



DEVADATTA KĪRTIDEVA AŚVAMĪTRA

🇬🇧 4 – THE *ADHYĀROPĀPAVĀDA* APPLICATION TO THE MANIFESTATION, MAINTENANCE AND
DISSOLUTION OF THE WORLD: *SRṢṬI-STHITI-SAMHĀRA VICĀRA*

In several passages, the *Upaniṣads* exhort the inquiring on Brahman, as if the individual were the knower and Brahman the object of knowledge. Thus, assuming that *jīvātman* is other from Brahman, they assert that Brahman is the cause of manifestation¹, maintenance and dissolution of the world, and that it penetrates the manifested world as *jīva*. At the end of its cosmic journey, the *jīva* should merge again with Brahman. The waking, dream and deep sleep states of consciousness (*avasthā*) are imagined in the same guise, as if the *jīva* would continuously come and go among them. Similarly it is assumed that *jīva* happens to continuously transmigrate between births and rebirths, death and re-deaths. Finally it is believed that the individual proceeds through different levels of knowledge to Liberation. All these explanations can only serve as tool for the *tattva vicāra*, the inquiry on *Paramātman*, using the method of *adhyāropāpavāda*. That means the *vedāntins* reject the belief that Brahman itself is the cause of manifestation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe; that indeed penetrates the world under the appearance of *jīva*, and that as such, is subject to the limitations of states of consciousness, of different lives and of the ignorance he eventually should become free from. Gauḍapāda summarizes such reality as follows:

There is no manifestation or dissolution whatsoever; no one is ever limited nor takes any initiatic path; no one burns with desire of Liberation, and no one really achieves Liberation. This is the utmost truth. (MUGK II.32)

We begin examining the use of the method of *adhyāropāpavāda* applied to the manifestation (*srṣṭi*), maintenance (*sthiti*) and reabsorption (*saṃhāra* or *pralaya*) of the world (*jagat*). For the presumed nature of individual *jīva* and the speculations on its mutations throughout states, lives and other bounding conditions, depend entirely on the belief that the manifestation is somehow real.

The texts that refer to the manifestation, maintenance, end reabsorption of the world aim at demonstrating the oneness of Brahman. They do not particularly indulge on the reality of manifestation. We can quote as example the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, which concludes in the following way after affirming that “from *Ātman* ether was born” (*TU* II.1):

For, whenever a seeker gets fearlessly established in this unperceivable, bodiless, inexpressible and unsupporting Brahman, he reaches the state of fearlessness. (TU II.7.1)

In this way the *śruti* negates that all the manifested things exist in Brahman as effects in the material cause. Also the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* affirms unequivocally that the imperishable (*akṣara*) Reality is free from any particular feature, stating that:

... which cannot be perceived and grasped, which is without cause, attributes, eyes and ears², which has neither hands nor feet³. (MuU I.1.6)

The same *Upaniṣad* proceeds with the description of the manifestation of the universe from that very imperishable principle:

¹ The term “manifestation” is often used to describe indifferently both the manifested world and its production, in line with the theological use of the term “creation”. In this chapter with “manifestation” it always and rigorously means the “act of manifestation”, distinguished from the “manifested world” corresponding to *sthiti*.

² Without *jñānendriyas*.

³ Without *karmendriyas*.





As from a fire, fully ablaze, fly off sparks, in their thousands that are akin to the fire, similarly, o my dear, from the Immutable originate different kinds of beings and objects and into It again they merge. (MuU II.1.1)

After enumerating in detail all the elements beings and objects that Brahman manifests, it concludes:

Puruṣa alone is all this comprising the karma and knowledge [tapas¹]. My dear, he who knows this supreme immortal Brahman, as existing in the hearth², destroys here the knot of avidyā. (MuU II.1.10)

Hence we deduce that the method of the manifestation etc. (*sr̥ṣṭi sthiti saṃhāra vicāra*), present in all the *Upaniṣads*, is one of the implementations of the *adhyāropāpavāda* method to *tattva vicāra*³. This method that first superimposes the universe on Brahman, at the end falsifies this idea to illustrate the oneness of *Ātman*. This method is common to the three *vedāntic Prasthānas*, i.e. *Upaniṣad*, *Bhagavad Gītā* and *Brahma Sūtra*. For instance, also the *Bhagavad Gītā* we find the following statements corresponding to the *adhyāropa*:

All living beings dwell in me, but I do not dwell in them. (BhG IX.4); Presiding over my Prakṛti I manifest this multiplicity of forms again and again. (BhG IX.8)

To *apavāda* are dedicated the following verses:

Nor are the beings really in me, just look at my Yoga [at my state of non-dual unity]. (BhG IX.5); And yet these acts do not bind me, o Dhananjaya. (BhG IX.9)

And the *Bādārayaṇa's sūtra* affirms:

For Brahman is spoken of as the cause of ether etc. [i.e. of all the manifested things] in all the Upaniṣads, uniformly on the same way description. (Brahma Sūtra -BS-, I.4.14),

commented by Śaṃkara as follows:

In the very same way that the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, the One non-dual is declared in any one of the Upaniṣads as a cause [...], and teach how the Self became multiple as in the text: "It wished: «Let me be many, let me be born»" (TU II.6), stating that the mutable, manifested things are non-different from the Manifesting one. Similarly by attributing to It the manifestation of the entire universe in the text: "It manifests all this that exists" (TU ibid.), the śruti asserts that the One and non-dual existed before manifestation. The characteristics under which Brahman is known here as the cause [of the world], are exactly the same as those under which It is known in other śrutis. (BSŚBh I.4.14)

One can find that the *śrutis* dealing with effect and cause not exhaustive, for the effect is not taken in consideration for the purpose of examining it. In other words, the purpose of the *śruti* is not to illustrate the manifestation, maintenance and dissolution of the world in detail, since the texts do not consider it useful to human life. Not even hypothetically this could be useful, as the passages dealing with the

¹ In this passage *tapas* means knowledge, *jñāna*.

² Obviously it is also an illusion to think that the *Ātman* can be localized in a spatial point as the cave of the heart.

³ There are five *prakriyā* (*pañcaprakriyā*), viz. applications of the method of the *Ātman* (or *tattva*) *vicāra*. These are the *dr̥ṣya viveka*, discrimination between the seer and what is seen; the *kārya-kāraṇa vicāra*, discussion on the non-distinction between cause and effect; the third is the *pañcakośa vicāra*, the argumentation based on the five layers of *Ātman*; the *sāmānya-viśeṣa viveka*, the solution of the specific in the general; and last the *avasthā trāya vicāra*, the highest of them all, the argumentation on the three states of Consciousness. The sources of the *dr̥ṣya* are *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Kena Upaniṣad*. *Kārya-kāraṇa* is described in *Mundaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. The *pañcakosa* is the main topic of the *Taittirīya*. The *sāmānya-viśeṣa* is discussed between Maitreyī and Yājñavalkya in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. The *avasthā trāya* is taught in *Māṇḍūkya* and *Praśna Upaniṣad*. The *sr̥ṣṭi-sthiti-saṃhāra vicāra* method is common to the first four *prakriyās*. In other texts is possible to find references to other vedāntic method, to be considered however as more detailed application of the four initial *prakriyā*. The *pañcaprakriyās* are the subject of the present and next chapters.



manifestation etc. are in any case focusing on the knowledge of Brahman only. In conclusion, all the detail concerning the manifestation maintenance and dissolution of the world aim at teaching that the effect is not other from the cause, as in the example of clay and vessel. Therefore the *vedāntins* declare:

The manifestation which is taught in various ways by means of illustrations like that of clay, metal, and sparks, is only a device for the purpose of leading the mind to the truth. There is no diversity on any account. (BSŚBh ibid.)

To better understand, it is necessary to mention the vedāntic doctrine on the relation between effect and cause (*kārya-kāraṇa sambandha*). The above mentioned *śruti* teaches that all *jīvas* are born from Brahman and in Brahman they merge:

Just as similar sparks dart forth in thousands from a fire aflame, so also, my dear, various beings are born from the Imperishable (akṣara), and are dissolved in that very same [akṣara]. (MuU II.1.1)

Other *Upaniṣads* assert very clearly that everything, subject (*viśaya*) and objects (*viśayī*), emerge from the Brahman alone:

From this alone are born the vital force, the mind and all the senses; the ether, air, fire, water, and the earth supporting all. (MuU II.1.3); It thought: «Let me become multiple, let me be born», and manifested the fire; seeing the fire it wished: «I will become multiple, I will be born.» Thus it manifested water. (ChU VI.2.3)

The *apavāda* of such cause-effect relation leads to affirm that *kārya-kāraṇa sambandha* is to be accepted only to point out that the effect is not different from the cause. In fact, several *śrutis* declare:

It is born in several ways, while he is really never born. (Taittirīya Āraṇyaka –TA-, III.13.39); Prakṛti should be taken to be Māyā [illusion] and the Great Lord to be the Māyāvin [illusionist] and by parts of his, this entire universe is pervaded. (ŚU IV.10)

Bādārayaṇa teaches this subject as follows:

Their non-difference is concluded on the basis of the word “ārambhaṇa” [in origin] and other texts. (BS II.1.14)

As usual, we rely on Śaṅkara to understand the meaning of the enigmatic aphorisms of *Brahma Sūtra*:

The effect is the world comprising the panorama of ether etc., and the cause is the Supreme Brahman. And we can conclude that the effect is non-different from the cause. How? On account of the word “ārambhaṇa” [in origin] and other texts. We shall first take up the word “ārambhaṇa”. After laying down the proposition asserting the possibility of knowing all things by knowing one particular entity, it is said, by way of supplying an illustration which is demanded by that proposition: Just as, my dear son, all that is made up of clay is known through the knowledge of a lump of clay, since the effect is only a name conjured up by speech¹ and the only reality is what is known as clay”. (ChU VI.1.4) The meaning is this: when a lump of clay is ascertained to be really clay, all that is made of clay, such as a pot, a lid or a pail also become known, since they are likewise essentially clay. For an effect is “vācārambhaṇam nāmadeyam” i.e. the effect is conjured up as existing only by speech, which calls it “a pot”, “a lid”, or “a pail”. But as a matter of fact there is nothing which may be called an effect; for it is only a name, unreal; what is known as clay is the only real thing. This is the illustration cited in the śruti for Brahman. By the word “vācārambhaṇam” used

¹ The use of the clay objects defines their apparent reality: and they are distinguished by assigning them different names. However for he who does not recognize its utility (*artha*), those objects are only clay. For all these objects are useless to a horse, a dog, a tiger. Therefore, they do not distinguish them according to name and form. For them they are only clay. This demonstrates that name and form (*nāmarūpa*) have no true reality. These are only attributes that the intellect (*buddhi*) – that is the mental faculty judging in the interest of *aham* the utility or the harmfulness of the objects – superimposed on the underlying reality.



therein, we have to infer that even in the case of that of which it is an illustration that no effect exists apart from Brahman. (BŚŚBh II.1.14)

By the word “*ādi*” [i.e. “etc.”] in “on account of texts about origin etc.” are to be cited the many texts establishing the oneness of the Self, such as, “All this has That as its essence; That is the Reality; That is the Self; That thou art (Tattvamasi)” (ChU VI.8.7); “... and this all are the Self” (BU II.4.6); “All this is but Brahman” (MU II.2.11); “All this is but the Self” (ChU XXV.2); “There is no difference whatever in It” (BU IV.4.19). (BŚŚBh Ibid.)

By affirming that the effect is not different from the cause Śaṅkara teaches that any effect arises only by illusion, with the purpose of demonstrating the knowledge of the oneness of Ātman. In conclusion there is not any effect as such. It is only ignorance that projects it and superimposes it on the cause.

Therefore in the same way that the ether [*ākāśa*, space] spaces limited by a large pot or a little one, or by any other vessel, are non-different from the cosmic ether, and in the same way that mirage water etc. are non-different from the barren soil etc., just appearing and vanishing away as they do, and being of a nature undefinable, so also we have to understand that this universe of manifoldness in the form of experiencer and experienced etc. is non-existent apart from Brahman. (BŚŚBh Ibid.)

With the following three quotations of the *Kārikās* of Gauḍapada, is confirmed the thought of Śaṅkara:

Of a real being an illusory birth alone can reasonably happen; for him whose opinion it is really born, it would be tantamount to say that what is born alone can be born. (MUGK III.27); No *jīva* is born, and there is no cause for him [from which he is to be born]. This is the highest Reality wherein nothing is born. (MUGK III.48); Birth is taught as a doctrine by the wise ones to those who hold to the doctrine that things exist because of their appearance and practical efficiency and who are always afraid of that which is unborn. (MUGK IV.42)

It is not intention of the *śrutis* to confirm the reality of the manifestation when they affirm that Brahman manifests the world, and pervades it. Their real purpose is to lead the seeker to understand that the unchangeable Brahman only appears as *jīva*. This can be inferred when *śrutis* teach the identity of *jīva* and Brahman while “entering the manifestation”. The following quotations correspond to *adhyāropa*:

Having manifested it, He entered into that very manifested world. (TU II.6); Splitting this very same seam of the hair, he entered through this opening. (Aitareya Upaniṣad -AU-, I.3.12); Let me enter in the shape of this *jīva* my own self and differentiate name and form. (ChU VI.3.2)

On the contrary the following refer to *apavāda*:

Now this One in the body of man and that One in the Sun, is one and the same. (TU II.8); He saw this very Puruṣa the all-pervading Brahman and ejaculated: «Now I have seen this Brahman!» (AiU I.3.13); All this has this [Being] for its essence, that is real, that thou art [Tattvamasi] o Śvetaketu! (ChU VI.8.7)

Śaṅkara adds these important remarks:

Now this very same cause of ether etc. Has manifested the effect [the world] and it is intuited in the particular forms of a seer, hearer, thinker and understander, as though it had entered into it. This really is [what is meant by] entering manifestation. (TU, Śaṅkara Bhāṣya –TUŚBh-, II.6); Texts relating to manifestation etc. may be reasonably understood to be meant as aids to the realization of the unity of Ātman, for this additional reason that perception of duality is derided. So we have to understand that being known in the effect in the special form [of *jīva*] is figuratively spoken of as entry into the manifested world. (BUŚBh I.4.7) Having manifested the effect beginning with ether up to and including the solid body (annamaya), it is intuited as possessing particular forms, as though it had entered into the manifested object. Therefore one should know it to be of a nature quite distinct from that of all effects, and Ānanda [*maya kośa*] distinguished



by characteristics like invisibility, as one's own Self: for teaching about entry into manifested world is meant to inculcate it. (TUŚBh III.1)

From the last quotation is evident that the method of the five layers of *Ātman* (*pañca kośa prakriyā*) is a specific application of *sr̥ṣṭi-sṭhiti-saṁhāra vicāra*, which has to be used as *adhyāropa*. For this reason the *śruti* lists five different “self” made up by *avidyā*, starting from the gross body (*sthūla śarīra*). Thus the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* affirms that in addition to the self made of food there is another made of *prāṇa*, one of mind, one of intellect, and finally one made of bliss. For each of these the selves, *śruti* enjoins a meditation, starting from the gross body onwards, **in order to reach a macrocosmic scope** (*samaṣṭi dr̥ṣ*). At the end of this list *Taittirīya* teaches that the inner Brahman is beyond the *ānandamāya kośa*:

If anyone thinks Brahman as non-existing, he himself becomes non-existent. If anyone knows that Brahman does exist, then he considers him as existing by virtue of that knowledge. (TU II.6.1)

Thus, overcoming all the selves projected by *avidyā* on *Ātman*, the *śruti* concludes that Brahman is the only substratum beyond those mental constructions, at the moment when all the bounding features disappear. Therefore *Ātman* is one non-dual and he who realize It as his own true nature, superior to *ānandamayakośa*¹, is completely free. Śaṅkara expresses this as follows:

Therefore this transcending act (saṁkramaṇam) is not attaining, nor is it the act of any one of the five selves beginning with the annamayātman. And so, as the only alternative left over, we have to take it that saṁkramaṇam is the act of that which is other than the five kośas beginning with annamāya and ending with ānandamāya and it is only knowledge that is meant by the term saṁkramaṇam².(TU II.8.5)

Therefore, *saṁkramaṇam* is the overcoming of the manifested *kośas*, viz. the realization of the own *Paramātman* nature, the Liberazione from *avidyā*. Gauḍapādācārya confirms it:

Of the kośas (sheaths) beginning with annarasamāya which have been explicated in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Ātman is the life and He is the Supreme Self which we have reasoned out by the illustration of ether [the universal space, apparently bound in pots etc.].(MUGK III.11)

Exit this world and to transmigrate in other *lokas* must be intended only from the *adhyāropa* point of view. For instance, to leave the body is described in these terms:

He has departed for he hears not, sees not, neither does he talk with the speech nor has thinking power. Then he becomes merged in the prāṇas, then speech is dissolved in him with all the names, the faculty of sight is dissolved with all forms and colours, the faculty of ear is dissolved with all sounds, the mind is dissolved with all the thought modes. When he departs from this body, he goes out indeed with all these. (Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad –, KauU-, V.3); The prāṇa goes out with him as he departs. (BU IV.4.2)

The departure from the body to reach other *lokas* is described in different ways:

Whoever goes away from this world, they all go to the moon. (KauU-, III.2); He takes this path of the Gods (devayāna) and reaches the world of Agni. (KauU-, III.3)

In other texts is described the rebirth in the *karma loka*:

From that world, he returns to this world to perform karmas. (BU-, IV.4.6)

All these statements describing the raggiungimento of a enjoyment world (*bhoga loka*) and rebirth in the *karma loka* are to be considered *adhyāropa*. This mistaken *saṁsāric* vision is rejected as follows:

He thought over like this: «Whose departure is it, due to which I also depart? Or whose stay is it due to, that I shall also have stayed?» Then He manifested prāṇa. From prāṇa He manifested decision, space, air, fire,

¹ Meaning *Brahma loka* or *Hiraṇyagarbha*.

² Being so, it cannot be considered neither an action nor the result of an action.





water, earth, indriyas, mind, food. From food He manifested force, self-control, mantras, rites, worlds and the name [the differentiating features] of the worlds. (*Praśna Upaniṣad –PU-*, VI.3-4)

The departure of the soul from the body is caused by the departure of *prāṇa*. Thus, it is not a peculiarity pertaining to *jīvātman*, being this in reality the very *Ātman*. This is the conclusion of the *śruti* that describe the Self as *aprāṇa*. Therefore Śrī Gauḍapāda affirms:

*In death and birth, in going away and coming back, and in staying in all these bodies, He is not dissimilar to the space*¹. (*MUGK III.9*)

Śaṅkara comments the thought of his *guru* as follows:

Just as the birth and death, going and coming back as well as staying in a place seemingly pertain to the jar-space, so also the birth and death etc. seemingly pertain to Ātman. (*MUGK Śaṅkara Bhāṣya – MUGKŚBh-*, III.9)

We derive that the migrations and transmigrations² of *jīvātman* are matter of *adhyāropa*. Moreover, they have been used in the *Upaniṣads* to exhort the *sādhakas* to reject the longing for such delusive fate posthumous and spur them toward *mumukṣā*.

Here in the first pāda [BS III.1], to begin with, the various ways of going to other worlds is set forth taking the Pañcāgnividyā³ for the authority This is just to induce [the disciple] to dispassionateness, for we have the śruti: “Therefore one should become dispassionateness” at the close of this section. (ChU V.10.8). (BSŚBh III.1.1, bhūmikā)

¹ I.e. omnipervasive.

² Here “Migration” means the immediate passing of the *jīva* in a *bhoga loka* to enjoy or suffer the *karma* produced during the last life. “Transmigration” here means the following rebirth in a new condition that allows the performance of rituals or the pursuit of knowledge.

³ “Knowledge of five fires”, ritual science teaching to the vedic initiate the way to obtain a better rebirth through five sacrifices to Agni. This leads to two different posthumous paths: the higher, *devayāna*, ending in the *Brahma loka* up to the end of the cosmic cycle (*kalpa*); and the lower, *pitryāna*, that ensures a favorable human rebirth. *ChU V.3.1-V.4.10; BU VI.2.1-16.*

