works that this great man did among the many noble works of his noble life—the preaching of the Gita and the writing of the most beautiful commentary upon it”. *Vivekananda*.

THE GITA A TEXT OF THE BHAGAVATA
SCHOOL AND ALSO A SUMMARY OF
THE VEDIC TEACHING.

In the very beginning of this work, Sankara quotes a sloka from the Puranas describing Narayana as the supreme Lord, who is beyond the undifferentiated, the Maya, from which the cosmic egg was born. It is interesting to see that, in the Sutra-Bhashya, Sankara begins his summing up of the doctrines of the Bhagavata School by giving the substance of this very verse in almost the same words. The Lord is described as the Ever-pure, the Ever-free and the All-knowing in two places in this section of the Sutra-Bhashya as in the introduction to the commentary on the Gita. Hence it seems that Sankara regarded the Gita as a text of the Bhagavatha School, a view suggested in modern times by the eminent scholar Lokamanya Tilak.

But Sankara goes further and says that the Gita contains the essence of the whole purport of the Vedas. This brings into relief the fact that the Gita contains no trace of the peculiar ideas of some divisions of the Bhagavata School such as the four Vyuhās, Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

THE TWO-FOLD VEDIC DHARMA-PRAVRITTI AND NIVRITTI.

A fundamental idea is enunciated in the introduction that Vedic Dharma is two-fold, embracing the way of action and that of renunciation. The former leads to worldly prosperity and the latter confers Moksha. These two paths were taught for the maintenance of the World by the Lord to two different types of created beings. The conception of the Avatar is also elucidated. The Lord manifests Himself to establish this—Dharma again whenever Virtue (Dharma) declines on account of selfishness and vice (Adharma) gains the ascendancy. Sri Krishna was such an incarnation and imparted that twofold Vedic Dharma to the world for its benefit through Arjuna, who was endowed with many virtues. Being accepted by such a person, the Dharma will flourish.

The Pravritti Dharma leads to prosperity here and hereafter. But it also conduces to

purity of mind, if done without any prompting for the fruit and (with a mind) dedicated to God—The man of pure mind becomes fit to get the true knowledge which directly confers Mukti or Liberation and Bliss Supreme. The Nivritti Dharma leads one to that goal immediately as it presupposes self-knowledge and renunciation.

Sankara says that the Gita treats of this two-fold Dharma and also expounds in detail the nature of the Supreme Lord, Parabrahman. These are the subjects dealt with and their knowledge serves to realise the aspirations of man and the purpose of human life.

THE SANKHYA AND THE YOGA.

Before beginning his interpretation of the text of the Gita, Sankara discusses the question of the true import of the teaching of the Gita. Does it inculcate Jnana or a combination of Jnana and Karma? From his commentary it is evident that some teachers were of opinion that the Gita taught a combination of Jnana and Karma as the means to Moksha. Sankara combats this view. It would seem that the advocates of this theory meant by Karma the rites enjoined by the Sruti or Smriti or both. They were performed with a view to reap the fruits thereof. Sankara distinguishes and says

as follows: The ordinary man works with the sense of egoism, that is, with the idea that he is the doer. He identifies himself with his body, mind as well as with his relations, friends and possessions and is affected by anything befalling them. It unnerves him and makes him stray from his path of duty, his swadharma, and take to the works forbidden to him. Thus Arjuna is moved by the thought of the battle depriving him of his own people and so sorrow and delusion overpower him. He is ready to give up participating in the just war and seeks to embrace the life of a mendicant. Even the person, who performs his swadharma is actuated by the sense of 'I am the doer' and he seeks the results of his work. This leads him to accumulate merit and the reverse, which cause ceaseless future births, agreeable and disagreeable and there is no escape from this chain. The teaching of the Gita begins from a higher standpoint. It shows the defects of these two ways of action. We should discriminate between virtue and vice and cling to the former. We should regenerate ourselves. We should know that the soul is different from the body, the senses, the mind etc. All the works we do should be dedicated to the Lord and we should have no attachment to the results. This is the path of Yoga or Karmayoga, taught in the Gita.

The performances of such selfless work in the spirit of an offering to God make for the purity of the mind. The pure mind is fit to grasp the true knowledge of the self as one and the same in all and that knowledge makes one free. The true knowledge of the self is what is known as Sankhya. Hence, Yoga or the path of Karmayoga is a means to Sankhya or Jnana, the knowledge of the Supreme Reality.

After getting that knowledge, some may still remain in the world engaged in work like the Lord Sri Krishna. But their work is solely and wholly for the benefit of others and never for themselves as the idea of the petty self clinging to or lodged in a particular body has been entirely transcended. Janaka and others like him must have worked in this manner, if they had already acquired the realisation of the Self. Otherwise, their work must be deemed to have been to acquire purity of mind, the indispensable prerequisite to the knowledge of the Self. Thus it is clear that Sankara assigns an important place to work in the scheme of Moksha. He does not condemn Karma or action according to the Sastras done with motive or the desire for the result in the case of the person who does not or cares not to know anything higher. Selfless work performed as an offering

to or worship of the Lord is approved as a means to attain knowledge. It is noteworthy that Sankara admits the possibility of work by the freed souls and cites Sri Krishna's action as an example. It is not at all contrary to Jnana. But to call it action will be a misnomer, as two essential elements ordinarily associated with work are wanting, that is, the feeling of egoism and the desire for the fruits. The views of Lokamanya Tilak do not seem to essentially differ from those of Sankara in this matter except in the emphasis necessitated by the circumstances of the time. The Mimamsakas insisted on the performance by all of rituals and sacrifices which would lead to heaven after death and asserted that there is no other goal in life. Passages dealing with the knowledge of the self were either meaningless or subservient to those enjoining action. So Sankara had to check the tendency to neglect the crest-jewel of the Vedas, the Jnana-kanda. But he did not decry the Karmakanda, he only showed that that was not the final goal taught in the Sastras. He teaches how such works should be performed to lead to that end. Tilak's appeal is to a nation which had become idle and indolent in the name of religion. So, he has laid stress on Karma Yoga. He also tries to make out that Sri Krishna

speaks of those who work for the world's good, after attaining Moksha as superior to those who abstain from any such action. Sankara's distinction as we learn from the Sutra-Bhashya is between those who are commissioned by God to work even after attaining Moksha and those who are not so authorised.

As a specimen of his interpretation the following may be cited.

First the connection with the preceding passage is given to serve as an introduction.

“Why dost Thou (the Lord) confer the devotion to knowledge (Buddhiyoga) to Thy devotee? And what is that obstacle in the path leading to Thee which the devotion to knowledge that Thou bestoweth on Thy devotees serves to remove? In answer to this question the Lord says :” Then follows the text.

“Out of my pure grace towards those (devotees) I, seated in their innermost soul, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the bright lamp of knowledge”. The commentary follows:—“Out of mere grace, that is out of mercy, desirous that they should attain bliss, I dwell in the hearts of the devotees who are ever engaged in thinking of the Atman;

I destroy the darkness of ignorance,—the inexplicable illusory nescience due to indiscrimination (of the Self and the non-Self) by the lamp of knowledge. Such knowledge is born of discrimination. The lamp is fed by the pure oil of disinterested devotion, fanned by the wind of deep incessant meditation on Me, the Lord, furnished with the wick of right intuition, refined by the cultivation of Brahmacharya and other exalting disciplines, held in the receptacle of the Chitta which is without any (worldly) attachment, placed in the wind proof enclosure of the Chitta (mindstuff) turned away from the sense-objects and untainted by attachment and aversion, and shining with the light of right knowledge generated by incessant practice of concentration and meditation”.

As an instance of Sankara's exposition according to the spirit of the text, the following may suffice. The following is his interpretation of the 13th sloka of the VIth Chapter, where the words “Fixing his gaze on the tip of the nose” occur, “The man, who practises yoga should gaze as it were on the tip of his nose ; here we have to understand that the words ‘as it were’ are also meant to be supplied in the text ; for the Lord means to prescribe, not the very act of ‘gazing at the tip of the nose’, but the fixing of

the sight within (by withdrawing it from external objects): and this, of course, depends on the steadiness of mind. If, on the other hand, the very act of 'gazing at the tip of his nose' were meant here, then the mind would be fixed only there, not on the Atman. But, as a matter of fact, the Yogin is to concentrate the mind on the Atman, as is stated in VI 35; that is, 'making the mind dwell in the Self (Atman)". Hence, the words 'as it were' should be supplied to make the purport clear".

We shall close with the commentary on the 55th sloka, of the 11th Chapter. According to Sankara, "this verse sums up the essential teaching of the whole Gita-Sastra, which should be practised, as it leads to the Highest Beatitude".

~. "He who does works for Me, who looks on Me, as the Supreme, who is devoted to Me, who is free from attachment, who is without hatred for any being, comes to Me, O Arjuna".

A servant works for his master, but he does not look upon that master as the highest goal for him to reach; but My devotee works for Me and also considers Me as the Supreme Goal. I

am this Supreme Goal. He is devoted to Me; he serves Me in all ways, with his whole heart and soul. He is not attached to wealth, to progeny, to friends, to wife, to kinsmen, or to pleasures; he has no (selfish) clinging towards them. He cherishes no enmity for any being, even though that being may have done great injury to him. Such a man comes to Me. I am his Highest Goal and he seeks nothing else. This is the beneficial teaching I have to offer you”.

It may be seen that practice and theory, work, devotion, and knowledge, are harmoniously taught here to reach the Lord, the Highest Goal.

THE CHHANDOGYA-UPANISHAD BHASHYA.

The Commentary on this Upanishad enables one to have a clear conception of the views of Sankara on the different forms of meditation and worship, which form a considerable part of the text.

In the very beginning, the relation of the Upasanas to the Advaita, the final purport of all Upanishads, is shown:—

“In this section (of the Vedas) dealing with the knowledge of the oneness (of the Soul with Brahman), the Upasanas (meditations) conducing to prosperity, as well as those having as their subject, Brahman, with attributes, leading to results approximate to Ultimate Liberation, are described. These Upasanas increase the efficacy of work and are related to the factors of work. The similarity between these Upasanas and the knowledge of the oneness lies in the fact that they treat of the same transcendent Brahman and are also mental in character. What, then, is the difference between the two? The knowledge of the Advaita frees one from the natural sense of difference of the doer, the means or instruments of work, the result etc., superimposed on the actionless Atman. It is just like the Superimposed knowledge of the snake, etc., on a rope, etc. That it is a rope etc., and not a snake etc., becomes clear when it is examined under proper light. On the other hand the nature of meditation is as follows. Something prescribed by the Sastras is taken up as a prop (for our ideas to cling to) and the mental current of ideas flows steadily and continuously on it as its basis without being obstructed by contrary ideas. These forms of meditation purify the mind and make the real

nature of the Atman shine (in the proper manner). They are therefore helpful to the Advaita knowledge and can be pursued with ease, as there is something (for the mind) to cling to. So, these forms of meditation are treated of in the very beginning".

It is interesting to note how Sankara explains the words Devas and Asuras occurring in the text. He takes them as significant epithets. His comments are given below. "The term Deva comes from a root meaning bright or shining'. By Devas are meant the actions of the Senses lighted by the Sastras that is, actions performed through the senses, following the injunctions of the Sastras. The Asuras are just the contrary. They take delight in following the objects of the senses. They are naturally of the nature of Tamas, darkness.....They always try to overpower the manifestation of the light of the actions done in accordance with ~~the~~ Sastras.....In the same manner, the Devas, shining with the light of discrimination of objects according to the Sastras, are striving to get mastery over the Asuras, the powers of darkness. Thus, this conflict between the Devas and the Asuras for mutual mastery is going on in everyone from time without beginning just as a long drawn mutual strike for supremacy".

This idea is developed by Sankara in his commentary on the Brihadaranya Upanishad.

The enunciation of an important principle is found when he says. "The fruition of an action, good or bad, depends on the factors of place, time and causation, propitious to its manifestation. Many times, the mind of an ordinary man is apt to be perplexed as the effects of good and evil do not seem to follow in immediate sequence to the action. Sri Sankara assures that every action produces its inevitable result, but that there are three essential factors to be taken into account when we consider the question of its manifestation.

A doubt often haunts some earnest aspirants striving for realisation. Sankara gives expression to such a doubt in the following passage. "The doubt may arise that this result (of more and more exalted life following from the meditation taught) may be only for great men of previous age and not for those of the present times. And the solution of the doubt is given thus. "Any one who meditates at any time (now or hereafter) will get the prescribed result". So, the aspirant can proceed with the assurance that the means taught by the Sastras are effective at all times and not merely at any particular epoch".

The following comments on a well-known passage of this Upanishad illustrate the illuminating nature of the remarks made by Sankara bringing out in full the hidden suggestions in the inspired words of the scriptures. The passage runs thus: "When the food (ahara) is pure, the Satwa element gets purified. When the Satwa element becomes pure, the memory becomes steady and unwavering. The gain of such a memory results in the breaking of all the knots (of the heart)". The commentary runs as follows: "Now the means for the proper manifestation of the knowledge (of Brahman) are taught just as the cleansing of the mirror is prescribed for the clear reflection of the face. Ahara means that which is gathered in. The knowledge of the sensations such as sound etc., is gathered in for the enjoyment of the enjoyer, the Self and that knowledge constitutes the ahara mentioned here. The purification ~~of the~~ knowledge, which gathers in the perception of the senses is the purifying of the food (ahara). The word (purification of food) means the acquiring of the knowledge of sensations freed from the taints of attachment, aversion and delusion. Such knowledge being purified, the Satwa material of the possessor of it—the internal

organ—will become purified. And the Satwa being purified, an unbroken memory of the Infinite One who has been known in His real nature, will result. When that memory has become steady, all the bonds of ill wrought by nescience and hardened by the constant hammering on the experiences of innumerable births, these bonds of the heart are rent asunder. As this is the gradual result of the purification of the Ahara, that purification should be attended to with great care”.

We shall conclude the review of this Upanishad-Bhashya by citing the eloquent passage commenting on the text “The man with an Acharya, a Teacher, gets the true knowledge”. The Commentary reads: “In the same manner, the Jiva is carried away by thieves in the shape of virtues, vices, etc., from Pure Being, the Self of the Universe, into the forest of the body—consisting of fire, water and food, filled with wind, bile, phlegm, blood, fat, flesh, bone, marrow, semen, worms, wine and fæces and full of all sorts of pairs of opposites, like heat and cold, having his eyes bandaged by delusion—fastened by the noose of longing for wife, son, friend, cattle, relatives and other visible and invisible objects of sense,—shouting out in many

such exclamations as that "This am I, this is my son, these my relations, I am suffering pain and feeling pleasure, I am in delusion, I am learned, I am ignorant, I am righteous, I have many relations, I am born, I am dead, I am old, a son is born to me, my wealth has perished. Ah! I am done for! How shall I live? What shall be my fate? What my refuge?" And then by some stroke of good fortune due to some of his past good deeds, he finds a compassionate person, knowing the Supreme Self, Brahman and having his own bondage removed thereby. This gracious man shows him the way of recognising the discrepancies of the World. When the Jiva loses all affection for worldly things, the bondage of illusion having been removed by means of such exhortations as "you are not of the world, the son, etc., do not belong to you, you are the Pure Being, That art Thou" etc., etc., he finally reaches back to the True Self of Being, ~~like the~~ inhabitant of Gandhara, who had lost his way and found it back by the advice of a kind person who knew the way, and becomes happy and successful. This is the meaning sought to be conveyed by the declaration, "one who has a Teacher gets the True Knowledge".

THE BRIHADARANYA UPANISHAD BHASHYA.

This Bhashya is as vast in extent and importance as the text of which it is a Commentary. The subjects dealt with are innumerable and various and the mode of treatment is such as to bring out all the relevant facts in full relief. A good many of the topics are of practical value to the aspirant to perfection. The style used throughout is of an unsurpassed lucidity, rare grace and matchless beauty. It stands second only to the Sutra-Bhashya. Nay, scholars have not been wanting who place it on a par with that magnum opus of the great master.

The introduction is a perfect model of its kind. It reads thus: "The text beginning with 'Usha va Asvaiya' is the Upanishad portion of the Vajasaneyi Brahmana. This brief commentary thereon is begun to expound the knowledge of the oneness of the Atman and Brahman to those who seek to free themselves from the constant round of birth and death, the Samsara. This knowledge is the means to destroy ignorance, the root cause of Samsara. As such knowledge absolutely annihilates the Samsara with its cause, it deserves the name of an Upanishad, which has this root meaning. Since the treatise deals with the knowledge, it is also

called an Upanishad. It is composed of six chapters. Being taught in the forest, it is an Aranyaka, a forest-treatise and being big in size, it is the Brihadaranyaka.

Now, we shall explain its connection with the Karma Kanda. The entire Veda is devoted to reveal the means not known by direct perception and inference to get good and avoid evil; all human beings naturally seek these two ends. We do not resort to the Vedas to know the way to get good and avoid evil in the case of objects within the ken of the senses, because our direct perception and inference enable us to find out that way. Without the conviction that there is the Atman, which persists after death and continues life after life, no one would seek to attain the good and avoid the evil in a future life. We thus find that the materialists who deny the existence of the Soul do not care for the means conducive to good in future lives.....One, who has the conviction that there is a Self which gets into relation with a future body, would seek to be informed of the means to attain good and avoid evil in connection with that body. The Karma Kanda of the Vedas is introduced to acquaint him with those means. But the cause of that desire to attain good and avoid evil is the ignorance regarding the Self, which

manifests itself as the idea of one's being the actor and the enjoyer. It is the knowledge of the nature of the Self as being identical with Brahman that removes this ignorance. And that knowledge is not revealed by the Karma Kanda. Until ignorance is removed by that Knowledge, a person prompted by such natural defects as attachment and aversion to the fruits of his actions, will act even against the injunctions and prohibitions of the Scriptures. Thus, under the powerful urge of his natural defects, he will accumulate in thought, word and deed a great deal of adharma, unrighteousness, producing harm, visible and invisible. This will lead him to descend in the scale of evolution, reaching down even to the State of stocks and stones. In some cases, the impressions made by the teachings of the scriptures will prevail, in which case he will accumulate in thought, word and deed a predominance of Dharma, righteousness which will contribute to his well-being and progress. This Dharma is two-fold, that attended with understanding and that which is merely mechanical. The latter will lead him to the attainment of the world of the Pitris etc. Dharma with understanding will lead one to Worlds beginning with that of the Gods and

ending with the World of Hiranyagarbha, the primal Being.

When Dharma balances adharma, one becomes a man. Thus this chain of Samsara, transmigration, beginning with the State of Hiranyagarbha and ending with that of Stocks and Stones, which a person with the natural defects of ignorance etc., attains through Dharma and adharma, depends on name, form and action (and is relative in its nature). This relativity, without beginning and end like the Seed and the Sprout, created by ignorance and consisting of the superimposition of action, its factors and its results on the Self, is the grand evil. Hence for the removal of the ignorance (the root-cause of this evil) of the person who is disgusted with this relativity, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is revealed in order to inculcate the Knowledge of Brahman which is the very opposite of ignorance (and utterly destroys it)".

The necessary topics to be mentioned in the very beginning of a Vedantic treatise are four in number. The subjectmatter of the treatise, the purpose served by the exposition of that subject, the connection between the subject and the purpose and the person for whom the

treatise is intended are to be dealt with. It will be noted that in the above introduction, Sri Sankara has briefly and yet adequately brought in all the four topics and thrown ample light on them by the luminosity of his exposition.

The cause-effect relation is clearly and succinctly explained in the following passage: "An effect is produced only when there is a cause and no effect is produced when there is no cause.....Whenever a cause produces an effect, it does so by destroying another effect it produced just before. The cause, by destroying the previous effect, does not destroy itself. The effect is present in the cause even before manifestation, for otherwise the effect can never manifest itself. The ideas of destruction and creation as well as of non-existence and existence mean only non-manifestation and manifestation. An effect latent in the cause serves to obstruct the manifestation of other effects. Hence, the necessary operation of the factors of an action has its utility for one who wants the manifestation of an effect. No one exerts for a non-existent thing. Therefore the effect exists even before its manifestation. Separable or inseparable connection is possible only between two positive entities, not between an entity and

a non-entity, nor between two non-entities. Hence the effect does exist even before it is manifested. The effect is non-separate from the cause”.

A famous prayer of this Upanishad, which has almost become universal, assumes a higher value and deeper significance, when understood in the light of Sankara's comments. The text reads as follows:—“From evil lead me to good ; from darkness lead me to light and from mortality lead me to immortality”. Sankara explains: “From evil lead me to good. Here evil means death, that is our unchastened acts and thoughts. They are evil and veritably death because they lead us to the lowest depths of degradation. “Good ” means the acts and thoughts as regulated by the scriptures. They constitute immortality as they take us to the State transcending death. Hence, the gist of the passage is “from evil deeds and thoughts, lead me to the deeds and thoughts as regulated by the scriptures, that is, make me endowed with the qualities of godliness ; make me immortal. In the same manner, ‘from darkness lead me to light’ means the following. By darkness is meant ignorance as it is of the nature of a veil. That causes death and so it is really

mortality. Light is immortality, that is knowledge which is quite contrary to ignorance. As it is luminous, Knowledge is light. That is also immortality, because it is imperishable in its very nature. Therefore, 'from darkness lead me to light' means, make me realise the fruit of Sadhana, the godly State of Prajapati. The first Mantra 'from evil lead me to good' leads one to Sadhana which one had not taken to before. The second mantra 'from darkness lead me to light' takes one to the Stage of Siddhi, fruition, because even Sadhana partakes of ignorance. The third mantra 'from mortality lead me to immortality', gives the combined meaning of the first two Mantras and is quite clear".

The utility of work is shown in the following passages. "All things spring from definite causes and we also see variety in the Universe. ~~Since~~ it is the accepted view of the Vedas, Smritis, reasoning and the consensus of human experience that happiness, sorrow etc., are the results of one's work, the gods or Iswara or time do by no means hinder the fruition of work; they are but factors in bringing about the effect. Work, good or bad, that one does cannot manifest without the help of factors such as the gods, time and Iswara, and even if it did manifest, it

would not have the power to produce results, since it is the very nature of work to spring from many causes such as the different factors. Hence, the gods, Iswara and others being auxiliaries to work, there is nothing to shake our faith in the attainment of the results of work. The inherent power of work cannot be checked. But there is no fixity about the relative predominance of work, time, destiny, and the nature of things. It is inscrutable and throws one into confusion. Some say that it is work alone that counts in bringing about results. Others assert that it is destiny, that plays the important role. Some others will have it that time is the only factor. There are those who give primacy to the nature of things. The opinion of some is that the combination of all these contributes to the fruition of work. The Vedas, Smriti and reasoning uphold the superiority of work and declare 'good results from good work and evil from evil work'. Even though each of these may have a little predominance in its own sphere when the others are for the time being held up, still it holds good that work necessarily brings about its results, since the Sastras and reason proclaim the importance of work".

As an example of the connection between two sections which is invariably shown by Sri Sankara, the following introduction to Section V of the Second chapter may be cited "The Section on Maitreyi (Section IV) was introduced to indicate the means to gain immortality. The Knowledge of the Self constitutes the means. When the Self is Known, the whole universe is known, and the Self is dearer than everything. Therefore the Self should be realised. The way to this realisation on is set forth by the statement that the Self should be heard of, reflected and meditated upon. The Self should be heard of from the Guru and the Scriptures and reflected on through reasoning has been given in the passage furnishing arguments in support of the proposition. "All this is but the Self", that is, that the universe has sprung from the Self, remains therein and dissolves back into the Self. Now the validity of this argument may be questioned. It is to remove this doubt that this Section is begun. As there is mutual helpfulness among the parts of the universe including the earth and as it is common experience that those things which are mutually helpful spring from the same cause, stay therein and dissolve into the same thing, so this universe consisting of the earth etc., on account of mutual helpfulness among its parts, must be

like that. This is the meaning which is expressed in this Section also; after the proposition "all this is but the Self" has been supported by the reason that the universe has its origin, continuance and dissolution in the Self, the meaning is concluded with the present Section, which preponderates in Scriptural evidence".

The effect of the realisation of the oneness of the Atman and Brahman is stated thus: "Liberation consists in identity with all and is the result of the Knowledge (of Brahman). "He transcends desires". 'He becomes free from evils', that is, devoid of both merits and demerits. He is 'established in fearlessness'. Fear is an effect of ignorance. Hence, the word fearless must be construed as denying the cause, ignorance, through its effect, fear. 'Established in fearlessness' therefore means that he is no more under the sway of ignorance. The identity with the all is the result of Knowledge and manifests itself in this way. All relative attributes have fallen away and the Self stands revealed in all glory. The Atman is the light that is Pure Intelligence and reveals everything by its own intelligence. As this identity with all is Its nature, therefore all objects of desire have been attained, because the Atman comprises all. All objects of desire are but the Self

in another form. So there is nothing to be desired for one who knows the Self in its real nature. He sees all as the Self, he sees that there is nothing different even by a hair's breadth from the Self. The Knower of Brahman becomes free from doubts and remains in the firm conviction that he is the Self of all, the Supreme Brahman. Such a man is the real Brahmana, in the primary sense of the word, that is, a knower of Brahman. This is the highest end of man, the culmination, the Supreme good. Attaining this one achieves all that has to be achieved and becomes a knower of Brahman. This is the teaching of the entire Vedas. He who knows the Self as the fearless Brahman becomes the fearless Brahman. This is the purport of the whole Upanishad put in a nutshell".

Well has it been said by an eminent scholar;- Prof. S. Kuppuswami Sastri, "Sri Sankara's Brihadaranyaka-Bhashya is the greatest of his commentaries on the Upanishads in the sense that the great Acharya shows in this Bhashya, in a very telling manner, how the great truth of Brahman-Atman identity forms the main purport of all the Vedantic texts in general and this great Upanishad in particular".

The Bhashyas on the other Upanishads have the same excellences found in the Commentaries on the two major Upanishads noted above and need not be separately considered.

BRAHMA-SUTRA BHASHYA.

The Brahma-Sutra Bhashya is acknowledged by all competent critics as the masterpiece of the great Master. It is fully worthy of that authoritative and systematic text-book of Vedanta which it explains so lucidly and admirably. The style rises to a majestic dignity, classic elegance, concentrated power and soul-stirring eloquence rarely met with in combination in any other book in literature. The illuminating comments reveal the wonderful depth and comprehensiveness of the Sutras. Swami Vivekananda writes, "the great glory of Bhagavan Bhashyakara Sankaracharya is that it was his genius that gave the most wonderful expression to the ideas of Vyasa".

The commentary begins with a masterly introduction well-known as the Adhyasa-Bhashya wherein the master establishes super-imposition as a matter of fact and not as a theoretical hypothesis trumped up to explain some preconceived metaphysical doctrine. The very first sentence of this introduction consists of two parts. The first part sums up all the

possible objections that can be brought against the fact of superimposition and the second part refutes them. His statement is as follows: "It is well-known and stands to reason that the subject and the object, which have for their spheres the notion of 'I' and 'thou' respectively cannot be identified since they are as opposed to each other as light and darkness. It needs no mention that the attributes of the Subject, the Sentient Self and the object, insentient matter cannot be identified. Hence, the super-imposition of the object and its attributes on the subject, the Self, whose essence is pure intelligence as well as the Superimposition of the subject and its attributes on the object ought to be logical impossibilities and hence untrue". The above contains the gist of all the objections against Sankara's view. The brilliant intellect of the master shines forth in all its splendour in having anticipated all that can be said to refute his view and he has expressed them clearly in half a sentence. Then he meets the objection thus "Even though it appears as logically impossible, we see as a matter of fact that it is natural on the part of all beings on account of their ignorance, not to distinguish between the two, the subject and the object, which are really quite contradictory and to superimpose the one and its attributes on the other and its attributes,

and thus mixing up the real and the unreal to use such expressions as 'I am this or that' and 'this is mine' and to think and behave accordingly". Sankara thus appeals to common experience to refute the objections stated in the beginning. As he has said elsewhere 'the question of unreasonableness does not arise in a matter of fact. A fact is a fact and has to be taken as such'.

It is interesting to note that Swami Vivekananda, the great apostle of Vedanta in modern times, had so completely grasped, assimilated and realized the teachings of Sri Sankara that the thoughts of the latter are found in the speeches and writings of the former in a form suited to the needs of the present age. Thus, in his historic address on Hinduism delivered at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, there is a masterly exposition of the Adhyasa Bhashya. The following passages are noteworthy. "Nor is the soul bound by the conditions of matter. In its very essence, it is free, unbounded, holy, pure and perfect. But somehow or other it finds itself tied down to matter and thinks of itself as matter. Why should the free, perfect and pure being be thus under the thralldom of matter is the next question? How can the perfect soul be deluded into the belief that it is imperfect? He (the Hindu) is brave enough to face

the question in a manly fashion : and his answer is: "I do not know. I do not know how the perfect being, the soul, came to think of itself as imperfect, as joined to and conditioned by matter. *But the fact is a fact for all that.* It is a fact in everybody's consciousness that one thinks of oneself as the body". The lectures on Maya delivered by the Swami in London also constitute a luminous elucidation of the themes in the Adhyasa Bhashya.

To return to the introduction of Sri Saṅkara. After explaining the various definitions of superimposition and determining its real nature, the master proceeds to show that it leads to the ignorance on which all our knowledge, empirical and scriptural and all our activities rest. Our experience has as its starting-point the primal error that identifies the Self with the body, senses, mind, etc. All cognitive acts presuppose this false identification, for without it the pure Self can never assume the role of a Knower and without the Knower, the means of right knowledge cannot operate. Hence the means of knowledge and the scriptural injunctions and prohibitions pertain to the sphere of ignorance. They are relative in value and are valid only so long as the ultimate Truth, Brahman, is not

realized. It is remarkable that Sri Sankara seeks to prove that the empirical knowledge of man is in no way different from that of animals. A cow flies away from the man who confronts it with a raised stick in hand while it runs with joy towards one with a handful of green grass. In the same manner, human beings, who pride themselves on their superior intelligence, try to escape from persons wildly shouting at them with drawn swords while they approach to welcome those who appear friendly to them. The behaviour of animals is admitted by all to be based on ignorance. Hence, the conduct of man in such circumstances shows that it has also as its basis the same ignorance of the real nature of the Self".

Although a person will not engage in a scriptural act without a Knowledge of the Self which is separate from the body and persists after physical death, yet he considers his Self not in its pure nature but as an actor, enjoyer etc. Thus he is also within the pale of ignorance. Superimposition is taking a thing for what it is not. It is that which prompts the notions of action and enjoyment with regard to the Pure Being, the Self. Man is thus in ignorance, identifying his Self with his body, senses, mind or with his relations or friends and thus

suffers all kinds of misery. It is with the purpose of utterly annihilating ignorance, the root-cause of all evils by inculcating the true knowledge of the identity of the Self with Brahman that all the Vedantic texts are taught. This is the object aimed at by the *Brahma Sutras*".

Thus, the *Adhyasa Bhashya*, summarised above, serves as an introduction not only to the *Brahma Sutras* but also to all treatises dealing with the *Vedanta Sastra*, as *Padmapada* remarks in his gloss on the Commentary. The nature of superimposition and its wide scope and far-reaching effects being rightly understood, the other topics of *Advaita* become easy of comprehension.

The commentary on the very first Sutra shows the penetrating vision of the master which can see the depth of thought underlying the text. The Sutra reads thus "Then therefore the enquiry into Brahman (should be taken up)". Sri Sankara explains, after an adequate discussion, that the word 'then' means 'after the attainment of the pre-requisites for the Knowledge of Brahman, the four virtues' mentioned

in the early part of this book. They are the *Sine-qua-non*, the indispensable excellences to be acquired before turning to the enquiry into Brahman. The word 'therefore' signifies that because the results obtained by sacrifices etc., are transient whereas the effect of the Knowledge of Brahman is lasting, one who seeks the eternal good should exert to attain the right knowledge of Brahman".

The Second Sutra defines Brahman by declaring that Brahman is that omniscient and omnipotent cause from which the origin, the sustenance and the dissolution of this universe proceed. It is shown in the third Sutra that the Scriptures alone form the means of the right Knowledge of Brahman and the proposition laid down in the Second Sutra is corroborated by the testimony of the Scriptures. In the fourth Sutra, it is stated: "The proposition that (Brahman is to be known only through the Scriptures and not independently by any other means is established) because it is the main purport of all the Vedanta texts'. The commentary on this Sutra is exhaustive. The views of the opponents, especially the Purva Mimamsakas, are refuted by a thorough and searching examination of all the texts they bring

forward to prove that the Vedas deal with action alone. It is conclusively shown that all the Vedanta texts deal with an independent topic, Brahman and that those texts are the only proof of Brahman, as it is not possible to know it through any other source.

The Bhashya on the first four Sutras together with the Adhyasa Bhashya may be considered to be an independent treatise. A careful study of this part of the commentary will give a correct knowledge of the Vedanta. Innumerable are the books that have been composed to explain this portion.

In the commentary on the 12th Sutra, Sankara states a fundamental proposition, which gives a clue to an understanding of his philosophy. He says: 'Brahman is known in two ways, with the distinctive attributes of name, form, etc., and without any attributes'. After quoting Vedantic texts substantiating this proposition, he concludes: "Thus, manifold texts show that there are two aspects of Brahman, based on ignorance and knowledge, that is, empiric Knowledge and ultimate reality, respectively. Among these two all the conduct of the world has the characteristic of being based on the

difference between the worshipper and the worshipped, due to ignorance. Some of the Upasanas of Brahman are for gaining worldly prosperity, and others for attaining Mukti or Liberation gradually. Some again are for enriching the efficacy of work. These Upasanas differ according to the difference in the attributes. Even though the one Supreme Soul, the Lord, is the sole object of Upasana, characterised by the particular qualities attributed by each worshipper, the results vary according to those qualities attributed by the person in question. Though the one and the same Soul is latent in all beings, stable and moving, still on account of the difference in the attributes of the Chitta or the mind, the eternally constant Being, the Atman, manifests differently and exhibits the powers (of the Atman) variously. Wherever there is more of the manifestation of godly power, that object is taught as the Lord to be worshipped". In introducing the subsequent part of the text, Sri Sankara declares: "The next portion of the treatise is begun to show that the one and the same Brahman, with and without attributes is taught in the Vedanta texts as the object to be worshipped and known". The utility of this method of treatment is shown in the following passage: "The purpose of the

Scriptures is to teach of the Atman, par excellence, the real Atman. In consonance with the nature of the mind of ordinary man, the Sastra takes up first of all the gross material body which is regarded by the utterly ignorant as the Self, like the molten metal poured into the mould, it goes further and further inside, treating of this inside (reached by this means) as the Self, until the innermost, the Real Self, the Blissful, is realised. This method is most befitting".

Before beginning the commentary on the Second Chapter, Sri Sankara gives a lucid, succinct and comprehensive summary of the first chapter. This is a characteristic of his method of exposition and is very useful as it enables a student to take stock of all that has been learnt before. The portion reads as follows: " In the first chapter it has been shown by the exposition of the harmony of Vedantic texts that the Omniscient Lord, the Ruler of all, is the cause of the universe, just as the clay, gold, etc., of the pot, Ruchaka (a golden ornament) etc., that He is the cause of the maintenance of the Universe, just as the juggler of the show He has manifested and that He is the cause of the withdrawal of this manifested universe, just as the earth of its

creatures. It has also been shown that he is the very soul of all of us. The (contrary) theories that Pradhana (Prakriti of the Sankhyas) etc., is the cause (of the Universe) have been refuted". Then, the subject matter of the Second chapter is stated thus: "Now the (apparent) objections to the view (of the composer of the Sutras) which seem to be supported by Smriti and Nyaya are met and it is shown that the theories of Pradhana etc., being the cause are supported only by false reasoning and that all the processes of creation etc., mentioned throughout the Vedantic texts are sound. These are the topics dealt with in the Second Chapter".

Though the master refutes the Sankhya and yoga in certain respects, he approves those portions of the two systems which do not contradict the Vedanta. His respect for the Sankhya is evidenced by his remark that the Sankhya is the most formidable opponent to the Vedanta and by refuting the Sankhya the other systems which do not rise to that stature in importance and are more or less dependent on the Sankhya are also refuted.

There is a widely prevalent notion that the Advaitin is an idealist maintaining that only

ideas exist and nothing else. That this view is entirely unfounded will be evident from a study of the commentary of Sri Sankara on the Sutras 28 to 31 of Section II of the Second Chapter. Those Sutras contain a refutation of a school of Buddhists who hold the above belief wrongly attributed to the Advaitis. Sri Sankara says: "The view of these Buddhists that external objects do not exist is untenable. Why is it not tenable? Since we experience the external objects like the pillar, the wall, the pot, the cloth etc. It is not right to hold that a thing of experience does not exist. It would be like a person who has taken food and feels relieved denying his having taken food and feeling relief. How can we give credence to the opinion of a person who, after having sensed an external thing by his own senses, denies its existence as well as his having experienced it? By all valid proofs, external objects are experienced. How then, can one deny their existence? 'The very nature of consciousness by itself proves the existence of external things different from consciousness, because men are conscious of things or objects of perception and none is conscious of his perception by itself as an external object'. With regard to the argument advanced by some Buddhists that the external world is like a dream,

the master remarks: "There is difference between the dream state and the waking state'. What is the difference? One is cancelled and the other is not. The thing experienced in dream is cancelled when one wakes up and he realises that his experience in dream was a delusion. But the things experienced in the waking state, the pillar etc., are not thus cancelled in any state whatever. The experience in dream is a kind of memory whereas that of the waking state is a real perception. So, the latter experience cannot be rejected as untrue".

"In the fourth section of the fourth Chapter of the Brahma Sutras, there is an aphorism to the effect that, though the liberated soul gets almost infinite power and knowledge after attaining Moksha, he will not have the power of creating, ruling and dissolving the universe, because that power belongs to God alone. It is easy for the dualistic commentaries to explain this Sutra since they hold that the Jiva is a subordinate soul and so can never have the infinite power and total independence of God. Let us see how Sri Sankara elucidates the text. He says: "A question arises as regards the powers of those who by worshipping the qualified Brahman, *i. e.*, Brahman with attributes attain conjunction with the Supreme Lord preserving their own mind.

Are those powers limited or unlimited? There are scriptural texts which may seem to lead to the conclusion that their powers should be unlimited. But this Sutra says: "except the power of ruling the universe". Without the power of creation etc., of the universe, all other powers such as anima etc., are acquired by the liberated. The function of ruling the universe belongs to Iswara, the eternally perfect Lord. Why? Because the scriptural texts mention that He alone is the cause of creation etc. The Supreme Lord alone is engaged in ruling the Universe. The texts relating to creation point to Him alone. The adjective 'ever-perfect' shows that only God is meant (and not the liberated Souls) in this connection. Further, all the scriptures say that the powers anima etc., of the liberated are due to the search after and worship of God. Therefore they have no place in the ruling of the universe. Lastly, on account of their possessing their own minds, it is possible that the wills of the liberated souls may differ, so that when one of them desires creation, another may desire destruction. The only way to avoid this conflict is to make all wills subordinate to some one will. Therefore the conclusion is that the wills of the liberated

are dependent on the will of the Supreme Ruler, God”.

“Thus we see that Sri Sankara maintains all the hopes and aspirations of the dualist intact, and at the same time propounds his own solution of the problem in consonance with the high destiny of divine humanity. Those who aspire to retain their individual minds even after liberation, and to remain distinct, will have ample opportunity to realize their aspiration and enjoy the grace of the qualified Brahman. But none of these ever become equal to God Himself. Those, however, who attain to that State where there is neither creation nor created nor creator, neither Knower nor Knowable nor Knowledge, neither I nor thou nor he, neither subject, nor object nor relation, have gone beyond everything, beyond ‘where words can reach nor mind’, to that which the Srutis declare as ‘not this, not this’ ”.

Of all the works of Sri Sankara, the Brahma Sutra Bhashya has had the largest number of glosses. Vachaspathi Misra’s famous gloss, the Bhamati, was explained in detail by Amalananda Swami of the 13th Century in his well-known Kalpataru, which called forth the celebrated

Parimala of the great scholar, mystic and philosopher, Appayya Dikshita in the 17th Century. It is curious to read in the Nyaya Ratnavali that by the Vedanta Sastra is meant the group of five treatises, that is, the Brahma Sutras, Sri Sankara's Bhashya, the Bhamati, the Kalpataru and the Parimala. This reveals the authoritative character ascribed to those works by eminent scholars. The Panchapadika also has had its glosses upon glosses. No work of the Master has had this firm hold and fascination on the minds of the scholarly world than this great commentary on the Brahma Sutras.

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OTHER WORKS.

Innumerable are the original works of Sri Sankara and unequal in size, ranging from one verse to hundreds. It would seem that the master felt that the commentaries on the scriptures would satisfy the needs of only a small part of humanity, that is, the scholars alone. Those learned treatises were too elaborate, controversial and subtle for the ordinary man. The large heart of the master yearned to make available to all, the inspiring truths of Vedanta.

Hence the compilation of independent works acquainting the layman with the principles and practice of Sanatana Dharma. The style used is simple and the method direct and forcible. Among the prose works belonging to this group, we shall consider a few.

1. *Ajnanabodhini*. This book seems to be intended for those who are mere beginners in the study of Vedanta and whose Knowledge of the Sanskrit language is meagre. It gives in brief the leading principles of the Vedanta as well as the Sadhana or the means to realize them in practical life. This treatise may be recommended to those who earnestly seek a Knowledge of Vedanta without entering into lengthy discussions and hot controversies. A few extracts are given below. To the soul who has been awakened by true knowledge, these words of approbation are addressed: "Up to now, you had been groaning under the bonds of Varna, Ashrama, rules of conduct, the Sastras, etc. Now, you have got out of the net work of this world just as a mighty lion which has broken the cage and made itself free and happy". It is boldly stated that the realized Soul is not even under the sway of Prarabdha, that Karma or action which gave birth to the present body and

is ordinarily conceived to persist till this body is given up. The part played by various means to realisation is thus described. "By Scriptural Knowledge, the idea of ultimate reality conceived with regard to the body, world etc., constituting the non-self will be given up. By direct realization, the feeling of oneself being an actor and enjoyer will disappear. By the destruction of Prarabdha, the phenomenal world of relativity will no longer make itself felt. Thus the maya, the Ignorance, created by oneself, will depart from one and the Atman will shine in full and true glory'. 'It is declared that the retaining of the body by a jivanmukta, who has attained final realization is for the good of the world. His very sight destroys sins, loving service rendered to him confers good and constant association with him, listening to his words of wisdom, conduces to Moksha, liberation'.

2. *Atmajnanopadesavidhi*. The method of treatment adopted in this work shows that it was composed as a guide to competent Sadhakas in the jnana marga. The way to discriminate the Self from the non-self, the body, mind, intellect etc., is clearly detailed and the practice of meditating and concentrating on the Self is

effectively taught. We learn from this work that Vedanta is not a system of dialectical metaphysics but the efficient means of the realization of the Supreme in this very life. The gloss of Anandagiri, the famous and faithful interpreter of all the important works of the Master, brings out into prominence this characteristic of the treatise. A few quotations will show the nature of the book. "The Atman is said to reside in the hearts of all beings, because it is realized as the witness of the intellects of all. As a matter of fact, the omnipresent and impartible Self cannot be contained in the intellect. It is like the ether which cannot be contained and held in a particular receptacle. The self is like pure light and the intellect is like clear crystal. Though the intellect is devoid of light, it appears to be luminous by the presence of the luminous Self. Hence, the contact between the Self and the intellect is super-imposed. Though the intellect etc., are but instruments, they are illumined by the light of the Self and function in their respective spheres. The sun cannot be revealed by any other light. In the same manner, the Atman, the illuminator of all including the intellect, cannot be revealed by the intellect. Wakefulness, dream and sleep are but

states of the intellect and not of the pure and changeless Self. The Atman is the innermost and never changes like the external things. The Atman is to be realized in the fourth State, the State of transcendence, beyond wakefulness, dream and sleep. The Atman needs no proof to establish existence. The Atman existing and taken for granted, one seeks for proofs etc. How to prove the one who proves? How to know the Knower? Even the Vedas do not determine the Atman as such but only seek to remove the superimposed attributes wrongly ascribed to the Atman. Then one realises the oneness of the Atman and Brahman. He indeed is the sage who realizes in his own experience this identity. He has awakened from the sleep of ignorance by the grace of the Guru and is freed from the bonds of Samsara. He has attained the goal of life and is truly blessed'.

3. *Atmanatmaviveka*. Though brief in extent, this work is very clear and serves as an elementary manual to introduce the inquirer into the realm of Vedanta. Some passages will illustrate the nature and utility of the work. "What is the cause of the passions, anger, lust etc? Egoism; What is the cause of egoism? Indiscrimination. What is the cause of indiscrimination? Ignorance. What causes

ignorance? Ignorance is not caused by anything. Ignorance is beginningless, indefinable as existence or non-existence, and made up of the three gunas, Satwa, rajas and tamas. It is destroyable by true Knowledge". "Even though not possessed of the four Sadhanas, the pre-requisites for an enquiry into Brahman, the Grihasthas (householders) incur no sin by discriminating between the Self and the non-Self. On the other hand, it will be most beneficial to them". This shows that there were some at the time of Sankara who hold the view that it was harmful, nay, sinful, for the Grihasthas to take to the study of the Vedanta. As Swami Vivekananda says: "Still the idea was that the Upanishads talked only of the forest life of the recluse and so were only for the Sanyasin. But Sankara was kind and says that even Grihasthas may study the Upanishads, it will do them good, it will not hurt them".

Sankara's conception of falsehood or unreality is revealed by the following definition. "That which does not persist in all the three periods of time, past, present and future, is false".

The Sat, Chit and Ananda nature of Brahman is thus explained. "What is Sat?

That which cannot be cancelled by anything in the three period of time, and exists as the same always. And chit? That which shines by itself without the help of any other light and lights up all the things superimposed on it. And what is Ananda? That which is the abode of Supreme love and unsurpassed excellence”.

He who thus realises with unshakable conviction that he is Brahman, the Eternal, Pure, all-knowing and ever-free is the jivanmukta, free even while living in the body.

4. *Panchikarana*. This is the shortest of the extant prose works of Sri Sankara. And yet it clearly explains the means of attaining the grand experience of the identity of the jiva, the individual Self and Brahman by meditation on the inspired mahavakyas of the four Vedas and the Pranava, the Om. The gradual process of projection from the Supreme cause is also described. No other work of the Master gives in such a brief compass the Sadhana for Brahmanjñana. It thus assumes an importance which is borne out by the fact that the great Sureshwara-charya thought it worth while to write an explanatory Vritti on which also there is a fine gloss. Besides this Vritti there is the tika by Anandagiri, the wellknown interpreter. The

Panchikarana is used as a text for daily meditation by many Sanyasins. The nature of ignorance is thus explained". "It is neither existent nor non-existent nor both these; it is neither different nor non-different, nor both these; it is neither with parts nor without parts, nor both these. We can only say of it that it vanishes by the realisation of the identity of Brahman and the Atman". Samadhi is defined in the following manner: "The state of remaining in non-differentiation or oneness with the realisation that I am the Brahman, the Ever-existent, the Pure, the All-knowing, the Free, the Blissful, is Samadhi".

Sri Sankara's poems stand as a class by themselves. Their ring is unmistakable. The great Master does not strain at creating an effect. The muse is ever at his service and the most befitting and beautiful word and number, phrase and figure, come to him spontaneously. Not even a syllable is to be found added for the sake of embellishment and yet the divine charm of his poems is unparalleled. The language and thought are vigorous and direct. Every tone of that music is firm and produces its full effect. We seem to hear once again the Sublime verses of the poetic Upanishads in the setting of classical Sanskrit. As Sri Aurobindo says:

“These poems are admirable literature combining a supreme philosophical genius with a remarkable literary talent, embodying the highest possible thought, using well all the weighty, compact and sparing phrase of the classical sanskrit speech, achieving the harmony and noble elegance of its rhythms. These merits are seen at their best in poems like the *Vivekachudamani* attributed to Sankara and there we hear even, in spite of its too abstract turn, an intellectual echo of the voice of the Upanishads and the manner of the Gita”.

We shall consider some of the important poems of Sankara.

1. *Vivekachudamani* is a complete treatise, a masterpiece on Advaita Vedanta. Only a Sankara could accomplish the gigantic task of giving a clear exposition of the Advaita philosophy and at the same time soaring to the highest height of supreme realisation in a brief work of 580 verses. The greater part of the book is in the form of a dialogue between the realized and competent Guru and an earnest and worthy aspirant, seeking to free himself

from the bondage of Samsara. The opening verse emphasises the need of good works and thoughts to attain Mukti, freedom. "Mukti cannot be attained except through the good deeds and merits of countless births". The imperative necessity of striving for mukti is shown thus: "The fool who does not exert for attaining mukti in human life verily commits suicide, because he kills himself by choosing and clinging to unreal and vain things". The direct means to attain to Mukti is given in the following verse". Without the realisation of the identity of the Atman, one's Self, with Brahman, Mukti can never be attained whether one studies Sacred lore, Sacrifices to the Devas or does works or worships gods". The attainment of the goal depends primarily on the competence of the seeker and time, place and other means are but aids in this regard. "It is declared that the fruition of internal calm and other virtues depends 'on the intensity of renunciation and yearning for freedom, Mukti". The characteristic of the great-souled ones is thus described: "The nature of the magnanimous is to exert of their own accord to relieve the sufferings of others. Look at the moon which voluntarily soothes and relieves the earth parched by the burning rays of the scorch-

ing sun". The need of self-exertion to attain Mukti is beautifully explained in the following verses "Sons and others (heirs) may free the father from his debts by clearing them on his behalf. But none other than oneself can free one..... from the bondage of Samsara". "The load on one's head can be shifted off to others and thus one can get relieved; but the torture of hunger and thirst cannot be shifted and relieved by anyone other than oneself". Who is fit to attain to Moksha? The master says: "The delusion that one is the body etc., is the real death leading to utter destruction. He who has completely freed himself from this delusion becomes worthy to attain the high status of Mukti, Freedom". The means to attain to Moksha is given in this verse. "To free oneself from the bondage of Samsara, the wise man should discriminate the Self from the non-Self. By resorting to this discrimination, he comes to realize his Self as Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss and thus he becomes supremely blissful". The conceptions of the Self entertained by different types of men are thus distinguished. "The unenlightened person deems that he is verily the body, while the educated

man identifies himself with the aggregate composed of the body and the limited individual Self. The illumined sage endowed with true discrimination and Knowledge is fully persuaded that the Self is one with Brahman and ever abides in the conviction and realization that he is verily Brahman". What are the factors to be heeded most by the Seeker after Moksha, Freedom? "The mind becomes pure by the ripening of discrimination and renunciation and then one is fit to attain to Moksha. Hence, the wise Seeker after Moksha should first of all exert himself to strengthen these two factors, discrimination and renunciation." The Seeker after Moksha should strain his utmost to purify the mind. When the mind has become pure, Moksha is within one's grasp". The direct cause of Moksha is stated in this verse. "The realization of the identity of oneself with Brahman is the cause of freedom from the bonds of Samsara. By this realisation, the wise attain to Brahman, the one without a Second, the Bliss Absolute". 'In the state of the highest realization of the Supreme Truth, the Oneness without a Second is alone real, since there is nothing other than the Self". Eloquent are the exhortations to the Seeker to be ever conscious of his

real nature. "That which is beyond caste, custom, family, and race, devoid of name, form, good and evil, transcending space, time and objects, that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy inmost soul. That Supreme Brahman, which is beyond the reach of words, but accessible to the eye of the pure consciousness; which is the embodiment of Knowledge, the Eternal Being, that Brahman art thou, realise this in thy inmost Soul. That which is free from birth, growth, development, decay, disease and death; which undergoes no modification and yet is the cause of the projection, maintenance and dissolution of the universe, that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy inmost soul." How can one reach this State? The master gives the following advice. "Even after the Truth has been intellectually learnt, there still persists the strong rooted impression that one is the agent and the enjoyer which is the cause of transmigration. That impression has to be utterly destroyed by constantly living in absolute identification with the Supreme Self. This is the Mukti with the attenuation of impressions, described by the Sages". Realising thy own Self, the Witness of the mind and its modifications and constantly meditating on the

positive thought 'I am He, the Supreme Self', conquer the persisting identification with the non-Self". The Sage who seeks Supreme realisation must give up the idea of pleasing society or following the inclinations of the body and the senses. He should give up even the bondage of scholarship in sacred lore", for all these are hindrances to his attaining the goal. "The quest after Self-realisation is hindered by the countless desires for things other than the Self. When these desires have been destroyed by the constant devotion to the Self, the Atman manifests in all its splendour". "First of all, Tamas has to be destroyed by Rajas and then the latter by Satwa. When purified, Satwa is also destroyed. Hence, we should do away with the Superimposition, the cause of all ills, with the help of Satwa". "So long as there is the least trace of poison left in the body, there is no hope of recovery. Similar is the effect of the faintest shadow of egoism on the Yogi's Moksha." Steadfast devotion to the Ideal is emphasised. "If the mind strays from the Ideal even in the slightest degree, and goes after external things, then it falls lower and lower just as the play-ball inadvertently dropped on the staircase bounds down from one step to another lower and lower". The fallen

man invariably comes to ruin and is seldom seen to rise again. Such is the dire effect of even the slightest inadvertence. Hence the necessity of eternal vigilance to attain one's end, freedom. "To realise oneself as the self of all is the means to get rid of bondage." The realisation of the Sage is graphically described. "The Sage realises in his heart through Samadhi the Brahman, the Eternal consciousness, the Bliss absolute, beyond all bound beyond all compare, beyond all qualities, limitless like the sky, without parts, the absolute, the perfect. The Sage realises in his heart through Samadhi, the Brahman, devoid of the changes of Nature, beyond all thought, equal to all, yet having no equal, immeasurable, whom the Vedas declare, the essence of our existence, the Self of our Self, the perfect. "The Sage realises in his heart through Samadhi, the infinite Brahman, beyond all decay and death, the positive Being beyond all negations, all names and forms, the calm, the Eternal, the one". What is the tangible result of the Knowledge and realisation of the Self? "Being unruffled by anything that may happen is the immediate visible effect. The sage is freed from unreal things. He cannot be moved to do any selfish action. The absence of the sense of

egoism is the characteristic of the Sage. The mind is no more tossed about and does not raise ripples. His soul is wholly merged in Brahman and he attains eternal bliss." To the jivan-mukta, free even in this life, the ideas of I and mine do not arise in the case of his existing body. He does not brood over the past or care for the future. He is ever in the transcendent state of the realisation of oneness with Brahman. He looks with an even eye, seeing Brahman everywhere. The universe and the individual Self are not seen apart from Brahman. He who has realized Brahman can no more be attached to Sense-objects. If a person has such an attachment, he has not realized Brahman. "Even the prarabdha, the work which has produced this body, does not affect him who having realized his identity with Brahman, ever remains in that state of realization." It may be noted in passing that this is the boldest pronouncement on the difficult question and reveals the master's view based on his own experience. In the very next verse he adds: "To the sage who lives in identification of the Self with Brahman, the one without a second devoid of all limiting adjuncts, the very talk of the existence of Prarabdha is as

meaningless as the idea of a relation with the objects witnessed in a dream to the man who has awakened". The Prarabdha holds sway only so long as one identifies oneself with the body. The sage of realisation never identifies himself with the body. Hence there is no prarabdha governing him. It is declared that 'even the teachers and scriptures help one but indirectly. The wise one crosses the Samsara by the aid of his pure intellect illumined by the grace of God'. The conclusion of the Vedantic scriptures is thus summed up. "The settled verdict of the Vedanta is that the jiva and the whole universe are Brahman alone and that Moksha is the state of abiding in Brahman, the indivisible Being". The realisation of the disciple is described in noble verses of charm and magnificence. We shall quote a few of these. "My mind has vanished and all outgoing activities have melted away by realising the identity of the Self with Brahman. The majesty of the ocean of the Supreme Brahman, replete with the currents of the nectarlike bliss of the Self, can neither be expressed by words nor conceived by the mind. In an infinitesimal fraction of that ocean, my mind has melted like a hailstone getting merged in the sea and it is now fully satisfied

with that essence of bliss. I am the Self of all, I am the all, I am beyond all, I am the One without a Second. I am absolute and infinite Knowledge. I am Bliss without a break. This splendid majesty of the Sovereignty of the Lordship of the Self, I have attained by thy unbounded mercy and grace. Salutations to thee, O! Glorious and magnanimous teacher, Salutations to thee again and yet again." Having blessed the disciple with the highest realisation, "The Guru marches on purifying the whole world, with his mind steeped in the ocean of Absolute Bliss". We shall close with the concluding verse. "For those who are afflicted in their weary passage in the world with the scorching heat of the noon-day sun while wandering in delusion through deserts in search of water to quench their burning thirst, this voice of Sankara points out within easy reach the Sweet and soothing waters of ambrosia, the Brahman, the One without a Second which will give them eternal peace and bliss."

2. *Prabodhasudhakara*. In this work of 257 verses, we find a wonderful harmony of jnana and Bhakti. The wrong notion entertained by

many that Advaita or non-dualism is incompatible with Bhakti or devotion will be dispelled by a careful study of the poem. The fifth verse says: "The means to attain to Mukti are three-fold, renunciation, Self-knowledge and devotion." It is declared that 'if one does not discriminate between the Self and the non-Self and is not conscious of the perishable nature of the body all his learning is in vain.' Worldly wisdom is reflected in these lines. "So long as you have wealth and ability to help others, every one will be your friend. The moment you are wanting in these, all will turn hostile." How can the mind be restrained? "By the control of the motion of the prana, by the company of the good, by the renunciation of sensual desires and by devotion to the Lord, the mind gradually gives up its vagrant vagaries and attains to calm". Who is the really blessed man in this very life? "He who is endowed with the supreme wealth of renunciation, tranquility and desirelessness and is pleased with whatever befalls him is indeed blessed on earth." Renunciation by itself will not confer happiness unless it be accompanied with knowledge which can be effective only by the instructions of an illumined master.

“The inner soul cannot be purified without devotion to the Lord. Hence, the necessity of devotion. “Progressively, the devotee sees the Lord in all beings and all beings in the Lord. One who has reached this stage is the best of devotees” God is with and without attributes. Both these aspects are true. The eyes which see the phenomenal world and its things cannot reveal God. So, the Lord granted the divine vision to Arjuna to witness His universal form. “The Grace of the Lord is boundless. Birth, beauty, position, age or reputation are not taken into consideration by the Lord. Though the sky seems vacant, it rains and blesses the parched earth thirsting for relief. So also the Gracious Lord, who is beyond vision, words and mind, blesses the earnest devotees by raining the immortal waters of absolute Knowledge and bliss.” This is the fitting conclusion of this remarkable poem.

3. *Vedanta-Kesari*. This is also called the Sata-Sloki, as it consists of a Century of verses. The current of thoughts that should ceaselessly flow in the mind of the Sadhaka who aims at the Knowledge and realisation of Brahman is charmingly portrayed in this famous work which has

been commented upon by Anandagiri. The opening verse describes the unparalleled greatness of the Guru. "No comparison can be found anywhere to depict appropriately the gracious Guru, the giver of Knowledge. The magic Stone which converts iron into gold cannot however confer on it, its own virtue of turning baser metals into gold. But the good Guru makes the disciples who resort to him verily like himself. Thus the Guru is incomparable and unique." Many of the fundamental ideas of the Upanishads are brought home to the reader by the exquisite method of presentation. Thus the eleventh verse reads as follows:—"There are two kinds of things in the world, the apparently pleasing and the lasting good. The former breed all ills and lose their charm in a short while. Fools alone go after them. The lasting good is Brahman, the abode of supreme bliss and the wise choose to cling to that alone. Thus has it been declared in the second valli of the Katha Upanishad." The life of the Seeker after Liberation, Moksha, is depicted in the following verses. "When he walks about, the person who thirsts for Moksha, conceives that he is a wave of the ocean of the Supreme Self floating hither and thither and when he does not move, he is convinced that he

is a pearl threaded on that Supreme Brahman, the Absolute Knowledge. When he senses anything he feels that he is sensing the Self. Deep sleep is to him the immersion in the waters of bliss. Thus he passes his days in the world". Without taking formal Sanyasam, one can live the life of a householder and yet reach the goal. How can this be done? Sri Sankara says: "Just as a guest lives in a house having no attachment to it, knowing full well that his home is elsewhere, so the man of discrimination will abide in the body Unaffected by physical pleasures and pains, as he is fully persuaded that he is the Self and not the body. Like the clouds which come and go, the body and all other things pass away. Being convinced thus, he will be ever at ease." How can one make this world a very heaven? The Master says thus, elucidating a Mantra of the Sama Veda. "Dedicating everything to Brahman is what is meant by charity. Being without the least shadow of anger is forgiveness. The firm conviction in the existence of the Self is faith. Truth is verily Brahman. By these four virtues, charity, forgiveness, faith and truth, one can break the bondage caused by the opposites of these and attain to the immortality of the gods in this very life." What leads

to Sin? The teaching of the Gita on this subject is expanded in the following verse. "First of all desire dawns upon the mind of man. Then he resolves to possess the objects of his desire. He proceeds to grasp them through his senses. Thwarted in his course, anger sets in. When he gets wealth, he thinks of appropriating it and becomes greedy. These three, desire, anger and greed are the causes of sin. Hence, the wise man should give up these and devote himself to the constant contemplation of the Self. "Food offered to the gods and guests becomes nectar conferring immortality. Otherwise the food one appropriates to himself is in vain. He who takes food merely for the sake of adding to his flesh is verily taking poison leading to destruction. Such a man who cares not to dedicate to gods and guests is really eating sin and becomes a cage of sin." The glory of the Self is described in this verse. "The light of the Sun or moon by itself does not reveal objects to us. This is not strange since the Sun or the fire cannot reveal themselves but through the eye directed by the sentient Self. Hence the Self is the Light of the eye as well as of the Sun, moon and other luminaries." It is proclaimed

that the realisation of the Self does not depend on caste, profession, status, age, sex or any other consideration. "Any one, *whoever that person may be*, can have the realisation of the Self, with the conviction 'I am that Brahman'. Such a one has become truly wise and becomes a *jivan mukta*, having gone beyond all doubts and delusions and living in the Supreme Self, the abode of eternal bliss. The realisation of such a one is in this wise: 'I am Existence and Knowledge absolute. I am therefore neither the body nor the senses nor the mind. I am not the intellect or the vital air. All these are transient and perishable. That I am not the house, son, relation, field, wealth etc., needs no further mention. I am the Witness, the Sentient, the Soul of Souls, the Substratum of the universe, the bliss absolute "

4. *Atmabodha* is a manual of 68 slokas dealing with the Knowledge of the Self. The special feature of this work is that it deals in detail with the three direct aids to realisation, *Sravaṇa* or hearing of the Truth from the proper Guru, *manana*, or the continuous reflection upon the Truth that has been heard and *nididhyasana* or the constant meditation on the Truth so heard and reflected upon. The characteristics of the

jivanmukta are also well portrayed as well as the Supreme bliss that attends the Knowledge and realisation of the Self. A few quotations are given to show the mode of treatment. "By repeated reasoning, the pure, innermost Atman should be discriminated from the sheaths in which it is, as it were, encased, just as rice is separated from husk by means of repeated threshing. Though the Atman is ever all-pervading, yet it does not manifest everywhere. It shines only in the pure intellect, just as an object is reflected only in bright surfaces. As people do their work by the aid of sunlight, so the body, senses, mind and intellect function in their respective spheres by the presence of the Sentient Self. As a lamp does not require the aid of another lamp to reveal itself, so the Atman does not require any other Knowledge to reveal itself. As I am different from the body, I have no birth, decay, destruction etc., and as I am not of the senses, I have no contact with sense-objects. As I am not the mind, I have no pain, attachment, aversion, fear etc. The Vedas declare "The Atman is not the senses or the mind. It is ever pure". The constant meditation of the Truth 'I am Brahman' destroys the dire torments caused by ignorance just as the sovereign remedy, the elixir of life cures all diseases". "Though the

Atman is ever attained, it appears as unattained on account of ignorance. When ignorance is removed, the Atman seems to have been attained, just as a necklace on one's person which one thought as lost though it was there all the time". The Yogi who has attained Self-Knowledge sees with the eye of illumination everything in his own Self and the Self as the One and the all. That which pervades everywhere, above, below and on all sides, which is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, the Infinite, the Eternal, the One without a Second, know that to be Brahman. Getting a particle of that unbroken and everlasting Bliss, all beings become blissful, Know that to be Brahman. That by which the Sun and other luminous bodies are illumined but which is illumined by none, That which illuminates all, Know that to be Brahman." "The Sage sees the All-pervading Brahman, that Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss." The ignorant do not perceive It like the blind not seeing the resplendent Sun" The All-pervading and All-sustaining Atman, the Sun of Knowledge, rising in the heart of the purified soul, dispels all darkness and illuminates everything".

APAROKSHANUBHUTHI.

This grand work of 144 simple, charming and pregnant verses contains a complete system of Sadhana for the aspirant aiming at the highest spiritual realization. It is declared in the very beginning that the desire to do Sadhana will arise only by the due performance of the duty entailed on one by his birth and status as well as by a life of austerity and devotion to God. The imperative need of proper reflection for the dawn of true knowledge is emphasized: "One should think in this wise. Who am I? How has this universe sprung into existence? What is the cause of all this phenomena? I am neither the body nor the senses. I am the One, the Subtle, the Knower, the Witness, the Pure Being, the Indestructible". Ignorance and Knowledge are finely distinguished in a few verses. "The Atman is the eternal Being and the body is the transient unsubstantial. To identify them, as is generally done, is the crassest ignorance that can be conceived." The fool thinks that he is the body and suffers all ills. "The wise man realises "I am the Brahman, the Eternal, the calm, the Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. I am not the ever-changing and perishing body". This is true

Knowledge. "When all beings are known as the Self, there is no more any sorrow or delusion". The realization of the true Self cannot be reached without constant practice. Hence, the earnest enquirer after true knowledge should meditate on Brahman to attain his goal. Fifteen aids to such meditation are enunciated and explained. It may be noted that this enumeration is unique, being found in no other work. Yama, Niyama, renunciation, silence, Space, time, Asana, Mula-bandha, equipoise of the body, fixing of sight, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Samadhi constitute these fifteen aids. The names of eight of these are the same as the eight limbs mentioned in Patanjali's yoga. But the definitions differ essentially. A few examples will make this clear. Yama is defined as the control of the senses by the perception that everything is Brahman. That posture in which Brahman can be constantly meditated is the Asana and not other so-called Asanas which hinder the true bliss of the Atman. To think of Brahman by the mind and restrain all mental modifications is Pranayama. The other Pranayama involving the closing of the nostril is for the ignorant and merely causes torture to the nasal organ. To see the Self in the senses and merge the mind in the Atman is Pratyahara. Wherever the mind goes,

see the Brahman there and hold the mind there. This is Dharana. To remain in the thought 'I am the Brahman' is the real Dhyana conferring the Bliss Supreme". The description of the other aids is also peculiar. Thus renunciation is defined as the giving up of the Universe as it seems by the constant vision of the Sentient Self which confers instant Moksha. The Silence which is the goal of the yogis is that where words together with the mind fall back unable to attain it. The wise man should constantly resort to that silence. Verbal silence is prescribed for undeveloped souls. That in which there is not another in the beginning, middle and end and by which all this is ever pervaded is the real retreat. Get the eye of Knowledge and see the Universe as Brahman. This is the fixing of the sight and not the looking at the tip of your nose". The vain talk of high things without practical realisation is decried in the following verse. "Those who are expert in discourse upon Brahman but have not realized Brahman, being intensely attached to the things of the World, are indeed most ignorant. They cannot escape the wheel of constant transmigration." The aspirant is exhorted not to turn his mind for even half an instant away from the contemplation of Brahman. He should have as his models Sanaka, Suka and other Sages who remained in

constant contemplation of Brahman." The wise man should reduce the visible to the invisible and contemplate on the ultimate Reality, the Brahman. Thus he will remain in eternal bliss with his mind saturated with the nectar of Brahman. The last verse gives the assurance that the devotee of God and Guru will with ease and speed attain to the highest realization.

From the above, it will be seen that the works of the Master deal with the leading topics of the Vedanta, differing from one another only in the method of treatment and the manner of approach. All of them point to the same goal. They are intended to lead the earnest aspirant to the realisation of the ultimate Reality, the identity of the Jiva and Brahman. How well Sri Sankara has succeeded in this self-imposed task is evident from the rapid propagation of his works throughout India and their popularity which has been not only unwaning but also steadily growing with the passage of time. The words of Madhusudana Saraswathi, an acknowledged authority on the Vedanta philosophy, seem to express only the sober truth when he says: "With all his Sutras (meaning both aphorisms and threads), Vyasa was not able to string together all the ideas of the Vedas. Sankara, however, without any Sutra whatsoever,

succeeded in threading all those ideas." Such is the tribute rendered to the genius of the great master by an eminent scholar and sage. The testimony of Swami Vivekananda is equally emphatic. "The greatest teacher of Vedanta philosophy was Sankaracharya. By solid reasoning he extracted from the Vedas the truths of Vedanta, and on them built up the wonderful system of jnana, that is taught in his works. He unified all the apparently conflicting descriptions of Brahman and showed that there is only One Infinite Reality. He showed, too, that as man can only travel slowly on the upward road, all the varied presentations are needed to suit his varying capacity."

PART III.

TEACHINGS.

[EXTRACTS FROM SANKARA'S WORKS.]

G O D.

The Lord is the Friend and Well-wisher of all beings, the selfless benefactor of all, the Dweller in the hearts of all creatures, the Dispenser of the fruits of every action and the witness of all thoughts and feelings. Yoga is the power of God comprising omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, etc. The Supreme Lord is the Omniscient, who knows and ordains.

The attainment of true knowledge is through the Grace of God alone. •

One, who knows God's real nature, is blessed and gets godly powers (by His Grace).

The All-knowing God, through His two Prakritis, higher and lower, is the cause of the Universe. It is a matter of common experience that the Self is dear to every one. As the Lord

is realised by him as his own Self, He is dear to the jnanin. (In fact, the Lord is the Self of all and should be dear to all. But, the truly discerning alone know this and hence they alone hold on and cling to God as dearer than everything else). He, who resorts to God, the Self of all, is indeed a high soul.

The Supreme Lord is Kala, as He is the Ordainer of even time, the Controller of all. He, who is disgusted with this constant whirl of birth and death, is alone competent to gain the knowledge of the true nature of God. None else is fit to attain that knowledge. The deluded do not perceive the Lord, though He is quite within the range of their mental vision (for He is their very Self. They are deluded in various ways, their minds being forcibly drawn away from Him by the desire for enjoyment of objects, seen and unseen. They are indeed to be pitied. Those who are endowed with the eye of wisdom, born of competent and proper evidence, do perceive Him.

None, except the Supreme Lord, has the power of absolute and unfettered lordship in the past, present and future.

Even the immortality of the Devas is but relatively long existence. Their godly powers are derived from the Supreme Lord.

The Supreme Lord dwells in all bodies without any adjuncts.

God cannot be cognised by Common experience. His true nature is revealed only by the Sruti and it is the direct purpose of the Sruti to make this revelation.

The knowers of the Science of Yoga declare that it is by the Grace of God that even the yogins acquire the direct knowledge of the past and the future. Such being the case it goes without saying that the eternally perfect Lord has eternal knowledge.

MAN.

Ordinary man is under the sway of delusion. The common nature of ordinary man prompts him to act under the impulses of attachment and aversion. Thus, he abandons his proper legitimate duties and takes up the work prescribed for others, as the mood sways him. The ordinary man of indiscrimination considers desire as a friend in the beginning when he is prompted by attachment to grief when he meets with that result.

Some are born with renunciation and dispassion as their nature while some others are naturally attached to work with desire for the fruits. These latter not only do not take to renunciation but are also averse to knowledge. To see action in the actionless Self is a deep-rooted characteristic of ordinary man. He identifies himself with the aggregate of the body and the senses and in his ignorance attributes works to the Self and thinks that he is the doer. The mode of thought of the ordinary man is in this wise. "I am the doer; this work has been done by me; I must enjoy the fruits of this action". He thus attributes the actions of the body, the senses, etc., to the Self. This false ascription of the actions of the body and the senses to the actionless and changeless Self is common to almost all humanity, so that even a (book) learned man thinks that he is the doer. The ignorant man, who identifies himself with the aggregate of the body and the Senses thinks that he is resting in a house, on the ground or on a seat. The man, who sees the body as the Self cannot conceive that he is residing in the body that is really separate from him. But the man who sees his Self as distinct from the aggregate of the body etc., can certainly realise that

he is all the time residing in a body. On account of the ignorance of their own real nature which partakes of the nature of God, men in general do not resort to God. All beings are born subject to delusion and ordinary man is no exception.

Human birth, which is a means to reach the goal of life, is indeed very difficult to get.

Man is truly man only when his mind is able to discriminate between right and wrong. If his mind has become incapable of such discrimination, the man is lost. By the mind's incapacity to discriminate, man is rendered unfit to realise the object of human life.

The pure man is one who is endowed with both internal and external purity.

The able man is one who is able to decide rightly and promptly on the proper course of action in matters demanding immediate attention.

Wisdom and ignorance are incompatible with each other. Wisdom pertains to the real and lasting good and ignorance to the apparently pleasing.

The ignorant man who thinks of the body, the senses, etc., as his own Self, is prompted by attachment and aversion to do good as well as evil. He is convinced that he is born and will die. But the wise see the Self as distinct from the body, the senses etc., and utterly give up attachment and aversion. They are therefore completely freed from virtue and vice, resulting from attachment and aversion.

A man of discrimination is indeed very rare. Among innumerable beings, one perhaps will be a discriminating person, as is the case even now.

The ignorant will not follow the example of the wise. The actions of the ignorant are swayed by attachment, aversion and other passions. Some people are seen even to resort to black magic. Also, nature compels the ignorant man to act and he cannot desist from it.

By the power of good deeds, knowledge and memory manifest themselves in virtuous persons. In the case of sinful persons, both knowledge and memory remain clouded on account of their sinful deeds.

Purity of the internal instrument, the mind, is the giving up of deceit, dissimulation,

dishonesty, etc., in one's dealings, with others, in short, fair and just conduct in one's relations with others.

It is seen that some are born endowed with a capacity for certain particular works such as painting etc., while others have no capacity even in tasks involving very little effort. So also, in the matter of enjoying the senses, some are experts and others lack that skill. All this is due to the revival or non-revival of past experience.

Wherein lies the superiority of man? In his capacity to attain to knowledge and to accomplish works according to the dictates of the Sastras. It is in man that the Self manifests itself fully. Being enriched by discrimination, man can discern the future and see beyond. From mortality, he can rise to immortality. As regards other animals, hunger and thirst constitute their sphere of consciousness. Man alone is specially competent to work for prosperity and liberation.

Perfection and enjoyment present themselves to men in such a tangled manner that the dull-witted cannot discriminate between them. The wise, however, reflect on their relative

value and gladly choose perfection as it is far superior to enjoyment.

As in the past the first embodied being was afraid of being alone, so even now men in general fear to be alone. The removal of that fear was in the past as it is in the present by means of the right Knowledge of the Self.

One, who does not know the real nature of the Atman, is led by the natural defects of attachment and aversion to cling to the results of his action. He proceeds to act even transgressing the injunctions and prohibitions of the Sastras. Thus, by the preponderant urge of the natural defects mentioned above, he goes on accumulating in thought, word and deed in an increasing proportion evil (vice) which causes him undesirable consequences visible and invisible. This makes him go down in the scale of evolution and he may descend even to the level of stationary objects. Sometimes the impressions produced by the Sastras predominate. In that case, he accumulates more and more in thought, word and deed, an abundance of good (virtue). This good is of two kinds, with knowledge and without it. The Second takes one to the abode of the Pitris. The first leads him higher and

higher to the spheres beginning with that of gods and ending with that of Brahman. When good and evil, virtue and vice are balanced, one is born as man. The Sastras, (though they are of universal application) are specially applicable to human beings.

DESIRE AND ATTACHMENT.

Desire is the enemy of the whole world and leads to all kinds of evil. Desire, when obstructed in any manner, turns into anger. Desire arising, Ragas emerge and prompt the person to act. The lament of the afflicted, after they have engaged in service, and acted under the influence of Ragas is heard to this effect: "I am made to work by the prompting of desire." It is verily by the influence of desire that one commits sin.

The uprising of desire and anger is inevitable during life, for the causes that bring them out are infinite. Hence, we should never relax our efforts in the assurance that we have conquered them.

Desire is the thirst after objects of the Senses, previously enjoyed and found pleasurable

when they are again seen, heard or remembered. Anger is the repulsion towards inimical and painproducing objects, already suffered, when they are again seen, heard or remembered.

The uprising of desire is shown by the hairs standing on end, the pleasure spreading over the eyes, face etc., and the mind being tossed about, intoxicated by it.

The rise of anger is manifested by violent tremor. the shaking of the body, profuse perspiration, the biting of the lips the redness of the eyes, etc.

Desires are indeed caused by dwelling on thoughts of sense-objects.

Desires are beneficial to none. The Seekers of the objects of desire never attain Freedom.

By renouncing desires, the Seer, Steadfast in meditation, attains peace.

Desire is that which prompts one to seek and get that class of objects, which caused him pleasure formerly, under the impression that it will be a source of pleasure. Similarly, hatred

is the aversion to that class of objects which gave him pain on previous occasions.

The root of all evil is the attached contemplation of sense-objects. The natural working of the senses is accompanied by attachment and aversion.

The enemy can be slain only by knowing his haunts. The Senses, the mind and the intellect form the habitations of desire. Desire must be chased away from these abodes.

Attachment and aversion obstruct the good and right path just as robbers on the way to our destination.

No one can pursue pleasure and yet seek Moksha.

SENSE-CONTROL.

Without attaining right knowledge, the seed of attachment cannot be destroyed. Hence, to reach that end, steadfastness in knowledge should be cultivated.

True happiness consists in the withdrawal of the mind from attachment to sense-objects

and not in the attachment to them. Such attachment is indeed misery. If there be such attachment, there cannot be even the slightest tinge of happiness.

He, who seeks the imperishable bliss in the Atman, should withdraw his senses from the attraction to sense-objects which gives but momentary pleasure. It is evident to those who see that bodily complaints are due to sense-enjoyments. Knowing full well that there is not even the least shadow of real happiness in worldly objects, one should withdraw the senses from pursuing the mirage of sense-objects.

It is a matter of experience that the utterly ignorant alone delight in sense-enjoyments, like the animals.

Self-control is the control of the aggregate of the body and the senses by restraining their natural propensity to get off in all direction and by training them to walk solely and exclusively in the right path.

SADHANA.

In the Science of religion, the characteristics of the person who has attained the goal are

taught as the Sadhanas, the means to the aspirants, since these characteristics (natural to those who have reached perfection) can be acquired by effort and exertion.

The person, who pursues an end prescribed by the Sastras, is forewarned that he should not fall under the sway of attachment and aversion. When the aspirant conquers attachment and aversion by the practice of discrimination and right thinking, then he will see and act according to the Sastras and not under the sway of his unregenerate nature. Being wise by the instructions of the Sastras, he knows beforehand that desires prompt him to evil.

Non-injury, chastity in thought, word and deed etc., are aids to attain knowledge. Hearing of scriptural texts, pondering over their meaning and meditation thereof lead one directly to knowledge. They constitute the means for the realisation of Brahman.

Those who strive for Moksha can be said to have become perfect. Moksha results from the total giving up of all desires.

The means to attain Self-knowledge are the excellent virtues such as humility, endowed with which one becomes fit to know the Self. These virtues themselves are styled knowledge as they are means to attain that Knowledge. The knowledge of the Supreme Reality is the result of the ripe and full development of humility and other virtues, which have been spoken of as the means to attain knowledge.

By speaking of solitude as one of the means to attain knowledge, it is not meant that the company of the pure and disciplined is forbidden. In fact, such company helps one to attain Knowledge.

Only by great effort can the natural tendency to externalize be checked. It is like going against the strong current. After that tendency to "externalize" has been overcome, we should turn the mind to the Innermost Self.

WORK.

He who thinks that his Self is verily the doer of work will naturally feel that he has some specific duties to discharge. Such a man is therefore fitted to engage in work.

The path of action has to be followed first of all; then one can take to the life of renunciation (when one becomes competent for it.)

The secret of work is to get that dexterity by which works naturally causing bondage cease to have that effect in his case. That dexterity consists in being even-minded in pain and pleasure and the other dual throng.

It is not proper for one who has not known the Atman to give up the duties enjoined on him. It will be wrong if such a person were to think that he should not do his duty on the plea that work leads to bondage. For the reason that action sets the wheel of the world in motion, the person on whom a duty is enjoined should perform it. The import of the whole teaching of the Gita is that one who has not attained to the Knowledge of the Atman should perform the duties enjoined on him. Before attaining the competence to the Knowledge of the Atman, a man should engage in the path of action which is his proper sphere, as that will lead him to attain to that knowledge.

Karma Yoga is the means of reaching the true knowledge of the Atman and consists in the performance of unselfish work accompanied by

the conquest of the dualities of the sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc., and done in the spirit of worship of God. It is the yoga of concentration and equality while doing work. Ordinarily, work brings about bondage in the form of merit and demerit, virtue and vice. By God's Grace work ceases to bind when it is done as worship of God. Karma Yoga is thus the means to attain to Moksha.

Until a man has attained the competence to follow the path of knowledge he should engage himself in work, as he is till then qualified only to follow the path of action. Works, done disinterestedly, cause the destruction of the accumulated evils of the past and also bring about the purification of the mind. The disinterested performance of work is the means to attain to competency for jnana-yoga.

That Karma Yoga is the means to attain to jnana-yoga has been declared in the Sruti as well as in the Gita. Karma Yoga is prescribed as the way for those who have not attained to the true Knowledge of the Atman, since they are still under the sway of the three gunas, Satwa, rajas and tamas. By proper discrimination, one should think that he is the doer working for God like a servant for his Master.

Yoga is the doing of work as a dedication to God and without any desire for the fruits and such performance of work is a means to right knowledge.

Works, enjoined by the Sruti and the Smriti are means to attain to the goal of human life. The supersensuous knowledge of the Atman manifests itself to one who is the seeker of the Supreme Brahman and who is devoted to the performance without attachment to the fruits thereof of the obligatory duties enjoined by the Sruti and Smriti. Before the realization of the identity of the Atman and Brahman, the duties prescribed by the Sruti and the Smriti have to be necessarily fulfilled as they make for the purification of the person. Self-Knowledge manifests itself to a person as soon as his mind has become pure. Hence, works should be performed (as taught by the Scriptures) so that the knowledge of the Self may become manifest. The Sastras enjoin the performance of works as the means to destroy the accumulated evils of the past in the case of one who seeks Moksha as well as in the case of one who wishes to reap the fruits of his works. Wisdom cannot manifest to one who is obstructed in his path to

progress by the accumulated evils of the past. The obligatory works enjoined by the Sastras cause the manifestation of wisdom by removing the obstacles resulting from the accumulated evils of the past. Not only the Agnihotras and other sacrifices, but also austerity, truth, control, internal and external are Karmas since they are even more directly conducive to bring about Knowledge. So also are meditation etc.

The duty of an aspirant who has not known the Self is to go on performing works to acquire purity of mind. Work is an external aid to attain to Dhyana Yoga. Hence, until he becomes competent to rise to Dhyana Yoga, the Grihastha, on whom work is enjoined, should perform his duties.

An action will as a matter of course, be attended by its result. An act, dedicated to God, will produce greater results than one not so dedicated.

The absence of the egoistic sense that one is the doer as well as non-attachment to the fruits of work make one freed from the bondage of action.

Work, which springs from ignorance and desire and which give rise to the seeds of all sufferings, cause rebirth. Work done with egoism and desire produces bondage while work done without egoism and the desire for the fruits lead to Moksha.

The Karma Yogi is one who concentrates on work and does it with the conviction that he works for God and not for any personal gain. Karma Yoga, which is practised with entire devotion to God, dedicating everything to Him, leads to Moksha gradually by means of the purification of the mind, the attainment of knowledge and the renunciation of all actions.

Yoga is the performance of actions without any desire for the fruits thereof and such Yoga is an external aid to Dhayana Yoga. The nature of the Yoga taught in the Gita is the concentration of the mind on the Lord with universal form and the doing of work dedicated to Him.

Karma Yoga is Yoga through Karma. Work is done with the conviction that it is a dedication to the Lord. It is also Yoga in a secondary sense as such work performed with a mind dedicated to the Lord, leads to Yoga.

The Karma Yogi renounces all ideas of the fruits of action even while performing them. As the thought of the fruits of action causes distraction of the mind, a doer of action who abandons the thought of the fruits thereof, will become a Yogi with an undistracted mind.

Yoga, with the Lord as the object, means the performance of all actions after dedicating them to the Lord.

The rites to be performed regularly are enjoined by the Sastras on one who is tainted with the root of all ills, ignorance and the consequent desire and hatred, and who desires to seek good and avoid evil. He follows the injunctions of the Sastras and performs the rites enjoined by them without any desire for the fruits thereof. Even the rites designated as Kamya, that is, with some material end in view, fall within that category only because of the state of mind, namely, the desire of the person performing them. By themselves, they cannot be differentiated from the obligatory rites done without any desire for the fruits.

THE WORK OF THE FREED SOULS.

Even a knower of the Self, who has achieved the goal of life, should work for the welfare of

others, though he has no further duty to be done for his own sake. To work for the good of the world is the only duty remaining for the knower of the Self. Thus the work done by the Knower of the Self is really no work at all for his constant perception of Brahman destroys the binding effect of any work done by him. In the case of the Knower of the Self in whom all ideas of duality have been replaced by the realisation of Brahman everywhere, action ceases to be action, (as its binding effect has been destroyed).

“These are not my actions. I, the Atman, have no work to do. I am beyond it.” Knowing thus, one is freed from the bonds of action. The man, who has got right Knowledge, will not be bound by actions even though he does work for the good of the world.

APPENDIX.

I

YAJNAVALKYA—MAITREYI DIALOGUE.

It is enjoined in the Sruti (Vedas) that one should become a Sanyasin only after getting the assent of the wife and others (relatives and friends). So, the Rishi (Yajnavalkya) addresses Maitreyi, his wife, for her approval.

“I wish to give up the Grihastā Ashrama (my present status as a householder) and take up Sanyasa. Please give your consent”.

(Maitreyi replied): “The desire you have expressed is worthy of you and appropriate (in your circumstances). Kindly instruct me without delay as to my duty in the matter.”

Having thus obtained her assent, he said to her as follows: “I shall partition (my property) between you and your co-wife Katyayani.

Women have no wealth of their own. When I renounce, (I will have no property and

so), you will have no means (to fulfil) the rites and obligations (enjoined by the Sastras).

Before I become a Sanyasin, I shall therefore, distribute my wealth to both of you (as I retain my property till Sanyasa).

The Scriptures enjoin that one should renounce only after distributing all his wealth. Hence, I shall partition my property."

(Maitreyi said) "Your resolution is befitting. Only do not give me wealth. Bless me with that which will certainly be beneficial to us like your Sanyasam (to you),

The company of the great-souled ones will uplift all. Even impure water becomes pure and holy when it mixes and unites with the (sacred) Ganges.

By your association, (I have realised) that there is no other goal (to be sought after by human beings) than (the gain of) immortality. So, I ask you whether wealth can confer or be a means for immortality.

If the whole earth is full of wealth (and I own it) will I become immortal on that account?"

Yajnavalkya answered thus the query of his wife. "By wealth, one cannot gain immortality", Then Maitreyi asked "If wealth will not confer immortality, why do you wish to give wealth to me". Yajnavalkya replied thus, explaining the utility of wealth. "The life of man depends on many perishable things and wealth is one among them (as it can purchase those things). But it does not conduce to immortality.

Knowledge, which completely destroys ignorance, is the only means to immortality. It is vain to dream of immortality by wealth or anything depending on wealth (Sacrifices etc., performed by means of wealth).

Knowledge alone confers immortality. Work cannot be the cause of Mukti, just as fire cannot cure heat. Work results in birth and no cessation from rebirth is possible by that means."

(Maitreyi said) "The nature of the good is to do good even to those who wrong them. Then, what will be the conduct of the good to those who are devoted to them.

I must indeed have been guilty of some offence as you desire to do something injurious to me. Who else is there who will help me?

How can a high-souled one like you renounce by binding me, your devoted, beloved and virtuous wife, with wealth without breaking my worldly bonds of attachment?

If wealth can confer immortality, it is not fit that you renounce it. If it cannot help to gain immortality, of what avail, then, is it to me?

If you are kind and seek my welfare give me that supreme knowledge you are master of.

Give me that treasure by possessing which knowledge you have abandoned all wealth and all that can be procured by wealth and desire to be the Supreme Sovereign, the over-Lord of yourself.

Give me that treasure, which has no beginning, middle or end and which never decreases however much it is enjoyed and used up.

You are master of that infinite treasure. Why do you give me finite riches? The gift of illusory things is no gift at all. Doign, therefore, to give me the substantial and Real Wealth”.

Yajnavalkya replied: “I cannot give that knowledge the one and only means to Moksha to one who has not risen above the desire for worldly goods. I had my doubts about your real thirst for Moksha and so I offered you wealth. If you have got the real spirit of renunciation and the deep distaste for worldly goods, receive this invaluable and unsurpassable Nectar of True Knowledge.

You have never spoken a word against my wishes, thus fulfilling the duties of a devoted wife. Now also, you follow my inclinations and are as dear to me as before.

Even his brothers desert the man who seeks Moksha. By your unsurpassed and intense devotion to me, you do not desire to leave me even now when I renounce, seeking Moksha.

You cannot bear the idea of separation, as you are intensely devoted to me. You wish to follow me even in the path of Mukti, as you desire complete oneness with me.

Uma (Parvathi), on account of her deep devotion to Her Lord Shiva, resorted to become half His body. But, you seek with your entire soul to become the Whole of my Soul.”

(From Sureswaracharya's Vartika on the
Brihadhranyopanishad-Bhashya)

APPENDIX II.

SRI SANKARA'S INFLUENCE.

Jnaneswara, (1271-1296 A. D.) the greatest Saint of Maharashtra, says in his celebrated *Jnaneswari* "Just as a child, following his father, reaches the same (place where the latter goes) destination, so I, unworthy though I be, follow Vyasa, after ascertaining the way from the *Bhashyakara* (Sri Sankara).

Ekanath, (1533-1599 A. D.) one of the revered saints of Maharashtra, gives the following account in his explanatory rendering of *Hastamalaka's* reputed reply to the query of Sri Sankara.

"In the house of a certain Brahman, a (freed) soul, who was to have his last incarnation, was born by Supreme good fortune. They could not understand his greatness.....None could gauge the depth of his knowledge.....He kept an unbroken silence, neither smiling nor weeping... ..All who saw him spoke of him as

a peculiar child but could not arrive at any conclusion regarding him. He was not a corpse as there was the life breath in him. He could not be called blind, since he saw everything. He never cried, even at the time of birth. The light that emanated from him was intense. He had no hunger or thirst. He was above the dual throng, joy, misery and the rest and he had no feeling of I and mine.

So, the parents became indifferent. He had reached his eighth year. How to initiate him into the Gayatri, as he uttered no syllable from the time of his birth.....The father may beat and the mother refuse to give food and drink. His face was calm and there was no trace of sorrow. Such was the state of the boy. At that time, Sankara, in the course of his wanderings, came to that house, begging alms. Many wealthy and (worthy) worshipful Brahmins had respectfully invited the great teacher, but he did not respond and came unbidden to this house. Seeing the (state of the) child, Sri Sankaracharya was filled with joy and recognized his high state of knowledge. Wishing to hear from him, his words of supreme wisdom, the Acharya, who was already immersed in ecstasy at the sight of the child, questioned him thus

with great affection. "Who art thou, child" etc. The Acharya told his (father) relations: "This boy is an utter ignorant in worldly matters. He has no inclination to follow the path of the crowd, (the worldly way). Give him to me, as I know his value." The father, that excellent Brahman realised the truth of his words, as the Acharya had made the hitherto dumb child speak words of wisdom. He had the Upanayana of the boy performed and handed him to Sri Sankara who gave him full Sanyasa on the spot. Even now, at the time of Vyasa puja, Hastamalaka has a high place. In the Sanyasapadhathi the rules for being initiated into Sanyasa, he is greatly honoured "I shall give the line of Gurus". First in order, comes Sri Narayana. His disciple is Brahma. Narada, the great Sage, was initiated by him. Narada taught Vyasa and Vyasa was the Guru of Suka. Suka instructed Gaudapada, who formulated the rules for initiation into Sanyasa. The Guru of the Sanyasins, Gaudapada had as his disciple the most revered Govindapada. He had (in his turn) two disciples Vivarnacharya and Sankara. Illumination, wisdom, surpassing power, knowledge, grandeur and profundity, Sri Sankara had in full measure and he, the insight incarnate,

was supreme, extremely liberal in giving the grace of Self-Knowledge (to others). Ten Gurus (Masters) are to be worshipped in Vyasa-puja and I shall mention them according to the order in the instructions regarding the Puja. Four of the first Acharyas are to be honoured first and foremost among the ten. The other Six got their Knowledge from Sankaracharya. First is Gaudapada Acharya and the Second Govinda Bhagavat Pada. From him we come to the Vivarnacharya and the Chief Acharya Sri Sankara. From Sankara Six Acharyas took Sanyasa. They are Viswarupa, Prithwidhara, Sahajacharya, Hastamalaka, who was ever established in the Supreme (Whole), Padmapada and Trotakacharya. These complete the names of the ten highly revered Acharyas of the Sanyasins, the Supreme Lights of Wisdom. They are most eminent (Lamps) in holding to the ideal of Sanyasa and Supremely endowed to convey knowledge (to others). Four of them became the heads of Maths. Sankara established the order of ten Sanyasins and I shall give the names of those Tirtha, Asrama, Vana, Aranya, Giri, Parvata, Sagara, Saraswati, Bhagirathi and Puri. The Dwaraka Matha is on the West Coast and Viswarupa was the Acharya thereof. Tirtha and Asrama are the

titles of the Sanyasins there. The Joshi Math is in the Badarikashrama and Trotakacharya was the head of that. Giri, Parvata and Sagara abide there. The Jagannatha Math is on the East Coast, wherein Padmapada was the head. Vana and Aranya are the names of the inmates of that Math. The Sringeri Math is in the south, which had as its head Prithwidhara, Saraswathi, Bharathi and Puri reside therein. Hastamalaka was ever established in the Supreme, reposing therein and so had no Maths or Asramas. He was fully absorbed in the bliss of the Self. The last, Sahajacharya also had no inclination to be in charge of Maths and the like, being naturally in the high state of realisation.

APPENDIX

1

अनुष्ठातृणां कामोद्भवाद्धीयमानविवेकविज्ञानहेतुकेन
अधर्मेणाभिभूयमाने धर्मे, प्रवर्धमाने चाधर्मे, जगतः स्थितिं
परिपिपलयिषुः, स आदिकर्ता नारायणाख्यो विष्णुः देवक्यां
वसुदेवाद् अंशेन कृष्णः किल सम्बभूव ।

Gītābhāṣya

2

तस्मात् पुत्रो नाम सः ।

Brhadāranyakopaniṣad 1. 5. 17.

तस्मात् — पूरणेन त्रायते स पितरं यस्मात् तस्मात् पुत्रो
नाम । इदं तत् पुत्रस्य पुत्रत्वं, यत् पितुश्छिद्रं पूरयित्वा
त्रायते ।

Sāṅkarabhāṣya

3

“पञ्चमाब्दोपनीतश्चेद् ब्रह्मवर्चसमृच्छति”

Smṛti

4

न च यथैकस्य सामर्थ्यं दृष्टं तथा अन्यस्यापि
सामर्थ्येन भवितव्यम् इति नियमोऽस्ति ।

न च दृष्टेऽनुपपन्नं नाम ।

Brhadāranyakopaniṣadbhāṣya

5

जन्मनेव विरक्ता दृश्यन्ते केचित्, केचित् तु कर्मसु
प्रवृत्ता अविरक्ता विद्याविद्वेषिणः ।

जन्मान्तरकृतकर्मभ्यश्च प्रागपि गार्हस्थ्य्याद् विद्योत्पत्ति-
सम्भवात्, कर्मार्थत्वाच्च गार्हस्थ्यप्रतिपत्तेः कर्मसाध्यायश्च
विद्यायां सत्यां गार्हस्थ्यप्रतिपत्तिरनर्थिकैव ।

Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya
Śikṣā vallī Anvaka 2.

कपायं पाचयित्वा तु श्रेणीस्थानेषु च त्रिषु ।
प्रव्रजेच्चै पेरं स्थानं परित्राज्यमनुत्तमम् ॥
भावितैः करणैश्चायं बहुसंसारयोनिषु ।
आसादयति शुद्धात्मा मोक्षं वै प्रथमाश्रमे ॥

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad vārtika
Stanzas 1586 & 1587.

6

तस्मात् किमपि वक्तव्यम्, यदनन्तरं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासोपदिश्यत
इति । उच्यते । नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः, इहामुत्रभोगवि-
रागः, शमादिसाधनसम्पद्, मुमुक्षुत्वं च । तेषु हि ससु
प्रागपि धर्मजिज्ञासाया ऊर्ध्वं च शक्यते ब्रह्म जिज्ञा-
सितुं ज्ञातुं च, न विपर्यये ॥

Sūtrabhāṣya 1. 1. 1.

7

सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धान्तगोचरं तमगोचरम् ।
गोविन्दं परमानन्दं मदगुरुं प्रणतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥

8

तस्मात् असंप्रदायवित् सर्वशास्त्रविदपि मूर्खवदेवोपेक्ष-
णीयः ।”

Gītabhāṣya 13. 2.

9

श्रोत्रियोऽब्रजिनोऽकामहनो यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः ।
ब्रह्मण्युपरतः शान्तो निरिन्धन इवानलः ॥
अहेतुकदयासिन्धुर्बन्धुरानमतां सताम् ।
वसन्तबलैकहितं चरन्तः —

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi

10

मेधावी पुरुषो विद्वानूहापोहविचक्षणः ।
अधिकार्यात्मविद्यायामुक्तलक्षणलक्षितः ॥

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi

11

सर्वत्रैव ह्यव्यात्मशास्त्रे कृतार्थलक्षणानि यानि तान्येव
साधनान्युपदिश्यन्ते, यत्नसाध्यत्वात् । यानि यत्नसाध्यानि
साधनानि लक्षणानि च भवन्ति तानि ॥

Gītabhāṣya 2. 55.

12

क गतं केन वा नीतं कुत्र लीनमिदं जगत् ।
 अधुनैव मया दृष्टं नास्ति किं महदद्भुतम् ॥
 किं हेयं किमुपादेयं किमन्यत् किं विलक्षणम् ।
 अखण्डानन्दपीयूषपूर्णं ब्रह्ममहार्णवे ॥
 न किञ्चिदत्र पश्यामि न शृणोमि न वेद्म्यहम् ।
 स्वात्मनैव सदानन्दरूपेणास्मि विलक्षणः ॥
 धन्योऽहं कृतकृत्योऽहं विमुक्तोऽहं भवग्रहात् ।
 नित्यानन्दस्वरूपोऽहं पूर्णोऽहं त्वदनुग्रहात् ॥

Vivēkakūdamāni

13

स्थित्वास्यां स्थितौ ब्राह्मण्यम् अन्त्येऽपि वयसि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं
 मोक्षं गच्छति । किमु वक्तव्यं ब्रह्मचर्यादेव सत्यस्य याव-
 जीवं यो ब्रह्मण्येवावतिष्ठते स ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छतीति ।

Gītabhāṣya 2. 72.

14

तस्माद् ज्ञाने यत्नो न कर्तव्यः । किन्तु अनात्मन्या
 त्मबुद्धिनिवृत्तावेव । तस्माद् ज्ञाननिष्ठा सुसम्पाद्या ।

15

यथा च वर्तमाना ब्रह्मविदः प्रारब्धभोगक्षये कैवल्य

मनुभवन्ति एवं अपान्तरतमःप्रभृतयोऽपीश्वराः परमेश्वरेण तेषु
 तेषु अधिकारेषु नियुक्ताः सन्तः सत्यपि सम्यग्दर्शने
 कैवल्यहेतावक्षीणकर्माणो यावदधिकारमवतिष्ठन्ते, तदवसाने
 चापव्रज्यन्त इत्यविरुद्धं तस्माद् उपपन्ना यावद-
 धिकारं आधिकारिकाणां अवस्थितिः ।

Sūtrabhāṣya 3.

16

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः

Gītā. 5. 18.

17

“सर्वेषां चाधिकारो विद्यायां परं च श्रेयः केवलाया
 विद्याया वेति सिद्धम् ।”

Taittirīyopaniṣad. Śikṣāvallī. 2

18

वाग्वैखरी शब्दज्ञरी शास्त्रव्याख्यानकौशलम् ।

वैदुष्यं विदुषां तद्वद् भुक्तये न तु मुक्तये ॥

शब्दजालं महारण्यं चित्तभ्रमणकारणम् ।

अनेकैर्हि विवृतपदपदार्थवाक्यार्थन्यायमपि अत्यन्त-
 विरुद्धानेकार्थत्वेन लौकिकैः गृह्यमाणं उपलभ्य अहं

19

विवेकनः अर्थनिर्धारणार्थं संक्षेपतो विवरणं करिष्यामि ॥
(Ītābhāṣya)

20

द्रविडोऽपि च तत्त्वमसीनि वचो
विनिवर्तकमेव निरूपितवान् ।
शब्देण विवर्धितराजशिशो-
र्निजजन्मविदुक्तिनिर्देशनतः ॥
Śrūtisāraṣaṁgrahaḥ

21

नमाम्यभोगि परिवारसम्पदं
निरस्तभूतिमनुमार्धविग्रहम् ।
अनुग्रमुन्मृदितकाललाञ्छनं
विना विनायकमपूर्वशङ्करम् ॥
Pañcapādikā 3.

यद्वक्रमानससरःप्रतिलब्धजन्म-
भाष्यारविन्दमकरन्दरसं पिबन्ति ।
प्रत्याशमुन्मुखविनीतविनेयभृङ्गा-
स्तान् भाष्यवित्तपगुरून् प्रणमामि मूर्ध्ना ॥
Pañcapādikā 4.

22

तस्माद् ब्रह्मविदाम् एकपुण्डरीकस्य लोकनुग्रहैकरमतया
सम्यग्ज्ञानप्रवर्तनप्रयोजनकृतशरीरपरिग्रहस्य भगवतो भा-
ष्यकारस्य मतं आगमयितव्यम् ।

Pañcapādikā 2.

23

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं गोविन्दं भज मूढमते ।
सम्प्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले नहि नहि रक्षति दुष्टदुष्करणे ॥

24

अपि च सम्यग्ज्ञानाद् मोक्ष इति सवेपां मोक्षवादिनां
अभ्युपगमः ।

Brahmasūtra 2. 1. 2.

25

निरागमाः पुरुषोत्प्रेक्षामात्रनिबन्धनाः तर्का अप्रति-
ष्ठिता भवन्ति, उत्प्रेक्षाया निरङ्कुशत्वात् । तर्था हि
कैश्चित् अभियुक्तैः यत्नेनोत्प्रेक्षिताः तर्काः अभियुक्तैरन्यै-
राभास्यमाना दृश्यन्ते । तैरप्युत्प्रेक्षिताः सन्तः ततोऽन्यैराभा-
स्यन्त इति न प्रतिष्ठितत्वं तर्काणां शक्यम् आश्रयिषुं,
पुरुषमतिवैरूप्यात् नहीदम् अतिगम्भीरं भाव-
याथार्थ्यं मुक्तिनिबन्धनं आगममन्तरेणोत्प्रेक्षितुमपि शक्यम् ।
वेदस्य तु नित्यत्वे विज्ञानोत्पत्तिहेतुत्वे च सति व्यव-

स्थितार्थविषयनोपपत्तेः । तज्जनितस्य च ज्ञानस्य सम्यक्त्वं
अतीतानागतवर्तमानैः सर्वैरपि तार्किकैरपह्नोतुं शक्यम् ।
अतः सिद्धं अस्यैवैष निषदस्य ज्ञानस्य सम्यग्ज्ञानत्वम् ।

Brahmasūtrabhāṣya 2. i. ii.

26

एतदेव मे स्वस्त्ययनं यन्माम् एकयोगिनं अनेकयोगि-
प्रतिपक्षमात्थ । अतो जेष्यामि सर्वान्, आरभे च चिन्ताम् ।

27

अलब्धातिशयं यस्माद् व्यवृत्तास्तमत्रादयः ।
गरीयसे नमस्तस्मा अविद्याग्रन्थिभेदिने ॥

Naiṣkarmya siddhi. 1. 2.

गुरुक्तो वेदराद्धान्तस्तत्र नो वच्म्यशक्तिः ।
सहस्रकिरणव्यासे खद्योतः किं प्रकाशयेत् ॥

Do. 1. 5.

श्रीमच्छङ्करपादपद्मयुगलं संसेव्य लब्ध्वोचिवान् ।
ज्ञानं पारमहंस्यप्रेतदमलं स्वन्तान्त्रकारपनुत् ॥

Do. 4. 7-4.

विष्णोः पादानुगां यां निखिलभवनुदां
शङ्करोऽद्यपि योगात्

सर्वज्ञं ब्रह्मसंस्थं मुनिगणसहितं
सम्यग्भ्यर्च्य भक्त्या ।

विद्यां गङ्गाभिवाहं प्रवरगुणनिधेः
प्राप्य वेदान्तदीप्ताम् ॥

Do. 4. 76.

वेदान्तोदरवर्ति भास्वदमलं ध्वान्तच्छिदस्सद्विद्यो
दिव्यं ज्ञानमतीन्द्रियेऽपि विषये व्याहन्यते न क्वचित् ।
यो नो न्यः प्रशलाकयैव निखिलं संसारबीजं तमः
प्रोसार्याविरकार्पीद् गुरुगुरुः पूज्याय तस्मै नमः ॥

Do. 4. 77.

“वक्ष्ये गुर्वनुशिक्षया”

Do. 1. 3.

28

यां काण्वोपनिषच्छरेण सकलाम्नायार्थसंशोभिनीं
संचक्रुर्गुरवोऽनुवृत्तगुरवो वृत्तं सतां शान्तये ॥
यत् प्रज्ञोदधियुक्तिशब्दनखजश्रद्धैकसंनेत्रक-
स्थैर्यस्तम्भमुमुक्षुदुःखितकृपायत्नोत्थबोधोर्मितम् ।

पीत्वा जन्ममृतिप्रवाहविधुरा मोक्षं ययुर्मोक्षिण-
स्तं वन्देऽत्रिकुलप्रसूतममलं बोधाभिधं मद्गुरुम् ॥

Do. 23.

यामस्मद्गुरुरेवं वेदशिरसामैकात्म्यतात्पर्यतो
 वृत्तिं सज्जनशङ्करीं सुविमलां नान्ननयोद्बोधिताम् ।
 चक्रे काण्वसमाश्रितोपनिषदो दुस्तर्कदोषापहं
 श्रद्धामात्रवलेन वार्तिकमिदं तस्याः समासात्कृतम् ॥
 Do. 24.

यस्येदं सकलमलेन्दुकिरणप्रख्यैर्यशोरश्मिभि-
 र्याप्तं यच्च कृपालुतापरवशाच्चक्रे हितं दुःखिनाम् ।
 यद्वाणीकुलिशावरुणमस्यः पेतुर्दिशस्तार्किका
 भक्त्या पूज्यतमं प्रणम्य तमहं सद्भाष्यनीतौ यते ॥
 Taittiriyaopaniṣadbhāṣyavārtika
 मुमुक्षुसार्थवाहस्य भवनामभृतो यतेः ।
 शिष्यश्चकार तद्भक्त्या सुरेशाख्यो महार्थवित् ॥
 Do. 91. भृगुवल्ली.

29

“कुपुत्रो जायेत कचिदपि कुमाता न भवति”

30

योऽसौ नारायणः परमात्मा सर्वात्मा स आत्मनात्मानम्
 अनेकधा व्यूह्यावस्थित इति तन्न निराक्रियते ।
 यदपि तस्य भगवतोऽभिगमनादिलक्षणम् आराधनम् अजस्रं
 अनन्यचित्ततया अभिप्रेयते, तदपि न प्रतिषिध्यते

श्रुतिस्मृत्यौरीश्वरप्रेणिधानस्य प्रसिद्धत्वात् । यत् पुनरिद-
मुच्यते वासुदेवात् सङ्कर्षण उत्पद्यते, अत्र ब्रूमः, न
वासुदेवसंज्ञकात् परमात्मनः संकर्षणसंज्ञकस्य जीवस्यो-
त्पत्तिः सम्भवति, अनित्यत्वादिदोषप्रसङ्गात् ।

Brahmasūtrabhāṣya 2. 2. 42.

31

येषां धीसूर्यदीप्या प्रतिहृतिमगमन् नाशामेकान्ततो मे
ध्वान्तं स्वान्तस्य हेतुर्जननमरणसन्तानदोलाधिरूढे ।
येषां पादौ प्रपन्नाः श्रुतिशमन्निनयैर्भूषिताः शिष्यसङ्घाः
सद्यो मुक्तौ स्थितास्तान् यतिपरमहितान् यावदायुर्नमामि ॥
गुरुं पुङ्गव पुङ्गवकेतन ते समतामयतां नहि कोऽपि सुधीः ।
शरणागतवत्सल तत्त्वनिधे भव शङ्कर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥
जगतीमवितुं कलिताकृतयो विचरन्ति महामहसश्छलतः ।
अहिमांशुरिवात्र विभासि पुरो भव शङ्कर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥

32

तत्र दास्यमहं भृशमामरणात् प्रतिपद्य शरीरधृतिं भगवन् ।
करवाणि मया शक्नीयमिदं तव कर्तुमतोऽन्यदशक्यमिति ॥

33

आशैलादुदयात् तथस्तगिरितो भास्वद्यशोरश्मिभि-
र्व्याप्तं विश्वमनन्धकारमभवद् यस्य स्म शिष्यैरिदम् ।

आत्मज्ञानगमस्तिभिः प्रतिहतश्चन्द्रायते भास्कर-
 स्ससौ शङ्करमानवे तनुमनोवाग्भिर्नमः स्तुतु सदा ॥
 Brhadāranyakopaniṣad bhāṣya vārtika 6. 3. 25.

34

आचार्यकृतिनिवेशनमज्यवधूतं वचोऽस्मदादीनां रथ्योदक-
 मित्र गङ्गाप्रवाहपातः पवित्रयति ।

35

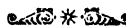
शिष्याचार्यप्रश्नप्रतिवचनरूपेण कथनं तु सूक्ष्मवस्तुविषय-
 त्वात् सुखप्रतिपत्तिकरणं भवति । केवलतर्कगम्यत्वञ्च
 दर्शितं भवति ।

36

तत्रैवं भूने विषये श्रोतृणां सुखप्रबोधार्थं व्याचक्षाणाः
 प्रतिवादिनं तत्रस्थमिव समुत्थाप्य तेनाक्षिसमनेन पृष्टमिति मत्वा
 प्रत्युक्तम्, पुनरसौ स्वभिप्रायं विवृणोतीति आक्षेपमवतार्य प्रति-
 विधानं प्रतिपद्यते । सर्वत्रैवंविधे ग्रन्थसन्निवेशे एष एव व्याख्या-
 प्रकारः ।

37

तस्मादग्रणीः शिष्टाचारपरिपालने भगवान् भाष्यकारः ।



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ERRATA

PAGE	LINE	MISTAKES AND CORRECTIONS
2	15	'to' should be omitted after 'back'
14	5	'effect' should be 'effort'
30	heading	Naishkarmasiddhi should be Naishkarmyasiddhi
35	last	'topical' should be typical
38	footnote line 8.	after "words—"there should be xxx
39	22	'some' should be 'the same'
55	10	after 'consideration' add 'that'
57	17	after 'this' delete '—'
80	11	delete 'on' after 'realisation'
80	13	for 'The' read 'That the'
101	18	for 'be presencet' read 'the presence'
102	7	after 'establish' add 'its'
104	2	'period' should be 'periods'
121	24	'mananda' should be 'manana'
125	12	after 'Dharana' add 'Dhyana'
137	10 & 13	'Ragas' should be 'Rajus'

