

MARTHA DOHERTY ON SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI SWAMIJI A COMMENDATION AND NOT A CONDEMNATION

A Review of Martha Doherty's paper published in The Journal of Indian Philosophy (2005)

“Whatever teaching is presented to one (by the preceptor), he sees that as his very self. That teaching, becoming his self, binds him from all sides and the obsession that that is the only truth, merges into him (GK 2.29)” - says Gaudapāda in his *kārikās* on the *Māṇḍukyopaniṣad*. What a pronouncement on the human psyche, even true to this date. It requires a metal of steel to swim against the current. Where the whole clan is obsessed with a particular idea and that too for centuries, it calls for great amount of grit to see the Truth or even to side with it. Personal bias, natural human tendency to side with the majority, want of a discerning mind, lack of in-depth knowledge resulting in getting carried away by others' opinion and other external factors etc are the barriers to determination of Truth.

Martha Doherty's paper “A Contemporary Debate Among Advaita Vedantins on the Nature of Avidyā”, published in the Journal of Indian Philosophy (2005) is taken up for a brief review. May be the same has been already commented upon by others; some may agree with these observations, while many may disagree; some may applaud, while many may condemn; some may react soberly, while others sharply; may be none reacts; what more may be no one even bothers to read this in full. But still, the review is presented to the readers just to bring to light that Martha Doherty's (hence forth referred to as M) endeavour to condemn Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji (herein after referred to as Swamiji) has in fact resulted in unexpected commendation. Attempt of M to portray Swamiji in poor light by all means, overt and covert, has ended up in presenting Swamiji in a way better than any one would have desired. Those who are unable to control the curiosity and those who have lesser patience to go through the sequence of this review may straight away read Para 70 of the review to know how the condemnation has transformed into commendation. Para 53 also may be referred to for the views of the custodians of the Advaitic tradition with regard to Swamiji. Others who are in no hurry to jump to the concluding part may follow the sequence of the review.

1. Śaṅkara's view on *avidyā* and the controversy arising on account of criticisms by Swamiji of the interpretation of *avidyā* by the sub-commentators on Śaṅkara (excluding Sureśwara) herein after referred to as traditionalists/advaitins forms the focus of the paper presented by M.
2. Admittedly, “*Mūlāvidyānirāsā*” (herein after referred to as MVN) authored by Swamiji, is the primary source used in this work for his thoughts on the nature of *avidyā* – Note 8 on page 212. Everyone concerned with this matter will agree that in order to properly understand this polemic MVN
 - a. one should be thorough with *prasthānatrayabhāṣyam* of Śaṅkara and Sureśwara's *vārtikam* & *naiṣkarmyasiddhiḥ*, which form the basis for Swamiji's views and which are profusely quoted by him in his works to substantiate his stand;
 - b. one should be thorough with all the major works by Vedantins – *Pañcapādikā*, *Bhāmatī*, *Pañcapādikāvivaraṇam*, *Brahmasiddhiḥ*, *Iṣṭasiddhiḥ*, *Advaitasiddhiḥ*, *Siddhāntaleśasangrahaḥ* etc. which have been dealt with in detail by Swamiji in MVN;
 - c. one should be thorough with *bhāṣya* of dualistic vedantins like *Śrībhāṣya* of Rāmānuja etc which is also dealt with by Swamiji in this work;
 - d. thorough study of all these mentioned above, presupposes a sound knowledge of Sanskrit, the language in which the works are written in. This prerequisite is required so as to avoid being misled by errors in translation unconscious or otherwise;

- e. last and the most important, one should possess a sharp discernable mind devoid of prejudice and influence by factors external to the works directly concerned. An inward look is also essential so as to verify certain statements with one's own experience, wherever such verification is called for.
3. The work under review consists of 30 pages proper [page 209 to page 238 of "The Journal of Indian Philosophy (2005)" leaving out the particulars of references]. Of these over 11 pages is devoted to historical/sociological considerations, which in the strict sense, does not form part of the scope of the topic admittedly, being to decide upon the fidelity of the traditionalists to Śaṅkara, and not whether Swamiji conforms to tradition or not etc. Leaving out 4 pages of introduction and over 2 pages devoted to Swamiji's understanding of *mithyātva* which is again in the strict sense extraneous to the admitted scope, the matter proper spans into about 12 pages.
4. MVN, admitted to be the prime source of Swamiji's views, spans into 238 pages. Here Swamiji proceeds in a systematic way restricting himself to the subject of *mūlāvidyā* in its various aspects as projected by the traditionalists. It does not enter into other matters of divergence between Śaṅkara and the traditionalists. The work is divided into four main cantos - the first details out the rival propositions and lays down the standards of judgment to be followed in ascertainment of validity or otherwise of the conclusion arrived at; the second (divided into 8 heads) deals with the in-depth examination of the opinions of the traditionalists starting with "The non-ascertainment of *paramārthasattā* (absolute truth)" which is essential for the ascertainment of the non-absolute nature of the states of awakening etc and proceeds to show the unprovability & untenability of *mūlāvidyā* on various grounds and under all circumstances put forward by traditionalists to maintain its tenability; the third canto presents the Swamiji's views on the matter starting with "capability of ascertainment of the absolute truth" on the basis of which the unreality of the states of awakening etc can be successfully ascertained. This canto is divided into 14 heads wherein the rival views are discussed in detail under the topics of "nature of *avidyā* (*svarūpam*)", "the object of *avidyā* (*viśayah*)", "the locus of *avidyā* (*āśrayah*)", "effects of *avidyā* (*kāryam*)", "cause of *avidyā* (*nimittam*)", "destruction of *avidyā* (*nivṛtṭih*)" are discussed; the fourth canto deals with fidelity of the opposing views to *Śruti*, *bhāṣyam* etc.

Thus this polemic calls for a deep study and application of reasoning based on universal human experience in addition to reference to and conformation from the texts of *Śruti*, *bhāṣya* etc. In order to prove Swamiji wrong the reasoning put forward have to be equally deep and strong.

5. First and foremost M's references of MVN is taken up for review. Let us now see how many of and to what extent, the grounds of Swamiji to substantiate the unprovability, untenability and unnecessary of *mūlāvidyā* are successfully refuted by M. In the whole of the paper, 16 paragraphs of MVN (two of them twice) are referred to from that extensive work. Let us consider each of the paragraphs quoted, in the order in which it is quoted.

Page 216 – Note 17; here four Paras of MVN are quoted – 65, 66, 67 & 174 to substantiate the statement "He (Swamiji) reasoned that since there is nothing outside of these states, when they are analyzed, the truth is understood".

This is not Swamiji's original idea but it is an echo of an express statement of Śaṅkara that "These very states are 'the knowable' in as much as there is nothing to be known beyond them" (GKBh 4.88). Thus Swamiji's views about the three states in Para 65 "hereinafter is demonstrated the method adopted by *Śruti* (*śrauti prakriyā*) as endorsed by the adepts like Gauḍapāda, Bhagavatpāda (Śaṅkara) etc." stands vindicated. This fact is mentioned by way of a note on page 86 of MVN. Further, while commenting on *Māṇḍūkya kārikā* 4.87, Śaṅkara introduces the method of analysis of the three states as "*atha idanīm svaprakriyā pradārśanārtha ārambhah*" – Now then is the commencement of demonstration of his own (Gauḍapāda's) method. Thus the analysis of the three states as a competent means to arrive at the knowledge of Reality is

the Vedic method taught by Gaudapāda and Śaṅkara, which Swamiji refers to in MVN and it is not his own as is presented by M.

Adequacy of this method is dealt with by raising various objections and effectively meeting them in Paras 66 & 67. Of these not a single point has been pointed out by M as being unreasonable or erroneous. Para 174 shows how the examination of the three states is given prime importance by different *Upaniṣads* in arriving at the knowledge of the reality. This again is not refuted by M.

6. The reference to Para 2 of MVN is probably to indicate inconsistency of Swamiji in the matter of determination of “True method of Vedanta”. This is on account of not appreciating the scope the two works MVN & “*Vedānta Prakriyā Pratyabhijñā*” (herein after referred to as VPP). The later work has a larger scope of determining the overall system of Vedanta – *adhyāropa* and *apavāda* (deliberate superimposition & recession) which when recognized transforms the all-seeming chaos into cosmos with regard to the sacred text. Where as, MVN aims at pointing out the mode “inquiry of three states”, which is most competent amongst various modes advocated by the *Upaniṣads* in the Intuition of Reality. In other words the scope of MVN is comparatively limited in nature restricted to selection of one of the many modes as primary in contrast to the larger scope involved in determining that one system, which operates in all the different modes and the overall method of teaching of Vedanta. A careful study of Para 174 of MVN and the introduction to VPP (Both English & Sanskrit, will make this clear to the reader). The determination of *adhyāropa apavāda prakriyā* as the all encompassing method is again not the brainchild of Swamiji. It is an echo of Śaṅkara’s quote “*ādhyaropāpavadābhyam niṣprapañcam prapañcyate*” (GitaBh 13.13) – that (Reality) which is devoid of all details, is set forth in detail, through deliberate superimposition and recession and Gaudapāda’s *kārikā* “*sa eṣa neti netīti vyakhyātam nihute yataḥ*” (3.26) – since that which is said is rescinded by the *Śruti* as “*sa eṣa neti netīti*”. Examination of the three states as the primary mode amongst the various modes again is the opinion of Gaudapāda & Śaṅkara – GK (4.87, 88).

Moreover, M has erred in stating that Swamiji’s search had resolved in *adhyāropa apavāda* in 1964. Swamiji refers to this method in the introduction to “*Sugamā*”, his very next Sanskrit work (an original commentary on the *Adhyāsa Bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara) conceived and written many years prior to 1955, the year of its publication. Thus M’s statement “In his early works...” is also contradictory to facts, since “*Sugamā*” is the work which immediately followed MVN. Thus the covert(?) suggestion of M, if any, a change in the stance of Swamiji with regard to the determination of the method of Vedanta is unfounded. However be it, M has not refuted Swamiji’s views in either case – analysis of three states as the primary mode (declared to be *svaprakriyā* in *bhāṣya* on GK 4.87 & as all exhaustive in *bhāṣya* on GK 4.88) or the *adhyāropa apavāda* as the principal system of teaching (declared to be the method adopted by the adepts in *bhāṣya* on Gita (13.13)).

7. Page 219 Note 27 refers to Paras 53 & 129 of MVN in support of the statement “the most serious is that the concept of a *mūlāvidyā* makes it impossible to prove non-duality, for if *mūlāvidyā* is postulated as the cause of the world, this undermines Brahman’s status as the only cause. If there is a cause other than Brahman there is duality”.

Para 53 of MVN deals with the proposition “*bhāvājñāne jñānāpanodatvam sutarām na sambhavati*” – Destruction by knowledge is all the more impossible in case of ignorance being a positive substance. Swamiji proceeds to show the untenability of *mūlāvidyā* on the ground of its non-destructibility by knowledge by advancing various propositions resulting there by, in harm to the doctrine of non-duality. Thus, Para 53 does not at all deal with the ground of ‘*mūlāvidyā* as the cause of the world other than Brahman’ as presented by M.

Para 129 deals with the negation of the traditionalists’ theory that *mūlāvidyā* is the cause for the birth of illusory objects and thereby on the same analogy negates the proposition that *mūlāvidyā* is the cause of the world. This Para runs into three full pages of discussion on the above subject considering various

propositions advanced by authors of different works. The Para ends with a passing remark that *mūlāvidyā* being proposed as the cause of the world will go against the Vedic proposition of Brahman as the cause.

Thus both the Paras quoted by M in the support of her statement primarily deal with matters different from that for which the same are quoted. The Sanskrit equivalent of the sentences of M in respect of which these two Paras are cited, are not to be found in the Paras so cited. Moreover, M has not controverted any of the many reasoning advanced or conclusions arrived at by the Swamiji under these Paras.

8. Page 219 – Note 28 – Para 27 of MVN.

This Para is quoted in support of M's statement, "If *avidyā* is present in all the three states, it is real, as real as Brahman, and therefore a second reality."

Para 27 deals with the subject – "On the ground of the waking person's recollection in the form of 'I was ignorant', *mūlāvidyā* cannot be inferred."

In the course of the reasoning Swamiji negates the proposition of the traditionalists that 'that the positivity of *mūlāvidyā* is only to distinguish it from an absolute void like a hare's horn, and not a positivity in the real sense and therefore it can be destroyed by knowledge', on the ground that – even that differentiating positive *avidyā* being present in all the three states, and traces of which is present even in *jīvanmuktas* (those to whom knowledge has dawned) cannot be said to be eliminated by knowledge.

However, M totally omits the part of the reasoning given by Swamiji – "Traces of *mūlāvidyā* being present even in *jīvanmuktas*" in presenting Swamiji's views. This part of the reasoning also forms the basis for the conclusion that the removal of *mūlāvidyā* by knowledge is untenable. This amounts to partial and incorrect representation of Swamiji's views.

Here also no reasoning or conclusions of Swamiji is controverted by M and the primary subject matter of the Para is quite different from that to authenticate which it is quoted. Moreover, the Sanskrit equivalent to the sentence of M in respect of which this Para is cited is not to be found in that Para.

9. Page 224, Note 42, Paras 41 & 42 of MVN.

M's states that – " Swamiji's understanding of *mithyā* and of *avidyā*, as purely superimposition, is subjective idealism (*dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi*) which he acknowledges and defends;" M substantiates this statement by quoting the above to Paras from MVN.

This statement and the Paras quoted in support lays bare the depth of understanding not only of the line of reasoning advanced in these Paras in MVN, but also about that of *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi vāda*. Paras 41 & 42 fall under the major head "*jīvabrahmavibhāgasidhyartham na mūlāvidyā svīkāryā*" (*mūlāvidyā* need not be accepted to establish the distinction between *jīva* and Brahman). The heading itself of Para 41 which reads as - *suśuptāvapi jīvabrahmavibhāgaḥ svīkaraṇīyaḥ iti pakṣaḥ* (The view of necessity of acceptance of distinction between *jīva* and Brahman even in sleep) makes it clear that what is presented here is the *pūrvapakṣa* (opponent's view) which is to be refuted subsequently Para 42.

Para 41 outlines the views of traditionalists who in the present context argue for the necessity of *mūlāvidyā* in sleep

- a. in the case of *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi vāda*,
- b. so as not to be in contradiction to the *Brahmasūtra bhāṣya* where the continuity of the world is established in the context of refutation of the Buddhists.

Para 42 titled, "*jīvabrahmavibhāgo na avidyā tantraḥ*" (The distinction of *jīva* and Brahman is not on account of *mūlāvidyā*) proceeds in a systematic manner to negate the propositions of *pūrvapakṣa* made in Para 41. Thus the statement that Swamiji acknowledges and defends is totally incorrect, since Swamiji in Para 41 treats this *vāda* as a *pūrvapakṣa* (opponent view) which is refuted by him in Para 42 onwards.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the traditionalists considers the school of *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi vāda* not only as a member of its own clan, but also places it in a high pedestal as meant for top grade aspirants – "Those qualified aspirants who on account of performance of various *upāsanas* and *karma* have come to

possess incomparable greatness through God's favour may those whose minds are extremely pure, who do not find any distinction between the waking and dream states, aiming at such aspirants of knowledge of Brahman the *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi vāda* is advanced which is in accordance with the *Śruti* that teaches the creation and dissolution of the entire world in the waking and dream states, and this school has been advocated by the earlier *Ācāryas*". (Page 476 of *Jīvānanda-vyakhyā to Siddhāntaleśasangrahaḥ* of Sri Appaya Dikshita – reprint edition, 1990 published by Chowkhamba Vidya Bhavan, Varanasi.)

Sri Madhusudana Saraswati in his *advaitasiddhiḥ* defends the *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi vāda*, by devoting a whole chapter titled "*atha dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭyupapattiḥ*" (Now then the propriety of *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi*) where in he demonstrates the validity of this school on the authority of *śāstras*. The statement of M that "Since this (*dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi*) is a view which is refuted by Śaṅkara (page 224)" is also not correct. The charge of *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi* being opposed to Śaṅkara is met by Madhusudana Saraswati himself in the chapter referred to above. Moreover, *bhāṣya* on 2.2.28 is with regard to refutation of the views of *vijñānavādin* (a sub-school of Buddhists).

However this may be within the tradition, Swamiji cannot be said to fall under this group of *dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi vāda* because of the very basic fact that the *dr̥ṣṭi - sr̥ṣṭi* school is not antithetical to *mūlāvidyā* and considers the six beginningless entities (*mūlāvidyā* & distinction of *Jīva* and Brahman being two of them) as falling outside the ambit of *sr̥ṣṭi* and accepts the permanence of the world in the form of its cause.

10. Page 225 – Note 47 – Paras 27, 53 & 44 of MVN. M states "Swamiji concludes that if *avidyā* were to exist in all three states of experience, it would be real and could not be removed by knowledge. In support of this she quotes Paras 27 & 53 (which were quoted earlier also). The main subject of the discussion in Para 27 of MVN is that the recollection of awakened person, 'that I was ignorant' cannot lead to inferring of *mūlāvidyā* in sleep. In the course of the discussion, the view of the traditionalists that the differentiating positivity of *mūlāvidyā* (*bhāvavilakṣaṇa*) is also refuted on the ground that even this *mūlāvidyā* of the nature of different kind of positivity being present in all the three states and the traces of it being in the *jīvanmukta* also, its extinction by knowledge becomes unprovable resulting in the unprovability of *mūlāvidyā*'s unreality.

According to Swamiji, a positive *avidyā* cannot be removed by knowledge not only because of its being present in all the three states of experience but also because traces of it is held, by the traditionalists, to be present even in *Jīvanmuktas* even after the dawn of knowledge.

The impossibility of removal of positive *avidyā* by knowledge is dealt in Para 53.

Para 44 deals with the impossibility of 'the unreality of the beginningless distinction between *Jīva* and Brahman', if that distinction is said to exist in sleep. Other reasoning are also extended to show that positive *avidyā* is not required to be accepted as existing in sleep for establishing the distinction between *Jīva* and Brahman. Swamiji points out that the union of Atman and *avidyā* (*avidyācitoryogaḥ*) which is beginningless according to traditionalists, cannot be rightly said to be unreal (*mithyā*) because the tradition holds that this *avidyā* leaves out none till death being present in both the bonded and the liberated.

M has not refuted any of the reasoning made in these three Paras. Thus the Paras cited do not strictly conform to the statements in support of which they are so cited. Moreover M has left out a very important reasoning while presenting Swamiji's views. M makes no mention of the traditionalists' stand that traces of *avidyā* persist even after the dawn of knowledge, which is the basis for Swamiji's conclusion of its indestructibility by knowledge.

11. Page 225, note 49; Para 40 of MVN.

This Para has been correctly referred to by M. The conclusions of M with regard to this subject are taken up for examination later, while dealing with the subject of *mithyātva*.

12. Page 225, note 50; Para 125 & 126 of MVN.

These 2 Paras are sighted in support of Swamiji's statements – "Something that is *mithyā* cannot have a material cause, it is because it is *mithyā* that its appearance is tenable". However, this sentence is found in Para 128 of MVN.

13. Page 225, note 51; Para 128 of MVN.

This Para is quoted in support of M's statement about Swamiji's view that "The second is that it is not tenable that something that has cause-effect relationship is *mithyā*. If it does, it cannot be *mithyā*."

It is probably a printing error that Note 51 is appended to this sentence instead of being appended to the previous sentence – "Indeed, what is called falseness (*mithyātva*) of a thing is that it appears without existing." The later part of the citation of the original text under Note 51 corresponds to this previous sentence only.

14. Page 227, Notes 57 & 58 Para 76 of MVN.

This Para is quoted to substantiate, the charge made by M that "Swamiji makes frequent of shifting from a *vyāvahārika* to a *pāramārthika* stand point and that he is often intractable on this, creating otherwise resolvable conflict." In order to appreciate the appropriateness of this charge, it is necessary to be conversant with the whole of the context. The Para is titled – "Cognition of the world is on account of *avidyā* only". A free translation of the entire Para is given herein.

Opponent: If the world be totally non-existent in sleep how is it perceived on waking? If it be said that "It is not the same world that is perceived on every waking", then also it requires to be explained by whom and how the new that day's world, an imitation of the previous day's world is created. Isn't it improper to say that the world on its own comes into being accidentally?

Swamiji: By whom and how is the nacre-silver (nacre which is cognized as silver) similar to actual silver seen earlier, created? If you opine that there is no silver at all in reality and it is misconceived due to the erring mind possessed of an inherent nature to make one grasp unreal objects, then, be convinced that it is the same case even in respect of the world. If on the other hand, one on the strength of the neo-vedantins, says that there is the "ignorance" which is the material cause and from that the silver is created there, then such a person becomes a laughing stock at the hands of those guided by experience and he has to be corrected by referring to the reasoning put forward in earlier Paras and also in the forthcoming refutation of creation of nacre-silver.

Opponent: How is it that the world which cannot be experienced in sleep and its existence can in no way be imagined, all of a sudden, comes into being on awakening? In the illustration of nacre-silver, the false appearance is attributed to an eye defect and thus there is difference between nacre-silver and the world. While negating even *mūlāvidyā* in sleep you do not admit of any defect in sleep from which can issue forth the world in waking.

Swamiji: This is not correct, since it is seen that the world in spite of being unreal as viewed by the liberated is being experienced by the one who is bonded (this is an illustration given to gradually arrive at the answer that the world is perceived on account of misapprehension).

Opponent: But in that case also there is a difference. The liberated has no ignorance, whereas in the other it is there. Further, the liberated and the bonded are different persons. Experience of the world and its absence each being in respect of different persons, there is no contradiction. Here on the other hand, both the absence and the experience of the world, being in respect of the same person, is it not a contradiction?

Swamiji: Here also there is no difference. Here too, *avidyā* is not accepted in sleep, but accepted in waking. Thus the perception of the world and its absence being with regard to different states there is no mutual opposition.

Opponent: But then it is the same person to whom the different states pertain to.

Swamiji: True. Still there is a similarity to the illustration, where in it is to the same person that, there is appearance of the world during the state of bondage and otherwise during the liberated state.

Opponent: That is okay. But still, the liberated does not perceive the world on account of his knowledge dawned on the basis of Vedanta the valid means of knowledge, whereas the bonded experiences the world conceived by ignorance and to that extent that illustration is appropriate. But here it amounts to the very same person being bonded as well as liberated. **The proposition that being liberated in sleep, one becomes bonded on waking sounds absurd.** Therefore there is a vast difference compared when compared with the illustration.

Swamiji: Now listen with concentrated mind. **It is not our stand that, being liberated in sleep, one becomes bonded on waking.** How then? Just as, though being ever liberated, due to non-discrimination of the real nature of the self, one conceives bondage unto the self. Similarly while the world is ever absent, on account of misapprehension there is the non-perception of the world in sleep and the reality of it on waking. Thus there is no defect.

Thus ends the free translation. In support of the last sentence Swamiji quotes from *Śaṅkara-bhāṣya* on *Chāndogyopaniṣhad* (8.6.3) – “It was already said that the fall of Atman from its true nature in the form of entering the states of waking and dream and perception of external objects is on account of the seed that is *avidyā*, *kāma* and *karma*, being not burnt up by the fire of *Brahmavidyā* (knowledge of Brahman)” Here it is very clear that the perception of the world in waking and the absence of its perception in sleep is due to nothing but misapprehension. This sufficiently answers the question and also rules out the necessity of any *mūlāvidyā* to exist in sleep for the world to be perceived on waking. Moreover the statement of Śaṅkara quoted by Swamiji vindicates him totally.

Tracing of perception of the world in waking to misapprehension will not amount to a shift in the stand points from *vyāvahāra* to *pāramārtha*, since the concept of misapprehension squarely falls within the sphere of *vyāvahāra* only. From the *pāramārthika* point there is no misapprehension also. Thus the charge that Swamiji resorts to the shift of stand points is totally baseless. It is surprising that M has not made any reference to the quote from *Śaṅkara-bhāṣya* cited by Swamiji to substantiate his answer. Moreover, M also says that “Swamiji dismisses the objection by an appeal to experience”. There is no comment made on this also. The universal experience does not show the existence of any *mūlāvidyā* in sleep.

15. The outcome of the examination of the instances from MVN to the extent quoted by M is summarized below.

- a. Statements are made by M for which no Sanskrit equivalent is found in the Paras cited by M.
- b. The subject matter of the Paras cited do not primarily relate to the statements in support of which they are so cited.
- c. Statements from the original are quoted only in part, resulting in incomplete presentation of Swamiji’s reasoning.
- d. Opponent’s view taken up for refutation is wrongly reported by M as the view of Swamiji.
- e. Except with regard to two instances of citation from MVN, M has not dealt with the correctness or otherwise of the grounds put forward by Swamiji in the course of proving the untenability of *mūlāvidyā*.
- f. Even in those two instances one is an erroneous understanding in as much as the opponent’s view is considered as the view of Swamiji. The other instance where the M charged Swamiji with intractable change in stance, the same has been shown to be incorrect.
- g. Wherever an appeal to experience is admitted to be made by Swamiji, M is silent on the outcome of such examination. Moreover M has not denied the appropriateness of such an appeal to the experience.
- h. Thus MVN though admitted to be the primary source of Swamiji’s views is not dealt with by M in depth and details that it calls for even with regard to the Paras expressly cited by her, leave alone those which are not even cited.

16. Having dealt with the instances cited by M from MVN the topic of fidelity of the Post-Śaṅkara commentators to Śaṅkara in the matter of nature of *avidyā* is taken up for review. The discussion on the subject proper commences from page 213 of M's article where the "Post-Śaṅkara advaita commentators' interpretation of *avidyā*" is presented as understood by M. No comment is made with regard to this portion except that many facets of *avidyā* (like locus, number, unexplainability, traces, effect etc) have been left out by M without which a complete picture of the traditionalists' *avidyā* may not be had. The readers are requested to refer the originals authored by various traditionalists who have contributed in their own ways to the idea of the original *avidyā*.
17. Two Notes are appended by M to this portion which is dealt with in short. In note 11 Maṇḍana Miśra is said to be the first commentator in the advaita tradition to clearly define the distinction of a **concealing causal *avidyā*** and its projected effect also called *avidyā*. But the point is whether Maṇḍana's *avidyā* in its various aspects is the same as *mūlāvidyā* and its aspects. Does his distinction of the two *avidyās* correspond to the **concealing causal *avidyā*** and its projected effect or is it the mere lack of knowledge and misapprehension. A reference to Note 22 on page 218 where citation from Maṇḍana's work is given makes it clear that he speaks of **two *avidyās*** - *agrahaṇa* (non-apprehension) and *viparyayagrahaṇa* (misapprehension) which are placed in cause and effect relationship. Therefore Maṇḍana's **two *avidyā*** cannot be equated with the **one *avidyā*** (*mūlāvidyā*) possessed of two powers – concealing and projecting. Maṇḍana does not speak of a **concealing *avidyā***.
 Moreover Gauḍapāda much earlier to Maṇḍana has used the dialect of *kāraṇa* & *kārya* for non-apprehension and misapprehension respectively.
18. Note 13, refers to a passage from Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* (BSBh) (1.4.3) which according to M supports the traditional view that "in addition to *māyā* the words *avyākṛta*, *avyakta*, *prakṛuti*, *ākāśa* and *akṣara* are also synonyms of *avidyā*". It may be noted that even Swamiji draws support from this very passage to establish the distinction between *māyā* etc and *avidyā*. This will be dealt with later along with Note 32, both the notes being on the same matter.
19. Let us now examine the M's presentation of "Swami Satchidanandendra's view on *avidyā*". M says that "Swamiji bases this (his view that *avidyā* according to Śaṅkara is mutual *adhyāsa*) on a definition of *avidyā* given by Śaṅkara in his Introduction to the BSBh." M further says that "relying primarily on this definition and maintaining that it is the only definition of *avidyā* given by Śaṅkara, Swamiji proposes that superimposition (*adhyāsa*) is the only meaning of *avidyā* used by Śaṅkara." Comments on this follows :
- This statement of M itself is enough to vindicate Swamiji and prove his loyalty to Śaṅkara. Is there any other instance where Śaṅkara has **defined *avidyā*** so as to warrant the comment "Swamiji maintains that it is the only definition"? Neither M nor Sri Rāmā Shāstri whom M quotes has cited any single instance from the *Bhāṣyas* where *avidyā* is **defined** in any other way by Śaṅkara. Amongst the number of statements quoted by Sri Rāmā Shāstri (which will be dealt later) not even one amounts to a **direct definition**. *Bhāṣya* sentences purportedly equating *avidyā* and *māyā* are also quoted by him (which is also dealt later) but **there is not a single direct sentence (similar to the present one) defining *avidyā* or its facets as held by the traditionalists**.
 - Not only has Śaṅkara **defined *avidyā*** in this explicit way but he also **reiterates this definition of *avidyā*** to mean mutual *adhyāsa* in the same introduction – "All the talk of *pramānās* and their objects whether relating to the ordinary life or vedic action and all scriptures relating to injunctions and prohibition of actions or to mokṣa presuppose **this mutual *adhyāsa* or superimposition of the self and the non-self called *avidyā***, before they function.

- c. It is only reasonable to conclude that the definition of a technical term given at the start of a work is the intended meaning of the word wherever it is used subsequently by the author. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that *avidyā* as per Śaṅkara is, according to his definition, the mutual superimposition (mutual *adhyāsa*).
- d. A serious reader of Śaṅkara will come across many such instances in *prasthānatraya Bhāṣyas* where the nature of *avidyā* is dealt by Śaṅkara. Here the translated versions of such instances are intentionally not given so as to allow the reader to come to his own conclusion by reading the original passages himself. The reader may refer to *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad Bhāṣya* – 4.3.20, 4.3.34; *Kāṭhakopaniṣad Bhāṣya* 2.1.2, GitaBh 13.2, 13.21, 14.6 etc (Readers may however ensure that the translations are faithful to the original).
- e. The reader is also referred to *Upadeśasahasrī* the only independent work of Śaṅkara quoted by Sureśwara as his preceptor's work. In the second chapter of the prose section which is in the dialogue form contains the specific question by the student "What is *avidyā*?" and there is a **direct answer** by the teacher which is also reiterated subsequently in that work. (Translation is intentionally not given) In the poetry section also one may refer to ślokas 17.21, 17.46 etc.
- f. Thus one may see that in the contexts where Śaṅkara **defines** *avidyā*, he explicitly refers to mutual *adhyāsa* only as *avidyā*. It is but appropriate to take this **definitional** meaning to be the view of Śaṅkara and consider the fidelity or otherwise of the traditionalists with regard to the nature of *avidyā* by juxtaposing their meaning with that of Śaṅkara's.
- g. Further, one should ponder over the question, how far is it justified to be critical of the one who insists on sticking to Śaṅkara's definition as it is, word for word, and does not offer his own meaning to the different words in the definition as some of the commentators have done.
- h. As is well known BSBh has been commented upon by a number of persons, all of them claiming to represent the heart of Śaṅkara. In the context of commenting on this definition of *avidyā* not all the commentators are of a unanimous opinion. Certain commentators have explained the terms in the definition in their own ways instead of adopting the meaning as is used in common parlance. Certain others have stuck to the literal meaning. In this situation where commentators differ mutually, what should be done? Therefore Swamiji implores the serious reader to strictly follow the original and stick to the definition literally which will fully serve the purpose.
- i. Justification of resorting to a meaning different from that defined, on the grounds of exigency from time to time, amounts to nothing but undermining Śaṅkara's ability to present a system which stands the test of time and circumstances.

20. M states that "this *avidyā/adhyāsa*, Satchidanandendra maintains it is uncaused"; "he provisionally accepts that *adhyāsa* is due to lack of discrimination". But these again are Śaṅkara's own statements (which M admits later) and not promoted newly by Swamiji. It is no guess work that Śaṅkara does not demand a cause for *avidyā* for at the close of his introduction to BSBh he states that the mutual *adhyāsa* is beginningless. Moreover, since causal relationship is inconceivable without the presupposition of time and the concept of time itself being a product subsequent to the mutual *adhyāsa*, it is not possible to attribute a beginning to the mutual *adhyāsa*. That is, the mutual *adhyāsa*, desiderates no cause and thus it is not an effect of any other external cause.

In the introduction to BSBh itself Śaṅkara says that *adhyāsa* derives its breath from non-discrimination (*aviveka*), but it goes without saying that no temporal relation between the two is intended. The point driven in is, the moment the discriminative knowledge dawns mutual *adhyāsa* disappears.

21. M proceeds "In discussing this absence of knowledge or *viveka*, Śaṅkara, he (Swamiji) maintains, never uses the word *avidyā*, but rather a number of synonyms that imply want of knowledge".

Here “Śaṅkara never uses the word *avidyā*” attributed by M to Swamiji needs to be substantiated by M. Where has Swamiji maintained thus? In his work VPP there appears a discussion on this lack of discrimination on page 32 where it is said “*so'yam vivekābhāvaḥ ajñānam, āgrahanam, anavabodhaḥ, anavagamaḥ, apratibodhaḥ ityādiparyāyaśabdairapi jñānābhāvabodhakairvyapadiśyate bhāṣye*”- meaning, in the *bhāṣya* this lack of discrimination is referred to also by the synonyms indicative of absence of knowledge like *ajñānām* etc. No words indicating “Śaṅkara never uses the word *avidyā*” attributed to Swamiji is found in the Sanskrit original.

22. The next statement of M taken up for consideration is “Swami Satchidanandendra therefore considers *avidyā* purely in its manifest form as error which he also calls *mithyājñāna*” – page 216.

This again is not a figment of imagination of Swamiji. It is based on Śaṅkara’s own statements in his *bhāṣyas*. A long list of citations containing the word *mithyājñāna* or its synonym exclusively in the sense of misapprehension is given as an appendix to his works like Śaṅkara’s *Sūtrabhāṣya* (Self-explained), *Pañcapādikā Prasthānam* (A critical appreciation) etc which the reader may refer to.

23. M says “He does not accept a concealing power (*āvaraṇaśakti*) as its (*avidyā*’s) cause even in an epistemological sense.”

This again is in line with Śaṅkara, who nowhere states that *avidyā* (mutual *adhyāsa*) has for its cause a concealing power (*āvaraṇaśakti*).

24. M says “He (Swamiji) accepts *māyā, prakṛti, avyakta* as causal at the level of known experience (*vyavahāra*) but does not accept *avidyā*. It follows that he rejects the equating of *avidyā* with *māyā, prakṛti, avyakta*.”

This again is based on express statements by Śaṅkara. The seed form of the universe called *māyā, prakṛti, avyakta* etc is inferential in nature based upon the misapprehension of duality (BSBh 2-1-9). Evolution of the not-self – the body conglomerate etc which is the object of mutual superimposition is traced to this seed form called *māyā* etc. It is the mutual superimposition which is called *avidyā* while the inferred seed of all of phenomenal universe is called as *māyā*, literally meaning false-appearance on account of ignorance. Explicit statements to this effect are found in large numbers in *bhāṣyas* list of which is appended to works like Śaṅkara’s *Sūtrabhāṣya* (Self-explained), *Pañcapādikā Prasthānam* (A critical appreciation) etc, authored by Swamiji. Just one sentence is quoted here as an example – “Name and form which constitute the seed of the world of mundane life **conjured up by *avidyā*** as though they were identical in the omniscient lord, but which are indefinable as reality or other than that are called *māyā, śakti* (Potential energy) & *prakṛti* (primordial matter), in the *Śruti* and *Smṛtis* (BSBh 2-1-14).” Thus Śaṅkara himself differentiates *avidyā* and *māyā* by terming the later as conjured up by *avidyā* and as inferential in nature.

25. The next point taken up for consideration by M is *avidyā* in sleep where M states - “Central to Satchidanandendra’s position is that there is no *avidyā* in the state of sleep; only the reality, Brahman exist there. Consequently, the self is considered available in the state of sleep in its true form...”

This again is not a personal opinion of Swamiji but the direct dictum of the *Śruti* itself. Further Śaṅkara also states in unambiguous and explicit statements the absence of *avidyā* in sleep not just once but repeatedly. The citations are not given intentionally and the reader may refer the *Bhāṣya* on the third and the fourth *brāhmaṇa* of fourth chapter in *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad* which is popularly known as the *svayañjyotibrahmaṇam*. The Ajātaśatru – Gārgi conversation in the second chapter of the same *Upaniṣad* may also be referred to. In these places one finds that absence of *avidyā* in sleep is being repeatedly stressed in statement after statement. Even in the other *bhāṣyas* where the nature of the self during sleep is discussed, Śaṅkara on the authority of scriptures, expressly states the pure nature of the self during sleep and equates it to Brahman, Pure Consciousness.

In the *bhāṣya* there are statements to the effect that,

- a. By negating of fear in sleep, the *Śruti* in fact negates *avidyā*, the cause of fear in sleep.
- b. The self is devoid of all characteristics of *Samsāra* in sleep.
- c. In sleep due to the absence of *avidyā* which is the cause of duality, the self is *ātmakāma*.
- d. The *pranā* does not depart in respect of the desireless person, who intuits the self as the attributeless, non-dual, of the nature of unbroken light of consciousness **as is in the state of deep sleep**.

With regard to the express bhāṣya statements declaring the absence of *avidyā* in sleep, one cannot assign a secondary meaning to the word “*avidyā*” by stating that only projectional aspect of *avidyā* is meant to be absent in sleep but the concealing aspect is present in the sleep. Such an argument will be in contradiction to the use adjectives – devoid of all characteristics of *Samsāra*, of nature of Pure Consciousness alone, being the ever pure, ever knowing and ever liberated nature (*nitya-mukta-buddha-śuddha-svabhavatā*) etc in sleep.

Moreover Śaṅkara has not described *avidyā* as having two distinct powers.

With regard to sleep, the traditionalists postulate another point which is also in direct opposition to *Śruti* and Śaṅkara. The point is the reason for the ignorance in the form of “I knew nothing in sleep”. The traditionalists trace the ignorance to the presence of *mūlāvidyā* in its concealment aspect in sleep. But the *Śruti* and Śaṅkara declare “oneness” as the cause of such ignorance. During sleep everything becoming one with the Atman, the *jīva* being embraced by the true Self the Ultimate reality, becoming one devoid of any interval, being the all-self (*sarvātma*) knows nothing within or without. Oneness as the cause for non-apprehension in sleep is also expressly stated in *Chāndogyopanishad* and its *bhāṣya*. In the *Taittirīyopanishad bhāṣya* an opponent raises an objection – “Let the non-apprehension in sleep be on account of *avidyā*.” Śaṅkara negates this objection and answers that it is because being in its own true intrinsic nature, independent of any external factor. Since the topic of sleep deserves an independent research paper, nothing further is said.

Thus we find that, whatever has been said by M as ‘according to Satchidanandendra’s view’ “with regard to *avidyā*, *adhyāsa* negation of equation of *māyā* and *avidyā* and absence of *avidyā* in sleep are based totally on *Śruti*, and express statements of Śaṅkara which are incontrovertible and they are not in the least an original idea of Swamiji as is stated by M.

26. The next topic is with regard to matters stated under the head “Source of divergent views” – page 217. M says “Swamiji traces the introduction of the concept of *avidyā* as existent and as the material cause for the world to Padmapāda”. But on reading of the English introduction to VPP and *Pañcapādikā Prasthānam* one finds that Swamiji is of the opinion that school advocating *avidyā* as the primordial material cause of the universe was prevalent during the time of Maṇḍana, who makes a casual mention of that school.

Though the authorship of *Pañcapādikā* is popularly ascribed to Padmapāda, the direct disciple of Śaṅkara, no trustworthy internal or external evidence has so far been adduced to by any scholar to substantiate this belief. Moreover, Swamiji finds that *Pañcapādikā* really represents altogether a different school of Vedānta while it covertly poses to be a sub-commentary on a work propounding Vedāntic absolutism. It contains many a doctrine which is actually opposed and contradictory to that of Śaṅkara of which *avidyā* is just one among them.

27. M states that the crux of the problem is Padmapāda’s reading of the compound *mithyājñānanimittaḥ* in the section of introduction to the *Brahmasūtra bhāṣya* where Satchidanandendra determined that Śaṅkara has defined *avidyā* as *adhyāsa*.

It is to be noted that not only Swamiji but Bhāmatī also while dealing with this definitional part **has determined *avidyā* as mutual *adhyāsa***.

28. M states that “Swami Satchidanandendra finds several difficulties in this passage from the *Pañcapādikā*. The most important one is the Padmapāda’s resolution of the Śaṅkara’s compound *mithyājñānamittam* as *mithyā-ajñāna*, it is ignorance and it is false.”

It is to be noted that the words *mithyā-ajñāna* **does not according to *Pañcapādikā* mean “It is ignorance and it is false” as M translates it.** Padmapāda himself states his interpretation of the two words – *mithyā* means indeterminable and *ajñāna* means the insentient potentiality of *avidyā* as opposed to *jñāna* (sentiency). Probably M has inadvertently translated the two words as is commonly understood as against the definitional meaning given to them by Padmapāda.

Swamiji’s understanding of *mithyājñāna* as false knowledge or error is supported by a number of statements from *bhāṣya* which are listed on pages 20, 125 to 131 in his *Pañcapādikā Prasthānam*. Moreover, nowhere in the *bhāṣya* has the word *mithyā* used in the sense of “indeterminable”.

29. M states “Other problems that he has are the various characterizations of *avidyā* as indeterminable (*Anirvacanīyā*), inert (*jaḍa*), a power (*śakti*) and the opposite of knowledge (*jñānaparyudāsa*). Satchidanandendra particularly rejects the assertion that the power of *avidyā* (*avidyā-śakti*) is the material (*upādāna*) cause of superimposition (*adhyāsa*).”

These are not the only “Other problems” in this context. One may go thorough VPP and *Pañcapādikā Prasthānam* by Swamiji to know the various other inconsistencies with regard to *mithyā-ajñāna*. Śaṅkara in clear terms has said that mutual *adhyāsa* which is known as *avidyā* is fundamental to all human procedure empirical and Vedic which will evidently include within its sphere even concept of time which in turn is apriori to the concept of causation. Thus the *ajñāna* as postulated by *Pañcapādikā* as the material cause of *adhyāsa* is opposed to Śaṅkara. Moreover, the meaning of the term *adhyāsa* itself is different for *Pañcapādikā* and Śaṅkara. In Śaṅkara’s introduction to BSBh, *adhyāsa* means false knowledge/error and this is reiterated later as “*adhyāso nāma atasmin tadbudhiḥ – adhyāsa* means mistaking something to be what it is not.” However in *Pañcapādikā* this meaning of error is accepted only in the secondary sense, the primary being the thing which is superimposed in distinction to the mental process of superimposition. Thus according to *Pañcapādikā* explanation Śaṅkara is not primarily thinking of an inherent error that assails the human mind but only of something objective falsely appearing in place of another.

30. On page 218 M mentions that “The concept of *avidyā* as a two fold power, one concealing and one projecting, existing in a cause effect relationship, Swami Satchidanandendra traces to Maṇḍana Mīśra. Presenting it as the view of an opponent, which he subsequently accepts, Maṇḍana characterizes *avidyā* as a failure to apprehend (*agrahaṇa*), resulting in an erroneous apprehension (*viparyaya*).”

The first sentence is factually incorrect. Swamiji does not trace “The concept of *avidyā* as a two fold power, one concealing and the other projecting” to Maṇḍana, but states that according to Maṇḍana ***avidyā* is of 2 varieties, non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*) and misapprehension (*viparyaya-grahaṇa*)** and that Maṇḍana adopted the nomenclature accepted by Gauḍapāda who divides it into *Kāraṇa-avidyā* and *Kārya-avidyā*. Maṇḍana does not speak of concealing power at all. *Agrahaṇa* of Maṇḍana is only **non-apprehension** which is altogether different from the **concealing power**. The citation quoted by M under note 22 substantiates this. It does not speak of any concealing power.

As far as the second sentence is concerned the first part is correct, but the part “which he subsequently accepts” is incorrect. Maṇḍana’s acceptance of the concealing aspect needs to be substantiated by M. Moreover, Maṇḍana maintains that *avidyā* in *Jīva* belong to a beginningless series like that of seeds and sprouts and that the *avidyā* of the each preceding *jīva* is responsible for the succeeding false imagination which presents the next *jīva* in the series. Thus M has confounded the two different concepts of *avidyā*.

31. The Para “Implications” on page 219 is next taken up for consideration.

M states that “For Swami Satchidanandendra... the *mūlāvidyā* is a misrepresentation of Advaita with far reaching consequences.”

Here this statement needs a small correction – For Swami Satchidanandendra... The *mūlāvidyā* is a misrepresentation of Śaṅkara’s system of Advaita.

M enumerates certain of the consequences and in support of them cites Paras from MVN. All these citations have already been examined earlier and therefore they are not dealt with here. The implications are far more than what has been stated by M. K. A. Krishnaswamy Iyer in his introduction to MVN lists out some of the serious consequences to postulation of *mūlāvidyā* –

- a. The oneness of Reality which from the time of the *Upaniṣads* down to the time of Śaṅkara & Sureśwara was not a matter of faith but one of intuitive experience, not a doctrine accepted on authority, but a Truth realized in life, has become a cardinal article of belief based on vedic assertion admittedly unprovable.
- b. In the hands of the present day vedantins the transcendental (*pāramārthik*) has passed into a pure assumption, since all experience has to be included in the empirical. Vedantic truth has thus become an unsupported dogma resting on the sanctity of the ancient writings, but neither attainable nor demonstrable.
- c. A great deal of importance is attached to Samadhi or trance and only the gifted are supposed to enjoy the bliss of mystic union.
- d. Their system cast an impenetrable veil over Brahman which has lapsed into a holy fetish unconnected and unconnectible with life.

32. Comments with regard to the Para “Advaitins’ arguments against Satchidanandendra”.

Here and in the subsequent Para titled “*avidyā* and *māyā/prakṛti*”, M presents the response of the advaitins to Swamiji particularly that of Polagam Rāmā Shāstri. However it is very strange, rather unfair that M has not made even a single reference to the review made by Swamiji with regard to the comments of Rāmā Shāstri. The views of Swamiji on the refutation are found in the very same “*Vedāntavidvadgoṣṭhī*” quoted by M herself. The response of Swamiji to the refutation by Rāmā Shāstri if had been presented to the reader, it would have enabled him to judge for himself the appropriateness or otherwise of the refutation and whether the same has succeeded in proving Swamiji wrong or has only strengthened the views of Swamiji. A mention at least, of the fact that Swamiji has reviewed the refutation would have served the cause of fairness.

33. While referring to the charge of plagiarism leveled on Swamiji by Rāmā Shāstri, M appends the Note 30. The very first sentence in the Note is made on the basis of baseless surmises and is contrary to facts. M’s tracing of the charge of plagiarism to “Some historical basis” is merely fictional. This is in spite of the fact that Swamiji has denied his knowledge of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa’s allusion to *mūlāvidyā*, when he wrote the works refuting it. It is true that Swamiji deeply revered Mahābhāgavata of Kurtukoti and studied under him. But M’s bold statement that Mahābhāgavata of Kurtukoti was known in his time as an exponent of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa is unsubstantiated. No source work is indicated by M in this regard. Unless this statement is substantiated by proper evidence, the surmise of historical fact falls flat. What has Swamiji himself to say in the matter of the source for the knowledge of *mūlāvidyā*? In his preface to MVN, Swamiji expresses his indebtedness to Krishnaswamy Iyer. There is no mention of Mahābhāgavata of Kurtukoti in this regard. Sri S Vittala Shastry, the author of *mūlāvidyā bhāṣya-vārtika-viruddha* (which M quotes under note 26) pays his obeisance to Krishnaswamy Iyer as the one who brought to light “*avidyā* means *adhyāsa*”. Swamiji in his autobiography in Kannada explicitly tells that it was K. A. Krishnaswamy Iyer who first brought to his attention the variance between Śaṅkara’s school and that of the traditionalists. Swamiji further tells that Krishnaswamy Iyer took him to Virūpākṣa Śāstrī to prove his stand. Thus the history is nothing but her-story in the absence of evidence.

34. M states under Note 30 that Satchidanandendra's views on *avidyā* in Śaṅkara has several features in common with those of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa. This again is totally incorrect. Except for the common opinion that *mūlāvidyā* is ultra-vires the *Śaṅkara-bhāṣya*, there is no commonality whatsoever between the two. A brief reference to what *avidyā* means to both is enough to establish the difference between the two methods of approach (of Swamiji and that of Nāgeśa) to the subject. Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's *avidyā* is summarized by him as – "Therefore misapprehension is the gross *avidyā* and its impressions (*vāsanārūpa*) termed as *avyakta* is the subtle-*avidyā*. The subtle-*avidyā* being the cause of gross *avidyā* at the time of *vyavahāra*, it is called as the cause (*kāraṇa*)." – Page 282 of *Vayyākaraṇa-siddhanta-laghumanjuṣā* of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa published by Chowkhambha Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 1989. Nāgeśa further says "Thus it is settled that *avidyā* is of the nature of misapprehension and its impressions and this ***avidyā* has an origin (*janya*)**" – Page 296 *ibid*.

As against this view of Nāgeśa on *avidyā*, Swamiji sticks strictly to Śaṅkara's definition – "*avidyā* is the mutual superimposition of self and the not-self." Moreover according to Śaṅkara the mutual *adhyāsa* otherwise known as ***avidyā*, is beginningless** which Swamiji strictly advocates in contra distinction to Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa who holds that ***avidyā* has an origin**. Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa on page 305 of his above mentioned work reiterates the necessity of origination of *avidyā*. Even a casual reading of the views of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa on *avidyā* will reveal that he follows the Bhāmatī School rather, renders a sort of commentary on Bhāmatī's statements. He pitches himself on Bhāmatī's side and criticizes the *mūlāvidyā* citing statements from Bhāmatī in support.

35. M says under note 30 that "Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa rejects the interpretation of *avidyā* as indeterminable (*Anirvacanīyā*)." This is incorrect. Following the foot steps of Bhāmatī, he expressly states that ***adhyāsa* is *anirvacanīyā***. Page 279 *ibid*.

After portraying *avidyā* as per Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa as has been understood by her, M makes the statement "This is consistent with Satchidanandendra's representation of *avidyā* purely as an effect and his rejection of a causal *avidyā*."

The first part of the sentence that Swamiji's representation of *avidyā* purely as an effect is totally incorrect. *Avidyā* being beginningless according to Swamiji, it can never be an effect. The very objection of Swamiji against the traditionalists is the treatment of *avidyā* / mutual *adhyāsa* as an effect of *mūlāvidyā*. Swamiji basing himself on the express statements of Śaṅkara that *adhyāsa* / *avidyā* is beginningless and that "All the talk of *Pramāṇās* and their objects whether relating to ordinary life or to vedic action and all scriptures relating to injunctions and prohibitions of action or to *mokṣa* presuppose **this mutual superimposition of the self and the not-self** before they function (Introduction to BSBh).", holds that *adhyāsa* / *avidyā* is the root of even the concept of time which in turn is apriori to the concept of cause and effect. Thus **it is wrong to hold that Swamiji views *avidyā* purely as an effect as does Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa**.

Even though both Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa and Swamiji reject the *mūlāvidyā* which is held by the traditionalists to be the material cause of the universe, both of them differ totally with regard to the manner of rejection, the grounds put forward, the citation of supporting authorities etc. Therefore M's statement that the seed for his understanding of *avidyā* only as Superimposition (*adhyāsa*) can be seen here" is incorrect and totally fictional. The seed of Swamiji's views is the words of *bhāṣya* alone as M admits on Page 215.

36. M repeatedly lays stress on Mahābhāgavata's adherence to Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa which in turn according to her, influenced Swamiji. Without prejudice to the ground that no evidence is cited either for Mahābhāgavata's adherence to Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa or its surreptitious influence on Swamiji and thus the whole theory is a figment of M's imagination, it is submitted that even if it were true that if Swamiji was influenced by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa through Mahābhāgavata, it will in no way acquit the traditionalists from the charge of infidelity of *mūlāvidyā* theory to the definition of *avidyā* by Śaṅkara. To whomsoever the finding that *mūlāvidyā* is opposed to Śaṅkara may be traced to, how does it affect the actual finding as far as seekers of truth are concerned. **Not even a single statement in the *Prasthānatraya Bhāṣya* can be shown where *adhyāsa* is**

said to have *mūlāvidyā* as its material cause or for that matter, *adhyāsa* itself requires a material cause. Moreover, Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's work is primarily a treatise on *Vyākaraṇa* and not on Vedānta.

37. M on page 219 states “The response of the Advaita tradition to Swami Satchidanandendra has been thorough and sustained.”

One of the scholars (Sri Rāmā Shāstri) who is an advocate of the traditionalists equates Swamiji with Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa whose period is shown by M to be 1650-1750. Is it not strange for the tradition to keep mum so long in the face of an open attack upon their pet-doctrine? The tradition had to wait for centuries for the arrival of Rāmā Shāstri in 1958 to refute the charges made by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa.

38. Now the citations of Śaṅkara given in support of the tradition are taken up for consideration. M first picks up the BSBh on 1.4.3 and gives a translation of a part of that. However, **the translation is not faithful to the original** when she says “Then Śaṅkara make the argument that without **the acceptance of *avidyā***, liberation is untenable. Liberation is due to the destruction of causal potency (***bījaśakti* of *avidyā***) by knowledge.”

The original is thus – “*nahi tayā vinā paramēśvarasya sraśṭṛtvam siddhyati śaktirahitasya tasya pravṛtṭyanupapatteḥ muktānām ca punaranutpattiḥ| kutaḥ| vidyayā tasyā bījaśakterdāhāt*”

This translates as “Without **that (the *prāgavasthā* i.e. the primordial state)** the creatorhood does not get bestowed upon *paramēśvara*, since bereft of *śakti*, he cannot proceed with creation. Also (if *prāgavasthā* is accepted) the liberated are not liable to rebirth. Why? Because **that *bījaśakti*** (Potential seed) is burnt up by *vidyā*.” Thus as per the original so far, what is required to be accepted for absence of rebirth of the liberated is **the *prāgavasthā* i.e. the prior/primordial state** and not the **acceptance of *avidyā* as translated by M**. Further, in the following sentence what is stated to be burnt up by *vidyā* is **that *bījaśakti* (Potential seed)** and **not *avidyā*** as M translates. M introduces the next sentence in the *bhāṣya* as “The statement most germane to our discussion then follows” and translates that as “Śaṅkara reiterates that this causal potency (*bījaśakti*) is in the form of *avidyā*, has its basis in ***Paramēśvara* (*paramēśvarāśraya*)** and is called *Avyakta*; in it are sleeping the individuals (*samsāriṇaḥ*) who have no knowledge of their nature.” Here the statement of M that ‘Śaṅkara reiterates’ is incorrect since Śaṅkara has not at all used the word *avidyā* so far. Let us now see the original – *avidyātmikā hi sā bījaśaktiravyaktaśabdānirdeśyā paramēśvaraśrayā māyāmayī mahāsuṭṭiḥ yasyām svarūpapratibodharahitaḥ śerate samsāriṇo jīvāḥ*. This translates as “Because this *bījaśakti* (potential seed) called as *Avyakta* (the Unmanifest) being **made up of *avidyā* (*avidyātmikā*)** is the grand sleep composed of *māyā* having *paramēśvara* as its locus. In this the *samsāri jīvas* who are devoid of the knowledge of their true nature sleep. The next sentence is “That **this *avyakta*** (the unmanifest) in some places is referred to by the word *ākāśa*... in some places by the word *akṣara*... in some places by the word *māyā*...” based on this passage M arrives at the following conclusions.

- It is not difficult to see why this is such a popular *bhāṣya* for the proponents of *mūlāvidyā*.
- The prior condition or causal form of the world is in this **form of *avidyā***.
- This *avidyā*** has a number of synonyms – *Avyakta*, *ākāśa*, *akṣara* and *māyā*.
- From this is derived the equivalence of the words *avidyā* and *māyā*.
- Through the *Śvetāśvatara* quotation, these two *avidyā* & *māyā* are further equated to *Prakṛti*.
- Further this cause is a power (*śakti*) that belongs to *paramēśvara*.

Now the comments on these conclusions follow.

- The BSBh 1-4-3 is equally popular for the opponents of *mūlāvidyā*. Swamiji quotes this very passage to prove that Śaṅkara treats *avidyā* as distinct from *māyā/prakṛti/Avyakta* etc – Page 50 of *Pañcapādikā Prasthāna*; Point 5 on page 3 and point 6 on page 15 of *Vedāntavidvadgoṣṭhī*.
- The second conclusion of M is based on the original “*avidyātmikā hi sā bījaśaktiḥ*”, which translates as “Since that potential seed is made up of *avidyā*”. Here the potential seed is said to be **made up of**

avidyā and not said to be *avidyā* itself. This clearly brings out the distinction between the potential seed and *avidyā*. Even as per M's translation of the word *avidyātmikā* as 'the form of *avidyā*', it results in the potential seed being different from *avidyā* since 'form of *avidyā*' is not the same as '*avidyā*'. Moreover the usage "form of *avidyā*" does not settle the issue because a further question arises "What then is that *avidyā*?" Hunting for an answer to this, one finds no other definition for *avidyā* except that which is given in the introduction to BSBh which goes against the traditionalists.

In this context it is pertinent to pay attention to Śaṅkara's statement referring to the seed form of the world – *sarvajñasya īśvarasya ātmabhūte iva avidyākalpate nāmarūpe tatvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīye samsāraprapañcabījabhūte sarvajñasya īśvarasya māyā śaktiḥ prakṛtiḥ iti ca Śrutismṛtyorabhilapyete* – meaning – Name and Form **fancied by *avidyā***, as though identical with the omniscient *īśvara* but which are indefinable as identical with or other than *īśvara*, constituting the seed of the phenomenal world of mundane life, have been called the *māyā*, *śaktiḥ*, *Prakṛti* of the Omniscient Lord, in both the *Śruti* and *smṛti* - BSBh 2-1-14. Similarly in BSBh 2-1-27 Śaṅkara refers to **the manifested and the unmanifested name and form as *avidyā-kalpita* (figment of *avidyā*)**. Thus according to Śaṅkara and Swamiji, the potential seed/*māyā* etc is not the same as *avidyā* but the figment of *avidyā*, in contrast to the identity of both as per the traditionalists.

- c. The third conclusion of M that, *avidyā* has a number of synonyms *avyakta*, *akṣara* etc is also incorrect. The original *bhāṣya* reads as "*tadetadavyaktam kvacid ākāśaśabdānirdiṣṭam*" – That this *avyakta* in some places is called by the word *ākāśa*. **Here the synonym *ākāśa* is with regard to *avyakta* and not to *avidyā***. In the earlier sentence *avidyā* is used as a compound word *avidyātmika* qualifying the word *Avyakta*. Now since *ākāśa*, *akṣara* and *māyā* are said to be synonyms of *Avyakta*, the word *avidyātmika* will qualify these words also and therefore they are also to be treated as made up of *avidyā* or figment of *avidyā*. While introducing each synonym Śaṅkara uses the words *ākāśaśabda-nirdiṣṭam* (called by the word *ākāśa*), *akṣaraśabdoditam* (called by the word *akṣara*) and *māyā iti sūcitam* (referred to as *māyā*). However no such usage is made with regard to the word *avidyātmika* so as to consider that also as a synonym.
- d. The next conclusion that "the equivalence of *māyā* and *avidyā* is derived" is again incorrect. What is derived is the equivalence of *māyā* and *Avyakta* and not *māyā* and *avidyā*. If *avidyā* were to be considered a synonym then there should have been a sentence "*avidyāśabda-nirdiṣṭam*" etc. But it is not so.
- e. It is wrong to say that *avidyā* and *māyā* are equated to *prakṛti* through the *Śvetāśvatara* quotation. *māyā* and *prakṛti* are equated by that quotation.
- f. *Śakti* is a synonym of *māyā* and *prakṛti* as per BSBh on 2-1-14 and not ***avidyā-śakti*** as is considered by the traditionalists. The word ***avidyā-śakti*** being used as a synonym for *māyā* etc is not at all found in the entire *prasthānatraya bhāṣya*.
- g. In the BSBh 1-4-3 Śaṅkara considers two alternatives to the meaning of the word *avyakta*, depending upon the two different meanings of the word *mahān*. If *mahān* is taken to mean *hiranyagarbha*'s intellect, then the word *avyakta* will mean the primordial seed, which is made up of *avidyā* and is otherwise called as *māyā* etc. Alternatively, if the word *mahān* is taken to mean *jīva*, then the word *avyakta* will mean *avidyā*. Thus by giving two different meanings to the word *avyakta*, Śaṅkara explicitly brings out the distinction between *avidyā* on the one hand (when *jīva* is *mahān*) and the primordial seed called *māyā* etc on the other (when the *hiranyagarbha*'s intellect is *mahān*) and he specifically states the later to be *avidyātmika* i.e made up of *avidyā*. If according to Śaṅkara *avidyā* and *māyā* are synonyms then the proposal of two alternatives would not arise. In BSBh 1-4-3 Śaṅkara uses the words *yadā tu jīvo mahān* (on the contrary when *jīva* is *mahān*) to clearly show the alternative meaning. The word *tu* which is an adversative particle need not have been used, if according to Śaṅkara *avidyā* and *māyā* were synonyms. Since the first meaning itself would have been sufficient.

It would have been fair if only in her Note 30 M had included the above mentioned original sentence which is just one sentence later to the passage quoted by her.

- h. If *avidyā* should be treated as synonym for *māyā* etc, then the phrase *avidyātmika māyā* would result in the meaning *avidyātmika avidyā*, which is absurd.

Thus *avyakta*, *ākāśa*, *akṣara*, *māyā*, *prakṛti* and *śakti* are synonyms and all of them are **figment of *avidyā*** as shown above in BSBh 1-4-3, 2-1-14 and 2-1-27.

39. M then states that “Some of the most striking equations of *avidyā* and *māyā* / *prakṛti* occur in Śaṅkara’s comments on *Bhagavadgītā*” and cites six instances under note 34.

- a. The first citation is from GitaBh 15.16 it refers to one of the two *puruṣas* as *akṣara* and considers it as *māyā*, *śakti* of Bhagavān which is the birth seed of the *puruṣa* called *kṣara* and is the locus of impressions of desires and action of the many *samsārīs* i.e. it refers to the *avyakta*, *māyā* etc mentioned in BSBh 1.4.3, 2.1.14 etc. There is however, no mention of *avidyā* at all in this quotation. It is not known how this sentence supports the equation of *avidyā* and *māyā* / *prakṛti*.
- b. The second citation from the GitaBh 18.41 is again a reference to the Lord’s *prakṛti* which is *māyā* made up of the three *guṇas*. Here again there is no mention of *avidyā* so as to indicate an equation between *māyā* / *prakṛti* and *avidyā*.
- c. The next two sentences quoted from 8.20 and 9.10 are considered together. The *avyakta*, *māyā* and *prakṛti* are termed as *avidyā-lakṣaṇa* i.e. that which indicates *avidyā*. It is clear that *avyakta* etc are termed as *avidyā-lakṣaṇa* and not *avidyā*. By juxtaposing these sentences with those of BSBh 2.1.14, 2.1.27 etc where *avyakta* etc are termed explicitly as *avidyā-kalpita* (figment of *avidyā*), the word *avidyā-lakṣaṇa* would rightly mean *avidyā kalpita* only. Moreover the term *lakṣaṇa* in the compound word is derived as *lakṣyate anayā iti lakṣaṇa*. This is based on Śaṅkara-*bhāṣya* on Gaudapāda Kārikā 4.67 and the Śābara-*bhāṣya* on Jaiminī Sūtra 1-1-2. Since *avidyā* is indicated by *Prakṛti* the later is called *avidyā-lakṣaṇa*.

Further the GitaBh 18.48 specifically states that the *guṇas* are figment of *avidyā*. Therefore *māyā* which is made up of the three *guṇas* also becomes a figment of *avidyā*. The meaning of the compound *avidyālakṣaṇa* used for *prakṛti* etc will be further clear when the last citation is dealt with.

- d. In the fifth citation from the introduction to the 13th chapter *prakṛti* is termed as *triguṇātmika* i.e. made up of the three *guṇas*. The three *guṇas* being fancied by *avidyā prakṛti* also becomes a figment of *avidyā* and not *avidyā* itself. In this citation also there is not even a mention of the word *avidyā*. Moreover, this *prakṛti* otherwise termed as *avyakta*, *māyā* etc is called *kṣetra* (GitaBh 13.5 & 13.6) and *Jīva* is called the *kṣetrajaṇa* i.e. the knower of the *kṣetra* (GitaBh 13.1). The cause of *samsāra* which is *avidyā* is here determined as *kṣetra-kṣetrajaṇa-samyogaḥ* – the union of the *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajaṇa* (GitaBh 13.26). Thus *avyakta* / *prakṛti* which is *kṣetra* is different from *avidyā* the cause of *samsāra*.
- e. The last of the sentences is cited from the GitaBh 13.21. It is really surprising that M chose to cite this, since **it is a clincher for Swamiji**. In this *bhāṣya* the prime word is *prakṛtisthaḥ* (the one stationed in *Prakṛti*). Śaṅkara derives the word *prakṛtisthaḥ* as *prakṛtau avidyālakṣaṇāyām kāryakāranarūpeṇa parinatāyām sthitah prakṛtisthaḥ | prakṛtim ātmatvena gataḥ ityetaḥ – Prakṛtisthaḥ* is the one who abides in the *Prakṛti* which indicates *avidyā* (*avidyālakṣaṇa*) and which is transformed as the body and senses. In other words *prakṛtisthaḥ* is the one who identifies the *prakṛti* as his self. Probably the compound *avidyālakṣaṇa* which qualifies the word *prakṛti* is relied upon by M to establish the identity of *avidyā* and *prakṛti*. But towards the end of that *bhāṣya* is the sentence quoted by M under note 34 – “*etad uktam bhavati - prakṛtisthatvākhyā avidyā, guṇeṣu ca saṅgaḥ kāmah, samsārasya kāraṇamiti*” meaning – this is the conclusion, ***avidyā* called as *prakṛtisthatva* (identification of *Prakṛti* as self)** and attachment unto the *guṇas* i.e. desire, is the

cause of *samsāra*. Here there are two distinct words *prakṛtiḥ* and *prakṛtisthatva*. Śaṅkara calls **Prakṛti as avidyālakṣaṇa** and **prakṛtisthatva as avidyā** and states that *avidyā* called as *prakṛtisthatva* is the cause of *samsāra*. On the basis of this statement of Śaṅkara where he has clearly distinguished *avidyā-lakṣaṇā-prakṛtiḥ* from *avidyā*, the compound *avidyālakṣaṇa* qualifying the words *māyā*, *avyakta* etc can at no cost equate *avidyā* with *māyā* etc.

Moreover in this context one may refer to a few more statement from GitaBh

- a. GitaBh 14.6, the act of superimposition of an object of cognition unto the self which is the subject is clearly stated as *avidyā*.
- b. The GitaBh 13.26 which is an echo of introduction to BSBh almost verbatim, where identity of *adhyāsa* and *mithyājñāna* is spelt out clearly.
- c. **The mental notion** in the form of non-discriminative knowledge of the self and the not-self is referred to as *avidyā* and the mental notion in the form of discriminative knowledge of the self and the not-self is referred to as *vidyā* in GitaBh 2.21. Therefore, *avidyā* is a mental concept according to Śaṅkara, whereas it is a substance according to the traditionalists. Thus the sentences purportedly equating *avidyā* and *māyā* / *prakṛti* cited from GitaBh do not actually equate the two but clearly bring out their mutual distinction. This is in line with Śaṅkara's dictum in BSBh 2.1.14, 2.1.27 etc that *māyā* / *prakṛti* is figment of *avidyā*.

40. M quotes under note 35 citations from *Upaniṣad-bhāṣyas* as quoted by Sri Rāmā Shāstri. However the same is not dealt herewith since they are almost on the same lines as those already considered herein above. The discussion on the citations comes to a close with the following observations.

- a. The mutual *adhyāsa* is specifically declared to be *avidyā* and the same is reiterated by Śaṅkara.
- b. *māyā* / *avyakta* / *prakṛti* etc as per Śaṅkara are *avidyā-kalpita* and not *avidyā*.
- c. No single instance is shown where Śaṅkara defines *avidyā* in the sense of *mūlāvidyā* in terms of the various characteristics attributed to it by the traditionalists.
- d. Not a single statement to show that *avidyā* is *Anirvacanīyā*.
- e. Nowhere in the *bhāṣyas*, *adhyāsa* is either said to have a beginning or desiderates a cause.
- f. If *avidyā* and *māyā* are identical how come Śaṅkara uniformly uses the terms *avidyā-kalpita* (figment of *avidyā*), *avidyā-kṛta* (made of *avidyā*) etc and not even once by the word *avidyā* directly. In the sentences cited by M in defence with respect to *māyā* etc, use of a compound word *avidyālakṣaṇa* and *avidyātmika* is seen and the same is not referred to as *avidyā* plain and simple. On the other hand wherever superimposition is referred to, Śaṅkara uses the word *avidyā* in its plain form.
- g. It is very strange that M has not brought to the attention of the readers the fact that the *bhāṣya* statements cited by Rāmā Shāstri have been reviewed by Swamiji in his work *Vedāntavidvadgoṣṭhī*. It would have been fair only if M had considered the review and then decided upon the strength of the defence and the correctness or the otherwise of the views of Swamiji.
- h. None of the citation given by Swamiji in support of his views is challenged or shown as incorrect.
- i. Thus M's conclusion that "There is ample evidence that Śaṅkara considers *avidyā* as causal component in the creation of the world" is grossly incorrect in as much as Śaṅkara considers *māyā* / *Avyakta* / *Prakṛti* etc as the causal component and the *māyā* etc are in turn considered as figment of *avidyā*.

41. In this context it is pertinent to note what Swamiji says on page 32 of the introduction to *Vedāntavidvadgoṣṭhī*. "Incidentally it may be remarked that Śaṅkara always styles this primordial matter *Prakṛti* by the significant name *māyā* but never by the name of *avidyā* or any other synonym of ignorance. And conversely, he invariably calls the mutual superimposition of the self and the not-self by the name of *avidyā* or some equivalent of it, but we do not meet with any instance where it is called *māyā*. Coming down

to the commentaries, we see that this rule is observed more in the breach than in practice. In the school of *mūlāvidyā* theory, where the law of causation takes precedence of the principle of truth and error, this usage is of course justifiable. But can we use the terms *māyā* and *avidyā* indiscriminately even while strictly adhering to Śaṅkara's *adhyāsa-vāda*? This question has been neither posed nor critically considered in any Vedantic discussion so far as I am aware. I shall therefore venture my own opinion in the matter, and leave the readers to judge for themselves. In so far as *māyā* or *prakṛti* is a figment of *avidyā* proper, I think that one is perfectly justified in calling it *avidyā* in a secondary sense, just as one may say 'This is all his foolery' meaning thereby the result of that person's foolish pranks. And conversely, in so far as *avidyā* is regarded as a function of the mind and is included in the world of names and forms, it may be also called *māyā* meaning thereby an illusory appearance. But keeping in mind the fact that *avidyā* primarily denote a species of knowledge and *māyā* an illusory object, we cannot but exclusively follow Śaṅkara's practice in using the terms, if we do not wish to confuse the minds of our readers."

42. Now the points under the head "Philosophical considerations" on page 223 are taken up. M states that "Satchidanandendra's primary difficulty with Advaita tradition's representation of *avidyā* is that it is *bhāvarūpa*."

This is incorrect. The most primary difficulty is that it is inconsistent with Śaṅkara's definition which is reiterated in his *bhāṣyas* at several places. *Avidyā* being *bhāvarūpa* is just one of the many important inconsistencies. In the works like MVN, *Pañcapādikā Prasthānam* etc, scores and scores of pages have been used to put forward the various grounds. Not a single scholar has so far come out with a point by point refutation of the points raised by Swamiji in his works. M refers to a debate having taken place. Since the details of the debate are not presented by M no comments are made in this regard.

43. M under note 38 questions "If *avidyā* is purely *adhyāsa* how do we understand Śaṅkara's compounds like *avidyādhyāropita*, *avidyādhyasta*, *avidyādhyāropana*?" This question has been satisfactorily answered by Swamiji on page 19 of the introduction to the *Vedāntavidvadgoṣṭhī*. It is surprising that M has not made any comment with regard to Swamiji's answer to this question. But the usage of such words in no way undermines the clear-cut definition by Śaṅkara himself for whom *avidyā* is the mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self. The fact remains that no other definition of *avidyā* is given by Śaṅkara and the statements quoted by traditionalists are not definitional in nature and their stand that there are citations which equate *avidyā* and *māyā* etc was also shown to be incorrect. Swamiji says "These words (*avidyādhyāropita* etc) have to be understood in the sense of *mithyāpratyayadarśitaḥ* (shown by erroneous notion) similar to the usage *karikalabaḥ* etc. The words *adhyastha* etc refer to the qualified words which are the objects of cognition. Therefore merely on this account, it is not necessary to postulate any *avidyā* distinct from *adhyāsa* since such an *avidyā* is not accepted in the *Bhāṣyas*." In the above example *kari* means an elephant and *kalabaḥ* means an elephant calf, but still in Sanskrit literature such usages are not uncommon.

44. M says in page 223 that "Though *avidyā* is existent (*bhāvarūpa*) it is not real (*avāstava*) and therefore there is no untenability in it being removed by knowledge of truth."

The following points arise in this regard.

- Is the word "existent" the right substitute for the word *bhāvarūpa*? An "existing thing" will be more appropriate to denote *bhāvarūpa*.
- Is it logical to accept that a thing exists, but it is not real? The very meaning of the word existence underlines reality. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary gives this meaning to the word "exist" – "To have a real being whether material or spiritual; to have being in a specified place or with respect to understood limitations or condition." The word existence is said to mean "reality as opposed to

appearance; reality as presented in experience.” Śaṅkara in his GitaBh 2.16 says – “What exists, exists always.”

- c. Moreover, knowledge neither directly dispels nor creates a thing or its characteristics but only removes nescience. Therefore if *avidyā* be an existent thing then its destruction by knowledge is ruled out. Also knowledge being a mental notion can only remove another mental notion. *Avidyā* as per the traditionalists is not a mental notion and therefore it cannot be removed by knowledge. *Vidyā* and *avidyā* are both held to be mental notions by Śaṅkara at various places. Thus removal of *mūlāvidyā* by knowledge will remain only in theory, more so because traces of it remain till death even after the dawn of knowledge.

45. M states on page 224 that “The problem of reifying *avidyā* resulting in the untenability of non-duality was not unknown to Śaṅkara, who resolves it by establishing that *avidyā* is *mithyā*.” In support of this BSBh 4.1.3 is quoted.

- a. First and foremost M **has not shown even a single instance where Śaṅkara has reified *avidyā*** i.e. where *avidyā* is considered as a material thing. On the other hand a number of statements are there where Śaṅkara refers to *avidyā* as a species of knowledge – a mental notion (GitaBh. 2.21, 13.21, 13.26, 14.6, BSBh Introduction, 1.3.2, in *Taittirīyopaniṣad bhāṣya* 2.8 both *vidyā* and *avidyā* are said to rest in the *antaḥkaraṇa* (mind), GitaBh 13.2 *avidyā* is referred to as a *tāmassic* mental notion and is said to pertain to the mind).
- b. To hold that knowledge removes reified *avidyā* will go contrary to Śaṅkara’s express statement elsewhere that knowledge neither dispels nor creates the nature of things.
- c. The most important objection is that there is no statement in the *bhāṣya* (BSBh 4.1.3) cited above which says “*avidyā* is *Mithyā*”. M deduces this on the basis of two sets of statements quoted by her under Note 40 & 41. A reading of the whole of that *bhāṣya* will make it clear as to how M has confounded the issue. Śaṅkara poses different objections and clears them one by one. After answering the objection cited under Note 40 Śaṅkara proceeds to deal with a fresh objection and says that perception of senses is accepted prior to the dawn of knowledge and the absence of perception is after dawn of knowledge. As a sequel to this, the discussion runs like this –
Q: “To whom then does this ignorance pertain to?”
A: “We say it is to you who is questioning.”
Q: “But I’m declared to be the Lord by the *Śruti*.”
A: “If you know it that way then ignorance pertains to none.”

That is, duality, ignorance etc are there only so long as knowledge is not dawned and they cease to be the moment knowledge dawns. Immediately following this sentence is the one cited under note 41. Therefore the word “*etena*” (by this discussion) found in that sentence refers to the immediately preceding discussion and not which is farther in sequence. The later sentence disposes of the objection that “non-duality is hampered by the presence of *avidyā* which imputes duality to self” by referring to the immediately preceding discussion i.e. “duality of the self is accepted so long there is ignorance and when knowledge dawns there is neither ignorance nor duality.” This being the case one can judge for oneself the correctness of M’s statement “Reified *avidyā* is *Mithyā*, is established by Śaṅkara.”

- d. Moreover, here M has not made it clear as for what she means by the word *Mithyā* in the present context. Does it mean false/unreal as is the common usage or does it mean *Anirvacanīyā* (indefinable) as the *Pañcapādikā* holds or does it mean *adhiṣṭāna-ananyatva* (non-distinction from the cause), as M says later on page 226. If it is held to be false, then there is the contradiction that a thing exists but it is false. If it is *anirvacanīyā*, then it is foreign to Śaṅkara since Śaṅkara has never called *avidyā* as *anirvacanīyā*. If it is non-distinction from the cause then it becomes an effect. Then it is a

contradiction to *avidyā* being beginningless and its being the root cause of all. Thus the problem of reifying *avidyā* does not get solved.

46. M states that Swamiji's understanding of *mithyā* and of *avidyā* as purely superimposition is subjective idealism (*dr̥ṣṭi* - *sr̥ṣṭi*) which he acknowledges and defends. This statement is already refuted in Para 9 above.

It was repeatedly shown that *avidyā* as purely superimposition is based on Śaṅkara's only definition of *avidyā* in *bhāṣya*. In that Para it was shown that the advocates of *dr̥ṣṭi* - *sr̥ṣṭi* conform to *mūlāvidyā* which itself distinguishes Swamiji from *dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-vādin*s. According to the *dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-vādin*, the creation issues forth from the *jīva* who wakes up from sleep. They hold that there are six beginningless entities (*mūlāvidyā* and the distinction of *jīva* & Brahman being two of them) which are outside this creation. They also hold that *mūlāvidyā* and the distinction *jīva* & Brahman are present in Sleep. No where Swamiji is found to conform to any of these views. Swamiji rejects the theory of presence of *mūlāvidyā* and the distinction of *jīva* & Brahman in sleep. According to Swamiji, the mutual *adhyāsa* on waking is a sufficient cause for the perception of the word. Therefore, it is not correct to hold that Swamiji conforms to *dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-vāda*

47. M states that Swamiji's understanding of *mithyā* is based on a definition of *satya* and *anṛta* in *Taittirīyopaniṣad-bhāṣya*, *Kāṭhākopaniṣad bhāṣya*, *Brahmasūtra bhāṣya* and *Upadeśasahasrī* (page 224). She says "On the basis of these statements, Swami Satchidanandendra concludes that, if *avidyā* were to exist in all the three states of experience it would be real and could not be removed by knowledge, it therefore becomes imperative for him to establish that *avidyā* does not exist in sleep in order to establish that *avidyā* is not real." In support of these M cites certain Paras of MVN. Since the same have already been dealt with, they are not dealt with now.

With regard to the meaning of *mithyā* what objection could there be if Swamiji bases his views on the definitions given by Śaṅkara himself. Rather should not those who claim to be the followers of Śaṅkara, follow Śaṅkara to the last letter?

It is a misrepresentation of facts when M says that Swamiji concludes that if *avidyā* were to exist in all the three states it would be real and could not be removed by knowledge. Swamiji's contention is that *mūlāvidyā* being an existing thing (*bhāvarūpa*) it cannot be removed by knowledge. Moreover, *mūlāvidyā* is said not only to exist in all the three states but also in those who are liberated (*jīvanmuktas*). If this be so, then removal of *mūlāvidyā* by knowledge is only a myth and theory and therefore a practical impossibility.

Absence of *avidyā* in sleep (a topic requiring a separate detailed examination) is not without the support of *Śruti*, Śaṅkara and the actual experience. This was also dealt with earlier.

48. Subsequent statements of M in that Para on page 225 have already been dealt with. The observations of M with regard to *satya* and *anṛta* in *Taittirīyopaniṣad bhāṣya* is absurd, incorrect and baseless as any serious reader would himself come to know even on a prima-facie reading. Even the traditionalists will disagree with M that the definition of *satya* etc provides for distinguishing subjective from empirical reality. Therefore no comment is offered in this regard, except that the purpose of definition of *satya* which qualifies Brahman is to distinguish Brahman from all the modifications which are unreal.

49. M states in page 225 "In the *Upaniṣad* and Śaṅkara's commentary here and elsewhere, *mithyā* is presented as that which has no independent existence (*adhiṣṭhāna ananyatva*) while *satya* depends on nothing else for its existence." Citation from *bhāṣya* is also given. Here again there is a gross misunderstanding of the *bhāṣya* and a misrepresentation of the *bhāṣya* as would be seen hereinafter.

- a. In the *Chāndogyopaniṣad bhāṣya* on 6.1.4, the word *mithyā* is not at all to be found. So also is the word *adhiṣṭhāna*. The essence of that *bhāṣya* is – by knowing the cause the whole lot of its effects becomes known since effect is not another thing distinct from the cause. The effect is just a name

sake and in reality there is **no another thing called an effect**. The material cause such as clay, alone is real while its effect is unreal, its name being mere play of words. Thus what is proved is the sole reality of the cause as the substance of its effects and the unreality of the so called effect as distinct from the cause.

- b. Under Note 53, BSBh 2.1.15 is cited. Here also neither the word *mithyā* nor the word *adhiṣṭhāna* is found. What is said here in short is, the effect is not distinct from the cause even on the account that only when the cause exists the effect is cognized and not otherwise. Alternatively, not only on the strength of *Śruti* but also on the basis of direct perception we know that the effect is not distinct from the cause, for e.g. in respect of the cloth formed of the thread, the cloth which is an effect is not at all perceived apart from the thread. What is directly perceived is only the thread interlaced.

Thus, what exists is the cause alone, is what is stressed here.

- c. Vide Note 54, passage from BSBh 2.1.14 is cited in support of “*Mithyā* is presented as that which has no independent existence, while *satya* depends on nothing else for its existence”. This definition of *satya* and *mithyā* is not at all to be found in the passage quoted. Here again, the word *mithyā* or *adhiṣṭhāna* is not found. What is said is – “It is seen that in reality, there is no distinction between cause and effect. The multifarious world, space etc is what is the effect; the cause means Para-Brahman. The effect really is non-distinct i.e. **does not exist separately from that cause**. In these sentences no where it is said that *mithyā* means *adhiṣṭhāna-ananyatva* as M wants it. In fact, the effect is said to have no existence at all as an effect and what exists is only the cause. If cause is the only thing that exists and the so called effect is only a figment of words where from comes the cause-effect relationship between the two? It is not the case that there is a cause and there is its effect and that the effect is not distinct from the cause and therefore, it is *Mithyā*. On the other hand, what is there is just the cause which is actually perceived and the perception of the so called effect is a misapprehension and therefore the effect is *mithyā* (unreal).

50. M states in page 226 that, “(According to Advaita opponents of Swamiji) *mithyā* is defined as that which has a requirement for a material cause (*adhiṣṭhāna-ananya*). Further, what is *mithyā* is an effect, and is established as having a cause-effect relationship”.

Letting the Advaita opponents of Swamiji to judge for themselves, the correctness or otherwise of the definition of *Mithyā* attributed to them by M, the following observations are made in this regard.

- a. In the *bhāṣyas* the word *mithyā* is compounded with knowledge where reference to an error is intended. It is also used to indicate the characteristic of changing nature of knowable objects in opposition to the word *satya*. Also the words *asatya*(untruth) and *anṛta* (false) is used as synonym of *mithyā*.
- b. In the entire *prasthānatraya* the phrase *adhiṣṭhāna-ananyatva* cannot be found. The word *adhiṣṭhāna* wherever mentioned in the *Bhāṣyas* refer to the body and not to any causal matter.
- c. Effect, according to the *bhāṣya*, has no existence at all divorced from the cause i.e. what exists is the cause only and the cognition of the effect as such is a misapprehension and therefore the effect is unreal. It follows that there cannot be a relationship of whatsoever nature between the real and the unreal.
- d. In *Pañcapādikā* the word *mithyā* is said to have two meanings – *apanhavavachana* (denial) and *anirvacanīyatāvachana* (unexplainable). Here also the definition as stated by M is not found. Moreover in the *bhāṣyas* *mithyā* is never used as a synonym for unexplainable.
- e. M states on page 224 that *avidyā* is *mithyā*. Applying her definition of *mithyā* to *avidyā*, it results in *avidyā* becoming non-distinct from its cause. This means that *avidyā* has a cause which is not acceptable since it is defined as beginningless. Moreover, since everything other than Brahman is the effect of *avidyā*, the only other thing capable of being the cause of *avidyā* is Brahman, in which case Brahman and *avidyā* become non-distinct. This again is absurd.

51. M states that “The subjective idealism does have validity in the Advaita tradition from the absolute standpoint and that other *Ācāryas* advance it on the occasion when the context is purely *pāramārthika*. This is incorrect. The very word *dr̥ṣṭi* - *sr̥ṣṭi* falls within the empirical sphere. Moreover, the *dr̥ṣṭi*-*sr̥ṣṭi* approve of *mūlāvidyā* which again falls within the empirical sphere. This subject is already dealt under Para 9 and 46. In this regard M cites two *bhāṣyas*, Vide Notes 43 & 55. What the citation GKBh 4.3.28 refers to is not known. The other i.e. BSBh 2.2.28 is in fact refutation of the school of *vijñānavādins* of the Buddhists and not that of the *dr̥ṣṭi* - *sr̥ṣṭi*-*vādins*.

52. The points made by M under the head “shifting stand-points” is already commented upon in Para 14 in detail and shown that conclusions of M are incorrect.

Thus the various points raised by M have been dealt with in detail.

53. Before closing the discussion on the subject matter proper, attention of the readers are drawn to the opinions of the pontiffs of the *Kāñcī*, *Śr̥ṅgerī* and *Dwāraka Śaṅkarācārya* Mutts with regard to Swamiji.

The late Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamiji of the *Kāñcī Kāmakoti Pīṭha* who had invited Swamiji in 1961 to Karaikudi in Tamilnadu had described Swamiji as a living example of a sage who had lived all his life steeped in contemplation on the *Paramārtha*. Later on, in 1979 the *Kāñcī Pīṭhādīśa* persuaded and prompted the close devotees of Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji to celebrate his centenary the next year (Gangoli D.B – Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji Page 2). His Holiness concurred to the views of Swamiji and expressed it openly in an interview to Sri Devaraya Kulkarni (Recorded in the Souvenir – Birth Centenary of Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji). In spite of being the head of a great institution, the *Kāñcī Pīṭhādīśa* sent his successor designate Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamiji to Holenarsipur to pay respects to Swamiji (This information is given by HH Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamiji Himself). Moreover financial assistance was rendered by the *Kāñcī Kāmakoti Pīṭha* towards publication of Swamiji’s works.

Acceptance of Swamiji’s views with regard to mutual *adhyāsa* as *avidyā* by the *Kāñcī* pontiff is **confirmed from the recorded speech in Sanskrit rendered by His Holiness** (The audio cassette of the same is available with many of His devotees. The recorded speech is transcribed by Dr. K. Prashanth, Dept of Sanskrit Vivekananda College, Chennai – 4, titled *Janmarāhityam katham sambhaviṣyati* (Meaning: How birthlessness will take place?). In that discourse His Holiness states that “The cause of appearance of duality is *mithyājñānam* i.e. *anyathājñānam* (to know a thing as what it is not) and by the destruction of this *anyathājñānam* alone birthlessness is attained.” Here it is seen that His Holiness refers to misapprehension (*adhyāsa*) as the cause of duality and not to any *mūlāvidyā*, the destruction of which ensures birthlessness as held by the traditionalists.

The then pontiff of *Śr̥ṅgerī Śārada Pīṭha* late Sri Abhinavavidyātīrtha Swamiji had paid a visit to Holenarsipur to meet Swamiji. His Holiness had offered financial aid for the publication of Swamiji’s magnum opus the VPP at that time. His Holiness said on that occasion, “By my personal visit many of my doubts have been solved. Having dedicated your whole life for the propagation of *Śaṅkara-siddhānta* you are a true devotee indeed.” (Gangoli D.B 1997 ibid Page 30 and The Publisher’s Note to VPP).

The pontiff of *Dwāraka Śārada Pīṭha* had offered financial assistance towards the publication of Swamiji’s book, *Māṇḍukya Rahasya Vivṛtiḥ* (Acknowledgements *Māṇḍukya Rahasya Vivṛtiḥ* by Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji).

Moreover, almost all of the contributors to the *Vedāntavidvadgoṣṭhī* speaking against *mūlāvidyā* were groomed under the traditionalists’ school of Vedanta only, who on finding the Truth in the Swamiji’s stand shifted their allegiance to Śaṅkara alone devoid of the sub-commentators.

54. Straying away from the main focus of the topic admitted by M to be “The fidelity of the post-Śaṅkara commentators to Śaṅkara on *avidyā*” M imputes unto Swamiji Historical/Social considerations, traditional and modern influences etc. Under this head M makes baseless surmises and false allegations & statements. Mutually contradicting statements are not in wanting. Here also M exhibits lack of knowledge not only of Swamiji’s views but also that of others like Bhāskarācārya, Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa etc. M also resorts to selective presentation of facts and thus exhibits her crusader’s zeal to portray Swamiji in as poor light as possible. Every of this above made remarks are substantiated herein below.
55. M states in page 229 that “Swamiji’s exposure to traditional instruction was limited. Virūpākṣa Śāstrī did not go into great detail with his student, because he felt that his knowledge of Sanskrit was limited and that he lacked expertise in grammar, logic and other disciplines... His study was thus confined to a very simple reading of *Upaniṣad-bhāṣyas* with no study of *Brahmasūtra bhāṣya* or the explanatory texts that would normally be part of the traditional study.”
- This is a baseless surmise. Swamiji studied Bhagavadgītā *Bhāṣya* under K. A. Krishnaswamy Iyer (Page 9 of D. B. Gangoli) and also under Sri Mahābhāgavata of Kurtukoti. Not only Brahma Sutra *bhāṣya* but also *Pañcapādikā Vivaraṇa* was studied under Virūpākṣa Śāstrī. It was at the time of study of *Pañcapādikā Vivaraṇa* that MVN was being compiled. Swamiji availed of additional benefit of learning higher vedantic lessons from Virūpākṣa Śāstrī (D. B. Gangoli page 16) Swamiji’s correct presentation of the views of the sub-commentators, whenever they are taken up for refutation in his works is sufficient to prove M wrong.
 - M states that “Mahābhāgavata arranged for Swamiji’s initiation at the hands of Sri Śivābhinava Narasiṃha Bharati and for his subsequent study of *bhāṣya* with Virūpākṣa Śāstrī.”
This is incorrect. It was Bettagery Krishna Śāstrī, who arranged for the initiation (page 13 & 15 D.B Gangoli). Swamiji and his friend Chidambaraiah went themselves to Virūpākṣa Śāstrī to learn *bhāṣya* (Page 13, D.B Gangoli).
 - The statement that “Swamiji’s knowledge of Sanskrit was limited and that he lacked expertise in Grammar, logic and other disciplines” is totally incorrect. The very works of Swamiji in Sanskrit are enough to prove M otherwise. MVN a great polemic which was written while Swamiji was studying the *Pañcapādikā Vivaraṇa* under Virūpākṣa Śāstrī is itself a sufficient proof of Swamiji’s knowledge of Sanskrit and his familiarity with logic etc. Even the comment on MVN by Virūpākṣa Śāstrī that “The style of writing of the treatise is good” (Page 21 of D.B Gangoli) sufficiently proves Swamiji’s command over Sanskrit.
 - M states that “Grammar, logic and other disciplines are considered as prerequisite to the study of *bhāṣya*.” This is grossly incorrect. Śaṅkara does not treat these as the prerequisites for the study of his *Bhāṣyas*. In fact he expressly prohibits an aspirant’s endeavor in *Tarka Śāstra* (logic), calling it as anti-vedic and as not being adopted in any respect by the adepts of in the tradition. (BSBh 2.2.17 & 18). Śaṅkara also negates the prerequisite of expertise in other disciplines like *pūrvamīmāṃsā* etc (BSBh 1.1.1). Since the *Bhāṣyas* are in Sanskrit it goes without saying that a person has to have knowledge of that language. The only prerequisite for learning *bhāṣya* according to Śaṅkara is the *sādhana catuṣṭaya* (Four-fold means) (BSBh 1.1.1).
 - Intention of M in quoting a purported personal communication in this regard which is contrary to facts is not known.
56. M states on page 229 that “When Satchidanandendra submitted the manuscript of MVN to Virūpākṣa Śāstrī, he wrote on the manuscript ‘It should not be respected by those who are desirous of liberation’ He observed that ‘Satchidanandendra did not know *sampradāya*’, placing him outside of the advaita tradition”. Except for the last part i.e. Virūpākṣa Śāstrī’s comment with regard to tradition, M’s statement is contrary to facts. It was Maharaja of Mysore who forwarded the manuscript of MVN to Virūpākṣa Śāstrī and not Swamiji.

Virūpākṣa Śāstrī opined on that manuscript “The style of the writing of the treatise is good, but the exposition of the subject matter is against the tradition” (Page 21 of D.B Gangoli). The statement of M that “Virūpākṣa Śāstrī wrote on the manuscript ‘It should not be respected by those who are desirous of liberation’.” is baseless.

57. In page 230 M equates *avidyā* as per Swamiji’s with that of Maṇḍana, Bhāskarācārya and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa. The whole Para is replete with incorrect and contradictory statements.

- a. M says “Satchidanandendra’s interpretation of *avidyā* is similar to Bhāskara’s view that *avidyā* is the misapprehension of the self as the non-self and its cause, is not knowing Brahman.” This is incorrect. The place where Bhāskara has defined *avidyā* in such a way is not cited. According to Bhāskara in his *bhāṣya* on the sutra 1.1.4, *avidyā* is defined as – “The wrong knowledge in respect of the not-self like body etc and the lack of knowledge of the nature of Brahman, both these, the knowing and the not knowing constitute the *avidyā* of the *jīva*, who is real.” This is different from the *avidyā* of Swamiji who strictly follows the definition of *avidyā* given by Śāṅkara in his introduction to BSBh. Śāṅkara’s *avidyā* is mutual *adhyāsa* of the nature of the mixing up of the *Satya* (real) and *anṛta*(unreal). Moreover, according to Śāṅkara, the *jīva*hood is just a deceptive appearance. Thus not only *avidyā* of Swamiji and Bhāskara are different, but also M’s presentation Bhāskara’s *avidyā* incorrect.
- b. M says “Like Maṇḍana, Satchidanandendra finds that *avidyā* is not a material cause (*upādāna kāraṇā*) or a power (*śakti*).” Here also there are two defects – self contradiction and incorrect understanding.

Under note 11 on page 214 where Maṇḍana is attributed with defining the distinction of a concealing **causal *avidyā*** and its projected effect, also called *avidyā*. On page 218 M states that “The concept of *avidyā* as a two-fold power, one concealing and one projecting, existing in a cause-effect relationship is accepted by Maṇḍana.” In contrast to these two statements, here M says “Like Maṇḍana Satchidanandendra finds that *avidyā* is **not a material cause (*upādāna kāraṇā*) or a power (*śakti*).**” Moreover, according to Maṇḍana there are two *avidyās* non-apprehension and misapprehension which are placed in a cause-effect relationship.

- c. M says “Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa wrote a treatise on Vedānta in his *Vaiyākaraṇa-siddhanta-laghumanjuṣā*”. This is incorrect. The work is a treatise on *Vyākaraṇa* and not Vedānta. While discussing the subject of “wordy expression of mental objects”, Nāgeśa considers the topic of illusory objects and as a corollary criticizes the *mūlāvidyā* by substantiating his stand on the authority of Bhāmatī’s views.
- d. M is again wrong in stating that Nāgeśa like Satchidanandendra rejects *Pañcapādikā*’s characterization of *avidyā* as existent (*bhāvarūpa*), indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*) and beginningless (*anādi*). Nāgeśa does not reject the characterization – interterminable. He clearly says *adhyāsa* is *anirvacanīya* (page 279 of his work). Swamiji on the other hand is against the characterizing of *avidyā* as existent and indeterminable, since Śāṅkara does not characterize so. Swamiji’s *avidyā* is beginningless as Śāṅkara describes it and Nāgeśa’s *avidyā* has an origin.
- e. M once again is wrong in stating that “This is consistent with Satchidanandendra’s representation of *avidyā* purely as an effect.” Swamiji’s *avidyā* based on Śāṅkara’s definition, is beginningless and therefore not an effect.
- f. M states “... the seed for his (Swamiji’s) understanding *avidyā* only as superimposition can be seen here (in Nāgeśa).” This is too farfetched and baseless. The seed of Swamiji’s understanding is Śāṅkara’s definition itself given in the Introduction to BSBh, *Upadeśasahasrī* (2nd chapter of prose). *Bṛhadāraṇyaka bhāṣya* (4.3.34), *GitaBh* (13.26) etc.
- g. Thus in page 239 M has equated the views of Swamiji, Maṇḍana, Bhāskarācārya and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa. M states in page 215 that Swamiji relies on Śāṅkara’s definition. This amounts to equating Śāṅkara’s *avidyā* with that of Maṇḍana, Bhāskarācārya and Nāgeśa.

58. Satchidanandendra's emphasis on the method of analysis of the three states of experience as the best (M on page 231), as was shown earlier, is based on the express statement of Śaṅkara in his *bhāṣya* on Gaudapāda kārīkā (4.87), while introducing the topic of examination of the three states as "Now then, commences the exposition of his own (Gaudapāda's) method."
59. M states in page 231 "The principal features of Satchidanandendra's thought, which can be traced to the works of these authors, are a focus on the *avasthātraya-prakriyā* with the presentation of sleep as a state through which one can gain insight into reality, the absence of potentiality or ignorance in that state, and a subjective idealism in the waking state." The comments on this are as follows.
- Presentation of sleep as a state through which one can gain insight to reality is not the opinion of only Swamiji but also that of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara says (in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad bhāṣya* 4-4-6) "The *prāṇa* does not depart in respect of the desireless person, who **intuits** the self as the attributeless, non-dual, of the nature of unbroken light of consciousness **as is in the state of deep sleep.**" Verse 10.13 of *Upadeśasahasrī* may also be referred to in this regard.
 - The absence of ignorance in that state is again based on the express statement of Śaṅkara and *Śruti* and is a matter of universal experience. This was already dealt in Para 25.
 - M's imputation of the school of subjective idealism to Swamiji is incorrect as shown already in Para 9 and 46.
60. M states on page 231 that "In addition, there is the emphasis on intuition and rational inquiry, and the subordination of the authority of scripture (*Śruti*) to these modes of inquiry" and in page 233 that "he (Swamiji) also ruled out *Śruti* as the only *pramāṇa*, subordinating it to reason and one's own experience." In this regard it is pertinent to look at what Śaṅkara says.
- Śruti* and the other holy works are not the sole means of right knowledge in the inquiry into the nature of Brahman, as they are in the case of inquiry into the nature of dharma; but *Śruti* etc and intuition and accessories also are the means here according to the context. For the knowledge of Brahman has to culminate in intuition and relates to an existing entity, (BSBh1.1.2).
 - A text is not going to change a fact but only to make it known as it is. (*praśnopaniṣad bhāṣya* 6.3)
 - Even a hundred texts declaring that fire is cold or that it emits no light would not be a valid source of knowledge. (GitaBh. 18.66)

From the above, what is gathered is, according to Śaṅkara "scriptural authority alone, cannot decide the nature of Brahman. It depends not merely on the verbal authority, but also on whether or not the knowledge arising out of the Vedic teaching leads to the direct intuition of the Brahman. Swamiji strictly follows Śaṅkara in this regard. Therefore if M accuses Swamiji of subordinating *Śruti* to reason and experience, it amounts to Śaṅkara being accused. Moreover, the *Śruti* itself advocates the use of reasoning and contemplation as direct means for realization.

It is not that, *Śruti* is relegated in terms of being a valid means of knowledge, as M suggests, the emphasis being, *Śruti* is not the valid means of knowledge just because it is the *Śruti*. Moreover, one may refer to the chapter titled "*Śāstra* - the one means of self-knowledge" in the book "Salient features of Śaṅkara's Vedānta (1990)" authored by Swamiji, to understand Swamiji's views on how the *Śruti* operates as a *pramāṇa*.

61. In page 232 M comes out with another of her ingenious surmises. M sees Swami Vivekananda's influence in Swamiji's mission to discover the "real" Śaṅkara in order to restore the Vedānta to its authentic form. This is based on the information that Swamiji was commissioned to translate Vivekananda's Rājayoga into Kannada. Probably this is the height of M's farfetched and baseless surmises. M says "Swamiji took

Vivekananda's call for a retrieval of the 'real' Śaṅkara, delving deeply into textual studies to recover the authentic Śaṅkara." Even if accepting this for a while was it wrong for Swamiji to delve deeply into textual studies? How does this affect the result of such an in depth study by which the contrast between Śaṅkara and the Sub-commentators proclaiming to represent Śaṅkara was laid bare before the masses?

Thus the influences galore on Swamiji according to M is – Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa through Mahābhāgavata (Page 230 and note 30), the socio-political influences of Swamiji's time (page 229), V Subramanya Iyer (Page 231 & 232), K.A. Krishnaswamy Iyer (Note 14, page 231 & 232 and Swami Vivekananda (page 232) – all of them have significantly influenced Swamiji – all these influences within his 40 years of age.

If only some one reads aloud this influences galore in the precincts of Swamiji's Samadhi (place where his mortal remains are buried), he would give out a sigh in relief for not being burdened with two more of such unconscious influences – Rāmānuja, whose *Śrībhāṣya* and some other works were translated by Swamiji and Buddha whose Dhammapada was also translated by him.

62. In page 233, M states "(Satchidanandendra held -) Śaṅkara does not postulate any theory like that of *mūlāvidyā*, or require the acceptance of *pramāṇas*. Rather, he begins with a discussion of *adhyāsa* and appeals to universal Intuition." This is quoted from Swamiji's work – "Misconceptions about Śaṅkara". While quoting, M mixes up the original sequence of the sentences, which is likely to mislead the reader and the intended emphasis is lost in the process. In the original, the second part of the first sentence given above – "or require the acceptance of *pramāṇas*" does not follow the first part. The original is thus "Śaṅkara begins his *bhāṣya*, with an introduction dealing with *adhyāsa* – otherwise called *avidyā* without postulating any theory or acceptance *pramāṇas* (the valid sources of right knowledge) and appeals to universal intuition through out." The sentence "It is not right to say that Śaṅkara postulates a hypothetical *avidyā*" appears subsequently as a new para. The emphasis is that *avidyā* of Śaṅkara is not a hypothetical postulate but a matter of Universal experience and it does not require to be proved by *pramāṇas* in contrast to the traditionalists' theory of *mūlāvidyā* which they attempt to prove by various *pramāṇas*.

63. On page 233, M states that according to Swamiji "Śaṅkara could be legitimated in western terms" in so far as "he (Śaṅkara) is not theological because *Śruti* is not the final *pramāṇa* that being oneself." This is not at all correct. No where it is stated that *Śruti* is not the final *pramāṇa*. What is stated is *Śruti* is not the only means of knowledge as in theology but *Śruti* etc and intuition and other accessories also are the means here according to the context. In fact *śāstra* is the ultimate means of knowledge (*antyapramāṇa*) which removes the knowing nature itself superimposed on Atman and simultaneously with that removal, it ceases to be a means of knowing just as the means of dream knowledge ceases to be such on waking (GitaBh 2.69).

64. In page 233, M says "With this commitment to independent rational inquiry, as opposed to an exegesis of scripture along traditional lines..." This is incorrect. Swamiji does not suggest any rational inquiry independent of the scriptures as M imputes. Non-vedic reasoning is in fact discarded as means of knowledge of self. *Śāstraic* reasoning on the other hand, based on universal intuition is held to be subservient to self realization even by the *Śruti* itself. Swamiji explicitly states in page 23 of his "Salient Features of Śaṅkara's Vedanta" that - "That is why the reason proposed by the *Śruti*, claims superiority over any other ordinary speculative reason. It is based upon universal experience, while the other speculations are barren since they have no such support. Therefore no dry reasoning can be admitted here under the pretext that there is a text recommending reason." This is an echo of BSBh 2.1.6. Thus Swamiji's appeal to rational inquiry is not an appeal to dry speculation but to inquiry on the lines suggested by the *Śruti*. Therefore there is no opposition to the explanations of scripture as alleged by M.

65. M states in page 236 "Post-Śaṅkara commentators, both critics and defenders of Śaṅkara engage with ideas whose origin can be traced to Śaṅkara..." This is factually incorrect. Not all ideas dealt by the critics and

defenders can be traced to Śaṅkara. The most important being the *mūlāvidyā* and its various aspects of nature, number, locus, object, cessation etc. The substantiation of *avidyā* by *Śruti* statements and other *pramāṇas* is also not traceable to Śaṅkara.

66. M says in page 236 “His (Swamiji’s) standard for determining authenticity in advaita is Śaṅkara, which the tradition would not contest, but the focus on a single person as representative of tradition is foreign to Advaita tradition of *paramparā*.” The proponents of the traditionalists will themselves not agree with the later part of the sentence “But the focus on...” Swamiji would have had no objection if the proponents of the traditionalists had admitted this. But which at no cost, they would, for it is Śaṅkara that they would want to represent through their views.

In this regard, it is pertinent to look at Śaṅkara himself. In his *bhāṣyas*, one comes across his criticisms of other schools of Vedānta, all of them being non-dualistic. Śaṅkara even labels them as not conforming to the vedantic tradition. In this case, will M include such schools condemned by Śaṅkara within the vedantic tradition? If she does, will the traditionalists approve of it?

67. M says in page 236 “Tradition on the other hand, works to reconcile divergent views while subordinating the views of any given person to the vision of non-duality.”

Why can’t the same standard be adopted with respect to Swamiji also? Swamiji does not compromise on the non-duality. Rather even according to M, he follows Śaṅkara strictly to the exclusion of others. So, instead of levelling charges of being opposed to tradition, why is he not absorbed into it as another proponent of Śaṅkara?

68. M in page 236 states that “His (Swamiji’s) minimizing the status of *Śruti* as a *pramāṇa*, giving primacy to reason, circumventing the need for a teacher, and oral transmission, finding the text an adequate source of knowledge, and his generally philological/historical approach, along with problematizing the contradictions in the works of the post-Śaṅkara advaita commentators are all aspects of his work that deny his validation by the advaita tradition.”

Here M enumerates the grounds for throwing Swamiji out of Advaita tradition, which are considered hereafter

- a. First and foremost it should be ascertained whether at all there is a set of standards prescribed, on the basis of which one can be said to conform to the advaita tradition or otherwise. Is there a set of rules which particularize the tenets of advaita, confirmation or deviation with respect to which makes one fall into the tradition or out of it? Do the points mentioned above by M for throwing Swamiji out of advaita tradition find place in such a set of standards prescribed? What is the source of yardstick adopted by M in this regard? These are some of the basic questions that have to be answered. Above all should Swamiji be considered as an outcast just because M says so? We have seen **the favourable disposition of the proclaimed custodians of Advaita tradition i.e. the pontiffs of various Śaṅkarācārya Mutts towards Swamiji** (Para 53). Even if we take for granted that M has succeeded in showing that Swamiji is outside the Advaita tradition, it is pertinent to note that M has not been able to show even remotely that Swamiji is outside of Śaṅkara’s tradition of Advaita.
- b. The repeated acquisition of minimizing the status of *Śruti* as a *pramāṇa* and giving primacy to reason has already been dealt with earlier and it was shown that this acquisition will equally apply to Śaṅkara, whom Swamiji follows strictly. Śaṅkara’s statement with regard to reason and intuition are already cited. *Śruti* itself proposes reasoning as an immediate means to dawn of knowledge. Moreover, Swamiji does not undermine the status of *Śruti* as a *pramāṇa*. In fact, he advocates that even the reasoning to be followed is not any dry speculation but that put forward by *Śruti*. In his “Salient features of Śaṅkara’s Vedānta” (page 25), he quotes Śaṅkara’s statement in BSBh on 2.1.6 with regard to the kinds of reasoning, the first of which is the examination of the three states. In the

VPP, 3 full pages commencing from page 49, Swamiji details out how the āgama i.e. the method of teaching adopted by the *Śruti* and the reasoning are subservient to the intuition of reality. Here he clearly says that the reasoning as shown by *Śruti* is to be adopted and that speculative reasoning on the basis of pure intellection by human beings has no place in Vedanta. Page 75 of introduction to VPP, may also be seen for Swamiji's views in this regard where Swamiji says that “*Śruti* itself lays down that Atman is to be thought over, besides being heard only. Only dry speculation not based upon experience has no place here.” This view of Swamiji is also found on page 95 of introduction to *Māṇḍukya Rahasya Vivṛtiḥ*. Moreover the whole of the fourth canto of MVN is devoted to *Śruti pramāṇa* where he extensively quotes from the *Śruti* to substantiate his stand. Even while introducing the methodology of examination of the three states in the third canto of MVN he uses the word *śrauti* i.e. the method advocated by the *Śruti* (Page 85 of MVN).

- c. M's another baseless allegation is that Swamiji circumvents the need for a teacher and oral transmission. In this regard attention of the readers is drawn to the following statements of Swamiji in his works.
- i. He (the ignorant man) reverts to a more discriminating and considerate mode of life and acting upon the advice of Vedanta and a **wise teacher** gets enlightenment. (*Vedāntavidvadgoṣṭhī*. Intro - page 41)
 - ii. When one intuits his own true nature by discarding *avidyā* by means of the teachings of **Śruti and Ācārya**... The knowledge dawns **solely on account of Vedanta and Ācārya**.(VPP page 47 - translated)
 - iii. Therefore knowing of Brahman is **dependent upon the teaching of Ācārya**, knowing the Vedanta tradition.(VPP page 96 - translated)
 - iv. Thus the means of knowledge like faith, perseverance, **servicing the Guru** etc practiced cumulatively or alternatively depending upon the qualification of the aspirant become a tool for being qualified to hearing of *Śruti* etc and dawn of knowledge.(VPP page 99 - translated)
 - v. ... For both of these facts are quite understandable in so far as Brahman is reality, to be known **only through the guidance of a Guru** and there is need for *Śāstra* to treat of this paramātman (the supreme self) and the recommendation to the seeker to approach a teacher (page 115 - *Śuddha Śaṅkara Prakriyā Bhāskarā*, English edition 2001).

All the above citations, except for the last, are found in the very works of Swamiji referred to by M in her paper.

Probably this allegation is based on page 109 of “Misconceptions of Śaṅkara” where Swamiji advises the earnest student of Śaṅkara's teachings to carefully observe certain rules during the course of the study. There, the second rule reads as “Read the original for yourself as far as possible.” This statement, if read out of context will mislead the reader. This statement should be seen in the light of the previous rule and also to whom the work “Misconceptions of Śaṅkara” is addressed to as stated in the preface of that book. This work is for the earnest students who become bewildered in their attempt to ascertain the exact teaching of Śaṅkara in the wake of mutually conflicting sub-commentaries, each of them claiming to present Śaṅkara's thought, being taught to them. **Therefore the advice “read the original” is to those who have already been taught by their respective Gurus and on the basis of which they find themselves confused by the mutually conflicting views, all imputed to Śaṅkara.** The second set of readers to whom this book is addressed to is the professors and scholars who undertake to write on the subject in English. Here again, since they have already entered the field of Vedanta, most of whose interest in Vedanta being only academic, a direct reading of the originals will enable them to make a comparative study and there by sift the non-Śaṅkara tenets from that of Śaṅkara's.

Moreover, in the present days, in the paucity of teachers who teach the original *Bhāṣyas*, what is the way out for those sincere seekers of truth, **who with unflinching faith in Śaṅkara, have surrendered to him totally**, to help them cross the cycle of birth and death? For persons having such faith, Śaṅkara himself becomes their Guru incognito and the *Bhāṣyas* start making sense to those readers. Further, there is no fear of going astray since at every step they have the tool of verification by appeal to experience. Thus it is not the case that Swamiji circumvents the need for a teacher.

- d. M finds fault in Swamiji's "Finding the text an adequate source of knowledge." By the word text, it is presumed that M means the original *Bhāṣyas* of Śaṅkara. If the original text is not found adequate and is found to be wanting in any respect, then it amounts to undermining Śaṅkara's ability to present his views in a candid and comprehensive manner so as to serve the purpose for which he composed his works. In this regard let us consider the time when the various mutually conflicting commentaries had not yet been written on the *Bhāṣyas*. At that time, all the followers of Śaṅkara then had no option but to follow only his *bhāṣyas* without the aid of any commentaries. Applying M's yard stick, all of such followers should be considered as outside of Advaita tradition for following the *bhāṣya* alone. If it be said that at no point of time there was an absence of commentary since *Pañcapādikā* authored by Padmapāda the direct disciple of Śaṅkara was very much there. The objection cannot be sustained since it is still not established with evidence internally or externally that *Pañcapādikā* is from the pen of a direct disciple of Śaṅkara.

For a while let us take it for granted that *Pañcapādikā* is a direct disciple of Śaṅkara. In such a case what was the need for all other commentaries? Did the other commentators not have the faith that *Pañcapādikā* correctly represents the view of Śaṅkara? If they themselves being closer in time doubted the loyalty of *Pañcapādikā* to Śaṅkara, what is wrong in others who have come centuries later to doubt its loyalty? Another pertinent question that arises is what was the need for writing *Pañcapādikā* itself? Does it not amount to undermining Śaṅkara's ability to present his views to those qualified seekers in such a way that they understand it correctly? If *Pañcapādikā* has come to elucidate Śaṅkara in more detail then did the author do justice to the job taken up, since *Pañcapādikā* itself had to be further explained by *Vivarāṇa*? Author of *Vivarāṇa* is not said to be a direct disciple of the author of *Pañcapādikā* and we find the *Vivarāṇa* also to differ from the views of *Pañcapādikā* in certain aspects. Therefore, is it not sane to follow the original text only, to overcome this chaos?

- e. Swamiji's problematizing the contradictions in the works of post-Śaṅkara advaita commentators, according to M, places him out of the advaita tradition.

Here M admits the contradictions in the works of post-Śaṅkara commentators, but finds fault with "the problematizing of such contradictions". Is it not the presence of contradictions itself a problem, which does not call for any further problematizing. Why at all so many commentaries on the same work and that too mutually conflicting? Wouldn't it have been wiser for the tradition not to have presented the conflicting commentaries in the first place rather than presenting them and then trying to reconcile the contradictions? Wouldn't it have been better, if only the commentators presented their views independently without claiming to represent Śaṅkara? These are the pertinent questions that arise in the minds of an earnest student.

Now let us look at Śaṅkara, he also condemns many of his advaitic predecessors. Among the advaitins themselves, there were schools that supposed that the *jīva* nature of Brahman is also real and that the soul's union with Brahman has to be attained only after death by means of certain practices enjoined in the *Śrutis*. They likewise differed among themselves in their attitude with regard to the relation of the world and Brahman and with regard to final release and its means. Śaṅkara's school itself, while agreeing with others being advaitic, differed from them all in adopting a particular method of its own in presenting the vedantic truth. Śaṅkara however, was by no means

the originator of this method for it had been handed down by the line of teachers belonging to a holy tradition.

In BSBh 1.4.22 while dealing with three different views on the meaning of a particular *Śruti*, Śaṅkara upholds one of them (Kāśakṛtsna's) as conforming to the *Śruti*, Not only he rejects the other two views but also says that those who insist on distinction in Atman, they annul the purport of the Vedantas and verily obstruct the right knowledge which is the door for liberation, according to them liberation becomes attainable by actions and ephemeral, also they do not conform to reason. Now, applying the norms of M, Śaṅkara should also be considered outside the advaita tradition for instead of reconciling the opposing views he has criticized two of them and sided with the third view (of Kāśakṛtsna) finding it in conformity with *Śruti* and the other views as opposed to reason.

Even within the tradition, let us take an example. Anubhūtiśvarūpācārya, otherwise known as *Prakaṭārthakāra*, believed to be the Vidyā Guru of the famous Ānandagiri, in his independent commentary on Śaṅkara's BSBh makes a **'courteous'** remark about Vācaspati Mīśra the author of *Bhāmatī* – "Vācaspati is but a follower of Maṇḍana's posterior and is **ignorant of the meaning of *Sutrabhāṣya***... hates the very *sannyāsa āśrama* (3.4.47)" The author of *Kalpataru* reasons out the issue and says that Vācaspati Mīśra is **NOT ignorant of the meaning of *Sutrabhāṣya***. Is this mutually contradicting view not problematic for a sincere student, who having staked his all for the sake of liberation has come to the feet of Śaṅkara full of hope? Should not he in these circumstances look at what Śaṅkara himself says in this regard? It would not do to circumvent the situation by saying that both are right in their own ways since the issue does not affect the non-duality. *Prakaṭārthakāra* says *Bhāmatīkara* is ignorant of meaning of Sutra *Bhāṣya* i.e. the ignorance imputed is not in respect of any insignificant issue but to the whole of the *Bhāṣya*. Moreover, how to follow the *Bhāmatī*, who hates the *sannyāsa āśrama* (as per *Prakaṭārthakāra*), which is the basic qualification for the study of Vedanta as per Śaṅkara. Moreover, since both of them claim to explain Śaṅkara both cannot be correct at the same time. One of the two has to differ from Śaṅkara and that one will have to be regarded as outside of Śaṅkara's advaitic tradition. This is just one example.

69. Coming towards the end of the discussion on the traditionality of Swamiji M gives her verdict on page 237 "His (Swamiji's) concept of tradition as static rather than dynamic is anathema to both traditions." What a courteous remark full of kindness about the person who is regarded by the Sage of *Kāñcī*, HH Sri Chandraśekharendra Saraswati Swamiji, the 68th Pontiff of *Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha* as **the very personification of the phrase "āsupterāmṛteḥ kālam nayet vedantacintayā (right upto bed and right upto death one should spend the time in vedantic thoughts)"** and who was praised by HH Sri Abhinavavidyātīrtha Swamiji, the then pontiff of *Śṛṅgerī* Mutt as **"being a true devotee indeed of Śaṅkara"**. Curses are not new to Swamiji. Even during his lifetime one of the adversaries, a staunch advaitic traditionalist even cursed Swamiji that his tongue be torn to a thousand pieces. Swamiji's comparative study of *Śaṅkara-bhāṣya* and the commentaries and his single devotion to Śaṅkara, by strictly adhering to him word for word, are solely to be blamed for inviting disparaging remarks from his adversaries.

70. Lot has been said so far; false allegations and baseless surmises were brought to light; statements factually incorrect were exposed; citations substantiating certain statements were shown to be out of context and in some cases self-defeating; statements attributed to Swamiji, but not found in the originals were discovered; incomplete and incorrect understanding of not only Śaṅkara and Swamiji but also the views of traditionalists were enumerated; quotations made partially and out context were pointed out; issues raised, even though extraneous to the admitted scope were reviewed; withholding of complete facts and resort to partial reporting were singled out; how finding fault in Swamiji amounts to finding fault in Śaṅkara was shown; translations not faithful to the original were pointed out; self-contradictory statements were laid bare; **most**

important of all, how not a single ground of Swamiji against the tenability of *Mūlāvidyā* is controverted, was shown;

However what is yet to be shown is the final outcome of the question – **fidelity to Śaṅkara**, admitted to be the main focus of M’s paper. In this regard attention of readers is drawn to the following statements of M.

- a. He (Swamiji) bases this (*avidyā* means mutual *adhyāsa* of the self and the not-self) on a definition of *avidyā* given by Śaṅkara in his introduction to BSBh. (Page 215)
- b. It (Swamiji’s understanding of *mithyā*) is based on *satya* and *anṛta* in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad Bhāṣya* (2.1) BSBh (2.1.11), *Kāṭhakopaniṣad Bhāṣya*(1.2.14) and *Upadeśasahasrī* – prose (2.81) (page 224)
- c. For Satchidanandendra, on the other hand the focus is entirely on Śaṅkara.
- d. The question that informed his entire life’s work can be formulated as “What did Śaṅkara say?” (Page 236).
- e. He deals with possible points of contentions in the wake of other commentaries by measuring them against Śaṅkara. (Page 236)
- f. The difference between Satchidanandendra and the tradition on this point (measurement with reference to Śaṅkara) is a radical one. (Page 236)
- g. Satchidanandendra effectively places Śaṅkara above the tradition and is willing to separate Śaṅkara from tradition on a point of conflict. (Page 236)

The verdict is clear. M has vindicated Swamiji, though inadvertently, by stating that Swamiji follows Śaṅkara out and out. No qualms on account of Swamiji being treated as an outcast from the ‘Advaitic tradition’ so long as he is admitted to follow Śaṅkara. What more can the earnest seekers want, than the confirmation of unflinching loyalty of Swamiji to Śaṅkara and Śaṅkara alone?

71. The review concludes here with the answer to an important question – What should be the ideal standard to be followed to determine the conformity of a school of thought to the Advaitic tradition?

A system of thought can be rightly said to conform to Advaitic tradition, not just because it has come down from ages; not because a vast majority of people **believe** it to be advaitic; not because the authorship is attributed to revered names; not because it gives room for accommodating totally conflicting views; not because it logically refutes the Dvaita systems; **but because** it enables a true seeker, who in contrast to a mere academician, has forsaken his everything worldly, for the sake of realization of the Ultimate Truth and who is possessed of the required mental disciplines and discerning ability, to intuit the truth of Advaita in entirety **in his this very lifetime**, by providing him the necessary methodology of approach. If such a true seeker following such methodology intuits the truth for himself wherein no traces of nescience is left over even while living and revels in the eternal bliss, then that school of thought and that alone can be rightly considered to conform to the Advaitic tradition. Swamiji’s school in following Śaṅkara strictly has been proved to be so fruitful. Living still, amongst us, are those gifted few who have reaped the benefits of Swamiji’s teachings of Śaṅkara “as Śaṅkara says” and having intuited the unity of self find themselves to be the abode of eternal wisdom, happiness and equipoise. Many more are there who having renounced everything worldly, are engaged full time in the exclusive study of Śaṅkara alone and in the contemplation of self on the lines suggested by Śaṅkara and Swamiji. In light of this, the readers of this review may take the hint from Śaṅkara’s words and rest in peace in Śaṅkara alone– “The knower of Vedic teaching, leaves the cause of disagreement exclusive to the disputants themselves and rests in perfect peace being safeguarded from them all, on account of knowing of Reality (*Praśnopaniṣad Bhāṣya* 6.3)”.

śaṁ nah karotu śaṅkaraḥ

Om tat sat