

The Advaita Philosophy of Sreenarayana Guru in Advaita Deepika: An Analysis of Historical Monuments in Karunagapally Taluk

A Filosofia Advaita de Sreenarayana Guru em Advaita Deepika: Uma Análise de Monumentos Históricos em Karunagapally Taluk

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ABSTRACT: India is globally recognised as the birthplace of four major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. However, these religions are just a part of India's rich philosophical landscape, which includes Vaishesika, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Vedanta focuses on the philosophy derived from the Vedas, with Advaita, articulated by Adi Shankara, playing a pivotal role in the revival of Bhakti. He established four Mutts at each corner of Bharat for Vedic learning. Sree Narayana Guru, Kerala's prominent spiritual follower of Shankara, sought to balance materialism and spirituality of Advaita Philosophy. Advaita Vedanta promotes the non-duality of the Universal Soul and the Individual Soul. Narayana Guru aimed to demonstrate how Advaita could address real-life challenges and blended it with Vedic teachings on love and service. His writings encouraged the acceptance of eternal truths and kindled a trust for knowledge among lower castes. For this end he erected many institutions like schools and religious mutts like his guru Sankaracharya. This article aims to examine

Narayana Guru's Advaita Deepika to illustrate how Advaita philosophy shaped his thoughts and actions, thereby examining the intention of Guru to start Shanmugha Vilasam Higher Secondary School in Karunagapally and other similar organisations which aimed for hindu revivalism.

KEYWORDS: Sree Narayana Guru, Advaita Philosophy, Sree Sankaracharya

RESUMO: A Índia é globalmente reconhecida como o berço de quatro grandes religiões: Hinduísmo, Budismo, Jainismo e Sikhismo. No entanto, essas religiões são apenas uma parte do rico panorama filosófico da Índia, que inclui Vaishesika, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa e Vedanta. O Vedanta concentra-se na filosofia derivada dos Vedas, com Advaita, articulado por Adi Shankara, desempenhando um papel fundamental no renascimento de Bhakti. Ele estabeleceu quatro Mutts em cada canto de Bharat para o aprendizado védico. Sree Narayana Guru, proeminente seguidor espiritual de Shankara em Kerala, buscou equilibrar o materialismo e a espiritualidade da Filosofia Advaita. O Advaita Vedanta promove a não dualidade da Alma Universal e da Alma Individual. Narayana Guru buscou demonstrar como o Advaita poderia enfrentar os desafios da vida real e combinou isso com os ensinamentos védicos sobre amor e serviço. Seus escritos encorajaram a aceitação de verdades eternas e despertaram a confiança no conhecimento entre as castas inferiores. Para esse fim, ele erigiu diversas instituições, como escolas e centros religiosos, como seu guru Sankaracharya. Este artigo tem como objetivo examinar o Advaita Deepika do Guru Narayana para ilustrar como a filosofia Advaita moldou seus pensamentos e ações, examinando assim a intenção do Guru de fundar a Escola Secundária Superior Shanmugha Vilasam em Karunagapally e outras organizações semelhantes que visavam ao renascimento hindu.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Sree Narayana Guru, Filosofia Advaita, Sree Sankaracharya

INTRODUCTION

Indian philosophy has a grand tradition of nurturing all forms of thought. There exist orthodox (asthika) and unorthodox (nasthika) philosophies. The orthodox philosophy consists of Samkhya, Nyaya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimamsa and Vedanta (Uttara Mimamsa). Where Vedanta or Uttara Mimamsa focuses on the mystic and spiritual interpretations of the Vedas. Vedanta consist of Advaita, Visishtadvaita, Dvaita, Dvaitadvaita, Shuddhadvaita and Achintya Bheda Abheda. In these philosophies, the most prominent and intellectual one is Advaita Philosophy of Sree Sankaracharya. Sankaracharya in

the 8th century created a revolutionary change in the religious field of India that caused a revival of the Hindu religion. This revivalism caused Hinduism to survive the predatory conversion of violent Islam and the missionary onslaught of Christianity. Sankara was a native of Kerala. The same Kerala gave birth to an ascetic reformer who after Sankara gave impetus for Hindu revivalism and unity, that reformer was Sreenarayana Guru. Sree Narayana Guru, whose commentaries and original works uplifted the accessibility of Hindu scripture and the mass appeal of Hindu Sutras. Sree Narayana Guru boldly went beyond theological interpretation of the scripture and laid down practical aspects of evangelism to encompass lower section of hindu society. In Sanathana Dharmma there exist many sampradayas like Advaita, Vishista Advaita, Dwaitha and Bheda Abheda Behda. Of which Sree Narayana followed and interpreted Advaita sampradaya. He was true follower of Adi Sankara. Like Sankara when his followers increased he started ashrams, schools and consecrated temples.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adavita Deepika(With Hamsa Explanation) by Swami Vimalanad . Helped to learn the meaning of the poems of Advaita Deepika. Advaita Vedanta (1976) by Balasubrahmanian helped to under stand about advaita philosophy. Pavan K Varma's Adi Sankara(2018) shed light on life of Adi Sankara. Betty Heiran's 'Facets of Indian Thought' helped in identifying the Vedanta Philosophy.

METHODOLOGY

Historical study and philosophical analysis were the primary methods utilized for this article. The descriptive-evaluative method is primarily employed to analyse the books, speeches, commentaries, and other works of Sree Sankaracharya and Sree Narayana Guru. Additionally, comparative analysis and deductive reasoning are applied. The philosophies of Sankaracharya and Sree Narayana Guru necessitate study and analysis to identify their differences and similarities. This study is primarily supported by secondary sources of data, including books, journals, papers, articles, and online resources.

SREE NARAYANA GURU

Sree Narayana Guru was born in Chempazhanthi, Thiruvananthapuram, on August 20, 1856. His father, Madan Asan, was an Ayurvedic physician, and his mother was Kuttiyamma. Known as Nanu during his childhood, he was a healthy toddler. When he reached the age for learning, the patriarch of the Chempazhanthi Nair family initiated his education.

Nanu received his primary education in Chempazhanthi, where he studied Siddha Rupam, Amarakosam, and Bala Prabodhanam. However, the Ezhava community had limited access to Sanskrit

Ayurvedic texts, which restricted his education. To continue his studies, he moved to Central Travancore, where he attended a school established by the Varanapally family, also known as a Gurukul. There, he met a progressive educator named Kummam Palli Raman Ashan, who defied societal norms by providing education to the lower sections of society.

After some time, Nanu married a woman named Kaliyamma. He then left his village and began traveling through Tamil Nadu and Kerala. During his travels, while visiting the Shri Durga Devi Temple in Aniyur, he had a significant encounter with Chattamabi Swamikal. Later they began to visit regularly in Manakcud Perunelli Krishnan Vaidyar's home. Chattambi Swamikal was learning Yoga from Thycud Ayya. Sree Narayana Guru joined Yoga school of Thycud Ayya. While there he got attracted by Ayya's Subrahmanya Bhakti. Seeing the competence of Nanu in yoga, he was advised to reach Marathuva mountains in South Travancore. These hills are serene and solitary offering the conditions to achieve the ambience needed for a meditation.

In 1888 he reached Arivipuram near the banks of the Neyyar river. While there he went into the depths of the Neyyar river and from a deep part of a river called 'Sankaran Kuzhi'. From this spot he brought a round black stone and consecrated this stone as Shiva linga and established a Siva temple a Arivipuram. This became known as 'Arivipuram Pathisthta' (Arivipuram Consecration). When the brahmin orthodoxy questioned the authority of Sree Narayana Guru to consecrate a Shiva linga. Guru replied them that he consecrated 'Ezhava Shiva not Brahmon Shiva.'

On May 15, 1903, the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) was established under the guidance of Dr. Palpu and the leadership of Sree Narayana Guru, who served as its first president, with Kumara Naashan as General Secretary. This entity was incorporated as a Joint Stock Company and is recognized as the first social organization dedicated to uplifting the marginalized sections of society. While Guru envisioned a community united as a global family, many of his followers lacked such a broad perspective. This discrepancy led to Guru's disappointment and prompted him to resign in 1916, sending a letter to Dr. Palpu. Inspired by his role model Sree Sankaracharya, Guru sought to form educational institutions that would promote his teachings on Advaita philosophy and assist lower-class individuals in adapting to the modern world. One such initiative is the Shanmugha Vilasam Higher Secondary School (SVHSS), founded by Sree Narayana Guru with support from Shanmugha Panikkar, the patriarch of the Paraseril family. The Paraseril Tharavad and SVHSS stand as a historical landmark in Clappana Village, located in the Karunagapally taluk.

In 1904, he traveled to Varkal, where he established a school for underprivileged children. He began constructing the Saratha Mutt, and after seven years, it was completed. Several other mutts were built in various regions of Kerala. He made numerous visits to Sri Lanka, with his final trip occurring in 1926. In 1927, during a visit to Palluruthy, he shared his vision for his followers about making the Saratha Mutt an annual pilgrimage site. Due to age-related health issues, he became ill. His last public appearance was at a meeting in Palluruthy. On September 20, 1928, at the age of 72, Sree Narayana Guru passed away, attaining samadhi.

ADVAITHA PHILOSOPHY OF SANKARA

Sree Sankaracharya proposed Advaita Philosophy and is regarded as one of the greatest intellectual figures in Hindu Philosophy. Sankara was born to a Brahmin family in the village of Kaladi in Kerala in the 8th century A.D . Sankara was attracted to Sanyasa (aesthetic life) from very early. He became a disciple of Govinda Bhagavatpada. From Govinda he learned Vedas, Upanishads and Brahmasutra. Govinda also taught him Gaudapadiya Karika. From the age of sixteen to thirty-two, Shankara travelled across the length and breadth of India. He was spreading the message of Advaitam. *“Brahman is pure consciousness and absolute reality. The world is an illusion.”*

During the time of Sankara the Indian religious landscape was facing a crisis. The decline of Buddhism and Jainism due to their over-monastic disciplines alienated them from the common man’s aspirations and complexities. The Sanatana Dharam was sinking into a quagmire of expensive rituals and blind superstitions. He travelled and challenged all these sects including Buddhism, Jainism and Hindu philosophy. Hindus worshipped many gods like Surya, Sakthi, Vishnu, Shiva and Ganesh. These worshipers of different gods were antagonistic to each other. Sankara with his Advaita philosophy united these warring factions to accept Advaita philosophy. He also simplified the rituals and rites of worship.

Sankara’s religious fervor was only matched by his immense literary potential. He composed 72 devotional hymns like Soundarya Lahari, Sivanada Lahari, Nirvana Shalkam, Maneesha Panchakam. He also wrote commentaries on texts for Brahma Sutras, Bhagavat Gita and Upanishads. By the virtue of his travels, he had established four Mutts at four corners of India. These Mutts still mark the geographical boundaries of the Indian nation.

Sankaracharya lived a short life spanning 32 years. However, in this short life, actions are expressed through centuries.

His Advaita Philosophy stands as the quintessential Vedanta Philosophy. This philosophy states that the *Jivatman* (Individual Self) is pure awareness mistakenly identified with the body and the senses and is one with the *Atma Brahman*, the highest self. '*Advaita*' literally means 'anything but two'. In a religious sense, it means 'monism'. Samkhya dualism states that reality exists as *Purusha* (God being) and *Prakriti* (Nature). Sankara's Advaita Philosophy proposes the existence of *Atman-Brahman* as the ultimate reality and *Prakriti* is an Illusion, a manifestation of *Brahman*. Advaita states that *moksha* can be attained through knowledge of *Brahman* the ultimate reality.

MEANING OF REALITY

Advaita says that the Absolute or *Brahman* or *Atman* is the reality. It is *Ekam* (one) and eternal with no end and beginning. The *Vijnanam* (Knowledge) is *Prakriti*(Nature). The *Atman* is immutable. This *Atman* is *Sarvam* (Enitry), superimposed *Asarvam* (Façade). The source of knowledge is the key concept of *advaita*. Advaita has six sources of knowledge. They are 1, Perception (*Pratyaksha*) 2, Inference (*Anumana*) 3, Comparison (*Upamana*) 4, Presumption (*Arthapatti*), 5, non-cognition (*Anupalabधि*), and 6, verbal testimony (*Sabda*). According to Advaita *Brahman* or *Atman* which is absolute reality which is trans-empirical and can be only known through Vedic; *jnana-kanda*. *Chandyoga Upanisad* says that ultimate reality is only one without a second. *Brihadaranya Upanishad* says that everything is Perishable but for *Brahman*.

THEORIES OF ERROR

The Advaitin deals with the delusion or error by criticism of rival theories. These theories can be divided into (1) *asat-khyati* and (ii) *sat-khyati*. *Asat-khyati* involves is cognition of the unreal. *Sat-khyati* is divided into (a) *atma-khyati*, (b) *akhyati*, (c) *anyatha-khyati*

- (1) *Asat-khyati* : *Asat-khyati* posits that the subject of a mistaken perception is a non-existent entity, with the error arising from our incorrect belief in its reality. This deals with the apprehension of the non-existent. By underscoring the non-existence of the erroneous object, it draws attention to the deceptive quality of our perceptions and the necessity of grasping the authentic nature of reality. This theory is significant within the *Madhyamika* (or *Sunyavada*) tradition of Buddhism, which focuses on the principles of emptiness (*sunyata*) and the transient nature of phenomena..
- (2) *Sat-khyati-vaadins*: *Sat-Khyati* is a philosophical concept in Indian thought, particularly within the *Visiṣṭadvaita Vedanta* tradition. It asserts that errors are not simply misunderstandings of something that is non-existent; instead, they represent partial or incomplete truths, devoid of any subjective component. Advocated by *Ramanuja*, this theory maintains that errors arise not from

misinterpreting one thing as another, but from an insufficient grasp of reality. The emphasis of Sat-Khyati is that errors do not originate from cognitive mistakes but rather from a lack of comprehensive knowledge. Thus, it characterizes errors as forms of partial, truth or incomplete understanding, rather than as outright falsehoods.. It is divided into two

- (a) *Atma-Khyati*: Atma-khyati posits that when perception is flawed, the mind tends to project an internal concept or understanding onto what is regarded as an external object. This error is a form of self apprehension. This theory is consistent with the idealistic perspective, which highlights the importance of mind or consciousness, indicating that external reality is a reflection of internal cognitive activities. Mistakes occur when these mental alterations are incorrectly imposed upon what is perceived as an actual external entity. This is followed by Vijnana-vadins according to whom reality consist of a series of momentary cognitions. There exists no reality above cognitions. For example: If red were different from the cognition of red, then it would not manifest in the cognition.
- (b) Akhyati vadin: This error arises when delusion is seen as real. A form of non-apprehension. That is, delusion is not inferior in quality to cognition. This error is focusing on the nature of false perceptions and the different explanations for them, such as the inability to distinguish between different cognitions The Prabhakara school is considered to be composed of two cognitions. The memory is self-revealing and other cognition that leads to action has no result. However, ascertainment of the object remains inconclusive because the truth may not necessarily be useful or usefulness does not make it true.
- (c) Anyatha-Khyati: This proposes there can be no change in cognition without a change in the object.

Advaita firmly establishes that knowledge possesses intrinsic validity (*Savach Paramnya Vada*), which can be decisively tested through its origin and ascertainment. The *pranama* or cognition of knowledge is limited by the senses. The observable universe is valid till it is not observable and experience proves otherwise. A person on seeing a rope at a distance may recognize it as a snake. As he comes closer, he realizes his mistake. Thus, the validity of cognition on further examination may change. There is no negation of valid cognition, there is negation of the content of an erroneous cognition.

Another example false cognition is, seeing a white shell as a silver object. '*Jatharthanm sarva vijnanam*' which means 'a cognition may be less true, not untrue.' They believe in two cognitions they are seeing objects and memory of the person. He sees an object (shell) however, his memory sees something else (silver). Prabhakaras argue that this error in cognition is mainly due to the *akeyathi*. Which is the

inability to recollect from memory the true nature of sight. The problem with this view is that it is not only memory that a person relies on for cognition but experience also plays a part. If a person picks up the shell as silver, this makes him realise his mistake.

Aparna or error has its origin in avidya. Avidya or ignorance is not non-existence of knowledge where experience can change it. Non-existence is known only through anupalabdhi or non-cognition. Anu valid cognition must be preceded by its non-existence, which covers up the content of that cognition. As a lamp-light is preceded by darkness which is an existent void becomes valid cognition is preceded by ignorance which is of the nature of an existent.

REALITY AS EXISTENCE

In Advaita Vedanta, the essence of reality is identified as Brahman, which represents the ultimate non-dual existence characterized by pure being, consciousness, and bliss. All other phenomena are regarded as mere illusory expressions of this singular, transcendent reality. Reality can be defined as an inquiry into the nature. Advaita Vedanta defines it as the nature of thin which is present in that thing so long as it lasts and distinguishes it from the rest. Only Brahman is not that decays but remain, its nature is that we must define. Its attributes are being intelligence and bliss. Chandogya Upanisad says Brahman is bliss. Taittiriya Upanishad says is with out a second. Only brahman is real, and plurality is maya and not real. Objects of nature and form of the world are appearances are existent. Existence is nature of the Absolute.

REALITY AS INTELLIGENCE

The Brahmana is self-luminous and embodies not just existence but also intelligence. The Self has complete knowledge but cannot be grasped by conventional means. It transcends all forms and names, remaining unmanifest and hidden from sensory perception. Advaita Vedanta recognizes three levels of reality: Pratibhasika (subjective experience, like dreams), Vyavaharika (empirical experience, the world we perceive), and Paramarthika (the ultimate spiritual experience, Brahman).

REALITY AS BLISS

Brahman represents intelligent bliss. While many believe happiness comes from external sources, true happiness resides within the self. The love for others is ultimately a reflection of one's own feelings.

This "bliss" or "ananda" is not a feeling, but the inherent nature of ultimate reality itself. Bliss is not an attribute but the very essence of self. Taitriya Upanishad states that The essence; only on getting this essence, does one become blissful. Else who would breathe and who would live if there is no bliss in existence. Mundaka Upanishad calls reality as "Blissful Immortal". Advaita Vedanta exhorts one to have a clear understanding of reality and realize that the inherent quality of the Atman or the embodied self is Brahman which is Infinite Being, Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Bliss.

ATMAVIDYA

Atma Vidya is emphasizing non-duality, where the individual self (Atman) is ultimately identical with the universal Self (Brahman). Vedanta emphasizes mastering the Self. The Vedas state that Brahman, which is the Self, consists of earth, water, air, ether, and fire. According to the Kaumudi, the witness is a form of Brahman that enables the Jiva (individual soul) to take action or remain inactive. Shankara posits that the only true reality is the Supreme Spirit, referred to as Brahman. Brahman embodies pure Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss, characterized as Absolute, impersonal, unchanging, eternal, and omnipresent. What is typically perceived as Nature is merely an illusion, a dream generated by the ignorance that obscures the Supreme Spirit. This concept is encapsulated in the phrase 'Brahma Sathya, Jagan Mithya.' The phenomena we experience seem real for the same reason that the elements of a dream appear tangible while the dream persists.

ISVARA AND JIVA

Isvara is regarded as the cause of nature, with some advocates believing that both Isvara and Jiva are responsible for the world. The Samksepasiraka school claims that Para Brahman is the material cause, while the dristi sristi vadins argue that the world is a fabrication of Jiva. In contrast, Advaita philosophy asserts that an omnipresent entity creates the world. The individuality of the Jiva persists only as long as it is influenced by illusory Upadhis or restrictive conditions stemming from Avidya, or ignorance. Under the spell of Avidya, the Jiva mistakenly associates itself with the body, mind, and senses, leading to thoughts, actions, and experiences that are rooted in this ignorance. However, fundamentally, the Jiva is not separate from Brahman, the Absolute. Much like a bubble merges with the ocean upon bursting, or how the ether within a pot unites with the universal ether when the pot is shattered, the empirical self, or Jiva, realizes its oneness with Brahman upon attaining knowledge of it. When enlightenment occurs through the dissolution of Avidya, the Jiva transcends its individuality and limitations, ultimately recognizing its true essence. The phrase "Tat Tvam Asi," which translates to "That Thou Art," originates from the Chandogya Upanishad exemplifies this concept.

MAYA

Brahman embodies truth, knowledge, and infinity, while the world consists of changing, finite entities. Brahman is not the cause of the world; rather, the world is an illusion, akin to mistaking a rope for a snake—the snake itself is also an illusion. Maya is the cosmic illusion and the dynamic aspect of Brahman that allows the jiva to experience duality. It serves as the medium through which Brahman is reflected as jivas and through which the world is projected. Maya presents reality to human perception as a division between subject and object. This division is not real; however, since the mind primarily operates as a mechanism of differentiation, it cannot reveal the truth, which is fundamentally one and indivisible. Maya does not possess true existence and only appears to exist; once the truth is recognized, it dissipates. Human beings typically perceive themselves as distinct entities, closely tied to their physical and mental forms. This identification leads us to view ourselves as separate individuals, constrained by the dimensions of space and time, and subject to the various fluctuations, joys, and sorrows that life presents. We experience the continuous cycle of birth and death. However, when we come to realize that we are fundamentally one with the infinite Brahman, we can liberate ourselves from this cycle. Until such understanding is achieved, we remain trapped in the repetitive cycle of life and death.

PATH TO PERFECTION

The path to perfection lies in acquiring knowledge, as ignorance is the root of many of the world's problems. Brahman is not the source of action; rather, causality produces results through four types: Utpatti, Prapti, Vikara, and Samskara. Lacking knowledge is akin to searching for a gold chain while already wearing it. Only through knowledge can we achieve self-realization and overcome sorrow. The fire of knowledge incinerates all sins. In the "Vivarana-prameya-sangraha" by Vivaranakara, it is stated that knowledge can be attained through learning, Sankhya, and Yoga, leading to bliss. This process involves recognizing the authentic essence of the self as Brahman, which represents the ultimate reality. Such understanding is achieved through the pursuit of knowledge and engagement in spiritual practices like meditation and self-inquiry, ultimately leading to the transcendence of worldly affairs illusions.

RELEASE OF BONDAGE

Attaining Brahman intuition is considered release and marks the end of all sorrows. An enlightened person with this knowledge has no wants or desires, rendering both heavenly and earthly life

unimportant. True happiness comes from understanding Brahman, and while the absence of desires doesn't guarantee happiness, it is achieved by recognizing the flaws in the object of desire. The journey towards liberation is attained by identifying the non-dual nature of the self, known as Atman, about the ultimate reality, referred to as Brahman. This understanding enables one to transcend the deceptive perception of separation and the associated suffering. In Advaita Vedanta, the continuous cycle of birth and death is perceived as a form of bondage, stemming from ignorance and the false belief in a divide between the individual self and the ultimate reality. Such ignorance fosters an attachment to the transient material world, which ultimately leads to suffering.

SANKARA AND CASTE SYSTEM

Sankara posits that the world is Maya (illusion) and that Brahman represents the ultimate truth, implying that societal structures like caste are also illusory. He aimed to encourage his followers not just to ponder his Advaita philosophy but to actively embody it in their everyday lives. This concept was poignantly illustrated through an incident that involved him. While en route to bathe in the Ganges at Kashi, his disciples instructed a Chandala, who was walking towards them, to move aside for their guru. The Chandala challenged Shankara, asking how he could teach Advaitism while condoning such discrimination. This compelling question had a profound effect on Shankara, prompting him to compose the Manisha Panchaka, a collection of five philosophical verses that encapsulate the essence of Advaita and recognize the Chandala as his guru. Shankara's message was unmistakable: for a genuine follower of Advaita, practicing discrimination is irrational, and one must acknowledge the unity of all beings. Traditionally, the Chandala is identified as a manifestation of Lord Shiva. Shri Shankara is seen as an incarnation of Lord Shiva, making this work a dialogue between two forms of the deity, aimed at conveying the fundamental teachings of Vedanta. Questions about whether Shri Shankara engaged in practices like untouchability, despite his enlightened state, become irrelevant in light of these teachings. Additionally, the story itself holds limited significance; drawing broader conclusions would detract from its primary message. A crucial takeaway is that once an individual attains Self-knowledge, factors such as caste become meaningless.

SREE NARAYANA GURU'S ADVAITHA DEEPIKA

Sankara's Advaita philosophy posits that Brahman constitutes the ultimate truth and reality, a truth that surpasses cognitive understanding and embodies genuine knowledge. This philosophical framework rejects the caste system's legitimacy. Sankara played a pivotal role in unifying various distinct faiths, including Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Devi Worship, Buddhism, Jainism, and Surya Worship. He is often referred to as the Prachanna Buddha. It is important to note that Sankara remained relatively obscure until the rise of the Vijaya Nagara Empire, primarily because his teachings were largely confined to a small group of disciples and his monastic institutions. The Islamic invasions posed a significant threat to the sovereignty of numerous small Hindu states in North India, and later in Central and South India. Vidyanaraya lived in the fourteenth century A.D. as *Kul Guru* (Family Seer) of Harihara I and Bukka, who were founders of the Vijayanagara Empire. He was also the 12th saint to occupy the seat of Chair of Sringeri Mutt from 1377 A.D. to 1386 A.D. It was under the guidance of Vidyanaraya Muni that Harihara and Bukka established the Vijaya Nagara Empire in 1336 A.D. Vidyanaraya Muni also contributed to the historiography of Sree Sankara through his works, including 'Sankaravijaya.' Although Sankara lived in the 8th century, his influence gained prominence in the 14th century, largely due to the support of the Hindu rulers of Vijaya Nagara, which facilitated a revival of his teachings.

Sreenaraya Guru cannot be compared with Sankara because both have different access to technology, like printing press and books. Sree Narayana Guru wrote and composed many works in book format to disseminate his teachings in addition to his followers' evangelism. The technological exposure alone makes a huge difference in spreading the message of Renaissance. The ideological difference is small. Sankara had to face the brahmin orthodoxy and its bullying during his times. Sree Narayana Guru also had to face the established social norms and orthodoxy. Sankara established Mutts in four corners of India and directed rites and rituals of worship. Sree Narayana Guru also had established Temples and rites and rituals that govern them. Sankara is being criticised for being a theorist and not a practical authority when it comes to Advaita. However, Sree Narayana Guru is regarded as practical when it comes to Advaita. This is not true. Sankara's Advaita philosophy says it is only through knowledge of Brahman that happiness lies. Brahman alone is the truth and truth will set you free.

Let us examine Sree Narayana Guru's take on Advaita Philosophy in his Advaita Deepika. Advaita Deepika was written in 1894.

പേരായിരം പ്രതിഭയായിരമിങ്ങവററി-
ലാരാലേശുവിഷയമായിരമാം പ്രപഞ്ചം
ഓരായ്ക്കിൽ നേരിതു കിനാവുണരുംവരെയ്ക്കും

നേരാമുണർന്നളവുണർന്നവനാമശേഷം.

1

Translation

A thousand names, a thousand concepts, Each one represents countless points of interest. The world seems real enough when left unexamined; It is only when one wakes from the dream that its truth emerges; In waking, the awakened being is all that exists!

This poem clearly explains the concept of Errors of cognition and Maya. Then liberation through Knowledge of Brahman. The Universe or the world is composed of composite things. Each has its name, which exists in our memory. This is merely an illusion of the mind. This world is real for an ignorant being, but for a person with the knowledge of the advaita see the world as like a dream. Only a dream which fades away when we wake up.

നേര ദൃശ്യമിതു ദൃക്ചിനെനീക്കിനോക്കിൽ

വേറല്ല വിശ്വമറിവാം മരുവിൽ പ്രവാഹം;

കാര്യത്തിൽ നിൽപതിഹ കാരണസത്തയെന്നു

വേറല്ല വീചിയിലിരിപ്പതു വാരിയത്രേ.

2

Translation

What is visible here is not real; it exists only when observed. When one sees it, it appears as something unique, created by the universe. It resembles a mirage, reflecting the flow of consciousness. That which stands as an effect without a cause is merely an illusion. What creates the wave is simply water itself.

This poem covers Akhyadi Vadin where illusion becomes real until it is tested. Then every illusion is what our mind created out of memory, which also was created from cognition. Cognition can have errors. This error can only be eliminated through testing what is observed. Cause and effect tests the validity of the cognition. The Ultimate truth, Brahman is like water, whose ripples are what illusion of objects. If we try to classify the world into scenes and perception we will understand this. Each person has a perception, with in this perception lies the scenes of his life. Each person has a universe inside him. This mini universe never existed with out ‘me’ concept. People are mostly trapped inside this universe created by ‘me’. If we understand the preception we can control the ‘me’. We can see water on desert sand, only to be realise this was a mirage. To under stand the true universe we must exbrace the real universe from the unreal.

വാസസ്തുതനുവിതു പഞ്ഞിയിതാദിമൂല ഭൂതപ്രഘാതമിതുമോർക്കുകിലിപ്രകാരം

ബോധത്തിൽനിന്നു വിലസുന്നു മരുസ്ഥലത്തു

പാഥസ്തുപോലെ പരമാവധി ബോധമത്രേ

3

Translation

From cloth to thread and cotton,

we confidently trace our journey back to complex elements.

Everything arises like a river in desert sand, rooted in consciousness.

Ultimately, consciousness is the definitive limit.

In this we can see the how we can deep dive into material things to its constituents and discover the true nature of reality, which is pure consciousness. The consciousness is our limit of the knowledge of understanding brahman. The five states of matter 'Fire', 'air', 'water', 'wind' and 'ether' created this world. The enquiry into the universe ends with the five states of universe, however if one asks what illuminates the world the answer will come. The non-living cannot illuminate themselves. If the living also are just states of matter, then the whole world will go blind. Like a thousand sun rises that enlightenment comes to one. This sun rise will vaporize all that state of matter

വൃത്തിസ്ഥമാമറിവിൽ വിശ്വവുമില്ലിതിന്റേ

വിത്താമവിദ്യയതുമില്ല വിളക്കുവന്നാൽ

അദ്ദിക്കിലെങ്ങുമിരുളി ടനങ്ങു വർത്തി-

വിട്ടാൽ വിളക്കു പൊലിയുന്നിരുളും വരുന്നൂ.

4

Translation

In the presence of a fully functioning will, there is no universe, nor even the potential for ignorance. When a lamp is lit, darkness cannot be found nearby; but when the flame leaves the wick, the lamp extinguishes, and darkness emerges!

Here Guru, attests that the power of knowledge, the ignorance can be avoided and universe ease to be a factor. He is comparing the light to knowledge. The enlightenment and ignorance are like light and darkness. He asserts in this poem that even a small enlightenment can dispel the darkness. This is a confidence boosting measure for the common man who lives in worldly affairs. Guru says even a small knowledge can dispel darkness. Darkness can take away the sll forms of consciousness from the

ആരാജ്ഞിയാലുലകമില്ലിതവിദ്യ തത്ത്വ- മോരാതവർക്കിതുലകായ് വിലസും
ഭ്രമത്താൽ

ആരാൽ വിളക്കെരികിലില്ല പിശാചിത്സകാരം ഭയന്നവനിരുട്ടു പിശാചുപോലാം.

5

Translation

Research indicates that there is no external world; only ignorance exists. This illusion is perceived by a mind unable to find truth. The light can dispel it, but to a coward, even a brief illusion creates fear of darkness.

Maya of the world is the world we percives, Maya is seen by the untrained mind. This Maya causes coward to fear it. Be brave in knowledge and acceptance of maya. For awakened won the universe is a illusion (Maya). For a unawakened the universe also looks unreal, If one sees devil in the darkness. If light is turned on the devil will disappear. For a fearful even in light he will see devi in light. During sleep consciousness lives in the darkness but when we awake it becomes senses, subject, object.

ഉണ്ടില്ലയെന്നു മുറമാറിയസത്തുസത്തു

രണ്ടും പ്രതീതമിതനാദി തമസ്സ്വഭാവം;

രണ്ടും തിരഞ്ഞിടുകിലില്ലയസത്തു ര -

ഖണ്ഡത്തിലില്ലുരഗമുള്ളതു രജ്ജുമാത്രം.

6

Translation

Existence and non-existence are intermittently acknowledged as genuine.

Both the illusory and the authentic arise from fundamental ignorance.

Through examination, both amount to nothing; the snake is absent in the length of rope, which means only the rope is present.

Just like darkness is absence of light, Light can dispel the darkness of uncertainty that the errors of cognition brings. If we analyze the world we will realize the fact that we can see three states they are State of being, Anxiety and non-existence. For an individual to exist there is the need to find the source of individuality. We can see that the individual reality in real world existing in the moment.

When water is clear the images reflected from its surface will appear clear , but when the water becomes murky and image reflected becomes unclear.

അസ്ത്യസ്തുതിയെന്നു സകലോപരി നില്പതൊന്നേ-
സത്യം സമസ്തുവുമനിതമസത്യമാകും
മൃത്തിൻ വികാരമതസത്യമതിങ്കലൊക്കെ
വർത്തിപ്പതോർക്കിലൊരു മൃത്തിതു സത്യമത്രേ.

7

Translation

Only one entity stands supreme, consistently affirming its existence.

Everything else fades away and lacks existence.

The shapes made from clay possess no true being.

What perseveres is simply the clay itself.

Brahman is the true reality, the perpetual being. Like the clay dried object like cup, vase or pottery. If they are dissolved clay remains like wise every thing will go back to brahman. Maya created this world by covering brahman with ignorance. Essence , Knowledge and bliss constitute the Body of the brahman. The Maya consists of non-existence, inertia and sorrow. Maya created this illusiory universe by covering the Brahman. When one dwells into the universe one will uncover this brahman from the Illusion.

അജ്ഞാനവേളയിലുമസതിവിഭാതി രണ്ടു-
മജ്ഞാതമല്ല സുഖവും വിലസുന്നു മൂന്നും;
രജുസ്വരൂപമഹിയോടുമിദന്തയാർന്നു
നിൽക്കുന്നതിനിഹ നിദർശനമാമിതോർത്താൽ

8

Translation

Even in times of ignorance, the two factors of existence and subsistence are not recognized with an appreciation of value as a third. The presentiment of a snake form with a rope base serves as an adequate reference.

If we take into consideration the example of snake and rope. Only through the experience that we can understand the meaning of Brahman. Sun gives heat and light to the water in a container ,

However, the light and heat relatively limited by the vessel that water contains. The real sun will always be above the water vessel. The clear water reflects sun better just like good deeds reflect brahman more. The inertial objects occur in large variety and they change very often. They underlying truth behind all of them are the same.

വിശ്വംവിവേകദശയിങ്കലഴിഞ്ഞു സർവമസ്വസ്ഥമാകിലുമതിന്ദ്രിയദൃശ്യമാകും
ദിക്കിൻഭ്രമം വിടുകിലും ചിരമിങ്ങവൻറ

ദൃക്കിന്നു ദിക്കു പുനരങ്ങനെതന്നെ കാണാം. 9

Translation

Even when insight triumphs and renders the entire world devoid of meaning,

It can still endure as perceived through the senses.

Even after a person has regained their proper perspective,

For a while, they will still perceive the incorrect paths as they did previously.

Even a brahma yogi, who had understood the world is without meaning. Thus a man who regained his sense who knows the way. May recognize the wrong paths as correct. This depends on the person and it is due to his body. How enlightened one person is his body is, he is bound to his body. Even when one gets englightened he will show symptoms of ignorance. So beware of this disadvantage.

സത്യത്തിലില്ലയുലകം സകലം വിവേകവിദ്വന്മാരായ പിറകും വിലസുന്നു
മുൻപോൽ നിന്നുൾക്കൊയ് മരുവിലില്ലിഹ നീരമെന്നു

സിദ്ധിക്കിലും വിലസിടുന്നതു മുൻപ്രകാരം.. 10

Traslation

The world holds no inherent truth; it is overshadowed

By knowledge, everything remains significant as it did before

Despite being well aware that a mirage holds no water

The feeling of expectation persists as it always has.

The human body is part of this world. The observation of universe using the body make the universe look permanent. Many names are only an illusion. Desert lack water , but mirage makes water

appear in desert. However, truth is otherwise. When one looks inside he is bound to his ‘me’ mental state. However, if one sees the world outside he relates to ‘they’. This two mental states one must ignore in order to attain enlightenment.

ജ്ഞാനിക്കു സത്തുലകു ചിത്തു സുഖസ്വരൂപം

ആനന്ദമല്ലന്യതമജ്ഞാനിതപ്രകാശം കാണുന്നവന് സുഖമിതയാർന്ന ഭാനു-

മാനർക്കനന്ധനിരൂളാർന്നൊരു ശൂന്യവസ്തു

11

Translation

For a sage, the world represents existence, and the essence of being holds significance.

Deceit does not bring true happiness; this is not evident to a foolish person.

To the one who perceives, joy is a genuine sun. Conversely, to those who are blind to it, even the bright sun at noon appears as a void.

The real liberation only comes when one who understands the errors in cognition and how to get validity of the cognition. This deceit means the worlds and mind’s imagination, which itself came from memory of the world obtained previously through senses. Sun and moon rises and sets these objects are in a state of constant flux. The true enlightened state asks the what is the unchanging aspect of these objects. The brahman cannot be observed directly, the seeing is believing is a fallacy that an advaita must ignore. Guru in this poem criticizes the atheist and other god deniers.

വിത്തൊന്നുതാൻ വിവിധമായ് വിലുസുന്നിതികലർമാന്തരം ചെറുതുമില്ല
വിശേഷമായി

രജുസ്വരൂപമറിയാതിരൂളാൽ വിവർത്തസർപ്പം നിനയ്ക്കിലിതു രവിൽനിന്നു
വേറോ?

12

Translation

There exists a single seed that appears in various forms;

There is absolutely no chance for any specific ambiguity in this situation.

If someone, disregarding the nature of the rope, mistook it for a snake,
would it then possess a reality separate from that of the rope?

This poem refers to the seed analogy of the Chandogya Upanishad. Where one small seed grows into a tree. Guru asks with the example of snake-rope analogy, where if one mistook rope for a

snake. Then how can the snake have an independent existence. With the acceptance of adaita Philosophy that one could understand the meaning of ‘All religions are equal’. A small seed sprouts a big tree , the tree is different from the seed. Tree is infact a big seed that is the truth.

ഓരോന്നതായവയവം മുഴുവൻ പിരിച്ചു
വേറാക്കിയാലുലകമില്ല വിചിത്രമത്രേ
വേറാകുമീയവയവങ്ങളുമേവമങ്ങോ-
ട്ടോരാജ്ജിലില്ലവിലവും നിജബോധമാത്രം.

13

Translation

When each portion is divided individually, ultimately,
Everything is fragmented—Behold! The world has vanished!
If one continues to investigate these individual components,
All that is discovered is merely one's own awareness.

In this poem Guru, proclaims that the scientific enquiry of splitting the atoms into minute particles and the further into quarks which is the advancement of modern science . during the 1894 when this was written the atoms were the indivisible particles of matter. Which were indivisible particles of matter. So Guru is not mentioning the atoms here. We can see advaitam was way head of its time. Its philosophical interpretation of infinitesimal world turns out to be guided by probalilities. Here sceintific enquiry is not differentiated from a asecic living a life of spirituality , both are seeking truth. One uses reading scripture and imagination, other smashing atoms.

നൂലാടതന്നിലുദകം നൂരതന്നിലേവം
ഹാ! ലോകമാകെ മറയുന്നൊരവിദ്യയാലേ
ആലോചനാവിഷയമായിതു തൻ കാര്യജാലത്തൊടും മറകിലുണ്ടറിവൊന്നുമാത്രം.

14

Translation

The thread woven into the fabric vanishes, just as water dissolves into bubbles.
Therefore, unfortunately, through ignorance, the entire world is undone.

As the focus of comprehension, even when everything fades away into diverse results, only pure awareness persists.

Guru with the example of woven cloth, foam in water points to the fact that that these forms. He is making his disciples detach from the worldly life and illusions of life. The Brahman is the actor behind the different roles he plays in the stage that is universe. The truth is that they are all characters played by one actor. This is reflected in his phrase ‘many characters many names’. Maya makes the different version of the object in addition to its ability to cover the truth with illusion like names and attributes. An Advaiti must follow the process of ‘Not this Not this ‘ calling out the illusion or bluff of Maya.

ആനന്ദമസ്തിയതുഭാതിയതൊന്നുതന്നെ

താനന്യമോർക്കിലതു നാസ്തി ന ഭാതി സർവം;

കാനൽജലം ഗഗനനീലമസത്യമഭു

സുനം മരുർച്ചിഗഗനം പരമാർത്ഥമാകും.

15

Translation

Happiness is a reality; it exists within our awareness and stands as a singular entity.

When we see ourselves as separate from happiness, nothing feels genuinely real.

The shimmering water of a mirage and the blue sky lose their authenticity,

while a flower in the sky and the illusionary heavens regain their ultimate significance.

In Chandhyoga Upanishad there is the mention of the Brahman which is cognizer, object of cognition and cognition. Taittiriya Brahman mentions of the bliss from which all creatures come from and bliss to which everything must return. This bliss, happiness and enlightenment all are same awakening to Brahman. The knowledge of the Brahman is pure knowledge and if any other illusion came into it, the Maya will cover it also. This can be alleviated by “Method of Earth”. This follows the technique of realising the fact that Even earth stands on Brahman. This Brahman exists without any other.

ആത്മാവിലില്ലയൊരഹംകൃതി യോഗിപോലെ

താൻ മായയാൽ വിവിധമായ് വിഹരിച്ചിടുന്നു;

യോഗസ്ഥനായ് നിലയിൽനിന്നിളകാതെ കായവ്യാഹം ധരിച്ചു വിഹരിച്ചിടുമിങ്ങു
യോഗി.

Translation

The Self, free from egoism, playfully interacts with Maya like a yogi. Grounded and still, it takes on various forms, finding joy in this creative play.

Like a play of shadows the Brahman like the light that causes shadows of object displays various characters as shadows. The characters comes and goes but the fire that causing the shadow remains burning. A yogi approaches this images as transcended ie, ever changing. This is yogi's role. He only sees permeance of brahman.

അജ്ഞാനസംശയവിപര്യയമാത്മതത്ത്വജിജ്ഞാസുവിന്നു ദൃഢബോധനിതില്ല
തെല്ലും

സർ പ്രതീതി ഫണിയോ കയറോയിതെന്ന

തർക്കം ഭ്രമം, കയറുകാൺകിലിതില്ല തെല്ലും.

Translation

Only the inexperienced seeker of Self-awareness

Opposes the individual filled with uncertainty;

Not someone who has achieved a solid comprehension.

The identical uncertainty of mistaking a snake for a rope is a perplexing issue,

Maya surrounds all aspects of truth. Only the strong-willed can remove the illusion that clouds the life-giving Brahman. People are looking for stability in life. But the stability only exists in the brahman. All others are transcended illusions. Weak-minded believe in these illusions and question the existence of Brahman. The people who seek the truth believe the fact that there exists no permanence in anything. It is well established that the permanence can only be found in the ultimate reality. The illusions that covers the ultimate truth obscures view of the truth seeker. This illusions are called *Ajnjanam (ignorance)*. Like the fire being covered by smoke, Image on a mirror is being covered by dirt. This causes doubt of whether brahman exists or not.

മുന്നേ കടന്നു വിഷയം പ്രതിവൃത്തിമുന്നിൽനിന്നീടുമാവരണമാം തിര നീക്കിടുന്നു
പിന്നീടു കാണുമറിവും പ്രഭതൻ്റെ പിൻപോയ്
കണ്ണെന്നപോലറിവു കാണുകയില്ല താനേ.

18

Translation

Advancing continuously through each encountered object,
Cognitive engagement eradicates ignorance with each stride.
Even the understanding gained afterwards, guided by illumination,
Like the eye, is unable to perceive itself.

Like a foam covers water, the mind covers all the consciousness we possess. Even Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh are this illusion that befell our mind. Only through cognitive validity can we see the brahman. The Ultimate truth.

കാണുന്നു കണ്ണിഹ തുറക്കിലടയ്ക്കിലന്ധൻ
താനുള്ളിൽ മേവുമറിവിങ്ങു വരായ്കയാലേ
ജ്ഞാനം പുറത്തുതനിയേ വരികില്ല കണ്ണു-
വേണം വരുന്നതിനു കണ്ണിനു കാന്തിപോലെ.

19

Translation

The eye perceives only when open; when closed, awareness remains dormant. Knowledge requires the eye, just as the eye needs light.

Another example is the pond with clear water reflecting clearly but, when a stone falls on the pond the splash and the ripples cause the reflection to blur away. Only through opening your inner vision the ultimate truth be revealed. So knowledge alone won't wake a person to Brahman but his willingness to do so. Like bubble in water , the brahman is not disturbed by atman. Only when mind is made dormant that

Conclusion:

Shankara's Vedanta philosophy stands out as it operates as a pure metaphysical system, independent of theological frameworks.. As a result, those inclined towards philosophical inquiry rather than theological aspects are drawn to Shankara's teachings. The remarkable flexibility of his doctrine is one of the most attractive features for many followers. There is a shared understanding of the dream world's illusory nature; upon waking, people realise that the dream disappears when faced with the familiar reality. To promote the principles of Advaita Vedanta and protect Sanatana Dharma, Adi Shankara established four monasteries, or mathas, in India's four cardinal directions. These mathas have played a crucial role in maintaining and upholding traditional Hindu Dharma, which includes diverse cultural practices and beliefs. By establishing these mathas in different regions, Adi Shankara aimed to spread his teachings and philosophical ideas across the country. Similarly, Sree Narayana Guru revitalised the Hindu faith, which had been profoundly impacted by caste discrimination and rigid orthodoxy, through his written works and the founding of educational institutions. His institutions remain vibrant today, promoting his message. Like Shankara, Sree Narayana Guru adheres to Advaita philosophy; however, his influence was mainly felt in Kerala, while Shankara's reach extended across India. Notably, Sree Narayana travelled only to Sri Lanka during his lifetime. His efforts were directed at reaching the marginalised lower castes of Travancore State. The Vedas serve as the foundation of Dharma, which was later reinterpreted in his Advaita philosophy. Sree Narayana Guru echoed these principles in his teachings, essentially recreating them. This continuous repetition by seers represents a fundamental teaching method within Hinduism.

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