

Beyond Nirvāṇa

The Philosophy of Māyāvādism:
A Life History



by

Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Translated and presented by

Śrī Śrīmād Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

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First Edition - 2,000 copies

Disappearance day of Śrīla Madhvācārya 2003

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ISBN 81-86737-81-2



Gauḍīya Vedānta Publications

Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

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Acknowledgements

There are many people who have contributed in various ways to the publication of this important spiritual book. Although there are too many to list by name, a few deserve special mention.

The publisher offers many thanks to Linda Davies for her donation, which helped make this book possible. It is her desire that the respected Vaisnava reader bless her, her family and especially her father Wong Kee Tat with auspicious advancement on their spiritual path.

Thanks to Sarvabhavana das who is responsible for translating the book from its original Bengali text, and to his family who assisted in various ways throughout.

Finally, thanks to Mandala Publishing for their permission to use the artwork of B.G. Sharma for the front cover of the book.

Preface

Our modern world has for the most part lost its sense of relationship with the *personality* of the Godhead. On one hand it is now commonplace for people to question the existence of God, while on the other it is quite rare to find persons who have an awareness of, or appreciation for God *as a person*. Although not entirely absent from our consciousness and vocabulary, God as a deity who is complete with attributes and qualities that are as endearing as they are magnificent, is conspicuously absent in modern culture. The modern world seems for all intents and purposes structured and directed in such a way as to avoid at all cost any mention that He has alluring, captivatingly beautiful, qualities, Name and Form. How has this happened? And by what means has God's personality been gradually marginalised to the far fringe of the larger social consciousness? What philosophies, attitudes or teachings have contributed to this collective alienation? More importantly, what philosophies offer insight into His personality and our intrinsic, eternal, *personal* relationship with Him?

The arrival in the English language of this special book answers these questions and puts into context the historical, philosophical and apocryphal influences that have conspired to deny the personality of God. It is fair to say that this volume is a milestone publication, for it offers the reader a unique chance to explore the subtle barrier that has been surreptitiously set between God's personality and our own, thus hindering our natural spiritual inclination to seek pleasure and happiness through personal exchanges with Him.

The diverse body of philosophies that expound the impersonal conception of God are known variously as Māyāvāḍism, monism, impersonalism and Buddhism. These schools of thought have formalised in their teachings the misconception of an 'ultimate truth' that lacks personal attributes. Resorting to a bewildering array of word jugglery, faulty logic, and misappropriated scriptural references, the adherents of Māyāvāḍism falsely engineer a 'truth' that they argue is subservient to, and dependent on illusion, hence the term Māyāvāḍism (Māyā=illusion; vādā=the path of). In their eyes, the world is false, and beyond this world is *nothing* – from which inexplicably *everything* comes. Illusion is all there is, and with the removal of illusion *nothing* is left. Thus, they aspire to achieve a state of *spiritual non-existence* as relief from the pain of *māyā's* illusion, an indefinable state that the Buddhists call *nirvāṇa*. In truth the 'spiritual suicide' advocated by the Māyāvāḍīs stems from an ontological self-loathing that has its deepest origin in a primordial antagonism to the supreme sentient God. Beyond Nirvāṇa lucidly explains that these concepts

have no substance in transcendent reality and that these imagined states of *spiritual non-existence* are not only delusional, but are wholly baseless according to eternal Vedic wisdom. Further, 'Beyond Nirvāṇa' presents how these misconceptions and false teachings have taken shape over the centuries and the variety of gross and subtle forms they take, especially in our modern world.

This book especially investigates the philosophy of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, whose philosophical misinterpretations of the Vedas were so influential that not only did he succeed in driving Buddhism out of India, but what most of us now think of as Hinduism is fundamentally nothing but his brand of impersonal Māyāvāḍism. To quote the author, "...it can be safely concluded that in truth – any philosophy which has the propensity to dilute, divide, and confuse the rational, logical or factual understanding of the Supreme Lord's personal form, has at some juncture been influenced by the deceptive forces of Māyāvāḍism." Furthermore, 'Beyond Nirvāṇa' demonstrates that Śaṅkarācārya's teachings are in the final analysis ironically nothing but a recycled form of Buddhism – and in no way true to the original Vedic wisdom known as *Sanātana-dharma*.

The author of 'Beyond Nirvāṇa', Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, was a leading disciple of the hugely influential spiritual preceptor Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura who was a towering *ācārya* (spiritual master) of the Gauḍīya tradition in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Gauḍīya tradition is part of the ancient Brahmā-Madhava-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, one of the four main *sampradāyas* or lineages of Vaiṣṇavism (devotion to Śrī Viṣṇu as the one Supreme Personality). The Gauḍīya philosophy originates with the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (15th cen.) who is an incarnation of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Yuga Avatāra (incarnation of Godhead and preceptor for this epoch). It was especially the doctrine of *acintya-bheda-ābheda-tattva* (simultaneous oneness and difference) propounded by Śrī Caitanya that wove together the teachings and insights of previous *ācāryas* while further elaborating that God is "simultaneously one with, yet distinctly different from His creation, which includes both sentient beings and non-sentient matter". It is this *tattva* or truth that establishes beyond doubt the distinct identity of both God and the living being, and the basis of their relationship as qualitatively similar, but quantitatively different. Further, His teaching of Daśa Mūla or Ten ontological Truths, establishes that the *sādhya-vastu* or penultimate attainment of spiritual realisation is *prema* – or love for God wherein the living being is absorbed in transcendent love and affection for that supreme personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A central feature of Lord Caitanya's teaching is the reassertion that the highest aspect

of God is His divine, sentient personality and thus both He and the line of *ācāryas* that descend from Him are known as the ‘guardians of devotion’ and the ‘guardians of personalism’.

Later in the book you will read how Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura tirelessly preached about the fallacy of Māyāvādisim while establishing the truth of God’s name, fame, form and personality by conclusive scriptural and logical argument. In this he continued the tradition and preserved the disciplic line of Śrī Caitanya dating back to Śrī Madhvācārya (12th cen.) and continuing on to Lord Brahmā himself. Following in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura’s footsteps, his stalwart disciples vigorously continued the important work of promoting pure devotion while simultaneously revealing the deception of Māyāvāda concept.

Three prominent disciples led the way in the campaign to check the insidious advances of impersonalism, the first being the author of this work, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja whose extensive efforts in this regard are crystalised in their essence in this book. He was also the *sanyāsa guru* of Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja, a figure well known to the western world as the founder of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja was a pioneering champion of devotion, who was the first to educate the western public on the meaning and pitfalls of Māyāvādisim. The third figure was Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja whose very name means the ‘guardian of devotion’. Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was, like the other two *ācāryas*, a stalwart preacher whose eloquent command of English captivated anyone who heard him speak or read his books. All these *ācāryas*’ sweet manner, deep learning and profound realisation of the highest truths attracted many souls away from the trap of dry impersonal speculation to the certain shelter beyond *nirvāṇa* – the attainment of *prema*, or pure spiritual love in a uniquely personal relationship with the all-attractive, sentient supreme Lord.

In the present day, the effort to save the innocent from the loss of spiritual-self propounded by Māyāvādisim is being carried on by the *ācārya* and devotional guardian Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, under whose guidance and direction this book has finally appeared in the English language.

‘Beyond Nirvāṇa’ was originally published by the author under the title of “Māyāvāda Jīvani” (The life history of Māyāvādisim) beginning in 1934

as a series of essays written in Bengali for the leading religious journal of the time, “The Gauḍīya.”

The first draft was read in its entirety to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura who was, “very pleased and delighted to hear it”. However, because the Gauḍīya’s editors thought the essays too voluminous to fit into the annual edition, they planned to print them as separate essays in the future. This was not to be, for by strange circumstances the articles were either lost or stolen. However, eventually they were recovered in 1941 when they were returned to the author hidden in the contents of a briefcase that contained some lost writing and articles by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Taking this as a sign of his Gurudeva’s desire that the work be published, the author began work afresh on ‘Māyāvāda Jīvani’.

In 1949, the author founded ‘Śrī Gauḍīya Patrika’, a groundbreaking ‘spiritual newspaper’, and in due course of time “The Life History of Māyāvādism” was published as a twenty-part series beginning from the summer of 1954, through to the autumn of 1955. The book that you hold in your hand is a compendium of that series which was published for the first time in 1968, by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vaman Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the most senior disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Śrīla Vaman Mahārāja refined and amended the original Bengali text printing the book under the title of ‘Vaiṣṇava Vijai’. This English edition is a faithful translation of the original Bengali text taken from Śrīla Vaman Mahārāja’s edition.

We are confident that you will find the contents of ‘Beyond Nirvāṇa’ revealing and illuminating. It challenges a variety of modern philosophical misconceptions by clearly elaborating on the history, influence and effects of monist, impersonal Māyāvādism. The book makes a solid case that Māyāvādism is in fact *aveda* (against Vedic wisdom) and is beneath appearances simply a covered form of Buddhism. It also reveals how in modern times gross and subtle atheism in a variety of forms cloaks itself in a spiritual garb to mislead the innocent public.

We hope that you enjoy how this book takes you on a journey through time and philosophical thought. To make the going easy, we have explained philosophical points in plain English, offering footnotes where needed at the end of each chapter. There is also a glossary of terms and character names at the end of the book. The author repeatedly explains that in order to keep the book readable he keeps to the main points of the subject, and suggests a reading list for those who want to explore the

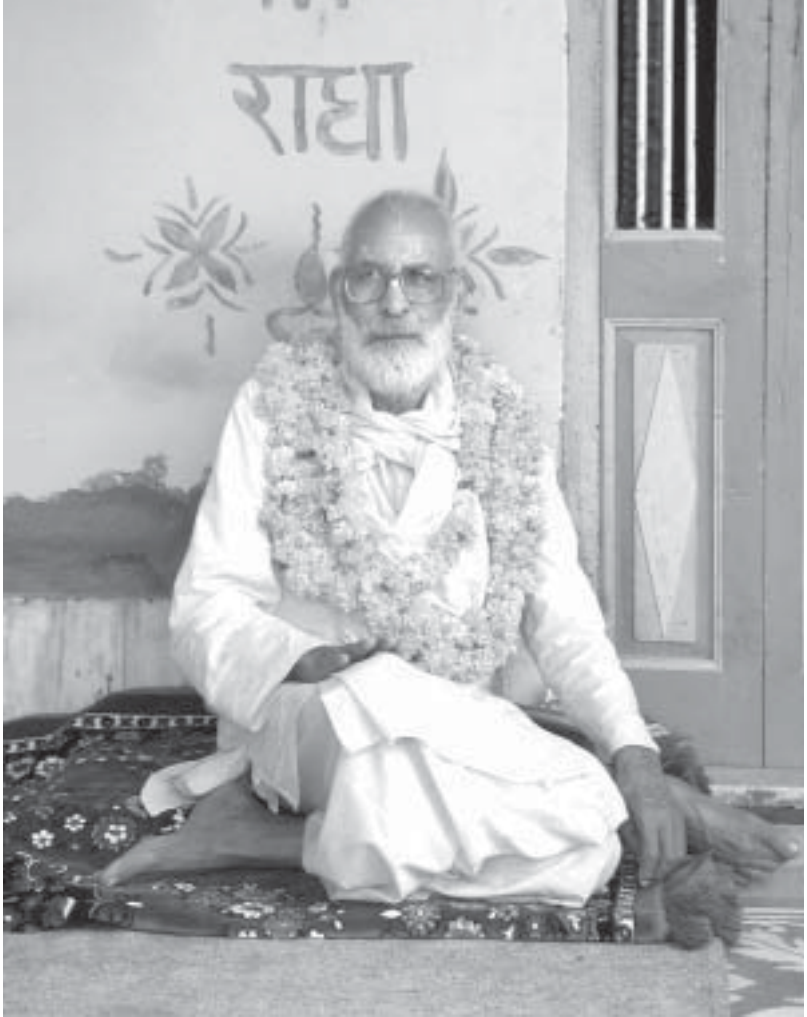
subject further. Be that as it may, while the book is in that sense a synopsis of a large subject, it is admirable in the way it presents both the big picture of the development of Māyāvādism as well as the salient details essential to a deep understanding of the subject matter. As such, on its own this book offers you a comprehensive understanding of Māyāvādism, its life and its history.

Finally, the editing staff would like to thank Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvami Mahārāja for the special privilege of working on this volume. Any unintentional errors or omissions are entirely the fault of the chief editor.

Completed on the auspicious disappearance day
of Śrīla Madhvācārya (Feb 10, 2003)

Vaiṣṇava das anudāsa

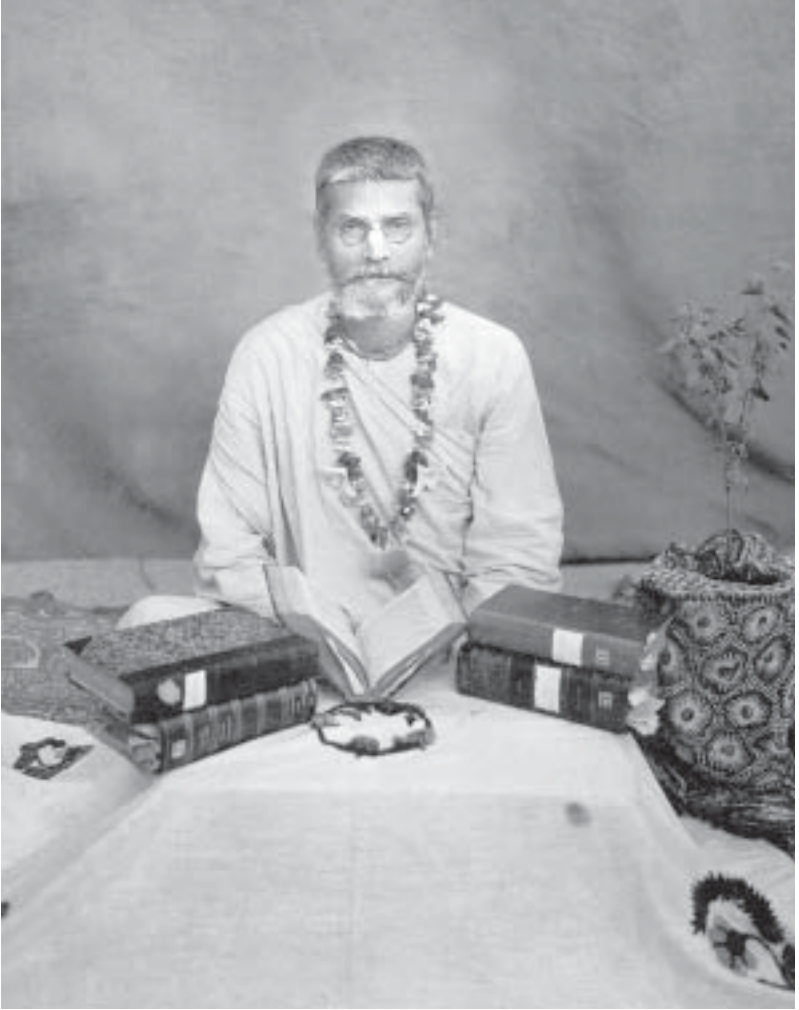
The editors



Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-Śata
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

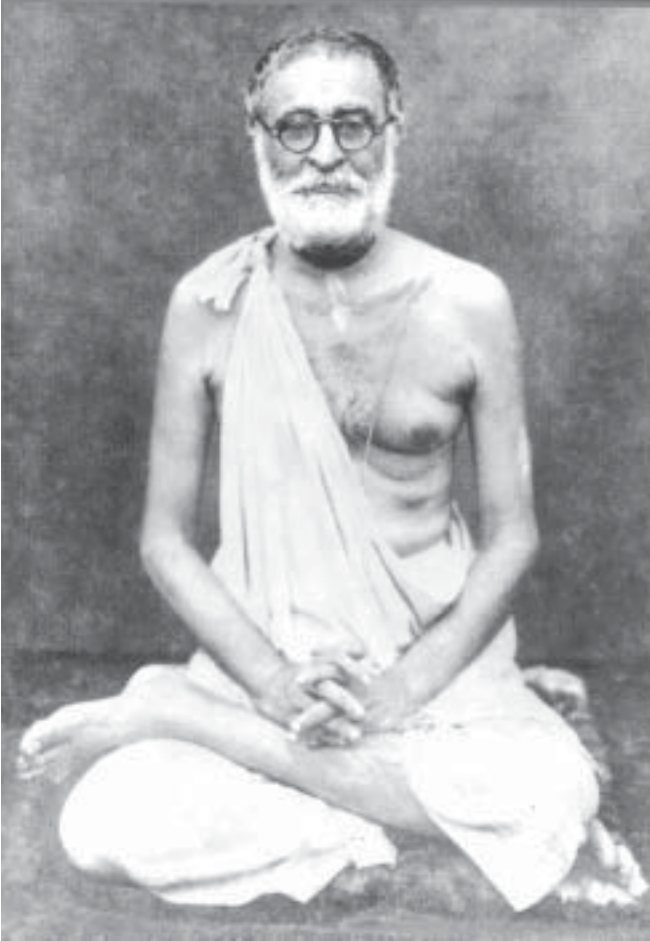


**Nitya-Lilā-Praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-Śata
Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja**



The Author of Beyond Nirvāṇa

Nitya-Līlā-Praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-Śata
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja



Nitya-Lilā-Praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-Śata
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda

Forward

(Edited from the first complete publication of 'The Life history of Māyāvādism' in 1968)

Śrīla Bhakti Prajñān Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Patrons of transcendental knowledge as well as those souls enlightened by it have all insisted on the publication of "The Life History of Māyāvādism"¹. The chances of this philosophical journal manifesting was in fact quite rare in this darkened age of Kali. The scope of the Kali-yuga's extensive atheistic influence, with all its base attributes, tendencies and mode of thinking can hardly be understated. The literary incarnation of the Supreme Lord and the compiler of the Vedic scriptures Śrī Veda Vyāsadeva with immense foresight narrated in the twelfth canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that the revelation of the absolute truth in the age of Kali would face immense difficulties. This was predicted over five thousand years ago and we now in the present time feel the awesome reality of this prophecy.

While living as a *naiṣṭhika brahmācari* (celibate monk) in the holy land of Mayāpur, Bengal, I had the rare opportunity in 1915 to attend the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam² classes of my worshipable Gurudeva *Jagat Guru Om Viṣṇupāda 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda*³. By reflecting upon the opening statements of all his lectures I understood his complete conviction against Māyāvādism. Under his instruction I completed my comprehensive study of the correct Gauḍiṇya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* (bona fide philosophical conclusions) four years later, which included my thorough training to properly preach and spread the *sāṅkīrtan* mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. At that time Śrīla Prabhupāda blessed me and gave me his benediction to realise all the scriptural truths and ontology. He would often remark, "So long as there is Śaṅkarācārya's Māyāvāda philosophy in this world, there will be obstacles on the path of pure devotional service. So on this earth there should not be a single place where Māyāvādism can find any shelter."

The longer I spent in his company contemplating his teachings, the more I realised that he advocated this idea in all his letters, essays, writings, lectures, commentaries, speeches and instructions. As a result his firm, unwavering conviction against Māyāvādism made a strong impression in my mind. Śrīla Prabhupāda had given almost a dozen lectures quoting from commentaries given by Rāmānuja, Madhvācārya and other noteworthy commentators of Vedānta philosophy, which also firmly

opposed Māyāvāḍism. I dutifully recorded these lectures by writing them down and adding them to my collection. In time after careful and thorough deliberation I was able to have some realisations, and was soon ordered by Śrīla Prabhupāda to go out preaching, specifically to prove the falsity of Śaṅkarācārya's Māyāvāda philosophy. I began by giving lectures at Ravenscroft College in Cuttack, continuing on to lecture to the intellectual elite at Allahabad, Assam, Meghalaya, Calcutta and Mathura among other places. Parts of these lectures were published in the "Dainik Nadia Prakash", the then daily newspaper⁴.

In his Śārīrika-bhāṣya commentary on Vedānta-sūtra, Śaṅkarācārya's deviates from the fundamental axioms of the Vedānta-sūtra so completely that he creates a work totally opposed to the principles of Vedānta philosophy. In this work Śaṅkarācārya states that the supreme spiritual truth (*brahman*), is formless, impersonal and non-qualitative. Hence, Śrī Caitanya Himself stated: *māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāṣa*: "If one hears this illusory commentary then one is doomed."

There is no mention anywhere in any of the five hundred and fifty-five sūtras of Vedānta sūtra that *brahman* possesses these three attributes. *brahman* cannot be formless, impersonal and non-qualitative. If *brahman* is not in possession of quality, from where comes His quality of mercy? If *brahman* is not in possession of a personality how is it that one can have a relationship with Him? And if *brahman* is not also in possession of form, then why is it that so many saintly souls have written praises to the dust on His lotus feet? These statements by Śaṅkarācārya about *brahman* being formless, impersonal and non-qualitative are utterly false and deceptive and are thus atheistic and *asurika*⁵. Nowhere in his Vedānta-sūtra does Śrīla Veda-Vyāsadeva ever mention these three blatantly atheistic descriptions of formless, impersonal and non-qualitative.

Śaṅkarācārya cleverly interpolated these three gnostic and anti-theistic concepts, borrowing them from Buddhism and then expertly superimposing them over his commentary on Vedānta-sūtra. The *brahman* of Māyāvāda philosophy alluded to by Śaṅkarācārya is therefore not actually true *brahman*. This is presented with abundant contextual evidence in the course of this book. Śaṅkarācārya gave an illusory, distorted and false imitation of *brahman* that should not in any way, shape or form be ever mistaken for the real *brahman* explained in the Vedic scriptures. Those souls who are eager to learn and understand the life history of Māyāvāḍism can easily understand the root of its beginnings already in the words of this forward.

The word *brahman* itself indicates the existence of transcendental sound vibration. This is the *nāma-brahman*, (Transcendental Name) in “Hare Kṛṣṇa” preached by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu 500 years ago. Those who have no affinity for this transcendental name and who lack the esoteric understanding of the word *brahman*, will realise no positive effect from their chanting. The broadcasting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* (great *mantra* of deliverance) was the main purpose for establishing the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in 1940. Promulgating and teaching Lord Caitanya’s *sankīrtan* mission of Kṛṣṇa *prema* (divine love), through the medium of the holy name is the sole objective of this all-embracing organisation. It is the desire of the Supreme that the truth of Vedānta and Sanātana-Dharma should be revealed in the world along with the chanting of His holy names.

In 1943, whilst spending time in Chinsurah at the newly installed Śrī Uddharan Gauḍīya Math temple, I had the opportunity to give classes on the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam for one week at Sanskrit Tol, Serampore. This institution was founded by and directed by renowned scholar Śrī Phanibhusan Chakravarti M.A, B.L. He possessed a vast and impressive library, befitting a great *pandita* (scholar) of his caliber and qualifications. It was a truly splendid collection of rare and out of print Vedic literatures in their original first edition and he gave me the freedom to use it to my heart’s desire.

One day while browsing through the hundreds of books, one volume entitled Lankavatāra-sūtra especially drew my attention. To appease my curiosity I read it cover to cover and discovered some very interesting information. In one particular part of the book it records that Rāvaṇa, the infamous adversary of Lord Rāma, would go to Mt. Kailāsa and meet with Lord Buddha to deliberate and discuss impersonalism. The book also gave very impressive ample proof of the state of impersonalism in the Tretā-Yuga age, over one million years ago. I copied the relevant portions from Lankavatāra-sūtra and added them to this essay for clarity.

In 1946, whilst staying in Vārāṇasī for observance of Dāmodara Vrata, the time was marked by a very interesting incident. At Bodhi-Gaya I found the Buddhist temple under the custody of one prominent *ācārya* of the Māyāvāda Śāṅkarācārya sect. The temple management was fully administered by him and moreover he was the only member on the trustee board. My curiosity being aroused by this extremely unusual combination of circumstances, I went to his office to meet him. My modest question was, “Bodhi-Gaya is a famous place of pilgrimage for Buddhists, however you are an *ācārya* in the Śāṅkara sect. How then have you become the

temple president of such an important Buddhist temple? Does the Śaṅkarācārya sect now subscribe to Buddhism?” This last statement inflamed him and his reply was, “Śaṅkarācārya was never a Buddhist! The Vaiṣṇavas declare him so with ill feeling. It is outrageous! Have you ever seen the book *Lalita Vistara*?” After replying that I had, he requested me to discuss the matter with the temple *pandita*. Summoning him we had some in depth discussions and at the conclusion the *pandita* gave me the book *Lalita Vistara*. The facts and evidence from this book as well have been quoted at suitable places.

Three years later in 1949 the Śrī Gauḍīya Patrika was inaugurated as the monthly magazine of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Bengali. In due course of time the editor, Pujapāda Nityalīlā Pravista Naraṣiṅgha Mahārāja inspired the gradual publishing of the “Life History of Māyāvāḍism” by printing it as a twenty part series from the summer of 1954 through the autumn of 1955. This was in fact the first edition of this book.

The desires of many learned and intellectual persons remained unfulfilled for many years, despite their numerous and persistent requests for this book to be printed in one volume. Generally one can expect many unforeseen obstacles to present themselves in this temporal world. Special insight into the hidden, fundamental cause of delays in the publishing of important spiritual literature however, can be understood by contemplating Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s narrative in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. From this we can clearly understand that Kali, although still an infant and not yet fully fledged, is reigning freely having taken over the world. The result of his influence can be easily seen in the lamentable plight and degraded condition of this suffering planet. It is the nature of *kāla* (Time) to move in cycles. By Divine Will, all the material creations experience a revolving periods of duality – of light and darkness, birth and death, knowledge and ignorance. In regard to our present age of darkness it has been predicted that the forces of Kali-yuga will intensify. Norms of human behaviour, ethics, morals and judgement have now reached such low levels that it will be difficult for future generations to surpass them – but somehow or other they will.

The Supreme Lord empowered Mahādeva Lord Śiva, to descend to this earth as his deputed servitor and take birth in a Brāhmaṇa family. In this incarnation he would develop a philosophy that would be logically acceptable to those opposed to *bhakti* (devotion), to the point where they would accept the Lord as impersonal – in other words possessing

no form, no personality and no qualities. Here is a vivid description of this as Śiva reveals to Parvati the method in which he created his theory:

*vedārthavan mahāśāstram māyāvādam avaidikam mayā eva
kathitam devi jagatām nāśakāranāt*

veda-the Vedas, *ārthavan*-having the meaning in, *mahā*-great, *śāstram*- scriptures, *mayā*-illusion, *vādam*-the theory, *avaidikam*-is non-vedic, *mayā*-it's me, *eva*-who, *kathitam*-have told, *devi*-O' Goddess, *jagatām*-of worlds, *nāśa*-the root, *kāranāt*-of destruction

Translation

The great scriptural theory of impersonalism is non-Vedic, though taking its meaning from the Vedas, O' Goddess. It is I who has told this because it is the root of the destruction of the worlds.

Māyāvāḍism is factually covered Buddhism. Mahādeva Śiva was authorised to incarnate and spread this theory by Lord Viṣṇu. Atheistic people can only turn against their natural, constitutional spiritual position by accepting atheistic ideas. To accomplish this task Śivajī took birth as Śāṅkarācārya and misrepresented the Vedic scriptures by speculative logic and deceptive interpolation. It can be understood from Vedānta (the conclusions of Vedic knowledge), that Śiva is the lord of destruction, Brahmā is the lord of creation and Viṣṇu is the lord of preservation. To expedite the forces of Kali, Śāṅkarācārya powerfully declared, "This world is an illusion! This world is false! Its existence is not real!" This dark teaching, with a covert purpose, gives a type of false wisdom to spiritually inactivate humans. In Kali-yuga the gloom is deepening as nihilistic philosophy permeate subtly throughout all of society. Humanity, unable to save itself is helplessly beguiled by its own tune and charmed by its own dance into the deepest darkness of ignorance.

Definitions and explanations, hypothesis and theories that cannot be found anywhere in Vedānta philosophy or in Vedānta-sūtra were ruthlessly presented without compunction by Śāṅkarācārya as 'revealed Vedic knowledge'. Even if we were to accept his philosophy as a doctrine of knowledge, still because of the fallacy of his basic fundamental ontology, it would have to be rejected and totally excluded from the Vedic pantheon. Śāṅkarācārya's Māyāvāda theory can never in any shape, way or form be accepted as a doctrine of knowledge. It is not only my opinion, but it is also the opinion of all the previous Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and preceptors dating back to antiquity. For example, in the Śāṅḍilya Sūtra chapter two, called the Bhakti Khaṇḍa, verse 26 we find:

brahma-kāṇḍam tu bhaktau tasya anujñānāya sāmānyātā

brahma-brahman, *kaṇḍam*-portion, *tu*-but, *bhaktau*-in devotion, *tasya*-his, *anujñānāya*-for acceptance, *sāmānyātā*-as it is common

Translation

The portion of knowledge of *brahman* commonly accepted is for devotion.

The knowledge of the Supreme Truth (*brahman*) exists to illuminate the path of devotion. Knowledge without love and devotion is meaningless. Transcendental knowledge is for utilisation in the service of the Supreme Lord. *Ācāryas* of devotional wisdom instruct us on the best ways and means of attaining this love. These *ācāryas* are great, saintly souls and I pray to them that they not disregard this humble offering which follows in their footsteps. Nārada Muni describes both Śrīla Veda Vyāsa (the compiler of Vedānta-sūtra) and Śāṅḍilya as writers of devotional scriptures of the highest order. The great ṛṣi Śāṅḍilya also glorifies Vedānta-sūtra as the root scripture of his writings and the foundation of *bhakti-yoga*.⁶

Many verses like these put Śaṅkarācārya's attempts to establish impersonalism into perspective. To deny the Supreme Lord His form, His individuality, His opulence, His potencies, His paraphernalia and His beloved associates and devotees, consequently making the Supreme Lord an enigma and giving Him only the nomenclature '*brahman*', is devoid of all rationality and is a non-Vedic concoction.

My last humble but earnest request to all sane and intelligent persons desiring freedom from the clutches of Kali, is that they should declare total prohibition on Śaṅkarācārya's Māyāvāda hypothesis, never listen to the senseless prattle of indistinct formlessness, and never utter a single word of impersonalism to anyone. Total prohibition on Māyāvādism is based on the injunction declared by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraj Gosvāmī in Śrī Caitanya caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, chapter six, verse 169 below:

jīvera nistāra lāgi' sūtra kaila vyāsa
māyāvādī-bhāṣya sunile haya sarva-nāśa

jīvera-the living entities, *nistāra*-deliverance, *lāgi'*-for the matter of, *sūtra*- Vedānta sūtra, *kaila*-made, *vyāsa*-Vyāsadeva, *māyāvādī*-of the impersonalists, *bhāṣya*-commentary, '*sunile*-if hearing, *hays*-becomes, *sarva-nāśa* -all destructive

Translation

Śrīla Veda Vyāsa presented the Vedānta-sūtra for the benefit of all living entities, but hearing the impersonalist commentary of Śaṅkarācārya is utterly destructive.

All devotees, friends and well wishers of Vaiṣṇavism must follow this injunction. Moreover we must augment it by the sublime teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura who wrote thus:

*viśaya vimūḍhaḥ āar māyāvādijan
bhakti śunya duhe prāna dhare akāraṇa*

viśaya- materialists, *vimūḍhaḥ-*ignorance, *āar-*and, *māyāvādijan-*believers in impersonalism, *bhakti-*devotion, *sunya-*devoid, *duhe-*the two, *prāna-*life, *dhare-*existing, *akāraṇ-*uselessly

Translation

The lives of the ignorant materialists and the impersonalists are useless, since they are both devoid of devotion.

*seyi duyer maḍhye viśaya tabu bhalo
māyāvādi saṅga nāhi māgi kona kāla*

*seyi-*that, *duyer-*the two, *maḍhye-*among, *viśaya-*materialists, *tabu-*is still, *bhalo-*better, *māyāvādi-*impersonalist, *saṅga-*association, *nāhi-*never, *māgi-*want, *kona kāla-* ever

Translation

Among the two, the gross materialist is better, for one should never ever associate with an impersonalist.

māyāvāda doṣa yār ḥṛdaye paśila kutarka ḥṛdaye tār vajra sama bhela

*māyāvāda-*impersonalism, *doṣa-*poison, *yār-*whose, *ḥṛdaye-*heart, *pasha-*entered *kutarka-*noise, *ḥṛdaye-*heart, *tāra-*his, *vajra-*thunderbolt, *sama-*same as, *bhela-*struck

Translation

For whose heart the poisonous noise of impersonalism has entered, it is the same as having his heart struck by a thunderbolt.

*bhaktira svarūpa āar viṣaya āśraya
māyāvādī' ānitya boliā saba kaya*

bhaktira-devotion, *svarūpa*-essence, *āar*-and, *viṣaya*-the supreme lord, *āśraya*- perfect guru, *māyāvādī*-impersonalists, 'ānitya-ephemeral, *boliā*-consider, *saba*-them, *kaya*-manifestations.

Translation

The essence of devotion is to the Supreme Lord and Guru; but the impersonalists consider these to be merely ephemeral manifestations.

*dhik tār kṛṣṇa sevā śrāvaṇa kīrtana
kṛṣṇa aṅge vajra hāane tāhār stavana*

dhik-inimical, *tār*-his, *kṛṣṇa*-Lord Kṛṣṇa, *sevā*-service, *śrāvaṇa*-hearing, *kīrtana*-chanting, *kṛṣṇa*-Lord Kṛṣṇa, *aṅge*-body, *vajra*-thunderbolt, *hāane*-is like, *tāhār*-his, *stavana*-prayers

Translation

For those who are opposed to serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and are inimical to hearing and chanting His holy names, their prayers are like a thunderbolt to Lord Kṛṣṇa's body.

*māyāvād sama bhakti pratikul nāhi
ateva māyāvādī saṅga nāhi chāi*

māyāvāda-impersonalism, *sama*-equal, *bhakti*-devotion, *pratikula*-against, *nāhi*-never, *ateva*-thus, *māyāvādī*-impersonalists, *saṅga*-association, *nāhi* never, *chāi*-want

Translation

There is nothing more against devotion to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa than the denial that He has a personality; therefore one (who is following the path of *bhakti*) should never take the association of an impersonalist.

Thus with all these instructions in mind we should always adhere to the pure and pristine teachings of the great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* (preceptors) making them our only shelter and refuge in transcendental life. Śrīla Vyāsadeva projected the highest welfare for all human beings when he compiled the Vedānta-sūtra. The Vedānta-sūtra and the Bhakti-sūtra⁷ are synonymous. They have both originated from the same source, with the same goals and same objectives. This has been made apparent in the previous pages while deliberating on the substance of Vedānta-sūtra and

the Vedānta philosophy. The only deliberation remaining is the efficacy of *nama-bhajan-śikṣa*.⁸

The chanting of the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Kṛṣṇa is the highest scriptural truth. In Kali-yuga without the devotional chanting of the Lord's holy names no other activities can be approved. The great *ācāryas*, sages, *rṣī*'s and *munis* of India prescribed this path as the principle method to attain imperishable transcendental knowledge as well as bliss. All other paths, whether by *jñāna* (knowledge), by *yoga*, by *tapasya* (austerities), by meditation or any other methodology are fruitless unless they are accompanied by the chanting of the holy names of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and His incarnations. Any concocted deviation or speculative assumption that doesn't include the chanting of the holy names of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and His incarnations should be understood to be incomplete and therefore ultimately valueless.

Since January of 1968 Śrīman Nava Yogendra Brahmācari has made an earnest attempt to publish this "The Life History of Māyāvāḍism" in book form. I am indebted to him. Śrī Bhakti Vedānta Vaman Mahārāja took immense pains for its publication in the "Śrī Gauḍīya Patrika", making literal changes and improvements. Although myself being ill, I tried to do my level best for it, especially by adding the term "Vaiṣṇava Vijaya" (Victory to the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) to the title, since without the Vaiṣṇavas the transcendental truth would not be made apparent. The truth must always prevail!⁹

I humbly request the readers of this book to study the contents of this book very carefully. By doing this, one will insure that they will never be captivated or ensnared by the illusion of Māyāvāḍism and also by doing so they will be able to easily lead others away from Māyāvāḍism.

Bhakti Prajñān Kesava,

Akśaya Tritiya,

Tuesday March 30, 1968,

17, Madhusudan, 482 Gour Era,

17, Vaiśakh, 1375 Bengali Era

(Footnotes)

¹ The original title of this book. Ed.

² Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: also known as ‘Bhagavat Purāna’, considered by Vaiṣṇavas to be the quintessence of Vedic knowledge and the natural commentary of Vedānta by its author Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

³ By introducing his spiritual master to the readers using his full title, the author follows the protocol of Vaiṣṇava etiquette in showing both love and respect. The disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also used the affectionate abbreviation of ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda’.

⁴ Dainik Nadia Prakash was a groundbreaking ‘spiritual daily newspaper’ founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Ed.

⁵ *Asurika*: Often translated as ‘un-godly’ or ‘demoniac’. However, a more direct translation of the word’s meaning is: *a*-against or opposite to, *sura*-the light (of the Supreme).

⁶ *Bhakti-yoga*: The path of spiritual realisation through devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

⁷ Vedānta-sūtra and Bhakti-sūtra: the conclusions of Vedānta and the path of *bhakti*, devotion. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is also considered to be the natural commentary of Vedānta.

⁸ Nama-bhajan-śikṣa: Instruction on devotional chanting of *mantras* containing the transcendental names of the Supreme.

⁹ Śrīpad BV Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja chose the current title Beyond Nirvana to illustrate that beyond the fallacious misconception of monism, impersonalism and voidism lies a sweeter, complete, variegated transcendent reality that is the ultimate goal of the Vedas and highest attainment of self-realised souls.

Beyond Nirvāṇa

The philosophy of Māyāvādism: A life history

The Brahma-Sūtra 3/2/3 states:

māyā mātrāntu kārtsnyeānabhivyakta svarūpa tvāt

A dreamer's dream is known only to him, others are unable to experience any part of it.

Life begins with birth and ends with death. The time between one's birth and death is filled with a variety of activities and experiences called 'life history'. However, in examining the life history of Māyāvādism we must look beyond the punctuation of birth and death. We must uncover its distant origins, its 'pre-natal' activities or the history of its past life, as well as the huge impact it left on others after it passed from this world. In other words, to fully understand Māyāvādism as a philosophy we have to explore it within the context of previous ideas which were factors in its appearance, also its subsequent development and mutation as a school of thought, and its influence on subsidiary philosophies and new philosophies which appeared afterwards.

To manifest itself, Māyāvādism required a pre-existing foundation of thought, a 'real substance' that would serve as a prop to offer its appearance, support and validity. It is logical when discussing a given quality, to include the entity that possesses that quality in the discussion. Without reference to such, a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the principle subject matter is obstructed and a deep understanding of its true nature potentially lost.

A Biography of Māyāvādism

The goal of writing such a treatise and to what extent it can be fully achieved is too demanding a prediction for me to make. Nonetheless, there is a considerable difference between a factual historical biography and a generalised speculative narration based on conjecture. An authentic biography is a consummate treatise that effects a well-rounded influence on the reader by providing them a full opportunity to learn the actual truth. Many superficially researched biographies are penned by authors who satisfy themselves by writing partial truths authenticated by them alone. In contrast the authentic biographer describes actual facts and events, giving the reader a chance to objectively verify and experience history. The latter approach is the one that inspires my efforts to enumerate

a well-researched and historically factual biography of Māyāvādism. In the course of analysing Māyāvāda philosophy I have given prominence to the biographies of pre-eminent followers of the Māyāvāda school of thought. The advantage of a methodical presentation of these biographies is that it follows the common approach found in the biographies of other philosophers and philosophies such as that of the Vaiṣṇava tradition. This gives the reader a chance to compare the finer points, offering a comprehensive view, without which salient facts remain hidden. Among the Māyāvādi philosophers, the most illustrious and exemplary personality worthy of everyone's respect is the world-renowned, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. The history and precepts of Māyāvāda philosophy draws heavily from his life, activities and teachings.

The path of 'Spiritual growth'

The Vedānta aphorism: '*tat tu samavayāt*' (Brahma-sūtra 2/2/4) states that the truth (*brahman*) can only be fully realised by treading the direct and favourable path. The indirect, deductive path of empiricism is tedious and hazardous, and leads to frustration due to the fallible nature of faulty material senses. But what is that favorable path? And by what attitude can one successfully arrive at the truth?

The crest jewel among Vaiṣṇava preceptors, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, wrote in the beginning of his book '*Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu*' – '*anukulyena kṛṣṇanusilanam*' which translates as 'the cultivation of a genuine understanding and realisation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is only possible with a favorable attitude', (Śrī Kṛṣṇa being Parambrahman or the ultimate truth). A favourable attitude is in fact essential if one hopes to obtain success in any of life's endeavours. But in matters pertaining to the realisation of ultimate truth, the rejection of everything unfavourable to spiritual advancement is inevitable. This is also confirmed in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11/676: '*anukulasya samkalpah pratikulasya vivarjanam*' – meaning, 'a special feature in the cultivation of *bhakti-yoga* is a firm determination to act favorably while rejecting everything that is detrimental or unfavorable'. In the pursuit of truth, one must therefore be able to discriminate what philosophical ideas are helpful and enriching, from those that may hinder or blunt one's clear understanding of the truth. I therefore consider that a comparative study of the history of Māyāvādism or monism is conducive to the favourable cultivation of *bhakti-yoga*. The sincere reader should soberly examine these points, as it will strengthen their understanding and deepen their devotion.

The Vedic Age and Māyāvāḍism

The word 'Māyāvāḍism' has long been in use among the followers of Sanatāna-dharma in India. However, its mention is not to be found anywhere in the Vedas or Upaniṣāds. The absence of this word in the Vedic Age prompts one to believe that there was no legitimate reason for this school of thought to become popular. Among the Āryans (the ancient adherents of Sanatāna-dharma) and since time immemorial, there is no record of disagreement about the authenticity and authority of the Vedic scriptures. The Vedas are transcendental, not a product of the human mind, but are understood by the sages to be 'revealed', self-manifested scriptures. In contrast from the beginning of Vedic civilisation which predates the division of ages, no authentic trace of Māyāvāḍa thought can be found. Lacking any historical precedent it can be safely concluded that the Vedic tradition was cultivated undiluted by any vestige of Māyāvāḍa thought. It therefore appears logical that this is one of the main reasons why the scriptures denounce Māyāvāḍism as non-Vedic.

The principle and fundamental *mantra* on which Māyāvāḍism stands is *ekam eva advitīyam* which translates as 'One and indivisible whole'. This *mantra* also forms the basis of non-dual or monist schools which are synonymous with Māyāvāḍism. Some hold the opinion that a few Vedic *mantras* like *so 'ham* 'I am that', and *aham brahma asmi* 'I am that *brahman*' etc. in a general way, and to some extent also supports Māyāvāḍism.

Prior to the advent of the four Ages (Satya, Tretā, Dvārapara and Kali) it was not possible for the living entities to make statements like 'I am God', 'I am the *brahman*', 'you are also that *brahman*' and so on. The Vedas powerfully proclaim the profound words '*Om tad viṣṇoh paramam padam sada paśyanti surayah*' translated as 'The wise sages, knowing Śrī Viṣṇu as the Absolute reality and only Supreme truth, eternally witness His Supreme abode'. The fact that the word *surayah* is in plural form, meaning 'wise sages', is very significant. In this Vedic text the object of observation is one and singular while the observers are plural and many, as well as distinct and differentiated from their object of observation. There is not a whisper of Māyāvāḍa thought in the minds of these eternal wise sages as they eternally engage in seeing Śrī Viṣṇu's Supreme abode. Māyāvāḍa statements like '*so 'ham*' etc, are therefore misplaced and at odds with this Vedic view.

The ‘Spiritual’ birth of Māyāvāḍism

When the pure spiritual living entity (the *jīva*) relinquishes identification with his eternal nature and forgoes the potential of his latent spiritual identity, he becomes subsequently engrossed in a second inferior substance, the material atmosphere, or *māyā*, which causes him to encounter numerous varieties of hazards and trepidation. According to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the Vedas, the situation is as follows (SB 11/2/37):

*bhayam dvitīyabhniveśatah syad
īśād apetasya vipayayo’s smṛtiḥ*

Fear arises when the *jīva* misidentifies himself as the material body due to absorption in the external, illusory world. When the *jīva* turns his back to the Lord, he forgets his constitutional position and original nature.

Like the ‘*surayah*’ or wise sages, the *jīvas* are meant to eternally see (render loving service to) the lotus-feet of Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When they deviate from their intrinsic spiritual nature they become engrossed in his divine illusory energy (*māyā*) which causes them to experience fear. At this time the *jīva* becomes eternally oblivious of his relationship to the Lord, and remains absorbed in the illusions of the Goddess Māyā’s temporary world. Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita writes in ‘Prema-vivarta’:

*kṛṣṇa bahirmukh haiya bhog-bancha kare
nikatastha māyātare japotiya dhare*

As soon as the *jīva* turns his back to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and desires temporary material enjoyment, *māyā*, waiting nearby, immediately captures him in her embrace.

The moment that the living entity falls into *māyā*’s clutches is the moment he forgets his original, spiritual identity. He forms a new mode of consciousness as a result of his immersion in the material atmosphere. Thinking that he is the ‘center of his own universe’, and imagining himself to be ‘the enjoyer’, he thus mistakenly equates himself with the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Supreme Lord is always steeped in penultimate bliss, either by dint of his inherent self-satisfied perfect nature, or through the sweet loving exchanges with his surrendered devotees. The *jīva*’s illusion becomes complete, when overcome by the spell of envy and self-adulation he desires to usurp the unquestionable and natural position of the Supreme. He thus becomes conditioned in this animosity, is enslaved by the stringent

laws of *karma* and is subjected by natural law to the cycle of repeated birth and death. Deluded by *māyā*, his deep-seated convictions make him an easy victim of the corrupting misconceptions of Māyāvāḍism.

It is at this primordial time that the disposition and vulnerability to the 'so'ham' (I am that) conception of Māyāvāḍism is born in the *jīva*. The *jīvas* who are inimical to the Supreme Lord take shelter of His illusory energy *māyā*, and become converts to Māyāvāḍism. It is thus the living entity's [adopted] state-of-illusion and his turning away from God that are the fundamental reasons for the birth of Māyāvāḍism.

The *jīva*'s fall into the material world is an imminent consequence of his desire to enjoy material nature. In that unnatural state he becomes victimised by the material concept of time and is caught up in the duality of existence and non-existence, of 'I' and 'mine', of reality and non-reality. He mistakes the real for the unreal, and the unreal for reality. Countless delusional ideas spill out of his mind, misconceptions like: 'this world is false and like a dream', 'the world is born out of illusion', 'truth and reality are impotent' and 'truth and reality are devoid of variety and attributes'. In contrast, an astonishing fact deserves to be disclosed. In all of the approximately 550 aphorisms (*sūtras*) of the Brahma or Vedānta *sūtra* is there any justification for these misconceptions. There is not the slightest mention of terms such as *nihśaktika* (impotent), *nirviśeṣa* (without attributes), or *nirakara* (formless). However, in spite of this, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary to the Brahma-Sūtra has forcibly interpolated these concepts, attempting to foist them off as Vedic conclusions.¹

What is the definition of Māyāvāḍism?

Māyāvāḍism is also sometimes known either as the theory of metamorphosis, or the theory of evolution, due to its striking departure from the truth as given by the Vedānta scriptures. However, the true Vedic view of evolution is a different thing entirely from the theory of 'one-ness' or non-dualism propagated by the monists, which is an aberration of Vedic wisdom. The Vedic Vivartavāda theory of evolution is that at some conducive, integrative and auspicious moment in time material atoms coalesce to create life. The special distinction of this philosophical view is that it confines itself entirely to the material model, and has no recourse to ontological concepts at all. The epicurean view of the atheist philosopher Carvak is an extension of this material-only conception. The real meaning of *vivarta*, metamorphosis or evolution, is the superimposition of the attributes, symptoms and apparent identity of

the soul onto the body as a concomitant by-product of material combinations. Despite this non-spiritual view, the true Vivartavādis do not make the mistake of claiming that matter becomes spirit. In contrast, the illusory concept that the world is *brahman* or is within *brahman* has nothing to do with Vedic metamorphosis, but is in actual fact pure Māyāvādisim. Thus, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's definition of 'vivartavāda', or theory of evolution, is in fact Māyāvādisim. Within this context therefore, the history and biography of Māyāvādisim can be understood as the history and biography of *vivartavāda*, or theory of evolution.

The real definition and meaning of Māyāvādisim will be discussed contextually: for now we offer a brief definition of Māyāvādisim.

The Sanskrit word 'māyā' generally implies the deluding spell of the material energy or the nescience potency. She (*māyā*) is the shadow or the reflected image of the form of the Absolute Truth. The illusory material energy has no power or authority to enter the spiritual realm of conscious reality, but here, in the material world she is the presiding authority. The tiny *jīva*, under the sway of *māyā* accepts incarceration in this material world and takes shelter in the ideas and theories of Māyāvādisim. The Māyāvāda philosophers attempt to debunk the claim that such an energy with the appellation 'māyā' exists, arguing that 'brahman' exists alone, without 'māyā'.

Their view is that *brahman* is without energy and is impotent. Because they endeavour to establish this theory about the supreme reality on the basis of mundane logic and arguments, these rhetoricians are famous as 'Māyāvādis'. On the strength of their mundane logic the Māyāvādis will have everyone believe that – 'The *jīva* is *brahman*', but that by the arrangement and action of the potency of 'māyā', *brahman* becomes projected onto many different *jīva* forms and is seen in each one of them. However, as soon as the illusion of *māyā* is removed, the *jīva*'s separate individual identity ceases to exist. It is only so long as the covering of 'māyā' remains that the *jīva* exists. Hence, Māyāvādis are persons who try to convince others of this relationship between *māyā* and *jīva*. Such persons do not accept the authority of the Vedas or Vedānta. By the imposition of sheer force and twisted arguments they say – "Once the covering of *māyā* is removed the *jīva* has no separate, independent existence. The *jīva* never experiences a state of pure-individual experience after he is freed from the clutches of *māyā*." We shall soon show many examples, to prove that these Māyāvādi conclusions are not supported by the Vedas, and are fundamentally fallacious.

Māyāvāḍism totally denies the individual *jīva* an eternal, pure existence and identity. On the other hand, deductively it dares to asseverate that *Isvara*, the Supreme controller; God, becomes afflicted by *māyā*. In which case ‘God’ is required to liberate Himself from *māyā*. Then factually, where is the distinction between God and *jīva*?

Even if one simply thinks, that the only criteria for deciding who is God and who is man is the state of freedom or bondage to the results of *karma* – still, such a view hurls the adherent into the pit of Māyāvāḍism.

If the identities of God and man are ascertained on the basis of this premise, what then can be more dangerous than this philosophy? The truth is that, the expression of such a view is in itself a prime symptom of the *jīva*’s affliction by *māyā*. Burdened with this misconception, even by attaining *nirvikalpa* (merging into *brahman*) he will be unable to free himself from the illusory entrapment of *māyā*, for nowhere is there any mention, proof or example of *nirvikalpa* liberation. As such, the Māyāvāḍis can never be included among the four pure spiritual *sampradāyas* (disciplic lineages) whose followers strictly adhere to the genuine tenets of the Vedas and Vedānta. This will be shown gradually in the light of traditional evidence.

Śrīla Veda-Vyāsadeva: Author of the Vedas

When the great sage Śrīla Veda-Vyāsadeva compiled the Vedas, he observed in them countless references and supporting evidences establishing the inherent distinction between God and the living entity. He did however, also encounter a few hints in support of the ‘non-differences’ between *Isvara* (God) and the *jīva* – but in contrast to the former were very few indeed. There is clear and ample indication that Śrīla Vyāsadeva surmised that these few hints would later form the corner stones of Māyāvāḍism, especially in the light that as a self-realised sage and preceptor Śrīla Vyāsadeva has knowledge of past, present and future (*trikālajña*)

The discussion of the conception of non-dualism in the Vedas is both incomplete and contextual. A comprehensive, exhaustive analysis of the truth, or any topic for that matter, can only be considered factual and authentic when it is discussed completely from all angles of perspective. Incomplete, or one-sided presentations that attempt to establish partial truths as the whole truth, is dishonest and is nothing but chicanery.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva has declared in his writings in the Purāṇas, that Māyāvāḍism is false and non-Vedic. Padma Purāṇa 25/7:

māyavādam asacchāstram pracchannam bauddham ucyate

The theory of Māyāvāḍism is a concocted scripture and is known as Buddhism in disguise.

In different sections of Padma Purāṇa, in the earlier part of Kurma Purāṇa and in many other Purāṇas, prophetic declarations such as this are common. In the Padma Purāṇa Māyāvāḍism is unequivocally declared non-Vedic. I made the point earlier in this book, that Māyāvāḍism or impersonalism was an alien concept in Vedic ages and therefore does not find a place as an authentic philosophy in the Vedic literature. Regarding this, Lord Śiva delivers a clear-cut declaration in the Padma Purāṇa:

*vedārtavan mahāsastram māyavādam avaidikam
māyā eva kathitam devi jagatām nāśakāranat*

The theory of Māyāvāḍism - though given a facade of great importance and claiming itself to be derived from the Vedas - is in truth a non-Vedic theory. O Goddess (Parvati)! It is I who has propagated this concocted theory, which will become the cause of the world's destruction.

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura comments on Māyāvāḍism in his book 'Jaiva Dharma':

“Atheist personalities under the cover of following the path of *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service, were attempting to use this knowledge to realise selfish and nefarious designs. Observing this, the most compassionate Supreme Lord, who is the fully committed guardian of His surrendered devotees, conceived a scheme by which demoniac elements could not corrupt the path of *bhakti*. He sent for Lord Śīvā, Mahadeva, and said to him: ‘O Sambhu! The human society will not benefit if the science of *bhakti* is preached to persons with an atheistic mentality. To delude these *asuras*² you must compile such a scripture, where My identity as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is obfuscated, and Māyāvāḍism is propagated. So persons steeped in the atheistic, demonic mentality may forsake the path of *śuddha-bhakti*, pure devotional service, and embrace Māyāvāḍism, in order that My dear devotees may relish *śuddha-bhakti* without consternation.”

The Supreme Lord Viṣṇu tells Lord Śiva the following in Padma Purāṇa: (42/110):

*svagamāyāih kalpitais tvam ca janān mad vimukhān kuru
maṁ ca gopāya yena syāt sṛṣṭi hrāsa uttara-uttara*

You should appear in Kali yuga among human beings in your partial incarnation and citing false scriptures compiled by you known as Tantra scriptures preach a philosophy to turn men against Me. Make sure to keep My eternal identity and Supreme form as the Personality of Godhead a deep secret. In this way the atheistic population will gradually increase.

And in Varaha Purāṇa:

*eṣa moham śṛjāmyāsu yo janān mohayiṣyati
tvaṁ ca rudra mahābāho moha śāstraṇi kāraya
atathyani vitathyani darśayasva mahābhujā
prakāśam kuru cātmānam aprakāśam ca mām kuru*

O mighty-armed Rudra! I am going to breed delusion of such magnitude that it will deceive everyone, hence you also must be prepared to contrive a scripture in order to further this cause. It should instigate mundane logic, full of word jugglery, to debunk the concepts supporting God's existence. Manifest your wrathful form (taken at the time of annihilation) and enshroud My eternal, divine form in deep mystery.

Śrī Vijñāna Bhikṣu's View

Some preceptors of the Śāṅkarācārya persuasion consider that Padma Purāṇa statements like the above, were interpolated out of envy by Vaiṣṇavas. However, the sāṅkhya-philosopher and egalitarian Vijñāna Bhikṣu disagrees. In the preface of his book 'Sāṅkhya-pravacana bhasya' he has quoted from the Padma Purāṇa. Which has been cited here for the information of the readers. (This appeared on pages 5 & 6 of the preface to Vijñāna Bhikṣu's commentary to 'Sāṅkhya darsanam', second edition, published by Śrī Jīvananda Vidyāsagar Bhattācārya in the Bengali era, 12/16:

*astu vā pāpinām jñāna pratibandhārthaṁ āstika darśanesv apy
amśataḥ
śruti viruddha artha vyavasthāpanam teṣu teṣvamaṣṣvapramānyam ca
śruti smṛty aviruddheṣutu mukya viṣayeṣu prāmānyam asti eva ata eva
padma purāṇe brahmāyoga darśana atiriktānām darśanānām nindā
upapadyate
yathā tatra pārvatīm pratiśvara vākyaṁ*

For the purpose of obstructing transmission of knowledge to sinful persons, theistic philosophy has sometimes proffered interpretations that contradict the Vedic view. These sections are mostly unsubstantiated. The major portions, which do not contravene the Vedas, are easy to prove. Thus in Padma Purāna, besides criticism of the knowledge of *brahman*, other philosophies have also been censured. For example in Padma Purāna, Mahādeva speaks to his consort Pārvatī:

*ṣṛṇu devi! Pravakṣyāmi tāmasāni yathākramam
yeṣāṃ śrāvaṇamātreṇa pātityaṃ jñānināṃ api
prathamam hi mayaiivoktaṃ śaivam pāśupatādikam
macchaktyā-veśitair vipraiḥ saṃproktāni tataḥ param*

*kaṇādena tu saṃproktaṃ śāstraṃ vaiśeṣikaṃ mahat
gautamena tathā nyāyam sāṅkyantu kapilena vai
dvijamanā jaimininā pūrvam vedamayārthataḥ
nirīśvareṇa vādena kṛtam śāstraṃ mahattaram*

*dhīṣaṇena tathā proktaṃ cārvākam atigarhitam
bauddha śāstram asat proktaṃ nagna-nīla-ṣāṭādikam
māyāvāḍam asac chāstraṃ pracchannaṃ bauddham eva ca*

*mayā eva kathitaṃ devi kalau brāhmaṇa rūpinā
apārtham śrutivākyānām darśayaloka-garhitam
karma svārūpatyājyvatvam atra ca pratipādyate
sarva karma paribhramśān naiṣkarmyam tatra cocyate*

*parātma jīvayor aikyam mayā atra pratipādyate
brāhmaṇo'sya param rūpaṃ nirguṇam darśitaṃ mayā
sarvasya jagato'pyasya nāśanārtham kalau yuge
vedārtha van mahā śāstraṃ māyāvāḍam avaidikam
mayaiva kathitaṃ devi! jagatām nāśakāraṇāt*

O Devī! I shall systematically explain 'Tāmasa – Darśana', philosophy in the mode of ignorance, hearing which even knowledgeable persons will become confused and diverted. Kindly hear it. The very first concept 'pāśupat', which is a part of the Śaiva-philosophy, is in the mode of ignorance. Brāhmaṇas empowered by me propagated these *tāmasika* philosophies. The sage Kaṇāda for example, postulated the Vaiśeṣika philosophy.

Gautama compiled the Nyāya scriptures and Kapila, the Sāṅkhya tradition. Jaimini compiled the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā scripture, which promulgated a false, atheistic view. Similarly Cārvaka put out an equally misleading theory from his imagination. For the destruction of the demoniac class of men, Lord Viṣṇu's incarnation, Buddha, propagated a false teaching. The Māyāvāda philosophy is a false doctrine disguised as Buddhism.

O Goddess! In the age of Kali, I will appear as a brāhmaṇa and preach this false philosophy. This view is contrary to the Vedic conclusion and is strongly denounced by the mass. In it I have perpetuated the theory of non-action, which urges one to give up life's activities altogether to attain freedom from reactions. Furthermore, I have established the one-ness of 'Paramātma', Supersoul, with the *jīva*, as well as the view that *brahman* is devoid of attributes. Intending to bring about the absolution of the world in Kali yuga, I have given Māyāvāda philosophy the stamp of Vedic authority and recognition.

Śrī Vijñāna Bhikṣu then writes:

iti-adhikaṃ tu brahma mīmāṃsā-bhāṣye prapañcitam asmābhir iti

More details regarding these points are available in my commentary to 'Brahma-mīmāṃsā'.

It is very important that we understand this scholar's background and motivation. Śrī Vijñāna Bhikṣu was intent on establishing a synthesis of all philosophical schools. He did not nurture any ill feeling or envy towards Śrī Śāṅkarācārya; rather he maintained an objective, unbiased stance and judiciously analysed both his merits and demerits. One who is realised in the Absolute Truth unhesitatingly admits both what is true and what is false, but never falls into the illusion of confusing the two. If pointing out discrepancies in a fabricated, speculative theory is hastily considered as envious behaviour, then Śrī Śāṅkarācārya himself can be faulted for the same. Śrī Śāṅkarācārya was never censured for calling Śākya Siṃha Buddha an imbecile. In his commentary to the Brahma-Sūtra 2/1/32, Śrī Śāṅkarācārya wrote:

*bahyārtha vijñāna śūnyavāda trayam itaretara viruddham upadiśata
'sugatena' spaṣṭikṛtam ātmano' sambandha pralāpitvam*

Sugata Buddha's statements are incoherent, as if made by one who has lost his faculty of reasoning.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's slanderous remarks on Śākya Simha Buddha should not prompt one to think that he was against Buddhist philosophy. He undertook a big effort to refute Śākya Simha Buddha's philosophies of *Vijñānatmavad* and *Bahatmavad* with use of proper logic and arguments, however his venture into refuting the philosophy of *Śūnyavāda* (annihilation of the self) did not seem to acquire the same magnitude. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's reverence for the Buddha and his *Śūnyavāda* philosophy was substantial, and was nurtured internally – this point will be delved into later. The previous statements by Śrī Vyāsadeva unambiguously declare that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya was a disguised Buddhist. He took Buddhist philosophy, which contradicts the Vedas, and giving it the stamp of Vedic authority, extensively propagated it in the world.

(Footnotes)

¹ Latter day Māyāvādis commonly misuse the word '*nirguna*' by conveniently misinterpreting its basic meaning (*nir*=without, and *guna*=material form) erroneously thinking that 'no material form' means 'no form at all'. This is despite copious Vedic references to the countless transcendental sentient attributes of the Lord that are supra mundane. Ed.

² Often translated as 'un-godly' or 'demoniac'. However, a more direct translation of the word's meaning is: *a*-against or opposite to, *sura*-the light (of the Supreme).

Two Buddhas

Śākya Simha Buddha and the Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha

It may be observed in different places in the Purāṇas that Māyāvādisms has been referred to as Buddhism. It is therefore necessary in this context to briefly discuss Buddhism. Śrī Buddha's philosophy or views is Buddhism. Hence, it is imperative that readers become acquainted with scriptural facts about Lord Buddha, who is declared by scripture to be one of the ten incarnations (*avatāras*) of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Viṣṇu. This is described in Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī's composition 'Gitā Govinda':

*vedān uddharate jaganti vahate bhūgolam udbibhrate
daityaṁ dārayate balim chalayate kṣatra kṣayaṁ kurvate
paulastyam jayate halaṁ kalayate kārūnyam ātanvate
mlecchān mūrccayate daśākṣikṛte kṛṣṇāya tubhyaṁ namaḥ*

O Kṛṣṇa, He who accepts ten incarnations! I offer my obeisances unto You for saving the Vedic scriptures as Matsya-incarnation; You held up the universe as Kurma-incarnation and lifted up the world as Varāha, the Boar-incarnation; as Nṛsimha You vanquished Hiranyakaśipu; as Vāmana You deceived Bali Mahārāja; as Paraśurāma You exterminated the corrupt warrior class; as Rāma You slew Rāvaṇa; as Balarāma You took up the plough; as Buddha You bestowed compassion and as Kalki You kill the Mlecchas.¹

In his Daśa Avatāra Stotram, Śrīla Jayadeva writes in the ninth verse:

*nindasi yajña vidherahaha śrutijātam
sadaya hṛdaya darśita paśughātam
keśava dhṛta buddha śarīra
jaya jagadīśa hare jaya jagadīśa hare*

O Lord of the universe, Keśava! You took the form of Lord Buddha Who is full of compassion and stopped the slaughter of animals which is strictly forbidden in the Vedas.

If this Lord Buddha is an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, then Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's connection to Him requires further elaboration and analysis. It becomes imperative to research this matter if Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's philosophy is referred to as another presentation of Buddhism. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's assessment of Buddha seems opaque, for he would have us believe that Śākya Simha Buddha and the Lord Buddha that the Vaiṣṇavas worship are one and the same personality. However, this is far

from the truth. Our revered *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, revealed that Śākya Simha Buddha was simply a highly intelligent mortal, a vastly learned person who had attained some inner realisations. So by declaring Śākya Simha to be Lord Buddha or by equating him with Lord Viṣṇu's incarnation, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya gives sufficient proof of the respect and dedication he quietly nurtured within him for Śākya Simha. The berating and admonishment he directed towards Śākya Simha is indeed only an 'eye-wash' intended to hoodwink the public.

One may ask at this point, in which context did Śrī Śaṅkarācārya opine Śākya Simha Buddha (also known as Gautama Buddha) and Avatāra Buddha to be the same personality? In response, I kindly request the learned readers to scrutinise Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's commentaries. In his commentary to Brahma-Sūtra that I referred earlier, the word *sugatena* refers to Gautama Buddha, the son of Śuddhodana and Māyādevi, and not to the original Viṣṇu incarnation Buddha. While discussing Buddha's philosophy, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya mentions his name in his commentary: '*sarvathā api anādarnīya ayam sugata-samayah śreyaskāmaih iti abhiprāyah.*' - In this statement *sugata* again refers to Gautama Buddha, the son of Māyādevi. The word '*samāyāh*' indicates philosophical conclusions (*siddhānta*) i.e. Gautama Buddha's *siddhānta*. However, it is true that another name for Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha is Sugata, and thus Śaṅkarācārya falsely interpolated Śākya Simha Buddha as if he were Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha. The use of the name Sugata-Buddha for Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha was already existing in Buddhist scriptures. This is substantiated in the book 'Amarakoṣa' an extremely ancient treatise written by the famous nihilist and atheist Amara Simha. It is believed that Amara Simha was born approximately 150 years prior to Śaṅkarācārya's birth. Amara Simha was the son of the brāhmaṇa Sabara Svāmī, who fathered a host of children with different mothers of different castes. This ancient verse about Amara Simha was well known in the learned circles of yore:

*brāhmaṇyām abhavad varāha mihiro jyotirvidām agrāṇih
rājā bhartṛhariḥ ca vikrāmanṛpaḥ kṣatrātrātma jāyām abhūt
vaiśyāyām haricandra vaidya tilako jātaś ca śaṅkuḥ kṛtī
śūdrāyām amaraḥ ṣaḍeva śabara svāmī dvija sya ātmajāḥ*

Varāha Mihira, foremost among the greatest astrologers, was born from the womb of a brāhmaṇa lady. King Vikrama and King Bhartṛhari were born from a *kṣatriya* mother. From a *vaiśya* mother were born Haricandra, a *vaidya tilaka* – an excellent Āyurveda physician and Śaṅku; and from a maidservant (*śūdra*)

mother was born Amara Simha. These six were fathered by the brāhmaṇa Śabara Svāmī.

The Amarakoṣa Speaks of Two Buddhas

Amara Simha was the author of many books on Buddhism. By coincidence all these books came in to the possession of Śrī Śāṅkarācārya, who subsequently preserved only the Amarakoṣa and burnt all the others. The following verses about Buddha are found in the Amarakoṣa.

*sarvajñah sugato buddho dharmarājas tathāgataḥ
samanta bhadro bhagavān mārājil lokajij jinaḥ
ṣaḍabhijño daśabalo' dvayavādī vināyakaḥ
munindrā śrīghanah śāstā munih*

All knowing, transcendental Buddha, king of righteousness, He who has come, beneficent, all encompassing Lord, conqueror of the god of Love Māra, conqueror of worlds, He who controls his senses, protector of the six enemies, possessor of the ten powers, speaker of monism, foremost leader, lord of the ascetics, embodiment of splendour and teacher of the ascetics.

The above verse contains eighteen names of Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha including the name Sugato, and the verse below contains the seven aliases of Śākya Simha Buddha without any mention of Sugato.

*śākyamunis tu yaḥ sa śākyasimhaḥ sarvārthasiddha śauddhodaniś ca
saḥ
gautamaś cārkabandhuś ca māyādevī sutaś ca saḥ*

Teacher of the Śākyas, lion of the Śākyas, accomplisher of all goals, son of Śuddhodana, of Gautama's line, friend of the entrapped ones, the son of Māyādevī.

In these verses, starting with *sarvajñah* and finishing with *munih* are eighteen names addressing the original Viṣṇu incarnation Lord Buddha. The next seven names beginning with Śākyamunistu to Māyādevī-Sutasca refer to Śākya Simha Buddha. The Buddha referred to in the first eighteen names and the Buddha referred to in the later seven names are clearly not the same person. In the commentary on Amarakoṣa by the learned Śrī Raghunātha Cakravartī, he also divided the verses into two sections. To the eighteen names of Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha he writes the words “*astadaś buddha*”, which clearly refers only to the Viṣṇu avatāra. Next, on his commentary for the seven aliases of Śākya Simha he writes: “*ete sapta*

śākya bangśabatirneh buddha muni bishete”, meaning- ‘the next seven names starting from Śākya-munistu are aliases of Buddha-muni who was born into the Śākya dynasty.’

Thus from the above verses and their commentaries it is indeed transparent that Sugata Buddha and the atheist sage Gautama Buddha are not one and the same person. I take this opportunity to request the learned readers to refer to the Amarakoṣa published by the respected Mr. H. T. Colebrooke in 1807². On pages 2 & 3 of this book the name ‘Buddha’ has been explained. The ‘Marginal Note’ on page 2 for the first eighteen names, states they are names of Ajina or Buddha and the ‘Marginal Note’ for the later seven, states these are aliases of Śākya Simha Buddha. A further footnote is added to clarify the second Buddha, of the later seven names – Footnote (b) ‘*the founder of the religion named after him.*’

Mr. Colebrooke lists in his preface the names of the many commentaries he used as references. Beside Raghunātha Cakravartī’s commentary, he took reference from twenty-five others. It can be said with certainty that the propagator of Bahyatmavāda, Jnanatmavāda and Śūnyamavāda, the three pillars of atheism, was Gautama Buddha or ‘Śākya Simha Buddha’. There is no evidence whatsoever that Sugata Buddha, Lord Viṣṇu’s incarnation, was in any way connected with atheism in any form. Śākya Simha or Siddhārtha Buddha, received the name Gautama from his spiritual master Gautama Muni, who belonged to the Kapila dynasty. This is confirmed in the ancient Buddhist treatise ‘Sundarānanda Carita’: ‘*guru gotrād ataḥ kautsāste bhavanti sma gautamāḥ*’- meaning “O’ Kautsa, because his teacher was Gautama, they became known from his family line”

Other Buddhist Literatures Recording Two Buddhas

Besides the Amarakoṣa, so highly favoured by Śaṅkarācārya, there are other famous Buddhist texts like Prajñā-Pāramitā Sūtra, Astasahasrika Prajñā-Pāramitā Sūtra, Sata-sahasrika Prajñā-Pāramitā Sūtra, Lalita Vistara etc. Proper scrutiny of these texts reveals the existence of three categories of Buddha namely:

- **Human Buddhas:** like Gautama, who came to be known as Buddha after enlightenment.
- **Bodhisattva Buddhas:** Personalities like Samanta Bhadraka who were born enlightened.
- **Adi (original) Buddha:** the omnipotent Viṣṇu Avatār incarnation of Lord Buddha.

The Amarakoṣa states that Lord Buddha, Śrī Viṣṇu’s incarnation is also known as Samanta Bhadra, whereas Gautama Buddha is a human

being. Other than the eighteen names of the Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha mentioned in Amarakoṣa, many names of Lord Buddha are recorded in the above mentioned Buddhist texts. In Lalita Vistara, Ch. 21 page 178, it is described how Gautama Buddha meditated on the same spot as the predecessor Buddha.

*ea dharaṇīmunde pūrvabuddhāsanasthaḥ
samartha dhanur grhītvā śūnya nairātmavāṇaiḥ
kleśaripuṃ nihatvā dṛṣṭijalāṅ ca bhītvā
śiva virajamaśokāṃ prāpsyate bodhim agryām*

The one seated on the hallowed earth of the previous Buddha's birthplace is on the path of voidism and renunciation. With his weapon, the powerful bow, he vanquishes the enemies of distress and illusion. Thus with wisdom he will attain the auspicious state of grieflessness and worldly detachment.

It is transparent from this verse that Gautama Buddha, realising the spiritual potency of the previous Buddha's birthplace, chose to perform meditation and austerities in that vicinity, under a pipal tree. The ancient and original name of this place was Kīkata, but after Gautama attained enlightenment here it came to be known as 'Buddha Gaya' (Bodhi Gaya). Even to the present day, the rituals of worship to the deity of Buddha at Bodhi Gaya are conducted by a *sannyāsī* (renounced monk) of the 'Giri order' belonging to the Śrī Śaṅkarācārya sect. It is commonly accepted amongst these monks that Buddha-Gaya (Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha) was a predecessor of Gautama Buddha, who came later to the original Buddha's birthplace to practice meditation. Śākya Simha Buddha chose this place to attain liberation, knowing it to be saturated with immense spiritual power.

Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra is a famous and authoritative Buddhist scripture. From the description of Buddha, which is found in this book it may be firmly concluded that he is not the more recent Śākya Simha or Gautama Buddha. In the beginning of this book we find Rāvaṇa, King of Lanka, praying first to the original Viṣṇu incarnation Buddha and then to the successive future Buddha. A part of this prayer is reproduced below:

*laṅkāvatāra sūtram vai pūrva buddha anuvarṇitam
smarāmi pūrvakaiḥ buddhair jina-putra puraskṛtaiḥ
sūtram etan nigadyante bhagavān api bhāṣatām
bhaviṣyatyanāgate kāle buddhā buddha-sutaś ca ye*

Rāvaṇa, the king of Laṅka, at first recited in the ‘Toṭaka’ metre, then sang the following –“I invoke in my memory the aphorisms known as ‘Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra’, compiled and propagated by the previous Buddha (Viṣṇu’s incarnation). The son of Jina (Lord Buddha) presented this book. Lord Buddha and his sons, who will appear in the future, as well as Bhagavān, the Viṣṇu incarnation, will continue to instruct all from this book.”

Añjana’s son, named Buddha is different from Śuddhodana’s son

Some people may consider that it is not Śaṅkarācārya but the Vaiṣṇavas who demonstrate a greater degree of respect and sincere reverence towards Buddha, therefore, it is they who should also be known as Buddhists. In this regard my personal view is, according to Linga Purāṇa, Bhaviṣya Purāṇa and the ninth of the ten Viṣṇu incarnations mentioned in the Vāraha Purāṇa, the Buddha described therein is not the same personality as Gautama Buddha, who was the son of Śuddhodana. Vaiṣṇavas never worship the nihilist and atheist (*sūnyavāda*) Buddha or Gautama Buddha. They only worship Lord Viṣṇu’s ninth incarnation, Lord Buddha, with this prayer from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10/40/22:

namo buddhāya śuddhāya daitya-dānava-mohine

O Supreme Lord Buddha! I offer my obeisance unto You, Who is faultless and have appeared to delude the demoniac and atheistic class of men.

Earlier in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1/3/24, Lord Buddha’s advent is described in the following manner:

*tataḥ kalau sampravṛtte
sammohāya sura-dviṣām
buddho nāmnāñjana-sutaḥ
kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati*

Then, in the beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Buddha, the son of Añjanā, in the province of Gayā, just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful theist.

The Buddha mentioned in this verse is Lord Buddha, son of Añjana; also known by some as ‘Ajina’s’ son. Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī writes in his authoritative commentary to this verse:

*buddha avartāramāha tata iti añjanasya sutah
ajina suta it pāṭhe ajino' pi sa eva kikaṭeṣu madhye gayā-pradeśe*

The words 'tataḥ kalau' etc. describe Viṣṇu's incarnation Buddha as the son of Añjana. *Ajina* in the word '*ajina sutah*' actually means 'Añjana'. *Kikata* is the name of the district of Gayā.

The monists, either by mistake or some other reason, regard Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmi as belonging to their sect and persuasion. Be as it may, his comments however on this matter can easily be accepted by the Māyāvādīs as true without hesitation. The following quote is from Nṛṣmha Purāṇa 36/ 29:

kalau prāpte yathā buddho bhavannārāyaṇa – prabhuḥ

In Kali-yuga the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa appears as Buddha.

A fair estimate of Lord Buddha's appearance can be made from this verse; that he lived approximately 3500 years ago, or by accurate astronomical and astrological calculation around 4000 years ago. Regarding the astrological facts at the time of His birth, the treatise 'Nirnaya-sindhu' states in the second chapter:

jyaiṣṭha śukla dvitīyāyām buddha-janma bhāviṣyati

Lord Buddha will appear on the second day of the waxing moon, in the month of Jyaiṣṭha.

Elsewhere in this book is described the procedure for Lord Buddha's worship:

pausa śuklasya saptamyām kuryāt buddhasya pūjanam

Lord Buddha is especially worshipped in the seventh day of the waxing moon in the month of Pausa.

The rituals, prayers and procedures for worship mentioned in these scriptures all clearly indicate that they are meant for Lord Viṣṇu's ninth *avatāra* incarnation. Lord Buddha also finds repeated mention in many authentic Vedic scriptures like Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Agni Purāṇa, Vāyu Purāṇa and Skanda Purāṇa. The Buddha mentioned in Devī Bhāgavat, a more recent text, and in Śakti Pramoda refers to Śākya Simha – not the Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha.

The truth remains that there are many different demigods and demigoddesses who are worshipped by their respective devotees, in the same way that Śākya Simha Buddha (who was an atheist) is worshipped or glorified by his followers. However, this is all completely separate and

unrelated to the path of Sanātana-dharma, which is the eternal religion of man enunciated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

According to the German scholar Max Mueller, Śākya Simha Buddha was born in 477 BC in the Lumbinī gardens, within the city of Kapilāvastu. This ancient, and at that time, well-populated city in the Terai region of Nepal was well known. Śākya Simha or Gautama Buddha's father was known as Śuddhodana, while his mother was called Māyādevi, this is all accepted historical fact. Although Añjana's son and Śuddhodana's son both share the same name (Buddha), they are nevertheless two different personalities. One of them was born in Kīkaṭa – which is now famous as Bodhi-Gayā, while the second Buddha was born in Kapilāvastu, Nepal. Thus the birthplace, parents, and era of Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha and the birthplace, parents, era etc. of Gautama Buddha are totally at variance.

We can therefore now observe that the famous personality generally referred to as 'Buddha', is not the Viṣṇu incarnation, the *original* Lord Buddha and hence, Śaṅkarācārya's views on this are completely unacceptable. It is not uncommon to find disagreements in matters of tradition and history, but in regards to important and significant issues an unbiased and objective discussion is imperative. Attracted by Buddha's personality and fame it is one thing to honour and respect him, but being impressed by his philosophy and teachings and reverentially surrendering to him is wholly another matter. Whatever the case may be, I am sure that the respected readers have grasped the crucial point that Buddha is not a single person, but at least two separate identities, – Śākya Simha is not the same as Lord Buddha, Viṣṇu's ninth incarnation. It is certainly undeniable that there are some similarities between these two Buddhas, yet it is incontestable that they are two different persons.

(Footnotes)

¹ *Mleccha* - derived from the sanskrit root *mlech* meaning to utter indistinctly (sanskrit) – a foreigner; non-Āryan; a man of an outcaste race; any non-Sanskrit-speaking person who does not conform to the Vedic social and religious customs.

² This book was published under the auspices of the Asiatic Society and can be referenced at its library. See www.indev.nic.in/asiatic/. Ed.

The Influence of Buddhism on Śaṅkarācārya

Śrī Kīśorī Mohana Cattopādhyāya, a follower of Buddhism, writes in his book *Prajñā-Pāramitā Sūtra* pg. 177:

‘The concept of *śūnyavāda*, (voidism) in Buddhism and the concept of ‘impersonal *brahman*’ of Hinduism (Śaṅkarācārya) mean the same but sound different.’

That Śaṅkarācārya was a prominent exponent of Buddhism is a subject of debate. Furthermore, his book goes on to unquestionably prove that Śaṅkarācārya’s ideas and precepts correspond to the Buddhist’s own views. Philosophers from the Sāṅkhya school like Vijñāna Bhikṣu, *yogīs* of the Patañjali school; philosophers of Vedānta, renowned scholars and *ācāryas* like Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhava, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Vallabācārya, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa etc., and even Buddhist scholars; all consider Śaṅkarācārya as a pre-eminent supporter and upholder of the Buddhist school of thought.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya’s unstinted display of reverence and respect towards Buddhism is merely a substantiation of the different facts, diagnosis and arguments that we presented earlier in this regard. Many Purāṇas have referred to Śaṅkarācārya’s philosophy and teachings as camouflaged Buddhism. Understanding that these Purāṇic statements are irrefutable, many adherents of the Śaṅkarācārya school postulate that these verses and statements were interpolations, and then try to foist off false, unsound arguments on the innocent public. In truth they cannot furnish a shred of evidence in support of their assertions.

The Conclusions of Buddhism and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya

A comparison of time honoured precepts and traditional knowledge in Buddhist philosophy shows many similarities in Śrī Śaṅkarācārya’s teachings. However, to pin the label of a covert Buddhist agent on Śaṅkarācārya singularly on the basis of *aitihya*, time-honoured traditional precepts, would possibly invite acrimonious objections from the Māyāvādīs. Therefore, to address their objections and satisfy them I will meticulously elucidate the philosophical conclusions of both schools of thought and present their similarities, with a view to chart the growth and expansion of this philosophy for the benefit of my respected readers.

Prakṛti (material nature) is indeed *māyā*, or a part and parcel of it, as such labeling Gautama Buddha’s interpretation of pantheism as Māyāvādism is not a mistake. The word ‘Buddha’ is derived from the Sanskrit word *budha*, from which comes *bodha* meaning perception or

knowledge. Gautama Buddha was born in the womb of Māyādevi – similarly the knowledge (*budha*) which is produced out of the matrix of the illusory material nature (*māyā*) is known as Māyāvādism, while the precepts preached by Buddha are called Buddhism. A relevant fact worthy of mention is that after Gautama Buddha’s appearance Māyāvādism acquired a specific character, and was tangibly manifested and broadcasted to the world. The precepts of non-dualism or monism (*advaitavāda*) prior to the original Lord Buddha’s appearance is quite distinct from Śaṅkarācārya’s and Gautama Buddha’s brand of *advaitavāda*. Our main objective now is to utilise all means to show the parallels within Śrī Śaṅkarācārya’s teachings and Buddhism. The concepts of *jagat* (material world), *brahman* (transcendence), *śūnya* (nothingness), *mokṣa* (means of liberation), the oneness of *brahman* etc., in Buddhism concur with all those in Śrī Śaṅkarācārya’s Māyāvādism, as will be shown below.

The Buddhist concept of a False Universe

According to Buddhist philosophy the universe is a zero, a part of nothingness. The source of the universe is zero or the state of nothingness and its end is also false, zero. Thus when its beginning and end are false; the interim or middle period must also necessarily be false. They deny the existence of *kāla* (time) in any form. Thus the substance of all existence, the Alpha to Omega of everything is *śūnya*, nothingness. The past is non-existent, the future is non-existent and between the two, the present is also ultimately non-existent. They postulate: “The present does not exist, it is simply another appellation for past and future. For example a word before being spoken is in the future and as soon as it is spoken the time changes to past and the present then is swallowed up, never to be found.” With this logic and argument the Buddhists want to prove that the present manifested universe is non-existent.

The Vaiṣṇavas point is that when one says ‘King Rāma is living’, does it not in the very least denote that the statement requires the factual existence of someone to make the statement? If everything is zero, then the person who argues against the existence of ‘the present’ including his mind and logic are all non-existent! In truth, if one practically wants to inquire into the nature of his existence, one can perceive that the present does in actual fact exist, and hence one is able to perceive the transformations of the past and future. If nothing exists then how was Śākya Simha Buddha able to take birth in this world? How was he able to renounce his kingdom and establish his philosophy? Be this as it may, Buddhism denies the existence of the universe and of the time factors – past, present and future. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has subscribed to this view, as we shall see.

Śāṅkarācārya teaches that the Universe is False

Śrī Śāṅkarācārya, faithfully following in the footsteps of Śākya Simha Buddha also postulated the theory that the ultimate cause of the universe is a non-qualitative, not-existing in time, impersonal oneness (*sūnya*) that he described as *avidyā* or nescience. The elusive concept of his *avidyā* is in practice inexplicable. This *avidyā* is neither eternal and real, nor is it false but rather an inexplicable principle distinct from both ‘*sat*’ (the eternally real) and ‘*asat*’ (the non-existent and unreal). As a comprehensible concept it is inexpressible, which is easily substantiated by his own admission. In his book *Ajñāna Bodhinī*, Śāṅkarācārya writes in the eighth statement:

*bho bhagavān yad bhrama mātra siddham tat kim satyam?
are yathā indrajālam paśyati janah vyāghra jalataḍādi
asatyatayā pratibhāt kim / indrajāla bhrame nivṛtte sati
sarvam mithyā iti jānāti idam tu / sarveśām anubhava siddham*

O Lord! That which can be attained (seen) only in illusion, can that be factual? How can the optical illusion of a tiger or a waterfall on stage conjured by a magician be perceived as unreal by the audience? (Meaning, it is not.) But after the magic show everyone realises that the optical illusions were actual illusions. This is easily comprehensible to all.

Again in his book *Nirvāṇa Daśaka* he writes:

na jāgran na me svapnako vā suṣuptir na viśve

I do not experience the awakened state, the dream-state nor deep sleep.

Such statements unambiguously illustrate that Śrī Śāṅkarācārya, like Gautama Buddha denied the existence of the universe. Śrī Śāṅkarācārya states elsewhere, in the *Ātma-pañcaka*, Verse 6:

*ābhātīdam viśvam ātmany asatyam
satya jñāna ānanda rūpeṇa vimohāt
nidrā mohāt svapnavat tan na satyam
śuddaḥ pūrno nitya ekaḥ śivo’ ham*

In the meaning of this verse, the phrase ‘*svapnavat tanna satyam*’ refers to the universe. ‘The universe is non-existent, like a dream it is false. The universe only seems real while we are asleep in a dream state, in reality it does not exist.’

Buddha in some places has referred to the universe as *saṃskāra*, an ‘impression’, while Śaṅkarācārya declares that the universe appears like a dream. Hence one can see that, in principle *svapna*, dream and *saṃskāra*, impression are the same, or synonymous, because both exist in the realm of imagination. The unimaginable images that are seen in a dream are caused by impressions – that is the opinion of philosophers and psychiatrists. Although Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, in his commentary on Vedānta-sūtra has torn apart the concept of *saṃskāra*, on closer scrutiny it becomes transparent that his concept of a dreamlike universe and the philosophy of *saṃskāra* are one and the same – they differ only in nomenclature.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, when explaining the meaning of *avidyā* (nescience), which according to him is the cause of the universe, speaks of an inexpressible reality which is beyond existence and non-existence – when this is compared to Buddha’s concept of nothingness, no difference can be perceived. His analogy of ‘the oyster and silver’ infers that to momentarily mistake an oyster for silver is due to *avidyā* or nescience, and is produced of ignorance (*ajñāna*). The false assumption that its shine makes it silver depends upon one’s temporary and fallible angle of perception. Faith in appearances is firm as long as *avidyā* - nescience persists, which is according to Buddhist understanding, only momentary. By this they postulate that the momentary assumption that the oyster is silver is nothing but ignorance, and as this ignorance is non-existent in time – past, present and future, it is false. The venerable Śrī Rājendranātha Ghoṣa made the following hypothesis in regards to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya’s views:

“That which does not exist has or makes an appearance – like this universe; whereas the one who truly exists does not make an appearance, like *brahman*.” This idea simply echoes the Buddhist view. Thus the Buddhist scholar and philosopher Jñānaśrī’ said:

yat sat tat kṣaṇikam

That which appears real is but momentary, fleeting, hence it is false.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, commenting on Buddha’s idea of ‘momentary appearance,’ writes in his book *Aparokṣānubhūti*, verse 44:

rajju-jñānat kṣaṇenaiva yad vad rajjurhi sarpinī

Paraphrased this reads;

The mistaken appearance of a snake (*sarpa*) as a rope (*rajju*),

although an illusion, is nevertheless a momentary one. In the same way, the illusory appearance of this universe is indeed momentary.

I ask our respected readers to be the judge. What is the difference between Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's explanation of the momentary illusory appearance of the universe's existence and Śākya Simha Buddha's view of the absence of time continuum?

Brahman and Void

I have presented that, in regards to the universe, both Śrī Śaṅkarācārya and Gautama Buddha accept the same conclusion. If the universe is non-existent, false, momentary, a mere appearance or apparition, then what is real and eternally existent? – This is exactly what we are required to ascertain here. For the non-dualist Gautama Buddha *śūnya* (void) is reality, and eternally existent, meaning knowledge of *śūnya* is the highest realisation. For the impersonalist Śaṅkarācārya, *brahman* is the eternal reality; i.e. *brahman* realisation is the highest realisation. Earlier we quoted Śrī Śaṅkarācārya saying, 'that which has no appearance (form) is *sat*, reality with eternal existence', while Buddha says that the unmanifest (without appearance or form) is *śūnya* (void), or *sat*, eternal reality. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya describes this '*sat*' as *brahman*, the Absolute Truth, which is the same concept as Buddha's *śūnyavāda* or voidism. Furthermore, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya expertly kept the concept of Buddha's *śūnya* intact and protected while replacing it with the term *brahman* to mean the same thing. Additionally, whatever more the Buddhists had to say about *śūnya*, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya simply repeated them in describing *brahman*. On careful scrutiny therefore, no contradictions between *śūnya* and *brahman* can be found. I will further establish this fact as hard and fast with some examples.

Gautama Buddha's concept of Voidism

The following quote is taken from Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra an authoritative Buddhist text – sūtra 16:

sudurbodhāsi māyaiva dṛśyase na ca dṛśyase

'You (*śūnya*) are very difficult to understand; like an illusion you are manifest and unmanifest.

In the Sūtra 2 of this same book it is stated:

*ākāśamiva nirlepām niśprapañcām nirakṣarām
yastam paśyati bhāvena sa paśyati tathāgatam*

One who perceives you as sky or ether – the void which is detached, non-material and formless is *tathāgata*, has realised void.

In the second round of the Buddhist text *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā* it is written:

*sarva dharmā api devaputra māyopamaḥ svapnopamaḥ
pratyag buddho'pi māyopamaḥ svapnopamaḥ
pratyag buddhatvam api māyopamaḥ svapnopamam
samyak sambuddho'pi māyopamaḥ svapnopamaḥ
samyak sambuddhatvam api māyopamaḥ svapnopamam*

O Son of God! All religions are illusions like a dream. Every Buddha, even all the Bodhisattvas (Buddhas) and all religious teachings are illusions like a dream.

Again in the book *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, the philosopher Śāyana Mādharma has expounded Buddhist tenets in this manner in Doctrine 15:

*mādhyamikās tāavad uttama prajñā ittham acīkathan
bhikṣupāda prasāraṇa-nyāyena kṣaṇa-bhaṅgādyabhīdhāna mukhena
sthāyitva anukūla vedanīyatva anugatva sarva-satyatva bhrama
vyāvarttanena sarva-śūnyatāyām eva paryavasānam
atas tattvam sad asad ubhayānubhayātmaka catuṣkoṭi*

The most intelligent of *Mādhyamikās* gave the analogy of a beggar who stretches his legs in discomfort. Thus, introducing the theory of the momentary non-existent nature of every experience, even of pain, once it is accepted as favourable. This defeats the hypothesis that everything exists. With this accomplished, all theories culminate in voidism. This factually means that beyond the four parameters – *sat*, *asat* and neither of these two, lies the state of void.

In the same book, Doctrine 21 explains the concept of *śūnya*, void:

*kecana bauddhā bāhyeṣu gandhādiṣu āntareṣu
rūpādi-skandheṣu satsvāpi tatrān āstham utpādayitum
sarvaḥ śūnyam iti prāthamikān vineyāncīkathan*

Verse (45): “Beyond *brahman*, which forms the ingredients and cause of the material universe, nothing else exists”.

Verse (46): “*brahman*, is both the cause and the source of the living entities. Therefore, all material dualities and distinctions are also *brahman* themselves, – one should think in this way”.

Verse (94): “Just as earth, water etc. are the ingredients required for the making of an earthen pot, similarly the *ajñāna*, or nescience, is the ingredient forming the material universe. It is questioned in the Upaniṣads that once this nescience is removed what remains of matter, or the universe?”

From this it is apparent that Śrī Śāṅkarācārya espouses *brahman* to be the primal cause of the universe. In his view all living entities are generated from *brahman*, and it is again *brahman* who, due to ignorance becomes manifest as the universe. Once nescience is destroyed, then everything that is manifest (all living entities) is also destroyed and transformed into *brahman*. The universe is the breeding ground for duality, like fear and suffering. Śākya Siṃha Buddha tried to nullify the sufferings of the world with the weapon of *Śūnyavāda*; voidism and Śrī Śāṅkarācārya tried to accomplish the same with the weapon of the ‘*brahman*’ concept. Thus for the purpose of neutralising material suffering, Śrī Śāṅkarācārya applied the path of realising an impersonal *brahman*, where Gautama Buddha applied his path of voidism. With the dissipation of the illusory or dreamlike appearance of the universe, one theory claims that *brahman* remains, while the other claims that void remains. At this point it is important to reveal the means each proponent recommends for the dissipation of the false appearance of the universe. The exploration and analysis of this subject is necessary to gain a better understanding of the extent to which they concur with each other’s views.

The Path of Salvation in Buddhism

Regarding the means to attain *mokṣa*, salvation through Buddhism, Sāyana Mādhava has written:

*tat dvividham tadidaṃ sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ dukhāyatanam
duḥkhasāadhanam ceti bhāvayitvā tan nirodha upāyam tattva jñānam
sampādayet/ ata eva uktam duḥkha-samudāya-nirodha-
mārgāścātvaraḥ āryabuddhasyābhimatāni tattvāni/ tatra duḥkhaṃ
prasiddham samudāyo duḥkha-kāraṇam tad dvividham pratyayopa-
nibandhano hetupanibandhanaśca*

Some Buddhists' strategy to teach beginners is, to explain that matter and sense perception (scent, sight, hearing, tasting, etc.), the internal form, and even 'sat', are all *śūnya*, void. Thus, they infuse apathy in their students for all of these.

In Lalita Vistāra, chapter 21, this statement about Śākya Simha Buddha is found:

samartha dhanur grhītvā śūnya-nairātmavādine kleśāripun nihatvā

Śākya Simha Buddha was able to nullify the sufferings of material existence with the bow of *śūnya* and *nairatmavad*, void and egolessness.

From numerous proofs such as those above, and all gleaned from different authoritative Buddhist scriptures, it may be concluded that the nihilistic concept of emancipation in void is like merging into the unlimited expanse of the sky – formless and immaterial. Furthermore, matter is the metamorphosis of *śūnya*, void – the original cause, and everything is like a dream, an illusion. Although matter is momentary, nevertheless its source and original cause is *śūnya*, void.

In the Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra it is stated: "As soon as the qualities and characteristics of a mango is separated from the mango it reaches void." Śrī Śāṅkarācārya's concept of a non-qualitative *brahman* is merely another name for *śūnya*. Buddha says: "What does not possess action nor qualities is *śūnya*"; while Śrī Śāṅkarācārya says: "What does not possess qualities is *brahman*."

Śrī Śāṅkarācārya's Doctrine of 'Brahman'

The subject of the similarities between Śākya Simha Buddha's voidism and Śrī Śāṅkarācārya's 'brahmanism' require necessary and proper comparison, examples of which follow. Śrī Śāṅkarācārya writes in his book 'Aparokṣānubhūti,' verses 45, 46 and 94:

*upādānaṃ prapañcasya brahmaṇonye na vidyate
tasmāt sarva prapañco'yaṃ brahmaivāsti na cetarat*

*brahmaṇaḥ sarva-bhūtāni jāyante paramātmanaḥ
tasmād etāni brahmaiva bhavantīty avadhārayet*

*upādānaṃ prapañcasya mṛdbhāṇḍasyeva dṛśyate
ajñānam ca iti vedāntāstan naṣṭaiva kā viśvatā*

By realising that this universe is permeated by suffering and that it is the outreach of sorrow and the source of sorrow, one must try to attain philosophical knowledge as a means to extirpate sorrow. There are four paths to accomplish this. But according to Buddha all philosophical knowledge is a means to end sorrow. Everyone knows the definition of sorrow. But does anyone know that the universe itself is the cause of sorrow and suffering; this cause is of two kinds – ‘*pratyayopanibandhana*’ and ‘*hetupanibandhana*’, connected to one’s feelings and connected to the cycle of cause and effect.

In Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra 17 this statement of self-praise is found: *margaste meko moksasya iti niscayah* meaning, “You are the only path of salvation, there is no other, this is certain.” In many books of the Buddhist Mahāyāna branch the Prajñā-pāramitā’s path of salvation has been acknowledged as the most significant. Right in the beginning of the Śatasahaśrika prajñā-pāramitā it is written:

Salvation cannot be attained from any knowledge found outside of what is written in Prajñā-pāramitā. Hence one must hear and read it with care and respect.

Elsewhere in this book the following statement is found:

*yā sarvajñātayā nayaty upasamaṃ śāntyaiṣiṇaḥ śrāvakān
yā mārgajñātayā jagaddhita kṛpā lokārtha sampādikā
sarvakāram idaṃ vadanti munayo viśvaṃ jayā saṅgatā
tasmai śrāvaka-bodhasattva gaṇino buddhasya māt্রে namah*

By whose compassion one attains complete knowledge, the Prajñā-pāramitā rewards its readers, who desire peace, with complete cessation of all sorrows in material existence. It knows the path that leads to *mokṣa*. Thus it alone is the source of benediction for the entire universe. I offer my respects to Bodhisattva Prajñā-pāramitā who is in the form of a book.

The above quotes from the Buddhist scripture lead us to conclude that *mokṣa* (the attainment of salvation in void, *śūnya*) is realisation of the fundamental truth or ‘Prajñā-pāramitā’. What Buddhists exactly understand by this Prajñā-pāramitā is explained in the first aphorism of the Prajñā-pāramitā itself – Sūtra 1:

*nirvikalpe namastubhyaṃ prajñā-pāramite’ mite
yā tvam sarva anavadya aṅgi nirvadyair nirīkṣase*

Aho Prajñā-pāramitā! I offer my reverential worship unto You. You are absolute and immeasurable. Your limbs and construction are flawless. Hence only a faultless person alone is able to perceive you.

If one was to analyse every word of this verse it can be clearly seen that the path suggested by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya for attaining *brahman* concurs fully with this. The Buddhists postulate furthermore that cessation of the two types of causes mentioned above – *pratyayopanibandhana* (connected to one's feelings) and *hetupanibandhana* (connected to the cycle of *karma*) results in *moksa*, salvation. Sayana Mādhava mentions this in his book:

*tad ubhaya nirodha karanāntaram vimala jñānodayo vā
muktiḥ tannirodhopāyo mārgaḥ sa ca tattva jñānam
tac ca prācīna bhāvanā balād bhavati itī paramam rahasyam*

Paraphrased it means,

When these two causes are extirpated, pure knowledge blossoms; in other words, salvation is attained. Those who are qualified to root out and destroy these two causes, acquire absolute knowledge. This absolute knowledge or *prajñā-pāramitā*, is attained only on the strength of ancient wisdom. This is an extremely recondite mystery. Once the cause is destroyed, the effect is automatically nullified – this is an axiomatic truth.

Thus according to the Buddhist philosophy the only means to obtain the void is to nullify the cause that manifests the universe, and the method of nullifying, is to acquire absolute, immeasurable knowledge.

Salvation as enunciated by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya

Śaṅkarācārya composed a poem entitled Kevalo'ham wherein he delineates the process of attaining salvation. Here we quote a verse from that poem; Verse 2:

*brahma bhinnatvāvijñānam bhava mokṣasya kāranam
yena advitīyam ānandaṁ brahmā saṁpadyate budhaiḥ*

Realisation that *brahman* is non-dual (non-different from the universe), is the state of salvation, liberation from material existence. Learned scholars attain that 'one without a second', the embodiment of bliss called *brahman*, by this process of realisation.

The next verse is from his book Aparokṣanubhūti, Verse 106:

*tyāgaḥ prapañca rūpasya cidātmatvāvalokanāt
tyāgo hi mahatām pūjyaḥ sadyao mokṣamayo yataḥ*

When one directly perceives the enlightened self, one renounces the universe with all its material forms. This state of renunciation is venerated by great personalities, for it soon leads to salvation.

Direct perception of the spiritual self or realising *brahman*'s non-duality etc., are processes of attaining salvation. Realisation is postulated to be the cause that dissipates nescience or ignorance. Thus Gautama Buddha's concept of *prajñā* (absolute knowledge) and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's concept of *brahman-jñāna* (realisation of *brahman*) are one and the same, with no differences. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has tried to bolster support and credibility for the above view by quoting extensively from Aitareya Upāniṣadā and commenting on them in his book Śaririka bhāṣya. He has cited *mantras* like 'prajñānam brahma' – (realised knowledge of *brahman*), 'prajñāne pratisthitam' etc. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's commentary, as well as the commentaries of Śāyanācārya and others which all relied heavily on his commentaries, reveal that the word 'prajñā' meant 'nirupadhika caitanya' – 'enlightened consciousness in ego-less-ness', and the word 'pratisthita' meant 'the illusory universe'.

There is no doubt that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya seized Śākya Simha Buddha's principle of *prajñā* terming it 'enlightened consciousness in an ego-less state', and also took his concept of a momentary universe and defined it with his analogy of the rope and the snake. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya further states in his Aparokṣanubhūti 135:

*kārye kāraṇatā yātā kāraṇe na hi kāryatā
kāraṇatvaṃ tato gacchet kāryābhāve vicārataḥ*

It is possible that cause is inherent in effect, but effect is not inherent in the cause. Thus, by contemplating on the absence of effect the cause disappears.

In verse 139 of the same book he writes:

*kārye hi kāraṇam paśyet paścāt kāryam vivarjayet
kāraṇatvaṃ tato gacchet avaśiṣṭham bhaven munih*

Having observed the cause in an effect, one should then reject it. When causation itself disappears, it is what remains that should be aspired for.

This same concept of 'cause and effect' is echoed in the Buddhist analogy of the mango. Now it is up to the respected reader to judge whether Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's statement 'what remains' is not the same as *śūnya*, void. After the mango loses all its qualities like taste and colour, nothing remains, just *śūnya*, void. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya covertly implies to Buddha's *śūnya* with his own terminology '*avasistha*', the remaining rest. It will not be unjustifiable to say that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya attempted to establish his Māyāvāda philosophy being influenced by Buddha's Māyāvāda creed. We will clearly show that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya fully subscribed to Gautama Buddha's delineation of the process of attaining *mokṣa*, salvation.

'Śūnya' and 'Brahman' in the Buddhist Philosophy.

The next step in our analysis will be to ascertain what differences, if any, exist between *brahman* and *śūnya*. In the Buddhist text Prajñā-pāramitā, verse 19, this statement is written:

*śaktaḥ kastvām iha stotum nirṇimittām nirañjanām
sarva-vāg viṣayātītam yā tvām kvacid anīśritā*

Who in this world is able to eulogise You, the one without instrumental cause, unattached, independent and beyond the realm of all narration.

We had earlier discussed the different characteristics of the Buddhist concept of *śūnya*, void, as described in these words:

*ākāśām nirlepām niṣprapañcām nirakṣarām –
The all pervasive ether or sky is unattached, nonmaterial and formless.*

In Asta-saha Śrīka Prajñā-pāramitā, Śākya Simha Buddha describes the qualities of *śūnya*, Verse 19:

*ye ca subhḥūte śūnyā akṣayā'pi te
yā ca śūnyatā aprameyatā api sā*

O Subhuti, the void is inexhaustible. That, which is known as *śūnya*, is immeasurable.

In the same book *śūnya* is further described:

*aprimeyam iti vā asaṅgheyam iti vā akṣayam iti vā śūnyam iti vā
animittam iti vā apranihitam iti vā anabhisaṁskāra iti va
anutpad iti vā ajñātirikta vā abhāva iti
virāga iti vā nirodha iti vā nirvāṇam iti*

The following are the symptoms of *śūnya*: immeasurable, solitary, imperishable, void, causeless, unattached, incommutable, inexpressible, detached, the law and the ultimate goal.

In the twelfth *parivartta* (horizon) of this same book it is written:

*śūnyam iti devaputrā atra lakṣaṇāni sthāpyante
anabhisamskāra ityunutpāda ityanirodha ity asamkleśa
ityavyavadānam ity abhāva iti nirvāṇam iti dharma dhātur iti
tathāt eti devaputrā atra lakṣaṇāni sthāpyante
naitāni lakṣaṇāni rūpa-nīscitāni*

O' sons of the gods, in regards to the void, characteristics are put forth such as; not transformable, unproduced, difficult to grasp, devoid of afflictions, unhindered, non-existent, possessing the nature of Nirvāṇa. O' sons of gods, they put forth these characteristics regarding this, but they are actually not determined with form.

Upon close scrutiny of these characteristics, it is revealed that there is no difference between Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's precepts on *brahman* and Buddha's precepts on *śūnya*. In fact, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya even went to the extent of calling *brahman* 'śūnya'. Below we have furnished the necessary proofs.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Conception of Void and *Brahman*

A thorough study of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's books like *Vivek Cūḍāmaṇi*, *Aparoksanubhuti*, *Brāhmaṇamavāli-māla* etc. will bring one to conclude that he has assigned all the symptoms and characteristics of *śūnya* onto *brahman*. A multitude of proofs can be furnished from his writings to support this view, but if all the proofs were to be cited, this book would become impractically voluminous. I therefore offer only few of the more pertinent quotes as follows:

From *Vivek Cūḍāmaṇi* 402:

*draṣṭṛ darśana drśyādi bhāva śūnyaika vastuni
nirvikāre nirākare nirviśeṣe bhidā kutah*

Is there a distinction between the viewer, vision and the object of vision in relation to the immutable, formless and attributeless substance? (Meaning, there is no distinction).

From Aparokṣanubhūti, 108:

*vāco yasmān nivartante tad vaktum kena śakyate
prapañco yadi vaktavyaḥ so'pi śabda vivarjitah*

Who can describe something that exists beyond words? Though it allows itself to be the subject of discussion, yet it remains ineffable.

From Brahma-namavali-mala 4:

*nityo'ham niravadyo'ham nirākāro'ham akṣarah
paramānanda rūpo'ham aham eva avyayah*

I am eternal, flawless, formless, imperishable, supremely blissful and inexhaustible.

Non-Dualist and Monist

A clear indication from these analyses is that Buddhist thought has nurtured Māyāvādisim. In the book 'Amarkosa' Śākyā Simha Buddha is addressed as 'advayavādī', a non-dualist. Knowing that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya was an indisputable *advaitavādī*, (monist), impartial and objective observation gives us enough reasons to believe that there is no difference between non-dualism and monism. Nevertheless, some dissimilarity may seem to surface between them every so often, hence a fact-finding probe into this matter is warranted.

Regarding *pariṇāma*, the theory of transmutation, Buddha said; "void (*śūnya*) must be understood as non-existence, a complete lack of everything, nothingness and full emancipation. Even if enlightened Bodhisattvas do not accept *śūnya* as void or consider full emancipation a qualitative state of consciousness, then they are also in a deluded state of conditioning like one who is in a dream."

Śaṅkarācārya explained the theory of transmutation or evolution¹ saying that *brahman* is the embodiment of eternity. In another place he said, *brahman* is the embodiment of bliss and the embodiment of full emancipation. On casual observation there is noticeable difference in the language they use to define their doctrines, but in essence their meanings are not in the least contradictory – a little exploration will prove this to be true. If the term *nirvāṇa*, complete emancipation, conveys the sense of an enlightened state, devoid of dry knowledge and renunciation, and is saturated with spiritual humour, then no one can object to the use of this word. Both Buddha and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya have defined their individual essential principle, namely *śūnya* and *brahman* respectively as the

embodiment of *nirvāṇa*. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya propagated that in the post-emancipation state *brahman* is perceived as the embodiment of unlimited bliss. On deeper scrutiny this statement is actually redundant, since according to him no one acquires the eligibility to personally attain that state. Thus, due to its unobtainable nature one might as well term it embodiment of sorrow; would that not be logical?

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in *Aparokṣanubhūti*, Vs 129, writes:

*bhāva-vṛttyāhi bhāvatvaṁ śūnya-vṛttyāhi śūnyatā
brahma vṛttyāhi brahmatvaṁ tathā pūrṇatvaṁ abhyaset*

To perceive that which exists requires meditating on its propensities; to attain the state of void requires developing its characteristics of absence of everything; and to attain the state of *brahman* requires being inclined to develop its (*brahman's*) properties.

In the above verse, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has tried to establish the pre-eminence of the *brahman* concept over voidism, but closer scrutiny reveals that this could not be accomplished. It is simply redundant verbiage. What is insinuated here is that by meditating on the characteristics of a sentient *brahman*, one will attain the ontological realisation of *brahman*. Similarly, by absorbing oneself in the characteristics of a non-sentient *śūnya*, one attains the non-existent void. It is imperative that we discuss the differences, if any, between ‘sentient *brahman*’ and ‘non-existent *śūnya*’.

The question must be asked, who in truth really suffers or gains from knowing this? Is there a great advantage in seeking, via an application of the ontological principle, ‘the seer, the scene and the vision’, to discover whether an object like *śūnya* can be known as sentient and existent or whether it is non-sentient and non-existent? Scientists say that there are many things yet to be discovered or invented, and to simply acknowledge that they potentially exist will neither harm nor benefit anyone. In the same vein, discovering or inventing that which cannot exist benefits no one. If an object or reality is not perceived by spiritual or ontological vision; if it has no seer or witness it can be considered totally irrelevant – by whatever name we call it, it is all the same.

In this context, it is relevant to discuss the following verse composed by the crest jewel among philosophers and saintly poets, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, in his book Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 6/168:

*veda nā māniyā bauddho haya ta’ nāstika
vedāśraya nāstikya-vāda bauddhake adhika*

The Buddhists do not accept the authority of the Vedas, therefore they are considered agnostics. However, those who claim to have faith in the Vedic scriptures and yet preach agnosticism in accordance with Māyāvāḍism are indeed more dangerous than the Buddhists.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, while comparing Buddha and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, hardly finds any differences, but concludes that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya was the stronger atheist of the two. The reasons for this is that the innocent general mass of people, believing Śrī Śaṅkarācārya to be a scholar of Vedānta and a theist, will be easily misled by the outwardly theistic appearance of his teachings; and in this way, unknowingly also become atheists. This is one of the most cunning ways that Kali-yuga establishes itself.

The Reasons for Camouflaging Māyāvāḍism

Although Advayavāda, non-dualism and Advaitavāda, monism are practically the same, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya refused to use the term Buddhism in identifying his own precepts, despite knowing fully well that there was no difference between them. He had a specific reason for doing so; it hardly mattered that there was little or no contradiction between his precepts and Buddhism. The real reason was, he had to execute the Supreme Lord's command. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja sheds significant light on this matter in Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 6/180:

*ācāryer doṣa nāhi īśvara-ājñā hoila
ata eva kalponā kari'nāstik-śāstra kailā*

Ācārya Śaṅkarācārya is not at fault, he was simply following the Supreme Lord's order. He had to fabricate from his imagination a scripture that preached atheism in the name of the Vedas.

On this subject Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura has written in Jaiva Dharma:

“Hearing Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's name mentioned, Śrī Paramahaṁsa Bābāji prostrated himself on the ground while offering obeisances. He continued to speak: ‘Dear Sir, please always remember – ‘Śaṅkarācāryah Śaṅkarācāryah saksat’, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya is Lord Śaṅkara (Śivā) himself. Lord Śaṅkara is considered to be guru of the Vaiṣṇavas. Śaṅkarācārya himself was a great Vaiṣṇava; hence Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu always addressed him as *ācārya* in veneration. At the time he appeared in India, a *guna-avatāra* (a qualitative incarnation) of his stature

was much needed. The cultivation of Vedic scripture and the practice of Varnaśrama (religious principles) in India had become stifled to almost naught by the onslaught of the Buddhist philosophy of voidism. This theory of voidism is an extreme form of atheism. Although it acknowledges a few truths about the true nature of the soul, in essence this theory is totally transient. The Brāhmaṇa class in India during this period were en masse converting to Buddhism and relinquishing Vedic principles. Just then Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, an incarnation of the extraordinarily powerful Lord Śaṅkara, Śīvā, appeared and re-established the authority and pre-eminence of the Vedas, causing a metamorphosis of Buddhism to Brāhmaṇism. This was an extraordinary feat. Bhāratvarṣa (India) and the Vedic culture will forever remain indebted to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya.

All accomplishments and works in this material world are judged on the basis of two things: Some works are time-bound and contemporary, while others are universal and eternal. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's accomplishments are time-bound. His work created many positive results, for he laid a strong foundation on which later *ācāryas*, preceptors like Śrī Rāmānujācārya would begin to construct the temples of pure Vaiṣṇavism. Therefore, Lord Śīvā's incarnation as Śaṅkarācārya is a deeply committed well-wisher of Vaiṣṇavism and one of its earlier *ācāryas*."

Thus, I present these facts not to offend the order carrier of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but rather to attempt to lay bare the truth. In order to comprehensively execute Lord Viṣṇu's divine command, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya camouflaged the concepts of Buddhism or voidism and presented them as his own. His predisposition toward Buddha is shown clearly in the text Daksinamurti-stotra, where he writes, glorifying Buddha in this manner:

*citram vaṭa-taror-mūle vṛddhaḥ śiṣyāḥ gurūr yuvā
gurostu maunaṁ vyākhyānaṁ śiṣyāstu chinna saṁśayāḥ*

A truly wonderful sight! The effulgent holy teacher is youthful while all his disciples are aged. Sitting under the banyan tree his silent instructions remove all doubts from the hearts of his disciples.

There is no doubt that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya held Śākya Singh Buddha in good respect. In the above verse the word *citram* signifies awe and wonderment. Furthermore the reference to the banyan tree is telling, in

that it unequivocally distinguishes between Lord Viṣṇu's incarnation, the original Lord Buddha and the more recent Gautama Buddha who traveled to Bodhi Gaya to attain enlightenment under the now famous banyan tree, the subject of Śaṅkarācārya's eulogy. Another interesting point is how Śaṅkarācārya was overjoyed when he came across a verse from the Nṛsimha-tapani Upāniśadā that underpinned his concept that the ontological principle defining *śūnya* is the same as the one defining *brahman*. This verse is as follows, Nt.U 6/2/4:

ananda ghanam śūnyam brahma atma prakasam śūnyam.

Śūnya, void, embodies bliss in the form of *brahman*.

Even Śākya Singh Buddha echoed the words of this verse in his book *Milinda Pancaha* describing the state of *nirvāṇa* by merging in void as 'ekanta sukham' – complete, total bliss; and 'vimukta sukha patisamvedi' – meaning 'embodiment of unlimited bliss'.

The famous Buddhist scholar Amara Simha has described *nirvāṇa* as, 'sreyasa amrtam' – the blissful highest good. The commentator to this verse writes:

nirvateh atyantika duhkhocchede-bhavekta

Nirvāṇa is a state of realisation which is attained after all sorrows have been completely uprooted.

This is another clear proof of Śākya Singh Buddha and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya speaking of the same concepts, and using the same words and characteristics to describe their individual concepts with the only difference that they are given different appellations. Śākya Singh Buddha called it *śūnya*, while Śrī Śaṅkarācārya termed his *brahman*.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya reveals he is a Buddhist by his own arguments

We have earlier used the epithet 'disguised Buddhist' for Śaṅkarācārya. To vindicate this assertion we have, so far, gleaned the following parallels from their teachings:

- Buddha's philosophy regarding the universe and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's are the same;
- The means to attain *moksa*, liberation or emancipation, are the same;

- The ultimate goal, or what is meant by *moksa* is also the same. (Buddha termed it ‘*śūnya*’ and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya called it ‘merging with *brahman*’).

The unanimity on these cardinal ontological principles is testimony enough that there is no distinction between their philosophies. Some Purāṇas also substantiate that Śaṅkarācārya is a Māyāvādī and a disguised Buddhist. The monistic sect, adherents of Śaṅkarācārya, attempt to expostulate and refute these scriptural statements with all and sundry trashing these Purāṇic quotes as interpolations that are based on invented logic and argument, claiming that Śaṅkarācārya was neither a Māyāvādī nor a Buddhist. Some of them condescendingly acknowledge that these Purāṇic statements are not interpolations but are authentic. However, they daringly attempt to corrupt historical truth by foisting off an incredulous theory that these Purāṇas were compiled after Śaṅkarācārya’s demise. These same persons claim that the reason Śaṅkarācārya’s name finds mention in the Purāṇas is because he appeared even before the advent of Jesus Christ. Such arguments are made by confused, ill-informed speculators who can not comprehend that proffering such arguments distorts historical fact so ludicrously as to pre-date the appearance of contemporaries of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, persons like Śrī Padmapada and Śrī Govindapada both of whom were born in the post-Christian era. Regardless of whatever case is made by them, it is clear that their arguments and logic are lopsided and motivated. A proper, comprehensive rebuttal supported by ample historical fact can be easily furnished to defeat these false arguments, the only reason for not doing so is to keep this book brief and concise.

The goal of this book is to expose the Māyāvāda philosophy for what it is. To make a balanced, unbiased presentation we felt it incumbent upon us to draw primarily from the statements and teachings of Māyāvādis, and to defer from presenting our own, or other’s points of view on the subject. But for argument’s sake, even if we admit that the above referenced Purāṇas were compiled after Śaṅkarācārya’s time and that their statements regarding Śrī Śaṅkarācārya were subsequently interpolated, our foregoing arguments and references have successfully established that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya as the chief among Māyāvāda philosophers was in fact a pure Buddhist.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya: a Mahāyāna Buddhist

Some may claim that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya appeared before Christ, but the fact that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya debated with Ācārya Bhaskara, cannot be debunked by any upright monist. The most watertight proof of this fact is mentioned in *Śaṅkarācārya Vijaya*, a book written by Ananda Giri, a direct and leading disciple of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. What is known from available historical records is that Śaṅkarācārya failed to defeat Bhaskarācārya in debate. Furthermore, Bhaskarācārya in his own commentaries confuted many of Śaṅkarācārya's arguments and proved them to be of Buddhist and Māyāvāda persuasion. It is not our intention to embark on a tirade against the Māyāvādīs and their devious methods of argument. Rather, we will simply present historical facts that vindicate and prove our assertions. Below we quote from Śrī Bhaskarācārya's commentary on the Brahma-Sūtra, published by Chowkhamba, Sanskrit Book Depot in 1914-Page 85:

*tathāca vākyam pariṇāmastu syād dadhyādivaditi
vīgītaṁ vicchinamūlaṁ mahāyanika-bauddha-gāthāyitaṁ
māyāvādaṁ vyavarnayanta lokān vyāmohayanti.”*

(Śaṅkarācārya) has taken the vile and baseless (without essence) philosophy of the Mahāyāna Buddhists and has promulgated them (as his own enlightened realisations) under the name of Māyāvāda philosophy, to beguile and ensnare the people.

In another place of the same book, page 124, Bhaskara writes:

*ye tu bauddha-matāvalambino Māyāvādinaste'pyanena
nyāyena sūtra-kāreṇaiva nirastā veditavyāḥ*

The author of this aphorism (Śrīla Vyāsadeva) has himself used this logic and argument to refute Māyāvāda followers of Buddhism – this is the way to understand this statement.

In the 'Foreword' to his commentary Bhaskarācārya writes:

*sūtrābhiprāya samvṛtya-svābhiprāya prakāśanāt
vyākhyātam yairidaṁ śāstraṁ vyākhyeyam tannivṛttaye*

For the express purpose of refuting Śaṅkarācārya's ontological theses this particular scripture (Brahma-Sūtra) has been commented upon.

Whether the Purāṇas in discussion are recent or ancient, whether some statements in them are interpolated or not, is not the final issue; what the respected reader must decide is, are there sufficient testimonials to prove that Śaṅkarācārya was a Māyāvādī and a Mahāyāna Buddhist? Bhaskarācārya was Śaṅkarācārya's contemporary and opponent; this is a unanimously accepted historical fact. His statements are therefore solid testimonials that cannot be ignored. Other contemporary philosophers also concur with Bhaskarācārya's opinion that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya was a Māyāvādī and a Mahāyāna Buddhist. The truth is that the Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings form the corpus, psyche and biography of Māyāvādisim. In this regard it seems appropriate at this juncture, to quote the views of a few prominent monist philosophers.

(Footnotes)

¹ See "What is the definition of Māyāvādisim?" on page 32.

Further Evidence

Śivānatha Śiromani

The venerable monist philosopher Śivānatha Śiromani wrote about Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in Śabdārtha-manjari published in the Bengali era 1308. In the *parisistha* section on page 35 he says the following:

‘Mahatma (great soul) Śaṅkarācārya has written the purports to *Īsopaniṣad* and nine other important *Upāniṣadās*, the commentary to Vedānta or Brahma-Sūtra and a plethora of other texts. The Śaririka Bhāṣya, his commentary to the Brahma-Sūtra, is indeed his immortal masterpiece. This book reflects his genius and profound knowledge. From reading this book it may be concluded that in the course of invalidating Buddhist theories he has taken recourse to Buddhist logic and argument. In many instances he has borrowed heavily from the past Buddhist masters such as Nagārjuna’s opinion.’

The venerable Śiromani, desiring to preserve Śrī Śaṅkarācārya’s pre-eminent position, says that he was responsible for confuting Buddhist views. But in truth was he really? Or was he responsible for furthering the propagation of Buddhism? In truth the success of his propaganda strategy, the aim of which was the respect and support of the public, was contingent on this deception. In the matter of confuting Buddhism, it seems Śaṅkarācārya’s contemporary philosophers, who strongly opposed him, were far worthier of praise.

Rajendranātha Ghosh

The venerable Rajendranātha Ghosh may easily be considered the most prominent Bengali monist of the 20th century. Infatuated with and enamoured by Śaṅkarācārya he was caustic and abrasive towards other pure religions. This streak in him exposed a narrow minded, blind faith in monism. Despite this, the respected Rajendra was forced to accept that his worshipable idol Śaṅkarācārya was an inveterate Buddhist. He confirms this in the preface to his book Advaitasiddhi:

‘Approximately till 500 years after Buddha, i.e. up to shortly before the birth of Christ and the appearance of King Vikramaditya (57 BC) the philosophy of monism was professed vigorously in the form of Buddhism.’

In this statement Mr. Rajendranātha is saying that Buddhist philosophy is not 'non-Vedic', but concurs with the Vedic view. He has reasons for saying this, for if he were to accept Buddhism as non-Vedic, he would subsequently be admitting that Śāṅkarācārya's view was also non-Vedic. Mr. Rajendranātha has made the sincere attempt to identify certain differences between Buddhist views and Śrī Śāṅkarācārya's teachings. In his personal opinion, he makes the assertion that Buddhist views are Vedic but they nonetheless cut at the root of the Vedic tree, while Śāṅkarācārya's views protect the root. The reality is however, that Śāṅkarācārya also cuts at the root of Vedic knowledge, as will be elaborated further on. While Mr. Rajendranātha tried his utmost to safeguard Śāṅkarācārya's from being branded as a Buddhist, in the end his attempts proved futile.

The Divine Plan

The Reason for the Promulgation of Māyāvādism

Earlier on I made some observations regarding the reason for the propagation of Māyāvādism. I would like to make a few more points on this subject. It is stated in Padma Purāṇa Uttara khanda 25/7, where Lord Śivā said to his eternal consort Durga Devi:

*māyāvadam asac-chāstram pracchannam buddham ucyate
mayaiva vihitaṁ devi kalau brāhmaṇa-mūrṭiṇā*

In the age of Kali, I will appear as a Brāhmaṇa and disseminate atheistic, false philosophy in the name of the Vedas, teaching Buddhism in a hidden way.

In the Padma Purāṇa Uttara, 62/31:

*svāgamaiḥ kalpitais tvaṁ ca janān mad-vimukhān kuru
mām ca gopāya yena syāt sṛṣṭir eṣottarottarā*

Bhagavan, the Supreme Lord, said to Śivā:

Interpret the Vedas in such a way so as to mislead the general populous to become averse to Me. Hide My identity, while gradually deluding people by encouraging them in the pursuit of material advancement.

These two statements unambiguously indicate that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya is the conceiver and professor of Māyāvādism. However, the words *pracchannam buddham ucayate* meaning, ‘covertly preaching Buddhism’, would obviously establish Buddha as the father of Māyāvādism. In the second verse cited above, the words *mām ca gopāya* meaning, ‘hiding My identity’ (spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa), clearly indicate that the prime reason for creating Māyāvādism is the Supreme Lord’s will. The transcendental reason for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to express such a wish is – *bhakta-vatsalya* protective and affectionate guardianship over His loving devotees.

The *jīva*, living entity, by forgetting Śrī Kṛṣṇa, turns his back on the Lord forever. Thus it is seen that when the *jīva* becomes oblivious of his service to Kṛṣṇa he is captivated by the feelings of ‘so’ham’, (I am *brahman*, the Supreme). This feeling releases from within him deep-seated envy toward the devotees, who are surrendered to the Supreme Lord. Thus, the prime cause for the conception of Māyāvādism in the world can be traced to the *jīva*’s forgetfulness of God and the Supreme Lord’s own will.

Hence from the time of creation of this universe and the illusory state of the *jīva*, it is seen that someone or other was treading the path of monism.

In the three previous *yugas* (cosmic ages) Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara, there were always a few empirical philosophers who pursued the path of monism. By the influence of their knowledge and by the scorching heat of Māyāvāda thought, the Supreme Lord observed that the delicate and tender creeper of *bhakti*, devotional service to the Lord, was in danger of drying up. So, in order to establish religious principles in the form of devotional scriptures, and also to uproot the malaise of Māyāvādism, the Supreme Godhead appears in every *yuga*. As Lord Kṛṣṇa declares to Arjuna in Bhagavad-Gītā, 4.8

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām, dharma-
samsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

To protect my devotees, annihilate the wicked, and re-establish
the path of *dharma*, I appear *yuga* after *yuga*.

In this context, it must be mentioned that the cosmic work of protecting the devotees and celestial beings (demigods) and slaying the *asuras* and atheists is the pastime enacted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's primary transcendental expansion, Lord Balarāma. For this purpose, the Lord appears in each *yuga*, rectifying the mental aberrations of Māyāvādīs by eradicating their atheistic views and initiating them into the principles of devotion, (*bhakti*). The Māyāvādīs, failing to be victorious in establishing their views over others, become attracted to the radiant path of *bhakti*. They come to reject the humourless path of dry empiricism, considering it worthless intellectual 'excreta', and by dint of the sweet taste of devotion, bow their heads in submission to the path of eternal loving service of the Supreme Lord that they relish as an intimate, personal relationship with Him.

Thus far I have gleaned the relevant essence from the history in the Purāṇas and other scriptures, endeavouring to present them succinctly to avoid unduly lengthening this book. Having established these historical facts as a common knowledge accepted by many without debate, I will avoid the labour of further substantiating every point with yet more quotes from authorised sources (although they are plentiful) and take the opportunity to advance our discussion so that we can make quick progress with the subject at hand.

Māyāvādism in the Four Yugas

Monism in Satya-yuga

‘Catuhsana’ – The story of the four Kumāras

There is frequent mention throughout the Vedic scriptures of Catuhsana – referring to the great child sages of Satya-yuga called the Four Kumāras, whose names are Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana and Sanata-Kumāra. By their birth the Four Kumāras defied the cosmic laws of procreation as they were born not in the manner of normal personalities who are products of the union between male and female energies. Rather, they were ‘psychic offspring’ born from the mind of Lord Brahmā, the celestial being who, as the “Cosmic Father”, is empowered by the Lord to preside over the Universal creation. As such, they did not have normal parents, mother and father – but only their ‘psychic’ father, Lord Brahmā. From early childhood they observed a strict vow of celibacy inspired by their pursuit of pure spiritual knowledge. Their quest for knowledge was however, subtly tainted by the aberrations of impersonal thought which made their efforts unfavourable for the cultivation of pure *bhakti* realised by devotional surrender. This saddened their well-wishing ‘father’, Lord Brahmā who approached the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu and prayed to Him for the benediction and good fortune of his sons. The Lord pondered over the fact that as the first offspring of the universal creator, the Four Kumāras set a precedent for the rest of the cosmic race. He concluded that the matter was serious enough to deserve His direct intervention and descended as the Hamsa-Avatāra (incarnation in the form of a divine swan) to instruct the Four Kumāras and Nārada Muni (another son of *Brahmā*), in the science of *bhakti-yoga*. Lord Brahmā himself recounted this factual event to Nārada Muni and the Four Kumāras, as is recorded in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2/7/19:

*tubhyaṁ ca nārada bhṛṣam bhagavān vivṛddha
bhāvena sādhu parituṣṭa uvāca yogam
jñānam ca bhāgavatam ātma-satattva-dīpaṁ
yad vāsudeva-śaraṇā vidur añjasaiva*

O Nārada, you were personally instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Hamsa incarnation on the science of *bhakti-yoga*. The Lord, being pleased with your devotion to Him, lucidly elaborated upon this devotional science, which is especially comprehensible to those who are surrendered to the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva.

Although the Four Kumāras were not explicitly mentioned, the composer of the Govinda-bhasya commentary to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and pre-eminent preceptor of the *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, explains that the word ‘ca’ in the verse (*tubhyam ca nārada*) refers to the Four Kumāras who were also present there. He writes in the Sāraṅgaṅgadā commentary to Laghu-Bhāgavatamṛta: ‘*tubhyam ca iti cat sanakadibhyah*’; meaning “The word ‘ca’, in this verse applies to the Four Kumāras”.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes that Lord Śeṣa (Lord Viṣṇu’s primary expansion) instructed the Four Kumāras on the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, as is stated in his epic scripture, Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Adi 5/120 – 122:

*sei ta’ ananta śeṣa’ bhakta-avatāra
īśvarera sevā vinā nāhi jāne āra
sahasra vadane kare kṛṣṇa guṇa gāna
niravadhi guṇa gāna anto nāhi pā’na
sanakādi bhāgavata śune yānra mukhe
bhagavānera guṇa kahe bhāse prema-sukhe*

That Ananta Śeṣa is the devotee incarnation of the Supreme Lord. He cares to know nothing other than service to the Supreme Godhead. He is engaged in incessantly singing the glories of Lord, but yet he is unable to find an end to the wonderful qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Four Kumāras hear the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam recitation from his lips and in turn they repeat it to others with feelings of divine exultation and love of God.

We learn from the Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta that the Four Kumāras had more than one instructor in the science of *bhakti-yoga*, the Hamsa incarnation of Godhead as well as the Ananta Śeṣa incarnation who also taught them the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the most significant treasure trove of ontological principles, for it delineates the transcendental concept of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. This spiritual truth reveals that the Supreme Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His energies are inconceivably, simultaneously, both one and different. The Four Kumāras had the good fortune of understanding this spiritual truth from Śrī Ananta Śeṣa, the Supreme Godhead’s devotee incarnation. Drawing fully from the teachings of the Four Kumāras, the illustrious Vaiṣṇava preceptor Śrī Nimbarkācārya, the shining star of the Catuḥsana lineage, subsequently espoused the famous *dvaita-advaita-tattva* philosophy. Śrī Nimbarkācārya expounds on *dvaita-advaita-tattva* in his famous commentary to the Vedānta Parijata Saurabha,

and thus this legitimate and recognised Vaiṣṇava lineage is known as Sanaka Samprādaya.

The annals of this Vaiṣṇava lineage's history confirm that the Haṁsa incarnation of Godhead was the spiritual master and guide of the Four Kumāras. Instructed personally by Haṁsa-avatāra on the science of *bhakti-yoga*, the Four Kumāras relinquished the dry path of empiricism and wholeheartedly embraced the path of pure devotion, even to the extent of propagating it.

Vāskali

History relates that Vāskali (also known as Vāskala) was schooled in non-dual philosophy by the monist Sage Vadhva, (some persons also call this sage 'Badhva'). Legend has it that after Sage Vadhva's demise, Vāskali gained respect as a prominent monist in his own right. In Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the Brahma-Sūtra 3/2/17, he has quoted the discussions between sage Vadhva and Vāskali from the Vedas. This section is cited below:

*vāskalinā ca vāhvaḥ pṛṣṭaḥ sannavacanenaiva brahma provāceti
śrūyate sa hovācādhāhi bhagavo brahmeti sa tuṣṇīm vabhūva,
tam ha dvitīye vā tṛtīye vā vacana uvāca –
brahmaḥ khalu, tvantu na vijānāstupaśānto'yamātmā*

To attain realisation of *brahman* in the Māyāvādī discipline, it is enough to sit in a secluded place and remain mute; one will automatically become enlightened after some time. Through logic and argument or by scriptural knowledge it is not possible to know anything about *brahman* within the Māyāvāda discipline.

Vadhva's instruction to Vāskali echoes the same mood and ontological essence that is quoted in the twelfth verse of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Daksina-murti Stava, earlier in this book. The following is a quotation from Vedānta Vagisa who offers his views on Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's comment:

More about Sage Vadhva is known from the Śruti: On inquiry from Vāskali, by maintaining silence, the sage indirectly inferred to the truth about *brahman*. Vāskali enquired from the sage "O great soul! What is the discipline for *brahman* realisation?" Then the sage spoke saying: "I state with certainty and conviction that *brahman*, the *ātma* is unceasingly non-dual."

The sage's real contemplation is that because *brahman* is formless and impersonal, it is inexplicable, as there are no words to describe it, hence

silence was the only appropriate response to his question. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that Vāṣkali was an inveterate Māyāvādī. Vāṣkali also finds mention in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6/18/12,13,16:

*hiranyakaśīpor bhāryā kayādhur nāma dānavī
jambhasya tanayā sā tu suṣuve caturahṣ sutān
saṁhrādaṁ prāg anuhrādaṁ hrādaṁ prahrādaṁ eva ca
tat-svasā simhikā nāma rāhuṁ vipracito'grahīt
anuhrādasya sūryāyām bāṣkalo mahiṣas tathā
virocanas tu prāhrādir devyām tasyābhavad baliḥ*

Hiranyakaśipu's wife, Kayādhu, was the daughter of Jambha and a descendant of King Dānu. She gave birth to four sons, Saṁhlāda, Anuhlāda, Hlāda and Prahlāda as well as a daughter named Simhikā. Simhikā married the *asura* Vipracit and their son was the demon Rāhu. Anuhlāda's wife was named Sūrya, and together they had two sons, named Vāṣkala and Mahiṣa. Prahlāda had one son, Virocana (whose son was Bali Mahārājā).

Anuhlāda came in a line of powerful *asuras*, so naturally his son Vāṣkala was reared on dark teachings growing to become a famous *asura*, atheist, and 'demon' of his time. In Māyāvāda history, it is easy to find examples like this in every *yuga*. If we respect the tradition and knowledge of the Vedas as authentic, we can then accept their evidence as proof that throughout the ages it is especially the demonic and atheistic class of men who have favoured Māyāvāda philosophy. There are accounts of equiposed, simple-hearted and unbiased sages who temporarily embraced the path of monism but who later in life underwent a transformation of the heart due to the association of the Supreme Lord's incarnation or His pure devotee. These fortunate, high-souls were able to reject monism and completely take loving shelter at the Supreme Godhead's lotus feet. In contrast, atheistic men who fully took shelter of the path of Māyāvādisim, soon became blind adherents to a hard-hearted philosophy that disqualified them from the chance to perform *bhakti-yoga*. The Supreme Lord and His innumerable incarnations and empowered representatives are the protectors and guardians of the celestial science of *bhakti*. They mercifully vanquished those demoniac Māyāvādīs and defeated their philosophy, and in so doing both purified and blessed them.

Lord Vāmana was the Supreme Godhead's incarnation as a *brahman* boy who redeemed Vāṣkali. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the crest jewel amongst Vaiṣṇava preceptors writes in his Laghu-bhāgavatamṛta that Lord Vāmana, besides this one time when He delivered Vāṣkali, incarnated twice more.

The second time at Bali Mahārājā's *yajña* (sacrificial fire) and a third time at Dhundi's *yajña*. We quote below from this book verse 80:

*mahārājās trirābhivyaktim kālpe'smin pratipedivān
tatrādau dānavendrasya bāṣkaler adhvaram yayau*

Lord Vāmana manifested himself three times in this *kalpa* (cosmic age), first delivering the demon king Vāṣkali, while he was performing a fire sacrifice.

In the two foregoing examples, first, the Four Kumāras who in the Satya-yuga rejected the path of empirical knowledge and took shelter of *bhakti-yoga*, and second, the demon Vāṣkali who was delivered from the jaws of Māyāvādism – in both cases, *bhakti-yoga* was restored and illuminated as the supreme path for all sincere seekers on the quest for perfection.

Monism in Tretā-Yuga

Sage Vasiṣṭha

In Tretā-yuga, the sage Vasiṣṭha was the chief preceptor of monism and was the royal *guru* to the Sun dynasty (*sūrya-vamśa*) in which Lord Rāma appeared. The Rāma Carita-Mānasa offers a brief description of his erudition as an empirical philosopher. Nevertheless, even grave philosophers and empiricists can become immersed in the ocean of Divine Love. This happened to Vasiṣṭha when he was consoling Bhārat, the brother of Lord Rāma, who at the time was deeply upset by his brother's banishment and the subsequent demise of his father, King Daśaratha. The sage entered an ecstatic trance while describing Śrī Lakṣmaṇa's and Sitadevī's unalloyed love for Lord Rāmacandra. The Vaiṣṇava poet Śrī Tulsidāsa writes:

*bhārata vasiṣṭha nikāṭa baiṭhāre
nīti dharmamāyā vacana ucāre
soka saneha magana muni-jñānī*

Bhārata sat near Vasiṣṭha and heard words of spiritual wisdom from this most knowledgeable sage. The sage however, entered into an ecstatic trance due to speaking consoling words to mitigate Bhārata's despondency.

In the Bengali translation of Rāmāyāna, the author Kirtivasa also referred to Vasiṣṭha as the foremost of sages on the path of empirical knowledge. That the sage Vasiṣṭha was a 'brahman realised' monist is certainly not contested by anyone. The famous composition Yoga-Vasiṣṭha

Rāmāyāna is solid evidence of this. Vaśiṣṭha is described in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6/18/5:

*vālmikiś ca mahā-yogī valmikād abhavat kila
agastyāś ca vaśiṣṭhaś ca mitrā-varuṇayor ṛṣi*

The great *yogī* Valmiki was mystically born in an anthill from Varuṇa's essence. Valmiki and Bhṛgu were considered Varuṇa's special sons, whereas Agastya and Vaśiṣṭha were the naturally born common sons of Varuṇa and Mitra (Aditi's son).

The renowned commentator and erudite preceptor Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī also writes in his commentary to the above verse:

‘Both Bhṛgu and Valmiki exhibited profound erudition and the super-excellent qualities of Vaiṣṇavas, hence they are called the extra-ordinary sons of Varuṇa. Whereas both Agastya and Vaśiṣṭha were ‘*brahman* realised’ monist Māyāvādīs, hence they are known as ordinary sons of Varuṇa.’

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam poetically describes how the demigod Varuṇa on seeing Urvasi the *upsara* (celestial damsel) uncontrollably passed semen, which later mystically resulted in the birth of the two sages Agastya and Vaśiṣṭha. Vaśiṣṭha is therefore usually known as Urvasi's son and maybe it is for this reason that Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī described Vaśiṣṭha as Varuṇa's ordinary son. The sage Vaśiṣṭha was a monist pursuing the path of impersonal liberation, the empirical knowledge of which he was known to teach to his disciples at his hermitage. The Supreme Lord Rāmacandra was greatly saddened to see His family preceptor so misguided and confused about the Absolute Truth. By the Lord's causeless mercy Vaśiṣṭha was delivered, his empirical mind seemingly drawn into the incessant ambrosial current of *bhakti* from where he surrendered his heart at Lord Rāma's lotus-feet and remained there eternally engaged in His loving service.

Rāvaṇa: The King of Laṅkā

There is an age-old adage in the spiritual lineage of Madhvācāryā, which states that the scholastic order in the Śaṅkarācārya cult offers respect to Rāvaṇa, the legendary King of Laṅkā, as the original commentator of the monistic Māyāvāda persuasion. One can therefore safely and appropriately address the ‘King of Demons’ Rāvaṇa, as a monist. Regarding Ravaṇa's birth, the following can be found in the ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa Saṁhita’:

‘Pulastya Ṛṣi left the kingdom of Brahmavarta (in India) and travelled to the island of Laṅkā in the south. He lived there for

some time and married a maiden from a Rākṣasa family¹. Rāvaṇa was born of this union, thus he was considered half ṛṣi, half demon.’

This quote corroborates the theory held in the Madhva-Sampradāya that Rāvaṇa was a confirmed Māyāvāda preceptor. From the famous Buddhist treatise Laṅkā-Avatāra Sūtra, we learn that beside being a reputed Māyāvādi, he was also a voidist, a Śūnyavāda yogī. In the final analysis his infamous activities speak volumes about his Māyāvāda and monistic conceptions and confirm his great status as a prominent torchbearer for both lines of thought. The principal credo of the Māyāvādīs is to try to ‘confiscate’ the Supreme *brahman*’s attributes, energies and form, and to present Him as impotent, attribute-less and impersonal. In so doing, the impersonalist subtly implies that his own constitutional position is equal to that of the Supreme Lord. The root of Rāvaṇa’s undoing was his attempt to steal Śrī Rāmacandra’s eternal consort, Queen Sītādevī, who is recognised as being the divine embodiment of Lord Rāma’s mystical potency – the potency of the Supreme omnipotent *brahman*. Śrī Sītādevī, Herself, personifies the all-attractive opulence of the Supreme that Māyāvādism attempts to both usurp and deny. Unfortunately Rāvaṇa failed to grasp, that one humbly takes shelter of the Supreme *brahman* by first taking shelter of His personified potency – and in doing so, one’s latent inclination to lovingly serve the Lord is awakened. If Rāvaṇa, who was bred on the Māyāvāda credo ‘I am *brahman*’ (*so’ham*), had sincerely sought refuge at Queen Sītādevī’s lotus feet instead of trying to confiscate, and selfishly ‘own’ Her, he would have certainly renounced his demoniac plan to usurp Lord Rāmacandra’s supreme position. And thus, by his actions Rāvaṇa proved himself to be an inveterate Māyāvādi and a monist.

In the end, the great devotee-warrior Hanumān confronted the demon king during the siege of Laṅkā. His thunderous fist, packed with the essence of pure *bhakti*, struck Rāvaṇa’s heart dissipating the dry empirical knowledge of monism and leaving him unconscious. At that point Lord Rāma, taking the arrow dipped in the conclusion of the Vedas, severed Rāvaṇa’s ten heads all of which were infused with Māyāvādism and voidism. As he lay dying in this purified state, Rāvaṇa finally began glorifying Lord Rāma and attained perfection. In this we have yet another example of how, in Tretā-yuga, the Supreme Godhead descends in His incarnation to vanquish the Māyāvādi demons and redeem the monist sages so that the torchlight of *bhakti-siddhānta* could burn evermore brightly.

Monism in Dvāpara-Yuga

Śrī Śukadeva

The great sage Vyāsadeva fathered Śukadeva in the womb of Vitika. Śukadeva was, even in his mother's womb, a liberated soul. He refused to be born and remained in his mother's womb for twelve years out of concern that he would lose his spiritual knowledge after coming into contact with the illusory material nature. Only after his father's repeated requests that he alleviate the suffering of his mother, and only after having *darśan* (direct vision) of Lord Kṛṣṇa and receiving His personal reassurance, was Śukadeva finally born. Despite being quite big his birth did not hurt his mother at all. As soon as he appeared he began to chant hymns glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa, singing sweetly like a *śuka* or parrot and was thus named Śukadeva. These same facts are reiterated in Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam verse 1/11/25. Śrī Śukadeva's birth is also described in detail in the 'Brahmā-Vaivartta Purāṇa'. (Later Śukadeva is famous for reciting the entire Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to King Parīkṣita).

The book 'Harīvaṁśa' also speaks of a certain Śuka, but this is a different personality to Śukadeva, the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva. This other Śuka, it is written, was also Śrīla Vyāsadeva's son, born of Arāṇī, and was known as Chaya Śuka. Chaya Śuka never met or had any relation with Mahārājā Parīkṣit, therefore the two should not be confused. Chaya Śuka was enlightened in impersonal knowledge of *brahman*. Although he was engrossed in impersonal *brahman* realisation, the Supreme Godhead's *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* (empowered incarnation) Śrīla Vyāsadeva, by powerful means made him abandon his monistic pursuits and brought him to the uncomplicated, heartfelt, and nectarean path of pure devotion to the Supreme Lord. Śrīla Śukadeva has revealed his own inner mood in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2/1/8-9:

*idaṁ bhāgavatam nāma purāṇam brahma-sammitam
adhītavān dvāparādau pitur dvaipāyanād aham
pariniṣṭhito'pi nairgunya uttama-śloka-līlayā
grhīta-cetā rājarṣe ākhyānam yad adhītavān*

(Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī said to Mahārājā Parīkṣit:)

At the end of Dvāpara-Yuga, under my father Śrīla Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, I studied this great Purāṇa 'Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam', which contains the essence of all Vedic scriptures. O' saintly King, despite

being perfectly situated in transcendence, I was still attracted to the narration of the Supreme Godhead's wonderful pastimes, glorified in enlightened verses.

At the age of twelve Śrīla Śukadeva left his mother's womb, but being so apprehensive about the entrapment of worldly life, on being born he immediately set off for the forest to become a hermit. Knowing that his son was no ordinary child, and that his consciousness was far beyond the reach of the mundane world, Srila Vyāsa decided he should be a student of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. To achieve this he devised an ingenious plan. It was customary that everyday Vyāsa's disciples would enter the forest to collect firewood for cooking, but now he instructed them to chant verses from the Bhāgavatam while they did this. When the young hermit Śukadeva, heard the wonderful sound vibration of the transcendental Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam he became spellbound and overwhelmed in spiritual ecstasy. Like a bumblebee that chases nectar, he followed the sweet melodious voices and was soon led back to his father's *āsrāma* where on realising his father's desire, he surrendered to him and became a high-class student of the Bhāgavatam.

By his father's mercy Śrīla Śukadeva was able to discern the sublime difference between a formless conception of the absolute and the tangible, sweet qualities of the Supreme Lord's transcendental pastimes. Having experienced both, he was able to compare the two – and realised that hearing and glorifying the pastimes of any of the Lord's incarnations to be far superior to all other realisations. Enlightened by this truth he understood that the greatest good fortune for all living beings is to hear and recite these auspicious, ambrosial works. To facilitate the ultimate good of all Śrīla Śukadeva instructed Mahārājā Parīkṣit on the complete Bhāgavatam in only seven days, knowing that Parīkṣit, nor anyone else, could benefit from impersonal Māyāvādā knowledge. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī is therefore considered one of the most illustrious of Vaiṣṇava preceptors.

Kaṁsa

Demon par excellence

King Kaṁsa was the son of Mahārājā Ugrasena and Padmadevī. Kaṁsa incarcerated Ugrasena because he was repulsed by his father's devotional inclinations and, of course Ugrasena also stood in his way to the throne. Kaṁsa's sister was Devakī, who married the transcendental personality Śrī Vāsudeva. After the wedding Kaṁsa was personally driving the newly wedded couple's chariot when he heard a providential message warning

him that Devakī and Vāsudeva's eighth son would be the transcendental Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, who would bring Kaṁsa's destruction. The demoniac Kaṁsa wanted there and then to murder his sister Devakī in an attempt to reverse the prophecy. However, upon Vāsudeva's intervention and many wise words, Kaṁsa agreed to spare her life. Nevertheless, he locked them up in the palace dungeon and waited for the birth of their eighth son so that he could kill it first-hand and thus mastermind his own destiny.

Māyāvādīs are antagonistic toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa's worshipable Deity form. According to their philosophy God does not possess a form or body – whether eternal, transcendental or otherwise. In Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Śārīrika Bhāṣya his opinion is that 'form' or 'body' is a manifestation of *māyā's* illusory nature: extirpation of the body or of form – which is produced of *avidyā*, is the attainment of liberation or *mokṣa*. Devakī's eighth child, a son, was indeed the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kaṁsa assumed that this baby boy was no different to any baby and that it possessed a mortal body, which the evil king became anxious to destroy. What Kaṁsa could not understand, was that Kṛṣṇa or His incarnation never take a temporary material body when He descends. Furthermore, it was also beyond his comprehension that transcendental, spiritual objects are outside the jurisdiction of mundane sense perception. The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa knew that the atheistic-minded Māyāvādī demon Kaṁsa was envious of Him and desired to kill Him. So Kṛṣṇa famously vanquished Kaṁsa's agents one by one in divine pastimes described in the Bhāgavat Purāṇa. In the slaying of *asuras* like Pralamba, Tṛṇāvarta, Agha, Baka, and Pūtanā, He actually showed them and the world the unique loveliness of His eternal transcendental form.

In the fourth chapter of Kṛṣṇa-Saṁhita Kaṁsa and the demon Pralambasura are described as Māyāvādīs. By slaying these two demons Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma symbolically protected the living entities of this *yuga* from the dreadful clutches of Māyāvāda thoughts and atheism. These statements are found in Kṛṣṇa-Saṁhita:

*devakīm gṛhit kaṁsa nāstikya bhaginīm satim
pralambo jivacaurastu śuddhena śauriṇa hataḥ
kaṁsena peritā duṣṭāḥ pracchanna bauddha-rūpa dhṛk*

Vāsudeva wedded Devakī, sister of the demon King Kaṁsa, an obdurate atheist. A covert Buddhist icon of Māyāvādī thought, snatcher of the soul, mischievous demon Pralamba was sent by

Kāmsa to wreak death and destruction, but was destroyed by Lord Balarāma.

The word '*jīvacaura*' in the above verse is significant. Like the Māyāvādīs, the Buddhists espouse that only when *brahman* comes under the spell of *avidyā*, or nescience does it accept a form or body. They teach that *brahman*'s transformation into a *jīva*, or separate living entity, is an illusory, conditioned state. On this basis they postulate that with the dissipation of *avidyā* through realisation of *brahman*, the *jīva* is no more as he merges once more back into *brahman*. For Vaiṣṇavas, this is known as stealing the *jīva*'s existence by denying his eternal individual identity. '*Jīvacaura*', *jīva*-stealing is a heinous habit of Māyāvādīs and demons, which they continuously practice. This idea can be formulated in another way; there is no object, substance or entity known as the *jīva* – everything is simply a transformation of the 'one *brahman*', for nothing other than *brahman* exists. Under the influence of nescience, *brahman* takes on the illusory form of the *jīva*. The monists endlessly, fruitlessly philosophise in this manner, although the Vedas bear evidence that even in Dvāpara-yuga, powerful atheists and Māyāvādīs were vanquished by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, symbolising the eternal victory of pure *bhakti* and Vaiṣṇavism.

The Condition of Monism in the Three Yugas

By the sweetwill of the Supreme, the first three of the four *yugas* – Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara saw the rise and fall of Māyāvādism. Each *yuga* had its impersonal *yogīs*, as well as many *asuras* who were atheists and Māyāvādīs. I have presented only the protagonists from each class of monists and Māyāvādīs in each *yuga*, merely to give an idea. The infinitely merciful Supreme Godhead transformed the hearts of monist sages and attracted them to join the Vaiṣṇava fold and engage in serving Him eternally, while for the Māyāvādī atheistic demons the Supreme Lord vanquished each of them, after which by His causeless mercy He rewarded them with liberation. As such another name of the Supreme Lord is '*muktipada*', the One who offers liberation.

To recapitulate, Māyāvādism or impersonalism in pre-historic *yugas* does not possess the same characteristics and practices of its modern counterpart, as propagated by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. Today's modern form of Māyāvādism is not only recent in origin, but is indeed contrary to scriptural conclusions and the views of Śrīla Vyāsadeva. The type of liberation it grants is a form of anaesthetic that puts the soul into a deep slumber, a state of complete forgetfulness which is in itself a very painful condition –

notwithstanding the relative fact that although undesirable, it is still far better than the false existence of a monist realisation where one desires to impossibly become 'One' with *brahman*. The modern brand of liberation proposed by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya is fictitious and illusory – there is not a shred of spiritual reality in it.

The Vedic Concept of Time Calculation

In India, one discovers that the modern figures for the duration of the first three *yugas*, Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara, and the number of years so far expired in the present and fourth Kali-yuga, has been surreptitiously calculated by Western scientists, via their Indian counterparts. These people are generally referred to as modern day Vedic 'scholars' most of them being hugely influenced by a vast plethora of non-Vedic western concepts. Working alongside these scholars are a class of astrologers who base their calculations on mundane empirical or speculative sciences. In the opinion of some of them, a total of approximately 7,500 years have passed since the beginning of Satya-yuga till now. This school of modern 'scholarship' also puts forward unsubstantiated theories that the Āryans were some kind of white skinned, nomadic horsemen who migrated from central Asia, invading northern India in 1500 BC. They usually go on to make nonsensical claims that these same barbarian nomads brought the ultra sophisticated Sanskrit language into India and wrote the Rg Veda as well. Ideas and speculations like these are not in line with Vedic thinking and have yet to be conclusively proven, despite being presented as 'ancient Asian history' in many universities and institutions of higher education around the world.

There is a well known astronomical axiom called the 'Precession of the Equinoxes' which enables a proficient astrologer to accurately calculate the dates of ancient events, providing one has the specific astronomical references. Using this astronomical system it is scientifically possible to determine the relative time frame of a particular event over a 25,000 year cycle which is the time it takes our solar system to go around the pivotal sun known as Polaris, or the Pole Star. For example; in the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa XIX.3 it is mentioned that a winter solstice occurred on the night of the new moon in the month of Māgha. This can accurately be determined to be approximately 3000 BC. So in this way, by studying the astronomical references found in the Vedas, accurate dates and times can be known. This is an appropriate way to calculate the chronology of the divine incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu in different universal epochs.

According to this system, the Śesa and Haṁsa *avatāras* appeared in the Satya-yuga which ended 2,160,000 years ago. The Tretā age began at this point and lasted 1,296,000 years, during which time Lord Rāma appeared in the royal solar dynasty and enacted His pastimes as recounted in the Rāmāyāna. Dvāpara-yuga was the next *yuga* which lasted 864,000 years. At the tail end of the Dvāpara-yuga the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared along with His primary expansion Lord Balarāma and enacted countless transcendental pastimes. These included His blissful childhood pastimes as the divine cowherd of Vraja, after which the overthrowing of His evil uncle Kāmsa, and latterly His central role in the epic Mahābhārata. At the core of this epic is the famous battle of Kurukṣetra, before which Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke the sublime Bhagavad-Gītā to His confidential friend and devotee Arjuna.

Vedic texts like Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describe how the universe progresses through periodic cycles and sub-cycles of vast cosmic time, in which Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Original Godhead manifests His transcendental pastimes only once in a great span of sub-cyclic time known as a 'day' of Brahmā or the equivalent of 4,320,000,000 earth years (four billion, three hundred and twenty million solar-earth years). Let me give perspective to these cycles from the viewpoint of our present 'modern' era. The Kali-yuga began approximately 5,000 years ago and lasts for a span of 432,000 years. Near the beginning of the Kali-yuga, some thirty-five hundred years ago the Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha appeared at Bodhi Gaya in present day Bihar, India (1500 BC). One thousand years later, Śākya Simha Buddha was born, (around 563 BC) at Kapilavastu in Nepal. Then, in approximately 700 A.D. the Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, Viṣṇusvāmī, empowered by Lord Śiva established the Rudra Sampradāya and preached the philosophy of *śuddha-advaita-vada*. Śaṅkarācārya took birth in 786 A.D. at Chidambaram, Kerala and promulgated his Māyāvāda hypothesis, which dramatically drove Śākya Simha's concept of Buddhism outside the borders of India. Thus in chronological order the respective personalities appeared as follows:

- Lord Buddha- 1500 BC
- Śākya Simha Buddha- 563 BC
- Viṣṇusvāmī- 700 AD
- Śrī Śaṅkarācārya- 786 AD

After Śaṅkarācārya, in three successive centuries, there appeared the famous *ācāryas* of the remaining three authorised Vaiṣṇava lineages:

- Ramānuja-*ācārya*- 1017-1137 A.D
- Nimbārka-*ācārya*- 1130-1200 A.D
- Madhva-*ācārya*- 1238-1317 A.D

Each of these *ācāryas* are considered transcendental personalities who were divinely empowered to expose the fallacy of the Māyāvāda hypothesis, by simultaneously revealing different, unique aspects of the Absolute Truth. Rāmānuja, empowered by Lakṣmi Devi, established the Śrī Sampradāya. Madhavācārya, empowered by Brahmā, established the Brahmā Sampradāya, while Nimbārka empowered by the Four Kumaras established the Nimbārka Sampradāya. Each of these *ācāryas* expressed in different schools, the individual identity of the *jīva*, and its personal nature in relation to the Supreme. These four schools of philosophy are listed as:

- Viṣṇusvāmī - Śuddha-advaita-vada.
- Rāmānuja-*ācārya* - Vasistadvaita-vada.
- Nimbārka-*ācārya* - Dvaita-advaita-vada
- Madhva-*ācārya* - Dvaita-vada

These four legitimate, genuine Vaiṣṇava lineages routed Māyāvādaism throughout India and firmly set the stage for the appearance of the last incarnation of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the year 1486 at Mayapur in Bengal.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu unified the four *sampradāyas* into one harmonious philosophy, showing that each *ācārya* was setting the foundations for a gradual revelation of the complete Truth. This was shown by His acceptance of two principles from each of the four Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. From Rāmānuja He accepted the concept of unalloyed devotion untainted by *karma* (material gain) and *jñāna* (monism) and service to the Vaiṣṇavas. From Madhvācārya He accepted the complete rejection of Māyāvādaism and the principle of deity worship of the form of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. From Viṣṇusvāmī, He accepted the philosophy of total dependence on Kṛṣṇa and the beauty of spontaneous devotional service; while from Nimbārka He accepted as the topmost ideal, the exalted love that the *gopīs* (cowherd maidens) exhibited for Kṛṣṇa in His Vraja pastimes, and the necessity of taking exclusive shelter of them. Unifying the four *sampradāyas*, He revealed the aphorism *acintya-bheda-ābheda-tattva* which is the philosophy that the Supreme Lord, by his unfathomable transcendental potency is inconceivably (*acintya*), simultaneously 'one with' and 'different' from His creations.

Śrī Caitanya appeared to reveal the most esoteric and confidential truths relating to the living entities' relationship with the Supreme, and at the same time gave practical instruction on how that relationship could be awoken from its dormant state. The *saṅkīrtan* mission² of Śrī Caitanya quite literally exploded as an all embracing movement that shook the Vedic world to its roots, attracting sincere and enlightened men and

women regardless of race, caste, or creed. It is interesting to note that while this devotional rebirth was taking place in India, the shock waves of change were simultaneously reaching the West in the form of the European renaissance. A beautiful quote from Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya līlā, chapter 17, verse 233 succinctly illustrates:

*jagat bhāsila caitanya-lilāra pāthāre
yānra yata śakti tata pāthāre sāntāre*

The whole world floated by the inundation of the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. One could swim in that inundation according to the extent of one's spiritual power.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's sublime pastime directs our attention to an unfolding truth. Like the banks of the river Gaṅgā, the land rises and is hidden again with the movement of the water over the centuries. The truth sometimes appears partially, each new chapter being divinely arranged to shed further light and understanding. Śrī Caitanya's *saṅkīrtan* mission is as eternal as it is contemporary. It is the fullest expression of salvation, the most magnanimous manifestation of creation, the most benevolent expression of compassion, a universal panacea for a suffering world assailed by the onslaught of Kali.

The Heliodorus Column

Heliodorus was a Greek ambassador to India 200 years before the birth of Christ. As a foreign diplomat, he obviously had the full confidence of the Grecian government and would have possessed a sophisticated understanding of the world as it existed at that time. It is not however, his political and diplomatic record that he is most well-known for, especially within the archaeological community, but rather the construction, in 113 BC, of a monumental pillar at Besnagar in Madhya Pradesh, India. Although it is now known as the Heliodorus column, in all archeological circles and literatures this pillar is acknowledged as a 'Garuḍa-stambha' similar to the one situated at the famous Jagannātha temple in Puri, Orissa, India. To the common man, the existence of this column is not so well known, but in archeological circles it is quite rightly considered an ancient phenomena whose discovery gave a profound perception of the universal influence of Vedic culture throughout the ages. In light of the fact that the western countries received the vast majority of their knowledge and assumptions from the Greek civilisation, it makes this a significant and unique archeological discovery of world wide importance.

The Heliodorus column first came to the attention of the western intelligentsia in 1877 during a British archeological expedition headed by Sir Alexander Cunningham. After analysing the style and form of the column, Cunningham incorrectly deduced that it was erected during the reign of the Imperial Gupta period, (second century AD) never dreaming that, underneath the coating of red silt at the bottom of the column, there lay a hidden inscription. However thirty-two years later in 1901, an independent researcher accompanied by Dr. J.H Marshall, had the coating of red silt removed. On closer inspection, an inscription was brought to light revealing that the pillar was factually erected in the second century BC and not in the Imperial Gupta period as had been previously assumed. Dr. Marshall described in an article he wrote in the 'Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society' that Cunningham had miscalculated the age of the column and could never have imagined the value of the discovery that he had let slip through his fingers. The language was Prakrit, a Sanskrit derivative, and one look at the ancient Brahmi inscription chiseled into the base clearly indicated that the Garuḍa-stambha was many centuries older than the 200 AD. This came as a great surprise to Dr. Marshall, but what amazed him, and later also electrified the international archeological community, was the translation of the ancient Brahmi script itself:

*devadevasya vāsudevasya garuḍa dhvajah ayam kārītaḥ
heliodoreṇa bhāgavatena diyasa putreṇa tākṣaśilākena*

This Garuḍa pillar is dedicated to Vāsudeva, the Lord of lords, and has been erected here by Heliodorus, a follower of the Bhāgavata devotional path, the son of Dion, and a resident of Tākṣaśila.

Tākṣaśila is Taxila, and according to the book 'Select Inscriptions on Indian History and Civilization' by Professor Dines Candra Sircar, published by the University of Calcutta, the exact location of Taxila is in the Rāwalpindi District of present day West Pakistan.

*yavanadūtena āgatena mahārājasya antalikitasya upāntāt sakāśam
rājñah*

*kāśī putrasya bhāgabhadrasya trātuḥ varṣena caturdaśena rājyena
vardhamānasya*

Who has come as ambassador of the great King Antialkidas, to the kingdom of King Bhāgabhadra the son of the Kāśī, the protector, now reigning prosperously on the fourteenth year of his kingship.

To very briefly try to put this in perspective, we should remember that Greece's greatest philosophers, starting with Pythagoras who lived in 560 BC, Socrates in 450 BC, Hippocrates (400 BC), and Plato and Aristotle (350 BC), had by this time already preached their doctrines, promulgated their philosophies, compiled their books and begun to spread their influence. Ambassador Heliodorus, being among the educated Greek elite in the second century BC, would most certainly have been familiar with all of their philosophies and reputations. In mind of this social and historical background, it is all the more illuminating that the Greek ambassador Heliodorus became an avid Vaiṣṇava devotee of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa and left a monumental pillar in the form of a Garuḍa-stambha as testament to this, for all of posterity. In 1955 after tremendous research Dr. M.D. Khare uncovered in the same area the remains of a huge temple complex dedicated to the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa and dating to the same period.

To conclude this brief section - it is clear and interesting that in the broad expanse of history, we can uncover minute personal details that shed light on an individual's life experience and events of personal transformation. Thanks to Heliodorus and his column, we can see that Vaiṣṇavism was an exquisite enough philosophy to capture the hearts of refined and cultured Greeks (and catholic enough to admit them into its ranks), even at a time when Indian and European cultures were largely ideologically separate.

Śakya Simha

Śakya Simha Buddha was born approximately one thousand years after the appearance of Viṣṇu Avatāra Buddha. Differing theories exist regarding the exact year of Śakya Simha's birth. Vedic scholars determined he lived from 563 BC – 483 BC, while Mahāyānic Buddhists calculated 566- 486 BC. Irregardless of the exact date, what is clear is that after an extended break the Māyāvāda school of thought again received a tremendous boost from this point on and continued to spread (albeit in various forms) for a thousand years as Buddhism until the appearance of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's appearance. It has already been discussed that Śaṅkarācārya's Māyāvādism is Buddhism with a different nomenclature. The inveterate monist, the venerable Rajendranātha Ghosa writes in his book Advaita siddhi, that:

‘From the time of Śākya Simha Buddha’s appearance up to the time of Śaṅkarācārya’s appearance, the precepts of monism were vigorously propagated under the banner of Buddhism’.

Statements of well-known monist scholars such as venerable Śrī Ghosa, firmly establish this truth that there is no difference between monism and Buddhism.

(Footnotes)

¹ *Rākṣasa*: An ancient demoniac creature described in the Vedas; which possesses mystical powers.

² The *saṅkīrtan* mission of Lord Caitanya is based on the Vedic scriptural injunction (*i.e.* Kali santarana Upaṇiṣadā) that the *yuga-dharma* is the congregational chanting, remembering and glorifying of the Holy Name of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya’s implementation of the *yuga-dharm* externally validates the Vedic references to Him as the *yuga-avatāra* – and the direct full incarnation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The Changing Shapes of Māyāvādism

Seven Philosophical Schools

Māyāvādism, like the multi-hooded Hydra, existed in many forms under different appellations. The following seven were the main schools of Māyāvāda thought:

- Sage Cārvaka's epicurean school of atheism
- Jina's Jainism or Arhata
- Kanada's atomic theory of Vaiśeṣika
- Gautama Rṣi's system of logic and rhetoric, Nyāya
- Sage Kapila's school of Sāṅkhya
- Patañjali's Yoga system
- Jamini's Mīmāṃsā (which argues that if there is a God, he is not omnipotent).

Māyāvādism in these variant forms became hyperactive and spawned a plethora of promulgation outlets in an attempt to devour the transcendental Vedic concept of *acintya-dvaita-advaita-Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta* – the Vaiṣṇava ontological precept that the Supreme Lord and all His multifarious energies are transcendental. Thus, they are not bound by material considerations, and are inconceivably, simultaneously dual and non-dual, one and different. The reason these other philosophies are also termed as Māyāvāda is because they consider the divine 'energy' herself as *māyā* or illusory, and all their debates and discourses focus on and are anchored in the mundane and the phenomenal. The above philosophies became especially rampant during the intervening period between Śakya Simha Buddha and Śaṅkarācārya.

In a peculiar but predictable twist to their successful propagation work, they ended up bitterly bickering amongst themselves, not able to bear each other's ascendancy. This debilitating infighting undermined their collective endeavours, a direct consequence of which was, fortunately for human society, the near collapse of Carvaka's Nastikya school of atheism. The same fate also followed Jainism. When Śrī Śaṅkarācārya appeared on the scene in 786 AD he saw these disparate groups of Māyāvādis embroiled in internecine strife, and resolved to find a way to bring them to share the same podium. He selected from each of them a few philosophical points, but pruned and interpolated them to suit his needs on the pretext of making them coherent and congruent. In doing so he then used them to further bolster his own philosophy. If one factually scrutinises these seven philosophies with a fine-toothed comb, one will conclude that with the addition of Śakya Simha's voidism and

Śaṅkarācārya's *brahman-ism* there are in total, nine Māyāvāda schools of thought. For the present it is not possible to expatiate with comprehensive arguments and quotes on the reason for terming the above seven philosophical schools of thought as Māyāvādism. However, if necessary, we shall do so in a separate book in the future.

Bhartṛhari

Approximately 150 years prior to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's appearance, Bhartṛhari created a cult based on the teachings of the Upaniṣadās and gave Māyāvādism a new direction. He took support of Buddhist arguments and rhetoric and then established a set of conclusions based on the Upaniṣadās. With the creation of this new 'Vedic'-based cult he attempted to preach and spread Buddhism in the name of Hinduism. Bhartṛhari was a contemporary of the famous Buddhist Amara Siṃha, and it is believed that the two were half-brothers, both being the sons of the famous Buddhist Sabara Svāmī. It is probable that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya gleaned many pertinent points from Bhartṛhari in order to promulgate his own brand of Māyāvādism. Bhartṛhari's new Upaniṣadā-based cult of Buddhism became the mouthpiece of Māyāvādism.

The True Face of Māyāvādism

Gauḍapāda

Gauḍapāda's biography sheds a great deal of light on the history and biography of Māyāvādism. Hence it is enormously relevant to discuss his life and works. Not only did Śrī Śaṅkarācārya have an extremely intimate bond with him, but also most of Śaṅkarācārya's philosophical conclusions were constructed by using his arguments and rhetoric as their foundation. Śaṅkarācārya's *guru* was Śrī Govindapāda whose *guru* was Śrī Gauḍapāda – this means Śrī Gauḍapāda was Śrī Śaṅkara's 'grand-*guru*', (sometimes Gauḍapāda is also referred to as Gaurapāda). Śrī Govindapāda did not write a book or leave behind any writings. As such although Śaṅkarācārya was formerly inducted into brahmanism by Govindapāda, it was his 'grand *guru*' who helped form his philosophy and therefore Gauḍapāda is factually Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's *śikṣā-guru* (instructing spiritual master). During Śaṅkarācārya's time, his brand of Māyāvādism acquired such a formidable stature that whenever the followers of the Indian Hindu society of Sanatāna-dharma referred to 'Māyāvāda', they meant only Śaṅkarācārya and his followers. Thus to know more about Śaṅkarācārya we must turn to his real instructing *śikṣā-guru*, Gauḍapāda, and find out more about him. The following information is found in 'Harivamsa':

*parāśara-kulotpalah śukonāma mahāyaśāh
vyāsād aranyām sambhūto vidhu moha'gniriva jvalan
satasyām pitṛ-kanyāyām viriṇyām jana yaśyati
kṛṣṇam gauḍam prabhūm śambhum tatha bhuriśrutam jayam
kanyām kīrtimatim ṣaṣṭhīm yogīnīm yogamātaram
brahmadattasya janānīm mahisī mānuhasya ca*

Śuka appeared in the illustrious family of Parāśara Muni as the son of Śrīla Vyāsa in the womb of Aranī. Śuka fathered Kṛṣṇa, Gauḍapāda, Sambhu, and Jaya in the womb of Virini. He also fathered daughters like Kīrtimati and his sixth child Mahisi, a *yogīni*, who gave birth to Brahmadaṭṭa, a descendant of Manu. Some persons confuse the two Śukas – one mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the verse *śuka kanyayam' brahmadattam ajjanat* and the other, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and Vitika, was a life long celibate, hence there is no question of him having progenies. The other Śuka, (also known as Chaya Śuka), entered householder life and is the one referred to in the Harivaṁsa.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī writes in his commentary to this verse:

*yadapi śuka utpattyeva vimukta-saṅgo
nirgatas tathāpi virahāturam vyāsa
manuṣānta dṛṣṭvā chāyā śukam nirmāya gatavān
tad abhiprāyenaivam gārhasṭhyādi
vyavahārah ityaviodhaḥ sa ca
brahmadatto yogī gavī vacī sarasvatyām*

From birth, the great sage Śukadeva was renounced and left home immediately. However, when he saw his father Śrīla Vyāsadeva afflicted by the pangs of separation from him, Śukadeva manifested an exact replica of himself and left again, this time for good. His mystically expanded replica is Chaya Śuka, who entered household life and fathered children. Brahmadaṭṭa (his grandson) was a *yogī* who had both mind and senses under control, residing on the banks of the sacred river Sarasvatī.

There is no contradiction regarding the renounced Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the above. The Devī Bhagavata specifically mentions that Gauḍapāda was the son of Chaya Śuka, and some scholars believe that Gauḍapāda received initiation from his own father. So it is clear that Gauḍapāda was born into a powerful family of saints and sages, a clear indication of the

important role he would soon play in assisting the ‘cosmic drama’ that was unfolding with the imminent appearance of Śrī Mahādeva Śiva as Śaṅkarācārya. Born as the son of Chaya Śuka and Vīriṇi, he soon impressed everyone with his scholarship and erudition. He is one of the brightest stars in the firmament of Māyāvādism. His timeless contribution to the world of philosophy is his two commentaries – Sāṅkhya-kārikā and Māṇḍukya-kārikā. These two *kārikās* (commentaries) are the cornerstones of Māyāvādism.

Refuting the Guru’s Views

Śaṅkarācārya compiled his own commentary based on Gauḍapāda’s *kārikās*. The famous Māyāvāda scholar and philosopher Vācaspati Miśra was a contemporary of Śrī Śaṅkara. He wrote the commentary *Tattva-kaumudi* to confute Gauḍapāda’s *kārikās* and one needs only to refer to his statement ‘51’ to be completely free of any doubts as to his intention. A general practice among the Māyāvādīs is that they habitually undermine the authority and reputation of the person or persons they depend on most for support and help – ‘biting the hand that feeds’. Similarly Śaṅkarācārya showed his true colours as a seasoned Māyāvādī in his Śārīrika Bhāṣya commentary to Vedānta Sūtra, when he attempted to undermine Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the Vedas. The illustrious poet Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi has succinctly penned this betrayal in his Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Adi 7/121:

*vyāsera sūtrete kahe ‘pariṇāma’-vāda
‘vyāsa bhrānta’ – bali’tāra uṭhāila vivāda*

Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s ‘Vedānta-sūtra’ describes that everything in reality is a transformation of the Supreme Lord’s divine energies. However, Śaṅkarācārya has deceived the innocent public by commenting that Śrīla Vyāsa was mistaken, and raised a hue and cry over this statement of truth.

To prove his misdeeds, we cite a couple of examples: Śrī Śaṅkara tried his utmost to twist the meaning of the Vedānta-sūtra to favour his theories, but his attempts backfired. In his commentary to sūtra 1/1/12 – ‘*ānandamayāḥ abhyāsāt*’, he tried to juggle the meaning of *ānandamayo* which means ‘the One who is saturated bliss’, and alone refers to Parabrahman, the Supreme Godhead. Regardless, Śrī Śaṅkara tried desperately to extrapolate that *ānandamayo* refers to impersonal *brahman*, and not a Supreme Personality. According to him, the affixed ‘*māyān*’ in ‘*ānanda*’ implies that the impersonal *brahman* accepts a *vikara*, (transformation). But in truth, only the Lord’s energies or *śaktis* are

transformed without Kṛṣṇa Himself having to accept any transformation or modification. If the true meaning of ‘*māyāh*’ was accepted by Śāṅkarācārya, his theory that *brahman* is impersonal would have to be instantly rejected. Consequently frustrated in failing to come up with a coherent explanation to refute Śrīla Vyāsadeva, he unabashedly reverted to character assassination and declared that Śrīla Vyāsadeva had composed a faulty *sūtra* claiming- “it should have been ‘*ananda*’ without the affix ‘*māyāh*’, because ‘*ananda*’ refers only to *brahman*”.

Śāṅkarācārya did not stop at defaming only Śrīla Vyāsadeva, but went to the extent of offending his own *śikṣā-guru* Śrī Gauḍapāda, from whom he had received all his original training. He tried to confute Gauḍapāda’s *kārikās*, finding fault in them. Śrī Śāṅkara wrote in his book *Ajñānabodhini – anavagatau brahmatma bhavam syat* – about Gauḍapāda, asserting that his *guru* was ‘devoid of knowledge of *brahman*’, and therefore inexperienced and ignorant about spiritual subject matters. How is it possible that a person, knowledgeable in the Vedas could affront his *śikṣā-guru* and preceptor, and still dare to present himself as a torch bearer of the Vedic tradition? The Vedas categorically condemn offences to one’s own *guru*, how then can anyone take Śrī Śāṅkarācārya as anything other than an *aparādhi* (offender) or take his words seriously.

Śrī Śāṅkara’s Birth

Śāṅkarācārya was the guardian of Māyāvāḍism, the prime exponent and propagator of voidism, the initiator of the modern form of monism and the crest jewel of the Māyāvāda lineage. Practically all educated, literate persons are familiar with the story of his birth, at least those in India. Many learned persons from the Śāṅkara cult have effusively penned his eulogies in biographical works such as Śāṅkara Vijaya and Śāṅkara Digvijaya. Further information and incidences of his life are also available in authoritative treatises of the Mādhva cult such as ‘Mādhva Vijaya’ and ‘Manimanjari’. The Mādhva cult and the Śāṅkara cult are opposed to each other. To draw a composite picture of Śrī Śāṅkara’s biography it is therefore imperative to harvest facts from both these sources and their authorised media. In addition to these sources there are plenty of biographical works written about Śrī Śāṅkara. Thanks to all these reliable sources we think it unnecessary to dwell at length on this topic.

There are numerous opinions regarding the exact date of Śrī Śāṅkara’s birth. Our personal estimate is that he was born approximately 700 years after Christ in the village of Chidambaram in Kerala, South India. His mother was a brāhmaṇi (female brāhmaṇa) named Viśiṣṭhā who married

the brāhmaṇa Viśvajita. For a very long time the couple were unable to have a child, which destroyed family life for a deeply morose Viśvajita who, cutting all bonds, left home and entered the forest to live as a hermit. Later, this same Viśvajita became famous as Śivaguru.

The following account is an excerpt from the ‘conclusion’ of the Śabdārtha Mañjarī by Śivanatha Śiromani, published in the Bengali era 1308:

“Viśiṣṭhā was left all by herself in the home. In her solitude she lived piously and vowed to worship the village deity of Lord Mahādeva, Śiva, daily, making this her life purpose. She became a disciple of the temple’s head priest and fully surrendered herself in her worship of Lord Śiva, applying her body, mind and soul. However, an amazing incident soon happened, she became pregnant. The word spread like wild fire. The council of righteous men in the village ostracised her from the village thinking her to be immoral and unchaste. Viśiṣṭhā, unable to bear the shame, insult and false accusations from the community, resolved to take her own life. At this time, Viśiṣṭhā’s father, Maghamaṇḍana, received providential instructions in a dream saying: ‘Lord Śiva has incarnated in Viśiṣṭhā’s womb, make sure she does not end her life’. Maghamaṇḍana immediately went to his daughter and dissuaded her from committing suicide. After a short while, under the care and nursing of her father, Viśiṣṭha gave birth to Śaṅkara.

Śaṅkara was an extremely intelligent and talented child. He completed his studies on Saṅskrit grammar and glossary even before his sacred-thread initiation. After initiation (*upanayana*) at the age of eight he began his Vedic studies. Very quickly he went through studying the Vedas and then concentrated his attention on mastering the six schools of Vedic philosophy and the Upaniṣadās. It is known that Śaṅkara was apathetic towards family life and material existence, and his entire time was taken up by scriptural studies and worshipping Lord Śiva.

Once Śaṅkara was accompanying his mother to another village, when they had to cross a narrow and shallow rivulet on the way. As they began to wade through the water, the mother was suddenly aware that young Śaṅkara was drowning. Śaṅkara was her only son, sole family member and meant more to her than her own life. Seeing him in that condition was more than she could bear and her heart began to shudder. Watching from only a little distance she became paralysed with fear, as he seemed unable

to save himself. It must have been a most pathetic scene as the helpless mother stood rooted to the ground, powerless to rescue her only child. Finally she waded out to him and in this drowning condition he made his mother promise to give him permission to take *sannyāsa*. He said, “Mother if you do not promise to allow me to enter the renounced order, I will not make the least attempt to save myself.” Finding no other recourse she desperately agreed to his demand. Śāṅkara then lifted himself from the water and returned home with his mother.”

From the above narration about Śāṅkarācārya it can be easily concluded that he was unsuccessful in his attempts to convince his mother to grant him permission to enter the renounced order, a spiritual order meant to benefit the entire world. Neither scriptural injunctions nor any form of consoling words helped him to convince her. Instead he inveigled his abandoned mother into giving him permission to take *sannyāsa* by pretending to drown in a shallow rivulet, taking full advantage of her weakness due to maternal feelings and sympathy. This sort of duplicity and emotional blackmail is probably not known in the annals and biographies of other great personalities. When Śrī Caitanya, the universal spiritual master of every living entity, embraced the renounced order of *sannyāsa*, He did so with the blessing of His aged mother Śācīdevī and the consent of His young, beautiful wife Viṣṇupriya Devī. He had patiently, and with deep understanding of the condition of their mind and heart, made them realise the importance of His decision. Indeed, one must not forget that Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who appeared to perform transcendental pastimes for the benefit of the entire world, while Śrī Śāṅkara is the incarnation of His dear devotee, Lord Śiva.

The fact of the matter is that Śrī Śāṅkara did not hesitate to use any means or method available, be it chicanery, duplicity, or aggression to achieve his desired objective whenever logic and argument failed him. By his extraordinary scholarship and genius he penned scores of books. His commentaries on Brahma-Sūtra and selected Upaniṣadās, which complimented his theories, are all exceptional literary accomplishments and his treasured legacy to the world. He travelled widely with the sole objective of promulgating and cementing his views and philosophy. He embarked on a world conquest. A few incidences on his ostensible victories are narrated below.

Śaṅkara Vijaya

One of many impressions one gets from reading Śaṅkarācārya's biography is that he had to debate on the scriptures with many Śmārta brāhmaṇas (ritualistic brāhmaṇas), Śaivites, Śāktas (Devī worshippers) and Kāpālīka (Tantrikas of the left-hand path, which ignores scriptural rules and regulations). A certain Kāpālīka by the name of Ugrabhairava, from Māhārāshtra became Śrī Śaṅkara's disciple, but under bizarre circumstances. In debate Śrī Śaṅkara was unsuccessful in refuting his arguments and satisfactorily answering the questions posed by him, rather he became convinced by his points. By a previously agreed draconian pact and wager, the loser of the debate would have to offer his severed head as prize to the winner. It was only on the intervention of Śrī Śaṅkara's senior disciple Padmapāda that the Kāpālīka was finally defeated successfully saving his *guru* from certain death.

In another incident Śrī Śaṅkara was locked in an acrimonious debate with one Krakaca, a *guru* of the Kāpālīka sect in Karnāṭaka. Śrī Śaṅkara found he had exhausted all his arguments without successfully convincing Krakaca, and was forced to beat a hasty retreat. In an attempt to save his face and reputation, he induced the king of Ujjaini, Sudhanvā to execute Krakaca on trumped-up charges.

In one shameful incident, this time in Assam, Abhinava Gupta, a Śākta (worshiper of Durga Devī), was impressed by Śrī Śaṅkara's personality and influence and became his disciple after an inconclusive debate on Māyāvādism. However, Abhinava's disciples refused to follow their *guru* in surrendering to Śrī Śaṅkara because their *guru* could not convince them about the superiority and absolute position of Māyāvādism. Śrī Śaṅkara perceived this as an affront and falsely accused Abhinava Gupta of inflicting him with an unpleasant skin infection delivered through a dark *tantrika* curse – at least this is the heresay. Whatever the case may be it is quite clear that neither Abhinava Gupta nor his disciples were convinced by Śrī Śaṅkara's philosophy. Finally, Padmapāda hatched a plot and had Abhinava murdered.

On another visit to Ujjaini, Śrī Śaṅkara crossed swords with Bhaskarācārya over his brand of Māyāvādism. Bhaskarācārya was the custodian of the Śaiva-Viśiṣṭa-advaita philosophy of non-dualism. Not only was Śrī Śaṅkara unsuccessful in converting him to his own persuasion, he was thoroughly drubbed. Bhaskarācārya exposed him as a Mahāyanika Buddhist, by refuting all his arguments in his own commentary to the Vedānta-sūtra, as we have already discussed above.

One of the most bizarre and incredible chapters in the life of Śāṅkarācārya concerns a debate with the wife of a scholar. Ubhaya Bhāratī was a wise and learned brāhmaṇa lady, wife of the illustrious scholar Maṅḍana Miśra. After Maṅḍana Miśra was defeated in a scriptural debate by Śāṅkarācārya, Ubhaya Bhāratī refused to concede defeat. She cited from the scriptures that Śrī Śāṅkara had defeated only one half of the complete whole – meaning after marriage husband and wife form one unit, hence in order for Śāṅkarācārya to claim full victory he must also defeat her. However, Ubhaya Bhāratī defeated Śāṅkarācārya in a debate on *kama*, the art and science of material love and sex. Dejected, Śāṅkarācārya vowed to avenge defeat. It so happened that the king of a small kingdom in the vicinity had, unknown to his subjects, just passed away. Śāṅkarācārya, by dint of his substantial yogic powers, possessed the deceased body of the king and went back to his royal palace. He entered the inner chambers of the king's queens undetected where for the next two nights he learned the art of love from many of them. He later abandoned the king's corpse leaving its body in a state of rigor mortis while the queens slept and returned to his own body, which had been kept in the safe keeping of his trusted disciple Padmapāda. He was then able to re-enter the debate, having experienced the world of sex and was able to defeat Ubhaya Bhāratī without any difficulty. There are obvious problems in reconciling this piece of biographical data, such as how can a strict celibate, bound by the vows of renunciation, spend time in the lap of luxury and sensual indulgence? The nagging questions are:

- a) Did Śrī Śāṅkarācārya deviate and fall down from his vow of celibacy and renunciation?
- b) Did he really need to prove that he could master the theory and practise of the art of *kama*?

We should normally think it highly praiseworthy for a *sannyāsa*, a controller of the senses, to be ignorant about scriptures dealing with physical union between sexes. Our conclusion is therefore, that for a *sannyāsi* of Śrī Śāṅkarācārya's stature it is dishonourable to deceptively learn about sex from a dead man's wife.

Maṅḍana Miśra was the biggest luminary to be defeated by Śrī Śāṅkara, and became the most prized feather in Śrī Śāṅkara's cap. Miśra was the most renowned and erudite Śmārta scholar of his time. Śrī Śāṅkara registered victories only over Buddhists, Tantriks, Śāktas, Śmārtas and Karmis – but never over a Vedic scholar. Through the ages there was never a doubt in anyone's mind that *jñāna*, empirical knowledge based on the Vedas, was far superior to both Buddhism and the ritualistic practices in the realm of Tantra. The tradition of Vedic scholarship enjoyed a long,

illustrious pedigree of preceptors and commentaries. In contrast the Māyāvāda philosophy, not being an established school with a recognised philosophy never enjoyed a high-profile victory against a respected Vedic authority. In the light of this well-known fact, it would therefore seem likely that Śrī Śaṅkara's followers have exaggerated the impact of the forementioned conquests. Certainly, Bhāskarācārya powerfully substantiated this during Śrī Śaṅkara's presence.

Padmapāda

Another noteworthy aspect in Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's life is that almost at every juncture when he was confronted with adverse situations, his loyal disciple Padmapāda was required to save him. For this, Padmapāda will always remain a luminary in the firmament of Śrī Śaṅkara's life history. In fact, long before Śrī Śaṅkara made public his Śārīrika-bhāṣyacommentary to the Vedānta Sūtra, Padmapāda had already completed his own commentary to the same treatise. We learn from history that Padmapāda's maternal uncle had stolen these invaluable manuscripts from Padmapāda, plunging the author in an ocean of grief. His *guru* Śrī Śaṅkara, stepped in to salvage the disaster and assured his loyal disciple that there was no cause for worry since Śaṅkarācārya, had perfectly committed to memory all Padmapāda's commentaries to the first four *sūtras*. Saying this, he then recited them all verbatim to Padmapāda. Given this event, it would not be wrong to assume that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya composed his famous Śārīrika Bhāṣya commentary borrowing heavily from his disciple Padmapāda's commentary. Now it is for all to judge which one of these two commentaries is the first and original. Nevertheless, the expropriation of Padmapāda's commentary did not deter him in the least to always come to the rescue of his *guru* in dire situations.

The Final Act

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's last and final challenge was a debate with the then leader of the Tibetan Buddhists, one Lāmā *guru*. At that time all the sects of Buddhism revered the Lāmā as their Jagadguru (world leader and preceptor). Before the debate began it was agreed by both parties that the loser of the debate would have to relinquish his life by plunging himself into a large vat of boiling oil. The debate is poignantly described in the book Sabdārtha Mañjāri, written by the famous monist scholar, the venerable Śiromani:

‘Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, after conceding defeat in a scriptural debate with the Buddhist Jagadguru, gave up his life by plunging into a

vat of boiling oil, as per the terms of debate. In this manner, in the year 818 AD the world lost a beacon of light upon the departure of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya.'

The 'Śaṅkara Vat', as it is known, is preserved in Tibet till today. The Buddhist monks honour it to commemorate their spiritual leaders' grand victory. It seems that history refuses to sweep the noble sacrifice of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya into oblivion.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Influence

There is almost a thousand years between the appearance of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, the incarnation of the Supreme Lord's devotee and the appearance of the Supreme Lord Himself as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The history of Māyāvāḍism in this intervening period will now be briefly described.

The bitter taste of voidism and its categorisation as a non-Vedic religion in Buddhism was expertly sugar-coated by Śaṅkarācārya by rubber-stamping it as Vedic, so that it became palatable and popular among the Indian masses. As a consequence Buddhism was rooted out and the masses, instead of identifying themselves as Buddhists, began to call themselves Hindus. The Hindu religion or 'Hinduism' generally refers to the religious interpretations of Śaṅkarācārya. Other religious theologies, which spread later, mistakenly believed they had refuted Hinduism but in truth they only crossed swords with Śaṅkarācārya's brand of Hinduism. What follower of the Vedas could be so miserly as to fail to acknowledge Śaṅkarācārya's momentous contribution to Hinduism, made by his uprooting Buddhism from the soil of India? His effort notwithstanding, real Hinduism bears a different definition than the one given by Śrī Śaṅkara. Real Hinduism is based on the Vedic conclusion known as Sanātana-dharma or the eternal 'religion' of Man. In other words, Sanātana-dharma is founded on the ontological principle of the living entities inconceivable and simultaneous oneness and difference with God and His multifarious energies. The practical application of this eternal esoteric principle (*tattva*) is manifested in a loving relationship expressed as *bhakti*, pure devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The thousand years since Śaṅkarācārya's disappearance have witnessed the gradual decline of Māyāvāḍism, in some places losing its face, in others being stripped of its veneer of legitimacy and respectability with its proponents and adherents wisely going 'underground' to avoid any further embarrassment.

Yādava Prakāśa

After the demise of famous Māyāvāda preceptors like Padmapāda Sureśvara and Vācaṣpati Miśra, the most prominent Māyāvāda *guru* who took over was one Yādava Prakāśa. He made the city of Kañchi in South India his place of residence. His contemporary, Śrī Yāmunācārya of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* was endowed with profound wisdom and a spiritual genius. Seeing his extraordinary expertise in argument and spiritual debate, Yādava Prakāśa failed to muster the strength and intrepidity to face him in a deciding scriptural debate. Yāmunācārya's famous disciple was the great spiritual preceptor Śrī Rāmānujācārya, who had actually studied Vedānta from Yādava Prakāśa as a young brāhmacari. Despite his status as his student, Śrī Rāmānuja would consistently point out the philosophical fallacies in Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on Vedānta. Yādava Prakāśa tried hard to influence young Rāmānuja with Māyāvāda philosophy but was rebutted each time by the young student's watertight logic and scriptural arguments. Rāmānuja's incredible intellect and profound spiritual insight made his teacher jealous, and so burning with envy Yādava Prakāśa conspired to kill the young Rāmānuja. But before the heinous plot could be executed it reached Rāmānujācārya's ears and the plan was scuttled. Not only did Rāmānuja forgive Yādava Prakāśa, he showered mercy to him and accepted him as his disciple. Yādava Prakāśa was extremely moved by this bountiful gesture and exalted Vaiṣṇava humility. Yādava turned over a new leaf and became a different person altogether, heartily embracing the life of a Vaiṣṇava *bhakta* (devotee).

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya faced a similar situation in regards to Abhināva Gupta. Unfortunately, instead of showing mercy to Abhināva, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya had him assassinated. From this, one can easily see that Rāmānujācārya's character was in comparison to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's role, far more noble, exalted and compassionate. Yādava Prakāśa was plotting his murder, yet Śrī Rāmānujācārya not only forgave him but by his benign grace redeemed him as well. Each of the above incidents, one involving Śrī Rāmānujācārya and the other Śrī Śaṅkarācārya were similar and crucial to them and reflects their individual characters. Śrī Rāmānujācārya was indeed a more compassionate, tolerant and elevated personality than the Māyāvāda role Śrī Śaṅkara was playing. Throughout the ages the Supreme Lord's pure devotees have always exhibited, under all circumstances, superior character and greater wisdom than others have. Māyāvādism during this time went through its leanest period, debilitated by the sharp, irrefutable logic and arguments of Śrī Rāmānujācārya who flew the victory flag of

Viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda. (This is the ontological principle that the Supreme *brahman*, is by nature different from the *jīva* [living entities] and the *jagat* [material nature] – although both *jīva* and *jagat* are a part of the complete *brahman* and therefore never separate from Him).

Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī

Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī was born in the province of Gujarāta. Not much can be said about the details of his appearance in the absence of an accurate and authentic date. One important fact deserves mention, which is that regardless of what monist scholars and historians speculate about the date of birth, their conjectures are totally unfounded, and at best based on hearsay. While Śrī Madhvācāryā does not mention Śrīdhara Svāmī in any of his writings, therefore, to chronologically place Śrīdhara Svāmī after Madhvācāryā simply on the basis of Śrīdhara Svāmī apparent *absentia*, would be illogical and unreasonable. Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī did not write a commentary on the Vedānta Sūtra or on the Upaniṣadās. This is the probable reason why Madhvācāryā never mentioned Śrīdhara Svāmī in any of his own writings, otherwise he surely would have. On the other hand Śrīdhara Svāmī mentions only Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's name in his commentary to the Bhagavad-gītā, making no mention of Śrī Madhvācāryā. These facts indicate that Śrīdhara Svāmī lived after Śrī Śaṅkarācārya but before Śrī Madhvācāryā's advent.

Śrī Rāmānuja wrote his famous Śrī Bhāṣya commentary to the Vedānta based on the conclusions of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī also wrote a commentary on the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. If Rāmānujācārya had known about this commentary he would have certainly cited it selectively or would have referred to it in his writings as evidence. The fact is that each of them fails to mention the other. In the light of these factors one would be hard-pressed to conclusively ascertain the chronological order of their respective periods. To this day the Māyāvāda impersonalist cults still endeavour to try and pull Śrīdhara Svāmī into their monist camp. The reason for this is that in the very early stages of his spiritual journey Śrīdhara Svāmī closely associated with a Māyāvādā scholar, was influenced by his teachings and for a time accepted the path of monism. This part of his life was sometimes indirectly alluded to in Śrīdhara Svāmī's writings. Later however, Śrīdhara Svāmī famously rejected Māyāvādisim and embraced Vaiṣṇavism under the guidance and by the association of Paramānanda Tīrtha.

Paramānanda Tīrtha, a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* of the *śuddhā-advaita sampradāya* was an itinerant preacher, and was a devotee of Lord

Nṛsiṃhadeva, Śrī Viṣṇu's lion incarnation. The most prominent preceptor of this Vaiṣṇava line of *śuddhā-advaita*, (pure, transcendental non-dualism), was Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī and he appeared long before Śaṅkarācārya. (Viṣṇu Svāmī was also known as Adiviṣṇu Svāmī).

Paramānanda Tīrtha was a *sannyāsī* in this illustrious Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* and by his mercy Śrīdhara Svāmī realised the spiritual bankruptcy in Māyāvādism. After severing his past association with Māyāvādism he wholeheartedly entered the hallowed Vaiṣṇava fold and received spiritual initiation from Paramānanda Tīrtha. Śrīdhara Svāmī's transformation emerged due to his enlightenment to the truth, which is that *mokṣa* (impersonal liberation) was not only extremely difficult to attain by following the path of dry speculation, it was actually impossible. He understood that only through devotional surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is liberation eternally ensured. In his commentary to Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīdhara Svāmī writes:

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇa-vacanānyevaṃ sati samañjasāni bhavanti
tasmād-bhagavad-bhaktir eva mukti hetur iti siddham
'paramānanda śrī-pādābja-rajah śrī-dhārinādhuna
śrīdhara svāmī-yatinā kṛta gīta-subodhinī.*

When properly understood, the meanings of the words of Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gīta – the entire Vedic literatures become clear. They all agree on this point that devotion to the Supreme Lord is the primary cause of attaining *mokṣa*, liberation – The *sannyāsī* Śrīdhara Svāmī is writing the Subodhinī commentary to the Bhagavad-gītā, taking the dust from the lotus feet of Śrī Paramānanda Tīrtha.

The Māyāvādīs' contention that Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī was one of them, a monist, is easily refuted by the above truth in Bhagavad-gītā. Their denial of his devotional status is useless and their arguments both incoherent and unsubstantiated.

A remarkable, but true historical fact surrounds Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary of Bhagavad-gīta. Once Śrīdhara Svāmī visited all the holy pilgrimages and arrived in Kāśī. He stayed there for an extended period writing his Subodhinī commentary to the Bhagavad-gīta. He approached the scholars and Paṇḍits of Kāśī, giving them a manuscript of this work for their response. Discovering that the ontological conclusions in his commentary were contrary to their Māyāvāda precepts, the Māyāvādī Paṇḍits became alarmed and began to fine toothcomb it for mistakes and irregularities. However, Śrīdhara Svāmī rebutted all their arguments with

an amazing display of ingenious debating skill. In spite of this, and unfortunately for them, the proud Māyāvāḍa scholars refused to acknowledge the excellence of his commentary. For a final arbitration both parties approached the deity of Lord Viśvanātha (Siva) in the temple. The best of the Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Siva let his decision be known in a dream to the Māyāvāḍa Paṇḍitas in the form of a verse, given below:

*aham vedmi śuk vetti vyaso vetti na vetti vā
śrīdharah sakalam vetti śrī nṛṣimha prasādataḥ*

I (Siva) know, Śukadeva Gosvāmī knows, Śrīla Vyāsadeva may or may not know. But Śrī Śrīdhara (Svāmī) knows everything by the mercy of Lord Nṛṣimhadeva.

This verse unequivocally declares that Śrīdhara Svāmī defeated the Māyāvāḍa Paṇḍitas by the grace of Lord Nṛṣimhadeva, and so Śrīdhara Svāmī, by his *guru's* grace became successful. Once again we find yet another account of monists, impersonalists and Māyāvāḍis all exposed by the Supreme Lord via his empowered devotee.

Śrī Bilvamaṅgala - Alchemy of the heart

Śrī Vilvamaṅgala was born in a small village on the bank of the river Venna in South India. His father's name was Rāmadāsa. Some are of the opinion that Śrī Vilvamaṅgala was previously known as Sihlanmiśra or Citsukhācārya. According to the book Vallabha-digvijaya he lived in the 8th Century AD. In his early life he was a monist and impersonalist but he later rejected Māyāvāḍism and entered the Vaiṣṇava Tridandi *sannyāsa* order of renunciation. In the Dvārāka chapter of the monastery records of the Śrī Śāṅkara cult, Vilvamaṅgala's name is mentioned against the year '2715', (years after the start of Kali-yuga). Again, according to Vallabha-digvijaya, he was the foremost disciple of Śrī Rājāviṣṇu Svāmī and credited with installing the Deities of Śrī Śrī Dvārakādhiśa. It is said that Vilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura lived in Vṛṇḍāvana near Brahmakunda for seven hundred years performing *bhajana*, spontaneous devotional *yoga*. He authored the famous book 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta' and since then he became widely known as Līlāśuka. He writes in his own poetic words about his rejection of Māyāvāḍism and blissful conversion to Vaiṣṇavism:

*advaita-vithī pathikairupāsyāḥ svānanda simhāsana
labdha dikṣāḥ haṭhena kenāpi vayam
śaṭhena dāsīkṛtā gopavadhū viṭhena*

I was worshipped by those who tread the path of monism and I was hoisted upon the throne of self-bliss. Yet by force, I was

appointed to be the maidservant of that supreme trickster; by Him alone who cheats the *gopīs*.

Trivikrama-Ācārya

Śrī Ānanda Tīrtha Madhvācāryā appeared at a time when the cult of Śaṅkarācārya was being widely broadcast. Śrī Madhvācāryā was born in the South Indian district of Kannaḍa (Mangalore) in a place called Pājakā-kṣetra, 7 miles from Uḍupī in the year 1238 AD. Other sources place the year of his birth three centuries earlier – but these are not considered very authentic sources. His father Madhyageha Bhaṭṭa was a learned Brahman, Vedic scholar, and his mother was called Vedāvidyā. Around this time Acyuta Prekṣa was a very prominent Māyāvādā *ācārya*. He had four leading disciples namely, Śaṅkarānanda, Vidyāśaṅkara, Trivikrama-ācārya and Padmanābha-ācārya all of whom were proficient preachers of monism. Just as Rāmanuja-ācārya, for the express purpose of delivering Yādava Prakāśa went through the motions of becoming his disciple, similarly Śrī Madhvācāryā for the same purpose took initiation from Acyuta Prekṣa. Śrī Madhvācāryā, vastly learned in Veda and Vedānta, was vehemently espousing the ontological principal of spiritual dualism – that God and the *jīva* were eternally individual identities. His extraordinary skills in debating and profound realisations of Vedic conclusions were tools with which he demolished the arguments and theories of Māyāvādisim. His *guru*, Acyuta Prekṣa was defeated by Śrī Madhvācāryā in a philosophical debate. He also defeated both Trivikrama-ācārya and Padmanābha-ācārya who became his disciples, and shunning the path of Māyāvādisim wholeheartedly embraced Vaiṣṇavism. It was their good fortune that Śrī Madhvācāryā saved them from the atheistic path of monism, which attempts to deny the Lord his unlimited opulence and infinite blissful qualities, thereby creating many offences at His divine lotus feet.

Trivikrama-ācārya was a prodigious scholar of Māyāvādisim. The great author of the far-famed books Madhvavijaya and Maṇimaṅjari was none other than his son Nārāyaṇācārya. Later, Trivikrama-ācārya became a pre-eminent preceptor in the spiritual lineage of Śrī Madhvācāryā. His added advantage over others was that he was expert in both the philosophies of spiritual dualism and impersonal non-dualism. He schooled his son Nārāyaṇācārya so expertly, that his son was able to successfully bring to light many ontological concepts in Śrī Madhvācāryā's teachings and expose the many fallacies in Śaṅkarācārya's philosophy. Thus both these philosophical schools must try and acknowledge Śrī Nārāyaṇācārya's books as evidential and authentic. It is a shortsighted, baseless accusation

to say that since Śrī Nārāyana-ācārya was in the Madhvācārya *sampradāya* his books are corrupted by prejudices and sympathies for his own lineage.

Vidyāraṇya- Śaṅkarācārya the Second

Madhava was an alias of Vidyāraṇya. His father's name was Sāyana and was therefore also known by the alias Sāyana Madhava. He was an erudite scholar possessing an intense and forceful personality. He had risen to such heights of popularity and influence within the Śaṅkara cult that some say that after Śaṅkarācārya no other *ācārya* achieved as much, either in learning or in influence. It is for this reason that the Śaṅkarācārya *sampradāya* honoured him as Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's incarnation and awarded him the unofficial title 'Śaṅkarācārya the second'.

At this time Akṣobhyācārya of the Madhva-Sampradāya was making his presence and influence felt in the learned circles. He was a towering scholar in Nyāya (rhetoric and logic) and was trying to lure Vidyāraṇya into a scriptural debate. After many attempts Vidyāraṇya finally took the bait. Both agreed on having the renowned stalwart *paṇḍita* Śrī Vedānta Deśikācārya of the Rāmaṇuja-Sampradāya as judge although the Madhva-Sampradāya did not completely see eye-to-eye on many fine ontological principles within the Rāmaṇuja-Sampradāya. Vidyāraṇya was not proficient in Nyāya *śāstra*, so he lost the debate with Akṣobhyācārya. Although Vidyāraṇya himself was a great scholar he was dwarfed by Akṣobhya's towering erudition. There is a verse glorifying Akṣobhya that was very well known to the learned circles:

*asinā tat-tvam-asinā para-jīva prabhedinā
vidyāraṇyam aranyāni hy akṣobhya-munir acchinat*

With the sword of the Vedic *mantra* 'tat-tvam-asi', 'thou art that', and by establishing the eternal distinction between the *jīva* and the Supreme Lord; Akṣobhya Muni cut the dense forest (of monism) by cutting down Vidyāraṇya's arguments.

After conceding defeat to Akṣobhya Muni in this momentous scriptural debate, which drew the attention of the entire scholarly society, Vidyāraṇya's influence and reputation waned considerably.

The Turning of the Tide

Jayatīrtha

After Akṣobhya, the Vaiṣṇava community saw the emergence of his disciple, the illustrious Jayatīrtha. By the grace of his *guru*, Jayatīrtha triumphed over every notable *pandit* in contests of scriptural debate and was crowned with the title ‘*mahā-digvijaya*’ – meaning, ‘one who has conquered in all directions’. The *Tattva-prakāśika* (his annotation of Madhvācāryā’s commentary of Vedānta) and his book ‘*Nyāya Śuddhā*’ are especially acclaimed in learned circles. Scholars even coined a phrase acknowledging the brilliance of his authorship. Both *guru* Akṣobhya and his disciple Jayatīrtha were such towering spiritual personalities and treasure houses of erudition that the powerful force of their preaching sent the impersonalist monists running for shelter in mountain caves rather than be philosophically disrobed in public.

The Madhva *sampradāya* continued to lay a sustained siege on Māyāvādisism for the next 300 years. A barrage of brilliant, potent literatures were written, all of which fuelled the fight against atheism. Gaudapūrṇānand-ācārya wrote the *Tattva-Muktāvalī* and *Māyāvāda-śata-dūṣaṇī* both of which exposed a hundred fallacies in Māyāvādisism. Vyāsa Tīrtha composed ‘*Nyayāmṛtam*’ and *Bhedojīvanam*. Vādirāja Tīrtha, also known as the second Madhvācāryā, wrote *Yukti-mallikā*, *Pāṣaṇḍamata Khaṇḍanam* and *Śuddhā-tippaṇī*. All of these texts philosophically demolished and analytically shredded the precepts of Māyāvādisism and monism. By fearlessly propagating the esoteric tenets of personalism, these authors shattered the Māyāvādi hypothesis and helped thousands and thousands of seekers to come to the Absolute Truth.

In doing so innumerable Māyāvāda scholars came to reject the scourge that is atheism and which is the ultimate core precept of Māyāvādisism. Thus they surrendered themselves to the exquisite, transcendental precepts of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. In significant contrast it deserves mention that there is not one recorded dialogue, scripture or recollection of any pure Vaiṣṇava leaving the path of *bhakti* for the sake Māyāvādisism.

Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī

Guru of Vārāṇasī

Looking back over the 500 years since the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu it is evident that the course of the Vaiṣṇava world was transformed forever and that with His divine advent Vaiṣṇavism as a living

philosophy was suffused with inexhaustible incandescence. The bright flame of Vaiṣṇavism, beautified by the highest ontological and spiritual truths, attracted Māyāvādīs in droves inspiring them to surrender.

Śrīpād Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī appeared between the later half of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century. He was the undisputed head of the entire Māyāvādī clan in Vārāṇasī. The old city was, as it is today, a famous center of learning and a beacon of Vedic study, as such Prakāśānanda commanded a high status in the society. His erudition inspired both awe and respect among his contemporaries everywhere, and his book Vedānta Siddhānta Muktāvalī brought new life into the monist community. Far away in Māyāpura, West Bengal, Śrī Caitanya, was told about him and commented, (Caitanya Bhāgavat, Madhya 3/37):

*kāṣite paḍāya beṭā prakāśānanda
seha beta kare mora anga khanda-khanda*

That youngster Prakāśānanda is a teacher (of Advaita) in Kāśī, Vārāṇasī and by his impersonal philosophy he is dismembering My Person.

The meaning of this verse comes from the fact that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Himself considered the fountainhead of all incarnations. Prakāśānanda was teaching his disciples the philosophy of monism, contending that the Supreme Lord Bhagavān is formless, and without attributes. In short, he taught a philosophy that does not accept that Bhagavān is a person. Hence, by denying God's personal aspect all their philosophising and arguments were no different than attempts to slash and dismember His blissful transcendental form. This is the purport of Śrī Caitanya's statement. In other *yugas* the Supreme Lord incarnated on the earth and either delivered or vanquished so many demoniac Māyāvādīs, according to His own sweet will. Yet, in this present Kali-yuga age it is understood that the most munificent Supreme Personality Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not choose to slay the *asuras* and Māyāvādīs, rather He simply extirpated their evil and iniquities. Like an irresistible, devotional alchemist He transformed both their hearts and minds inspiring them to either embrace the path of pure goodness propogated by Him, or to engage directly in His sublime service.

When Śrī Caitanya decided to deliver Prakāśānanda He arrived in Vārāṇasī with a group of His followers. They met together with Prakāśānanda's vast assembly of disciples and debated over the conclusions of the scriptures. Śrī Caitanya lucidly enumerated the galaxy of discrepancies inherent in Māyāvāda philosophy, unraveling both the fallacy

of monism, while simultaneously revealing the deepest hidden truths of the Vedānta. After doing so, He waited patiently for Prakāśānanda's riposte. Thousands of Prakāśānanda's disciples sat in stunned silence with bated breath. Prakāśānanda could not find a single fault in Śrī Caitanya's system of logic and his scriptural argument. Finally, He conceded defeat and surrendered both himself and his disciples at Śrī Caitanya's lotus-feet, which is confirmed by the statements of the Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi 7/149:

*prakāśānanda tāñra āsi dharilā carana
sei haite sannyāsira phire gela mana*

Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī came and caught hold of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's lotus-feet. From that moment on he experienced a change of heart.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's merciful preaching not only delivered Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī but also all the Māyāvādīs in Vārāṇasī were delivered. The effect of this conversion was so great that Vārāṇasī, the grand citadel of Māyāvāda philosophy and the refuge of the devotees of Lord Śiva was transformed into a second Navadvīpa, the devotional abode of Śrī Caitanya. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes in Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya 25/166-167:

*sannyāsī-pandita kare bhagāvata vicāra
vārāṇasī-pura prabhu karilā nistāra
nija loka lañā prabhu āilā vāsāghara.
vārāṇasī haila dvitīya nadīyā-nagara*

Thereafter all the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* and learned scholars of Vārāṇasī began discussing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and in this way Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered them all. He then returned to His residence with His personal associates, having transformed the entire city of Vārāṇasī into a centre of *bhakti*.

Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya

In the same way that Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī was acknowledged as the head of Māyāvāda society in Vārāṇasī, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was the undisputed leader of the Māyāvāda community in Śrī Kṣetra or Jagannatha Puri, which in Orissa shared an equivalent stature to Vārāṇasī. It is recorded that he was vastly learned in the six Vedānta schools of philosophy, and thus was awarded the accolade of the title 'Sārvabhauma'. While residing in Puri, Śrī Caitanya, on the pretext of hearing Vedānta

came to attend Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma's discourses for seven days. Sārvabhauma expatiated upon Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's commentary to the Brahma-Sūtra zealously trying to impress Śrī Caitanya with the Māyāvāda philosophy. Śrī Caitanya listened attentively to the discourses for a complete seven days in a row without saying a word. On the eighth day, Sārvabhauma requested Śrī Caitanya to comment on this mammoth dissertation. In this context, I request the respected reader to scrutinise the 6th chapter, *madhya-līlā* of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta. In this famous discussion, Śrī Caitanya then picked out a multitude of mistakes in Sārvabhauma's scriptural conclusion, impressing him with both His profound erudition, and his deep esoteric understanding of the true meaning of the Vedic texts. He became immediately attracted to the Lord and finally surrendered to Him. This is documented in the Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 6/201, 205–206

*ātmā-ninda kari laila prabhura sarana
krpa karibare tabe prabhura haila mana
dekhi'sārvabhauma dandavat kari' padī'
punah uti'stuti kare dui kara yudi
prabhura krpaya tnara sphurila saba tattva
nama-prema-dana-adi varena mahāttva.*

Sārvabhauma denounced himself as an offender and took shelter of the Lord, who then desired to show him His mercy. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was granted divine vision with which to see the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa manifested in Caitanya Mahāprabhu, at which he immediately fell down on the ground to offer Him obeisances. He then stood up and began to offer prayers with folded hands. By the Supreme Lord's mercy all ontological truths were revealed to Sārvabhauma and he could understand the importance of chanting the holy name and of distributing love of Godhead everywhere.

In His engagement to root out Māyāvādisim, which He succeeded to do wonderfully in Jagannātha Puri, He was aided competently by His disciples and followers. Other Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*, acknowledging that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, also came forward to contain the menace of impersonalism. All these devotees in the propagation of theism and Bhāgavata-dharma simply assisted Śrī Caitanya and thus participated in His transcendental pastimes. Among the Vaiṣṇavas from other *sampradāyas* most worth mentioning are the names of Śrī Keśava Kāsmiri from the Nimbārka *sampradāya* and Śrī

Vallabhācārya of the Rudra *sampradāya*. Both these spiritual preceptors accepted spiritual instructions from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Who in India has not heard of Śrī Caitanya's meeting with Śrī Kesava Kasmiri, who had earned the title of *Digvijaya* 'he who conquerors in all directions'? However, the real highlight of his career was to actually be defeated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu – which he came to realise was his greatest fortune, returning back to his home with the treasure of direct divine instruction from the Supreme Lord Himself. Later, in his spiritual maturity he authored momentous treatises and books like *Vedānta Kaustubha*, which are landmark texts of the Nimbārka *sampradāya*. In fact the great storehouse of books that have been published continuously and have enriched Nimbārka *sampradāya* must be understood as being the direct result of the dynamic propagation of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Upendra Sarasvatī

Upendra Sarasvatī was a towering influence among the monist scholars of Vārāṇasī. The Vaiṣṇava preceptor Śrī Vallabhācārya had received the mercy of Śrī Caitanya, and it was he who in Vārāṇasī soundly defeated Upendra Sarasvatī in a contest of theological dialectics. The defeat caused Upendra to harbour so much ill feeling towards Vallabhācārya that he even desired to inflict physical torture on him. He began to harass Śrī Vallabhācārya, who meanwhile departed from Vārāṇasī exclaiming in disbelief on how a person learned in scriptures could stoop to such depths of depravity. The great preceptor moved on to other cities where there were other Māyāvādīs that he also defeated resoundingly. Again, the Māyāvādīs were forced to move on elsewhere to save face. Thus we see that by exposing the Māyāvādīs, Śrī Vallabhācārya, played his valuable part in fulfilling Lord Caitanya's hearts desire.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Vyāsa Rāya

In his visit to Uḍupī, Śrī Caitanya had met the leaders of the Madhva-*sampradāya* and had long discussions on *sādhya-sādhana-tattva*, the highest spiritual goal and the best process for attaining it. The head of the Uḍupī temple at that time was Raghuvarya Ācārya, and after him Vyāsa Rāya became the head of the temple and remained in his position for a long time. He was a *pandit* of Nyāyā (logic), an erudite scholar par excellence in spiritual dialectics. It is for this reason that he is still widely revered in learned circles. Many historians say that he was the temple head from 1486 AD to 1539. Although there may be some differences of opinion over the time period of his appearance, there can nevertheless be no disagreement that he met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was in Uḍupī

around 1515 AD, when Vyāsa Rāya was in charge of the temple. Whether or not some scholars were fortunate enough to recognise Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's divinity, they nevertheless all unanimously acknowledged that Śrī Caitanya was the undisputed monarch of Nyāyā philosophy. Śrī Caitanya's fame preceded Him everywhere He went, so when He arrived in Uḍupī many great devotees and erudite scholars including Raghuvarya Ācārya and his successor ācārya Vyāsa Rāya, came to pay their respects. Since Vyāsa Rāya himself was a towering scholar of Nyāyā, on meeting Śrī Caitanya he was eager to receive more knowledge from Him and to capitalise on the rare opportunity. His famous book Nyāyāmṛta can be considered as a direct outcome of his meeting with Śrī Caitanya. Ācārya Vyāsa Rāya and other followers of Śrī Caitanya totally devastated much of the remaining pockets of influence that Māyāvādī preachers had so meticulously assembled by their own vehement presentation of 'Bhāgavat-dharma'.

The Secret Writings of Madhūsudana Sarasvatī

As if hearing the piteous cries of the Māyāvādīs, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is also known by the name 'Madhusūdana' (the killer of the Madhu demon) sent them succor in the form of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, a great *pandita* and one of the most learned of the *advaitavādīs* (impersonalists). Madhūsudana Sarasvatī was born in the small village of Unsiya in Fardiapura district of East Bengal, present day Bangladesh. After completing his studies of Nyāyā in Navadvīpa, Bengal, he travelled to Vārāṇasī where he studied the Māyāvāda commentary on Vedānta from Śrī Ramacandra Pandita. Later he authored his magnum opus 'Advaita Siddhi' – an impressive treatise written with the daunting task of confuting Vyāsa Rāya's Nyāyāmṛta, which as we have just discussed struck an awesome blow to the impersonalist community. He may have realised that his attempt had fallen short of defeating Vyāsa Rāya, for he developed the peculiar eccentricity of never allowing anyone from a different *sampradāya* to study his book. No copies of it were distributed and as the book could not be read firsthand, one had to hear it from Madhusūdana Sarasvatī himself. In this way, it became almost impossible for anyone to refute any part of the treatise with exact certainty. Vyāsa Rāya had a brilliant disciple by the name of Rāma Tīrtha, who conjectured correctly Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's real intentions. Disguising himself as a Māyāvāda scholar, he approached Madhusūdana on the pretext of studying this elusive work. Rāma Tīrtha, who was blessed with an incredible mind, committed the entire book to memory and then used this information to write a commentary to his *guru's* book Nyāyāmṛta. This commentary,

entitled Taranginī, was a resounding rebuttal to Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's Advaita-Siddhi. It was a scathing riposte, which ripped Madhusūdana's impersonalist arguments to shreds.

The crest jewel of scholars from amongst all *sampradāyas*, Śrīla Jīvā Gosvāmī, was a contemporary of these two *panditas*. There are some who say that Śrīla Jīvā Gosvāmī studied Vedānta from Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. There is no concrete evidence to substantiate this notion, but there is no doubt that the two personalities had met. During his stay in Vārāṇasī, Śrīla Jīvā often discussed the principles of the science of *bhakti* with Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Over this period of time, it was seen that this high, spiritual association had a transforming effect on Madhusūdana and he became strongly attracted to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Since he was already very advanced in knowledge, he could grasp the sublime, esoteric, and transcendental conclusions from Śrīla Jīvā, who had realised these understandings from Mahāprabhu Himself. It is documented that he became inundated with love for Śrī Caitanya and the process of *bhakti*, as is evident in his later life when he authored the beautiful treatise named 'Bhakti Rasayana'. The first verse of this book gives clear indication of the deep transformation in his mood:

*nava-rasa-militam vā kevalam va pumartham
param iha mukunde bhakti-yogam 'vadanti
nirupama-sukha-samvid-rūpam asprṣta duḥkham
tam aham akhila-tuṣṭyai śāstrā-dṛṣṭyā vyanajmi*

I am about to describe, after scrutinising the scriptures, the highest good and supreme benediction, which results in complete satisfaction for the *jīvās*. This goal lies in engaging in pure devotional service, devoid of any anxiety or distress, to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Mukunda Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of incomparable bliss and complete transcendental knowledge. This *bhakti-yoga*, – the transcendental process of pure devotional service- is suffused with the nine spiritual humours (tastes) and is the singular goal of all human aspiration – this truth has been promulgated by the greatest of sages.

In the above verse the word *vadanti* is in the plural and implies that several personalities who have preached the highest truth in the world, especially Śrīla Jīvā Gosvāmī, are in the exalted position of his *guru*. We see that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī does not write that *kevala-jñāna* or empirical knowledge of non-dualism is the *purusartha* (supreme goal of human life). Rather he explicitly writes that *kevala-bhakti* – pure devotion

exclusive to Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the highest Vedic goal. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, once a stalwart preceptor of monists and Māyāvādīs became an empowered upholder of the *bhakti* cult.

Māyāvādisim in Jaipur

After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the future prospect of Māyāvādisim continued to look bleak. For about 200 years Māyāvādīs had no stalwarts who could lead them out of this period of depression. Around the beginning of the 18th century AD Māyāvādisim attempted to make its presence felt again. A group of monists in the garb of Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī *sampradāya* tried to disrupt the worship of the famous deities of Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī in Jaipur, which were under the direct patronage of the King of Jaipur. They began creating disruption in the community by challenging the procedures and rituals of the daily worship, which had been introduced by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. The king was helpless and observed that these vociferous Māyāvādīs were about to spark off a raging controversy. Seeing this volatile situation, King Jai Singh requested help from the then preceptor and leader of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura who resided in Vṛndāvana. Due to his advanced age and a strong desire not to leave Vṛndāvana, he decided to send his foremost disciple and scholar par excellence Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa as his representative. He was sent to rectify the situation by upholding the honour of the Gauḍīya tradition, which maintained the sanctity of the worship of the Govindajī deity. This deity had originally been installed by Rūpa Gosvāmī himself in Vṛndāvana, but due to the constant fear of Muslim desecration, had been brought to the royal city of Jaipur for protection. Śrīla Baladeva humbly arrived at the assembly of the Śrī *sampradāya*, bare-footed and carrying a water-pot and an old quilt. Standing before them, he boldly declared that the founder of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* was Śrī Caitanya Himself, and that Śrīla Vyāsadeva wrote the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as the natural commentary to his Vedānta-sūtra. Referencing this, he said all explanations were given to reveal the appropriate hierarchy in the spiritual family, and that this formed the system of worship for the deity of Govindajī. The *paṇḍitas* being short sighted and wishing to protect their position maintained that Śrīla Baladeva could make no argument unless and until there was a legitimate commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra by the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. It seems that these proud scholars underestimated the humble *sādhu* who stood before them. Later that night Lord Govindajī personally appeared to Śrīla Baladeva in a dream and directed him to write the Gauḍīya commentary to Vedānta-sūtra. Within a short time he created the famous

work and titled it Govinda Bhasya indicating that the commentary was actually that of Lord Govindajī Himself. On presenting the work the Māyāvādīs were all dumbfounded and at a complete loss being unable to detect any defects in the text. They surrendered to him and wrote a letter of victory, which Śrīla Baladeva offered at the feet of his *guru* in Vṛndāvana. The news of the victory spread far and wide, as this timely divine intervention helped stem any dissension regarding the celebrated worship of Śrī Rādhā Govindajī who is still worshipped in this present day by both the royal family and the people of Jaipur.

The Ghosts of Māyāvāḍism

The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the presence of Māyāvāḍism in a declined state. It survived like a haunted institution - abandoned and in ruins. At times a notable Māyāvādī, like a restless spirit, would appear to try and salvage some of its past glory, but exactly at these times a stalwart Vaiṣṇava, almost acting in the capacity of an exorcist, would thwart any attempts of a Māyāvādī 'come back'. Especially worth mentioning among these Vaiṣṇavas is Śrī Rāma Śāstri of the Rāmānuja *sampradāya* who defeated in a theological debate Svāmī Saccidananda, the leader of Śāṅkarācārya's Śṛṅgeri monastery. Then there was the awesome *pandita* Ananta Ācārya, also from the Rāmānuja *sampradāya* who defeated the Māyāvāḍa scholars Rajesvari Śāstri and Viresvara Śāstri at the Māyāvāḍa stronghold of Vārāṇasī. Satyadhyana Tīrtha of the Madhvā *sampradāya* also defeated the then heads of Māyāvāḍism that were based in Vārāṇasī and authored two very famous books, Advaita-mata Vimarsa and Tri-pundra-dhikara. These books went a long way to undermine Māyāvāḍism by exposing intrinsic flaws in their theories.

It is also worth mentioning here that there were other erudite and wise sages, who were not affiliated to any of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*, but were nevertheless extremely critical of Māyāvāḍism in all its different forms. These sages were from diverse philosophical schools like Nyāyā, Mīmāṃsa, Sāṅkhya etc. They have deftly picked out philosophical discrepancies in Māyāvāḍism. Just to name but a few of these worthy personalities; Gaṅgesa Upadhyāya, Rakhaladasa Nyāyāratna, Nārāyaṇa Bhatta, Bhāskarācārya, Vijñānabhikṣu and so on.

Śrī Vyāsa Rāya's Nyāyāmṛta was a masterpiece in dismantling Māyāvāḍism. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's Advaita Siddhi was composed as a rebuttal to it. Then, in turn Rāma Tīrtha wrote Tarangini to checkmate Advaita Siddhi. In an attempt to then refute Tarangini, the Māyāvāḍa scholar Brahmānanda wrote his 'Brahmānandiya'. Taking up the theistic cause in response, Vānamala Miśra of the Madhva *sampradāya* authored

five treatises famous as the Panca Bhangi. These intriguing works are all well preserved in the Mysore State library. Not only do the five books confute Mâyāvādism, they also expose all the other unauthorised so-called 'Vedic' philosophies that are non-theistic. The conclusion of this work rightfully leaves only the four authorised Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* as the true upholders of Vedic knowledge, faith and *dharma*. It should be noted that all of these *sampradāyas* have historically remained untarnished by attacks from inauthentic deviant sects.

Māyāvādism in the Modern Age

In our modern times, Māyāvādism has spawned worldwide into many different shapes and hues. In this age of technology and with the spread of modern science and its related culture, communication between nations and cultures has been revolutionised. In the resultant machine driven society the emphasis on material vision becomes greater and greater, as the material incentive becomes the dominant perspective and goal, taking total control. From its epicenter in India Māyāvādism in all its different forms has been widely propagated in this era of global communication, and as anyone can plainly see has been well received.

A plethora of diverse philosophies are ubiquitously rampant especially in the materially advanced western societies where for all the technical advancement, spiritual understanding remains in a deplorable condition. Although these westernised philosophies often appear opposed to each other as well as ostensibly contradicting the precepts of Māyāvādism, in the end they are in one way or another a nourishing force for Māyāvādism. These ideas range from antagonistic 'left-hand path' mystical sects, to extreme fundamentalism, and on to subtle, camouflaged forms of atheism and nihilism. Unraveling the long journey of development that these deviant philosophies undertook, and their subsequent influence on western thought demands the focused attention and energy required of a detective. For instance among many stories and ideas, numerous Indian philosophers and sages have sufficient proof that Greek philosophers visited India when accompanying Alexander the Great in his quest for world conquest. They studied and trained here, learning the philosophy of non-dual monism or Māyāvādism, after which they returned to their respective countries to preach Māyāvādism. This fact is confirmed in the writing of some western researchers and scholars.

In the final analysis it can be safely concluded that in truth – any philosophy which has the propensity to dilute, divide, and confuse the rational, logical or factual understanding of the Supreme Lord's personal form, has at some juncture been influenced by the deceptive forces of Māyāvādism. An objective observation of the modern global society reveals that the symptoms of Kali-yuga are abundantly evident. It is a nefarious age of deception and trickery, feint and counter-feint, misinformation and disorganization. Opportunistic politicians controlled by zealous financial magnates covertly and craftily engineer public opinion by manipulation of the media in a relentless pursuit of ephemeral visions of illusory power rooted in the bodily concepts of 'I' and 'mine'. These personalities and

their respective ideologies are without doubt the true deputed agents of Māyāvādism.

We find that the other four prominent religions of the world have succeeded in divesting the Supreme of form, personality and personal attributes. The Buddhists, being atheistic, follow the theory that only the timeless void of non-existent nothingness is the real 'existence'. This is illustrated throughout their teachings, as well as in their holy scripture *Prajñānpāramitā*, which we have examined earlier in this book. The Hebrew Torah states in the Book of Ezekiel, chapter one, verse 28, that the Lord had the appearance of a mass of clouds on a day of pouring rain (i.e. blackish blue). The Muslim Koran in the second *sura*, 138th *ayat* states that they take their colour from the Lord. The Prophet Mohammed, who dictated the Koran, was a Bedouin whose colour is known to be very dark. The name Allah merely means the Supreme. The Christian Bible in Revelations, chapter four, verse 3, gives some reference that, God seated upon a throne has the appearance like a jasper stone. Jesus Christ, apart from stressing the path of devotion also taught that the name of God should be worshipped, '*hallowed be thy Name*'. However, despite certain references to form and quality in the writings of these world religions, it appears that any detailed mention of the identity and intimate attributes of the Supreme Lord are conspicuously absent in their latter-day teachings.

In India, there are two principal offspring of Māyāvādism. The first is the system of *Pañcopāsanā*, which is the idea that Śiva, Kali, Ganesh, Durga, Viṣṇu etc, can all be worshipped on the same level, in a philosophy of 'All paths lead to God'. Although this seemingly innocent concept makes a show of theism, it leads to the ultimate conclusion that there is no existing difference in the relationships within that eternal family, and so they reject the concept of one Supreme God.

The second wave of Māyāvādism is seen in the idea of *samanvayavāda*, (religious egalitarianism). The progenitor of this form of religion was the Mughal emperor Akbar. He was a crafty politician who for the sake of his own political gain propagated his own concocted 'egalitarian' philosophy that he called the '*Dine-ilahi*' religion. In the modern age many social and philosophical leaders hoping for even small mundane rewards and advantages have become infatuated with egalitarian theories, which on closer inspection are yet more takes on impersonalism.

Vaiṣṇavism has also had to endure the ravages of Kali-yuga in the form of aberrations in its precepts and practices, which have made gradual creeping advances especially in Bengal. This is seen in the groups of

unauthorised cults who deceptively preach their own brands of concocted philosophies. Groups like Avla, Baula, Kartabhaja, Neda, Darvesa, Sahajiya, Sakhibheki, Smarta, Jati-gosain, Ativādi, Cudadhari, Gauranga-nagari etc. All of these groups follow a form of Māyāvāḍism that on the surface does not give an impression of impersonalism. However, all of these groups deny the eternal, divine form of the Supreme Lord by disavowing from the sections and passages of authorised scriptures that verify His reality as evidenced in His name, fame, incarnations and pastimes.

Those who appeared after the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu such as Rāmānanda, Kabir, Nanaka, and Dadu, were all synthesists who in the name of egalitarian religion actually promoted Māyāvāḍism. Even Svāmī Vivekānanda followed this synthesis approach by choosing to eschew the true, pure meaning of Vedānta, in preference to a diluted version mixed with ephemeral concepts of universal brotherhood for all. These concepts are presented without regard for any understanding of the qualitative diversity of the Lord's energies that are described in detail in the Vedic texts, which leads to a covert assimilation of the Māyāvāḍi consensus that 'all is one'.

Contemporary times are fortunate to have witnessed the intrepid manner of two gigantic spiritual stalwarts: Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura and after him the universal preceptor Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Both of these preceptors have exposed the many faces of Māyāvāḍism with the expressed purpose of opening the eyes of the sincere seekers of truth with the torch light of transcendental knowledge.

Their real goal was not merely to refute the concocted Māyāvāḍa theories that are deceptively based on Vedic conclusions but to reveal the true Vedic conclusions, specifically by publishing spiritual literature and by forcefully preaching that pure message as taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In this way they created a spiritual revolution in the hearts and minds of conditioned souls, giving them a platform of real knowledge with which to chase away religious misconceptions and frustrating ideologies that are based on trying to satisfy the senses. Their message reached the far corners of the Western Hemisphere to a world known as the citadel of uninhibited, unrestricted carnal pleasures. In this way they have fulfilled the Supreme Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's future prediction, as stated in the Śrī Caitanya Bhagavata by Śrīla Vṛndāvana das Ṭhākura:

*ṛithvīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra hoibe mora nāma*

My holy Name will be preached in every town and village of
the globe.

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Hare Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa

Hare Hare

Hare Rāma

Hare Rāma

Rāma Rāma

Hare Hare

Concluding Words

Section A

Śaṅkarācārya

I will try and keep the conclusion as brief as possible as I do not want to test my reader's patience. At the end of every chapter I have offered my humble opinions. Here I will compile them and give a summary. After reading this book, which is but a short essay, the following are the salient points that constitute its backbone. Not a single adherent of pure Vaiṣṇavism had to concede defeat in spiritual dialectics to a Māyāvāda philosopher or any other philosopher, and thus subsequently be forced to forsake his own Vaiṣṇava persuasion in exchange for his opponent's path of dry empiricism. On the other hand the best of the Māyāvāda philosophers and preceptors were vanquished in spiritual dialectics by Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. They could then realise the truth that Lord Viṣṇu is the supreme Absolute Truth, Personality of Godhead and that the realm of *bhakti-yoga* is far superior to the speculative path of monistic knowledge. They gladly relinquished Māyāvādism and embraced the Vaiṣṇava religion of devotional service.

In his quest for world conquest, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's most impressive triumph came when he defeated Mandana Miśra, who was a follower of Jaimini's philosophy that is based on ritualistic activities recommended in the *karma khaṇḍa* section of the Vedas. This and other instances of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's victories in the world of spiritual dialectics have been dealt with in an earlier chapter. After this victory, the only other noteworthy victory we hear about is mentioned in the biography of Ācārya Śrī Nṛsiṃha Āśram. Śaṅkarācārya defeated a Śaivite by the name of Ācārya Apyaya Dīkṣita and brought him into the empirical school of impersonalism. However, from Ācārya Apyaya's many writings it can be easily established that he was already drawn to Pañcopāsanā (worshipping the five principal deities on an equal level) before he encountered Śaṅkarācārya. So for him conceding defeat and changing over to the path of empiricism was not a major paradigm shift, but merely slight philosophical adjustment. Śaṅkarācārya always laid special stress on the Pañcopāsanā process. According to Bhāskarācārya however, Ācārya Dīkṣita was not a true Śaivite in the real sense. Whatever the case may be, if Ācārya Apyaya as a non-Vaiṣṇava embraced another path of empirical knowledge then its effect is inconsequential to the cause of Vaiṣṇavism, while its enhancement to the reputation or pre-eminence of Māyāvādism is nill.

In Śaṅkarācārya's Śariraka-bhāṣya, it is interesting to note that he quoted verses from Bhagavad-gītā while commenting on the Vedānta-sūtra verse 1/2/5 beginning *śabda viś sāt*. Noting this very unusual inconsistency by Śaṅkarācārya way back in the 1200's AD, Madhavācārya the founder of the Brahma Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* wrote in his illustrious treatise Sri Tattva-muktāvalī verse 59 as follows:

*smṛteś ca hetor api bhinna ātmā
naisargikaḥ sihyati bheda eva
na cet katham sevaka-sevya-bhāvaḥ
kaṅthoktir eṣā khalu bhāṣyakartuh*

In his commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, Śaṅkarācārya also quoted verses from the Vedic scriptures that demonstrated the nature and the difference between the Supreme Lord and the individual soul. Indeed, if Śaṅkarācārya did not accept this conception, then how could he utter this statement?

The verse that Śaṅkarācārya quoted was from Bhagavad-gītā, chapter 18, śloka 61:

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām hṛd-deśe' rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayam sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

The Supreme Lord is situated in the hearts of every living entity O' Arjuna, and is directing the movements of all living beings who wander in the cycle of birth and death, by His *māyā*, as if they are mounted upon a machine.

It is ironic that Śaṅkarācārya should quote a verse that recognises the supra-mundane majesty of the Supreme Lord, and which specifies in no uncertain terms the clear and precise distinction between God and the living entities. As such the verse completely contradicts his own Māyāvāda hypothesis that the living entities and the Supreme Lord are one.

What is even more surprising is that Śaṅkarācārya also quotes from the Gītā, chapter 18, verse 62:

*tam eva śaraṇam gaccha / sarva-bhāvena bharātā
tat prasādāt parām śāntim / sthānam prāpsyasi śāśvatam*

O' descendent of Bharata, exclusively surrender to that Īśvara in every respect. By His grace, you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme abode.

Both the above verses indicate that, contrary to what Śaṅkarācārya may have propounded in his Māyāvāda hypothesis, he was clearly aware that the Supreme Lord and the living entities existed in distinct relationships, and that the path to salvation was complete surrender to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Further evidence of this can be found in his most revealing and extraordinary departure from the world, in a well-documented verse that Śaṅkarācārya spoke to his disciples prior to his infamous submergence into the boiling cauldron of oil.

*bhaja govindam bhaja govindam bhaja govindam mūḍha-mate /
samprāpte sannihite kāle nahi rakṣati dukṛn-karaṇe*

You fools! All your word jugglery will not protect you when the time of death arrives; so just worship Govinda! Worship Govinda! Worship Govinda!

Govinda is one of the confidential names of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. It was first revealed in the ancient poem called Brahmā Saṁhita, the hymn of Lord Brahmā, which was sung at the very beginning of the creation of the material universe. One of the main verses repeated throughout the Brahmā Saṁhita is ‘*govindam ādi puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*’, which translates as “I worship Govinda, who is the primeval Lord.” After being lost for many hundreds of years, this exceptionally beautiful poem was uncovered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, long after the departure of Śaṅkarācārya. For Śaṅkarācārya to use the confidential name of the Lord in this verse factually reveals his true position as an incarnation of Lord Śiva, ‘the auspicious one’, who is eternally the greatest servitor of the Lord. From examples like these it is clear that although Śaṅkarācārya was executing his service by preaching the Mayavada hypothesis, he himself was factually well aware of the actual truth.

Though I realise the necessity of presenting here the numerous Vaiṣṇava arguments and reasons that have convincingly routed the theories of Māyāvādism, I must defer due to the limited length of the essay. At the same time I request the venerable readers to refer to the following books for a clearer and more exhaustive explanation of these topics. ¹

- Ṣaṭ-sandarbha, Krama.sandarbha and Sarvasaṁvādinī, by Śrīla Jivā Gosvāmī
- Govinda Bhāṣya, Siddhānta Ratnam, Prameya Ratnāvalī, Viṣṇusahasranāma Bhāṣya, and Upaniṣadā Bhāṣya, by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa.
- Also Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda’s, Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Anubhāṣya, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Gauḍīya Bhāṣya.

Section B

The concept of 'Nirvāṇa'

What emerges as a consequence of discussing the biography of Māyāvāḍism is that all historical facts and the entire range of its' corner stone principles can be refuted merely on the basis of 'Aitihya-pramāna' (evidence based on time-honoured precepts). Māyāvāḍism stands on very weak logic, faulty arguments and faulty evidence. Hence, in open debates or direct dialectical exchanges it has always known defeat. If in spite of hearing the facts about Māyāvāḍism one still desires to pursue a path to attain *nirvāṇa*, then our advice is to not forget that *nirvāṇa*, as enunciated by the Māyāvāḍis, is a falsity and a figment of the imagination that hazardously misleads and deceives the innocent. This statement is easily substantiated by simple, traditional knowledge and without recourse to further support from other readily available evidences. *Nirvāṇa*, the concept of a liberation attained by merging into a void, is for the living entity a factually non-existent condition of being or awareness that can never be attained.

There is not a single instance or example of any monist or impersonalist attaining the state of *nirvāṇa*. Of this we are certain, because if we scour the biographies of Goudapāda, Govindapāda, Śāṅkarācārya or Mādhava, we would be forced to conclude that none of them attained the state of *nirvāṇa*, liberation. It is a well known fact that Śāṅkarācārya's spiritual master Goudapāda appeared to Śāṅkara when he was in deep meditation one day and said: "I have heard many praises about you from your *guru* Govindapāda. Show me the commentary you have written to my composition Maṇḍukya Kārikā." Śāṅkarācārya handed him his commentary and Goudapāda was extremely pleased and approved it. From this story it thus appears that neither Goudapāda nor Govindapāda had merged into void to be silenced forever. If both had attained *nirvāṇa*, liberation, it would have been impossible for Govindapāda to speak to Goudapāda. Furthermore, it would have been impossible for Goudapāda to later appear before Śāṅkarācārya and describe his meeting with Govindapāda – all of which took place after the physical demise of both. The followers of Śāṅkarācārya will give no occasion to doubt the veracity of this mystical event having taken place, and therefore the only intelligent conclusion one may draw from it is that neither had forsaken their individual identity and existence after their demise – *nirvāṇa* is simply a myth.

Another story that all Māyāvādīs swear upon as an authentic component of their tradition, is their belief that Śaṅkarācārya reincarnated as Vidyāranya. They furnish many hypotheses to prove their point. The question then is, did Śrī Śaṅkarācārya really merge into void or attain *nirvāṇa* liberation? The concept of reincarnating or appearing as an apparition or in any other form after attaining impersonal liberation contradicts the *nirvāṇa* thesis. Therefore, the conclusion is that *nirvāṇa* is a flawed philosophy, a myth concocted to confuse the innocent and allure them into swelling the number of their followers. What to speak of the common man, even those who are considered to be the innovators of this theory and its principal promulgators could not attain *nirvāṇa*.

The Eternal Effulgence

Regarding conclusive evidence concerning Kṛṣṇa's aspect of *brahman*, we quote from Brahmā-Saṁhita, chapter five, verse 40:

*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi
koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnam
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

I worship Govinda, the original primeval Lord, who is endowed with great power. His glowing effulgence is the non-dualistic *brahman*, which is absolute, fully complete and unlimited, and which manifests innumerable planetary systems with variegated opulence in millions and millions of universes.

In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, chapter two, verse 15, we find further description:

*koṭi koṭi brahmāṇḍe ye brahmera vibhūti
sei brahma govindera haya aṅga-kānti*

The opulence of *brahman* is spread throughout tens and tens of millions of universes. That *brahman* is but the bodily effulgence of Govinda.

It can be understood from this that factually, there is no question of any impersonal aspect of the Lord, there is only the personal aspect – but to comprehend this one must have the proper understanding as authentically presented in the Vedas, and the intelligence to apply the understanding. The Sun provides a good example. In a secluded, shaded place we can look out and see sunlight, and although we may not see the

sun disk itself, a correct understanding tells us it is there – that the sunlight has no independent existence from the sun disk. In the same way, one who has correct knowledge can understand that what appears to be the impersonal *brahman* is in fact the shining, transcendental effulgence of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is also known as Govinda.

We need not engage in fruitless speculation to understand how the impersonal *brahman* is the transcendental effulgence of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa's, rather there are practical examples to look to here on Earth. For instance, modern science estimates the Sun's distance to be 93 million miles from Earth, and although to us it looks no bigger than a small ball in the sky, it is able to illuminate the earth and cause countless varieties of living things to exist and grow. It's light travels at a speed of 186,000 miles per second and it is so powerful that its rays make it hot enough at some places to boil water. If the sun is able to manifest this 'opulence' as a part of ordinary nature, then certainly it is not difficult to contemplate how the Supreme personality of Godhead is able to manifest an infinitely greater opulence that is even more phenomenal and wonderful.

In the book *Lanka Avatār* that we quoted at the beginning of this humble treatise, it is mentioned that Rāvaṇa would journey to Mount Kailāṣa to discuss impersonalism with Lord Buddha. In another portion of that book, Lord Buddha gives pertinent information about *nirvāṇa* that we think our readers will find quite compelling. There He states that *nirvāṇa* is the manifestation of noble wisdom that expresses itself as a perfect love for the enlightenment of all. Now, what Śaṅkarācārya's Māyāvāda hypothesis postulates is that *nirvāṇa* is a state of merging into the formless, non-distinct, attribute-less *brahman* for the final emancipation of uninterrupted bliss. In this we have a diametrical dichotomy regarding *nirvāṇa*. Viṣṇu Avatār Buddha's *nirvāṇa* reveals a very profound and compassionate level of consciousness that naturally expresses itself for the benefit of all living entities. Śaṅkarācārya's *nirvāṇa* however, expounds (like Gautama Buddha) an extinction of individuality, a state of being where one's mind, senses and consciousness dissolve into some abstract emancipation. From this we are able to recognise Śaṅkarācārya's cloaked deception, veiling his hypothesis with a diaphanous form of Vedānta, he preached this Buddhist-atheism throughout India without mercy.

Another astounding fact is that Śaṅkarācārya has borrowed from others to emphatically postulate the falsehood or illusory nature of the existence of this world by comparing it to a dream, thereby denying the authenticity and reality of a dream. But his followers have contradicted him. The strict adherents of the Māyāvāda theory who penned Śrī Śaṅkara's biography

write exactly the opposite, disproving the dream theory he postulated. When Śaṅkarācārya's mother was carrying him in her womb, she had decided to end her life to escape the shame of having conceived in the absence of a husband and of giving birth to a stigmatised child. Her father Mandana Miśra, was informed in a dream that his unborn grandson was an incarnation of Lord Siva and that he must stop his daughter from committing suicide at all costs. Thanks to the dream a child was born endowed with extraordinary qualities, proving the dream to be authentic. So, are we to accept the Māyāvādīs' theory that dreams are an illusion, yet another manifestation of non-reality? On one hand they would have everyone believe that Śaṅkarācārya as a baby in the womb survived because of his mother's belief in a dream. On the other hand, they would also have everyone believe that all dreams, including the dream-like existence of this universe, are unreal, false and a figment of the conditioned mind.

Section C

Analysing the Brahma-Sūtra verse 3/2/3

I would like to draw the attention of our readers to the original title of this book 'Vaiṣṇava Vijay'. The real title should be 'Vaiṣṇava Vijay – Triumph of Vaiṣṇavism', but by elaborating on 'The Biography of Māyāvāḍism' (now entitled 'Beyond Nirvana') and its' historical background, the universal Vedic truths encrypted in the Brahma-Sūtra verse 3/2/3, (cited on the first page of the book) are systematically described. My intention in this was to present in conformity with Vedic *siddhānta*, the truth that Śaṅkarācārya's view was not Brahmanvāda (*brahmanism*), but rather 'Māyāvāḍism'. Once the respected reader has patiently and thoroughly gone through this entire essay they will quite easily grasp that the true concept that *brahman* is not *śunya* (void). The omnipotent, energetic principal Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of all energies and the Supreme Controller of both the inferior illusory energy called *māyā*, and the superior spiritual energy. These are truths that have been unequivocally substantiated by all the scriptures.

While delineating on the Supreme Personality of Godheads' original identity and characteristics, the Supreme Absolute Truth is also described, as is found in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: 1/2/11:

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate.*

Great seers of the truth, who perceive the nature of the Absolute, describe that same non-dual truth in three ways, - as *brahman*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān*.”

After this verse, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam goes on to enumerate the names of incarnations like Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, and Vāraha, etc. who are the embodiments of the *brahman* principle, omnipotent personalities who are the sum total of all the three truths mentioned above. This Supreme energetic principle is summed up with the following verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1/3/28

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇastu bhagavān svayam

All of the above mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of plenary portions of the Supreme Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead, fountainhead of them all.

Besides this, in many places the scriptures describe the *brahman* principle as Parabrahma or Paramabrahma. Furthermore in many instances, Śaṅkarācārya's has erroneously changed the expression *ātmā* to *Paramātmā*. We must understand that *brahman* and *ātmā* are different to Parama, the Supreme. Both Parama-*brahman* and Param-*ātmā* are irrefutably proven to refer to *the* Parama, the Supreme Absolute Principle. Yet, another powerful fact is that nowhere is there an example of the word Parama being used as a prefix to the word Bhāgavata, thus a term such as Parama-Bhagavān does not exist. This is a sure proof that the Bhāgavata principle is in truth the highest supreme principle or truth and not the *brahman* principle – *brahman* is not Parama². In the Vedānta-sūtra, Vedavyāsa's initial question about the nature and personality of *brahman* is answered by the first aphorism *athāto brahma jijñāsā* – which declares Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be *brahman*, and indeed, not Śaṅkarācārya's concept of an impersonal, impotent *brahman*.

Śaṅkarācārya postulates that – “*brahman* is impotent and without energy, hence how can he possess the potency to create, maintain and annihilate. However, when *brahman* comes under the sway of *māyā*, the illusory, material energy he becomes a *jīvā*, and as a *jīvā* he is executor of creation, maintenance and annihilation. It is the *māyā*-afflicted *Brahman* who alone carries out all action. In this condition *brahman* is no longer to be addressed as *brahman*, because he is now in the category of a *jīva*”

This is the Māyāvāda philosophers' main argument. It is for this reason that Śaṅkarācārya is a Māyāvādī. He is not a true, unalloyed Brahmvādī. We have quoted the Brahma-Sūtra verse beginning with 'māyāmatrantu' at the beginning of this book to illustrate the above viewpoints and to expose Śrī Śaṅkara's dubious and speculative arguments written in his Māyāvāda commentary to this verse.

Section D

Dream Does Not Mean Falsehood

Śaṅkarācārya claimed that both the process of creation, and creation itself, are false. According to him even God, the Supreme Being is false. In his attempt to preserve the concept of falsehood he obfuscated the real meaning of the word *māyā*, and so even the Māyāvāda definition he proffers of the word *māyā* is intrinsically false. Wishing to prove his theory that the creation is false he ended up equating *māyā* with a dream, as if both were founded on the same principle. In analysing the innate form and nature of a real substance he tried to prevaricate the truth and have everyone believe that it is false – *as the dream so also the creation*. It is true that dreams, as well as other activities and experiences of the conditioned *jīvā* deluded by *māyā*, are mostly false. Circumstances and objects etc. that the *jīvā* sees in his dreams while asleep are not in their full and real form and are not present in their true dimensions, thus they are all false.

The important point we want to make is that the Supreme Godhead is *present as a reality, eternally in the jīvā's original self, in his soul*. Since the Supreme Godhead inherently possesses the ability to create the universe, the *jīvā* (who is a tiny transcendental spark of the Supreme Lord's marginal energy) also naturally has the mystic power in his heart to create dreams. Consequently many dreams prove to be true. The prime reason for this being that the *jīvā* possesses the quality of *satyasāṅkalpatā* or the resoluteness to make a desire come true. An appropriate example is Śaṅkarācārya's maternal grandfather Maghamaṇḍana, who heard in a dream that his daughter was carrying Śaṅkarācārya in her womb. This dream proved to be absolutely true, disproving unequivocally Śaṅkarācārya's contention that 'dreams are false'. To asseverate that all dreams in general are false is illogical and unreasonable. Besides, what appears in a dream is never completely false. Generally, that which exists, that which we have some experience of and has left some tangible psychic impression, lodges itself in the *jīvā's* heart and appears in a dream. The crux of the matter is that the creation, etc. carried out under the influence

of the Supreme Controller's *māyā* potency, is not false as in Śaṅkarācārya's concept of dream, but is proven to be an experiential, verifiable reality.

Section E

Two forms of *Māyā*, and the definition of 'Chāyā' & 'Pratibimba'

According to the Vedas, the material creation as a product of the *māyā* potency is by definition illusory, for it is temporary and mutable. In spite of this, it is a shadow image of Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world that is situated beyond the influence of the deluding *māyā* potency.

The meaning of *dvibidha* is two-fold and indicates the distinct difference between the Supreme Lord and the living entities, as well as the distinct difference between the eternal spiritual worlds and the temporal material worlds. They are clearly not one, as *Māyāvādism* propounds. The meaning of *māyā* is illusion. Here too the word is indicative of two distinct forms of *māyā*: *Yogamāyā* and *mahāmāyā*. There is frequent use of the word *māyā* throughout the scriptures. It was not Śrīla Vyāsa's desire that both *yogamāyā* and *mahāmāyā* should be grouped together into the same category and regarded as one. In the Vedas and the Upaniṣadās, *mahāmāyā* is described as the shadow of *yogamāyā*, which is a transcendental spiritual energy in the eternal pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A shadow is a replica or image of a form produced by the play of light and is not a reflection. The shadow is inseparably connected to its object or form, whereas a projection always depends on its object. The most crucial distinguishing feature is that *yogamāyā*'s intrinsic form is projected on *mahāmāyā* as her image. This means that *yogamāyā* replicates her own form and superimposes it on *mahāmāyā*, thus bending her form but not her personality and characteristics. *Mahāmāyā* is bereft of the qualities and fruits *yogamāyā* possesses. This truth is encrypted in the words of Brahma-Sūtra – *māyāmatrantu*. To classify this point further we should bring in an analogy.

In the phrase *kārtsnyenābhivyakta svarūpatvāt*, the word *kārtsnyena* means 'in fullness' and the prefix *abhi* also means 'entirely'. In the shadow of a person we find the body's image, but in this shadow we cannot find any of the person's intrinsic qualities and characteristics, neither their physical features nor their personality. The white of the eyes, the beauty and charm of the face, the colour of the hair, the beauty spots or birthmarks, none can be observed in the shadow. Furthermore, if a person's shadow merges with another's shadow it will be impossible to separate them, even though the actual persons in front of the light retain

their individual, physical entity. Thus the shadow may give us a general idea of the actual object, but not its details and distinguishing features. A shadow does not reveal if its owner is a light-skinned or a dark-skinned person. In this way, the distinctions between *yogamāyā* and *mahāmāyā* function on similar principles and while there may be some existing similarities between the world of *mahāmāyā* and that of *yogamāyā*, they are eternally worlds apart. Observing the destructibility, mutability, coarseness, inferiority, and temporary nature of the creation, the universe we live in, it would be a gross inaccuracy to think that same characteristics and nature is to be found in the spiritual realm of Vaikuṅṭha.

Earlier we spoke of shadows merging into one another, making it impossible for one to separately identify the persons from their shadow or vice versa. Now, even if two young men stand next to each other with their individual shadows falling separately, it would be extremely difficult to identify each individual. Using the following example we would like to show the difference between *chāyā*, shadow and *pratibimba*, reflection. Śaṅkarācārya attempted to establish the falsity of this universe by taking for granted that the above two are one and the same. The moon does not cast its shadow on the water, but its reflection is seen on the surface of the water. If the water reflecting the moon is agitated, the moon's reflection also quivers. This does not mean however that the moon itself is quivering. This is the basic difference between shadow and reflection (*chāyā* and *pratibimba*). Another distinction is, when the person moves his right hand, the shadow does the same; but the reflection, since it faces the object or person, it seems to move the wrong hand – i.e. its (the reflected image's) left hand. Therefore Śaṅkarācārya's philosophical red herring was to equate shadow with reflection, thus further compounding the Māyāvāda hypothesis.

Section F

The Six Vedic Philosophical Schools: Four of Them are Atheistic

The Māyāvādīs are atheists, hence the atheist may think the Māyāvādīs belong in their *sampradāya*, school of thought, which would make Śaṅkarācārya the founder of Māyāvādisim also an atheist. Atheism at present is rampant in many forms and shapes and here we like to analyse the etymological aspect of the word 'atheism'. Man uses language primarily to communicate. The scholars of etymology, in order to understand the intrinsic meanings of words, have discovered different branches of study

and expression like grammar, poetry, philosophy etc. Regarding philosophy, there are various schools of thought in different parts of the world. In India there are six prominent schools of philosophy that have after a very long time arrived to the present day. These are mentioned with their main promulgator:

- Kanada's atomic theory of Vaiśeṣika
- Gautama Rīṣi's system of logic and rhetoric (Nyāya)
- Sage Kapila's school of Sāṅkhya
- Patañjali's Yoga system
- Jamini's Mīmāṃsa (which argues that if there is a God, he is not omnipotent)
- Śrīla Vyāsa's Uttara-mīmāṃsa, also known by several names like Brahma-Sūtra, Vedānta-darśana, Saririka-sūtra etc.

Of these six philosophical schools Nyāyā and Vaiśeṣika both subscribe to similar views, while Sāṅkhya and Yoga also have much in common philosophically. These four are known in India as atheistic schools. The other two schools, Purva-mīmāṃsa, and Uttara-mīmāṃsa, are considered theistic schools. Purva-mīmāṃsa poses many questions in the form of theses, which are then answered in the Brahma-Sūtra. Śrīla Vyāsa's philosophy, which is delineated in these answers, is known as Uttara-mīmāṃsa, or conclusive answers. The theistic philosophy can thus in its strictest sense, can be narrowed down to just this one school – Uttara-mīmāṃsa or Vedānta-darśana. The others cannot be called theistic schools of philosophy in the true sense of the word.

The reason why the first four schools of thought are termed atheistic should be discussed. They do not accept the authority of the Vedas, neither do they acknowledge the existence of God, the Supreme Being. These four schools are categorised as atheistic philosophical schools because to date they have never subscribed to the truth that there is a Supreme Controller, who is omnipotent, the energetic principal and who is the Supreme *brahman*. The general definition of the term 'atheism' or atheistic is the philosophy or person who does not accept the Supreme Being as the possessor of inconceivable potencies, as being omnipotent and as capable of making the impossible possible. They claim that the Vedic scriptures are mistaken by saying that God created the universe. The personal God or Supreme Controller is never mentioned in their philosophy, or written about anywhere in their books.

The Buddhists also do not accept the existence of a Supreme Personality, they do not respect the Vedas or their precepts and thus they are atheists who are placed in the category of Māyāvādīs. True religion must necessarily

be theistic. How can a religious philosophy claim to propagate theism without accepting God? Religion without God is a convenient theory for conditioned souls who have no understanding of human nature, the material world, the process of creation, and the ultimate purpose of their existence. Devout atheists are repulsed by the notion that they, like everything else in the cosmic creation, are under the control and jurisdiction of a Supreme Being. If they would only consider that eternal happiness can never be had by attempting to annihilate one's identity in void or *brahman*. If they would rather submit themselves at the lotus-feet of the source of all bliss and happiness, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, their lives would be transformed.

Section G

Māyāvādīs are Atheists

The non-dualist Buddhists and the monist Śāṅkarācārya followers are both Māyāvādīs and as such they are atheists. The derivative meaning of *nāstika*, atheist is *na + asti* is *nāsti*, meaning 'that which does not exist'. Those who deliberate on philosophy based on the premises that nothing exists are called *nāstikas*. All etymologists unanimously agree that the definition of an atheist is: one who sees everything as false (i.e. one who has not seen any true or real substance; one who constantly denies the existence of everything and has no information about the existence of any real substance).

The atheists in general postulate that God does not have a form, qualities, personality, power, potency and energy. The continuously deny the existence of anything. The philosophers of the Śāṅkarācārya school are the main corroborators of this view of God and of this deductive process of knowledge. Despite this offensive stance the followers of the Vedic religion (Sanātana-dharma) have not ostracised them as they have other atheistic groups who do not accept the authority of the Vedas, Upaniṣadās etc. Śāṅkarācārya's deception was soon exposed however, since neither the Vedas nor the Upaniṣadās concur either to atheistic views, or to philosophies promulgating that God is impersonal, impotent etc. The Vedic scriptures foretold that the quarrelsome, Iron Age of Kali would be permeated with atheism and the views of the *asuras* (demons). The demonic nature is envious of God because He is the transcendental autocrat and the 'sole-enjoyer', a position they can never assume. They resent the idea that human beings are only His part and parcel, who by their eternal constitution are meant to be enjoyed by the Supreme Enjoyer,

God. The atheists adamantly refuse to accept the transcendental philosophy that they, like all other beings, are infinitesimal parts of the Infinite Whole. They are not attracted to the idea that as soon as they forsake this envious mentality and acquiesce to their eternally subordinate position to the Supreme, they will connect with a state of pure joy never perceived before.

By their constant denial of the existence of a Supreme Enjoyer and their tireless struggle to destroy their individuality and existence by merging into void and *brahman* the only joy the Māyāvādīs can experience is the bliss of deep ignorance. This is an ignorance of the intrinsic nature of their eternal self, of the nature of the temporary world they live in and the nature of the creator of both.

Section H

The Dark dimensions of Māyāvādism

We ask our readers leave to close with a few last words. It is not an easy task to write a conclusive essay on Māyāvādism, especially given the limits of brevity that compete with the scope of the subject and the abundance of available reference. Despite the challenge, our goal and prime motivation has been to create a basic, inclusive and firm understanding of the subject, making it as comprehensive as the constraints of one book allow. To achieve this we are equipped with an array of authentic texts and scriptures that offer deep insight into all spiritual topics. For the present we would like to end by discussing a few verses from the sixteenth chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā. The Gītā has for countless generations been globally acclaimed as a book of profound spiritual wisdom. One of the many reasons it has attracted such praise and recognition is the epic Mahābharata, the fifth Veda composed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva and comprised of 100,000 verses, making it a unique and unparalleled masterpiece in the literary world. One chapter of this epic is the Bhagavad-gītā – an extraordinary treatise that encapsulates the voluminous teachings of the Vedas, Upaniṣadās, Purāṇas and other epics like the Mahābharata and Rāmāyana. The Bhagavad-gītā is the foundation upon which one is able to enter into the confidential and highly esoteric subject matter of the Śrīmad-Bhagavatam. The teachings of the Gītā are presented in a simple manner, where the depth of wisdom is not diluted, sketchy or encrypted. The elaboration of the highest truths are lucidly presented and easily comprehensible to the common man.

Today, in our society where corruption is growing at an alarming pace, cheaters dressed in the saffron garb of religious men, present a completely distorted meaning of Bhagavad-gītā. The Gītā for centuries has acted as a spiritual beacon, illuminating the path to self-realisation and God-realisation. It unequivocally delineates the highest wisdom and the Absolute Truth. However, these so-called religious teachers have altogether warped the real purport of the Gītā, misleading and exploiting the innocent masses to create atheists. These imposters want to strip the Absolute Truth of all His potencies and characteristics, and present Him as *brahman* that is impotent and formless. This is the religion of the *āsuras* preached in the name of Bhagavad-gītā. The Gītā strongly condemns such demoniac views; the Supreme Being Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna the following in Bhagavad-gītā 16/5:

*daivī sampad vimokṣāya nibandhāya āsuri matā
mā śucaḥ sampadam daivīm abhijāto'si pāṇḍava*

Transcendental qualities are conducive to liberation, while demoniac qualities are the cause of bondage. Do not lament or fear, O son of Pandu, you are born of the divine, transcendental qualities.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is telling Arjuna that the consequences of having demoniac qualities (*āsuri*) are extremely painful and full of suffering. The living entities are by nature pleasure seekers, searching after peace and happiness and here to help them in that search it is explained that demoniac qualities invite only sorrow and despondency. This verse therefore advises that to find peace and happiness one should avoid the cultivation of demonic qualities. Demons like Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna, Hiranyakṣa, Hiranyakaśipu, and Kamsa were all born into elevated *brāhmaṇa* families. To read their biographies will lead one to conclude that the demoniac nature, its habits and religious practices, creates a condition of extreme frustration that leads only to a miserable and untimely destruction. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's instructions in the Bhagavad-gītā are for the ultimate benefit of the entire human society, which is reeling under the malefic effects of the present Kali-yuga. For these instructions to be effective they must be properly propagated in their original form and meaning.

Thus it is said in Gītā-mahātmya:

*gītā sugītā karttvayā anyaiḥ sāstravistaraiḥ
yā svayam padmanābhasya mukha-padmād viniḥśṛtā*

The Bhagavad-gītā should be sung or chanted constantly. Hence what is the necessity of promulgating other scriptures? This is because the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Himself the speaker of the Gītā.

Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is giving these instructions we can all unhesitatingly receive and honour them. Lord Kṛṣṇa, is speaking the Gītā for the good of all living entities, and personally inviting us to come to Him and His eternal abode, which is our final destination. Our relationship with Him, in that eternal place is what will give peace and happiness to everyone. What can be more auspicious and fortunate than this? Knowing this it becomes our responsibility to embrace the teachings of Gītā and advance on the path of devotion to the Supreme Lord. In doing so we can reject the dry, joyless path of impersonal knowledge that gradually vitiates the heart with the poisons of pride and envy. Śrīla Vyāsadeva has given the same instruction in ‘Vedānta- Darśan’, confirming that the path of devotion is superior to all. Empirical deductive knowledge can never reward anyone with the highest liberation. The crest-jewel among scriptures Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam states: SB 10/2/32

*ye'nye' ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha
buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ patanty adho'nādrta-yuṣmad-
aṅghrayaḥ*

Lord Brahmā says: “O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who undergo severe austerities and penance to achieve perfection may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. Although they may rise to the level of impersonal *brahman* realisation, they fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they neglect to worship Your lotus-feet.”

In Bhagavad-gītā verse 16/6, the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa unequivocally states :

*dvau bhūta-sargau loke'smin daiva āsura eva ca
daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta āsuram pārtha me śṛṇu*

O son of Pṛthā, in this world there are two kinds of created beings. One is called the divine and the other demoniac. I have already explained to you at length the divine qualities. Now hear from Me of the demoniac.

A similar verse is found in the Padma Purāṇa:

*dvau bhūta svargau loke'smin āsura eva ca
viṣṇu bhaktaḥ smrto daivaḥ āsurastad-viparyyah*

The first line of this verse is the same as in the Bhagavad-gītā. The second line translated means:

The devotees of the supreme Lord Viṣṇu share the qualities of the *devas* (demigods) whereas the non-devotees are in the category of the demons.

This view is echoed in all the revealed scriptures. Rāvaṇa was extremely powerful and one of the most prominent demons the world has witnessed. He would personally worship Cāmuṇḍā Devī, (a form of the demigoddess Durga), in a temple located within the palace complex. Unfortunately, he never worshipped the Supreme Lord Śrī Rāma, who was manifest on earth at that time. Far from serving the Supreme Lord Rāma and His eternal energy Sītādevi, the demon king Rāvaṇa had the audacity to kidnap Queen Sītā setting a heinous example to the world.

The prime consideration for all monists and impersonalists, their pre-eminent concern above all others is that Paramabrahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead must always be described as impotent and formless. Their attempt to expropriate His divine attributes is perfectly symbolised by Ravaṇa's attempt to kidnap the Supreme Lord's eternal consort and *śakti*. In order to teach the world that Māyāvādīs are of a demoniac nature, the Supreme Godhead had to personally vanquish Rāvaṇa. Although Rāvaṇa was diligently worshipping Durga devi, she was powerless to protect him, nor did she desire to do so. After all, she would never betray her relationship as the loving servitor of her own Lord. Instead she assisted the Supreme Lord to bring about Rāvaṇa's end by rejecting his worship and sacrificing him without compunction, thereby illustrating the fate of souls who attempt to exploit worldly power in this manner.

Devout Māyāvādīs are atheistic *asuras* who are inimical to the Supreme Lord. Where the Padma Purāṇa clearly stated the demoniac qualities of atheistic Māyāvādīs, the Bhagavad-gītā is even more unequivocal in describing the demoniac nature of such monists. Bg 16/8

*asatyam apratiṣṭham te jagad āhur anīṣvaram
aparaspara-sambhūtam kim anyat kāma-haitukam*

They say that this world is unreal, that it has no foundation, and that there is no God in control. It is produced of sex desire, and has no cause other than lust.

The Māyāvādīs tactfully refrain from postulating just what masculine and female principles could be involved in producing something as awesome as the cosmic manifestation. To consider the world as false, abstract and dream-like is to them the essence of the Māyāvāda hypothesis. Therefore, from Śrīla Vyāsadeva's descriptions and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's declaration it may be established beyond doubt that Māyāvādīs are of a demoniac nature. Existentialists like Carvaka also did not believe in a God as the creator and maintainer of everything, nor did he believe in life after death. His views may be summed up in his own words:

*rṇam kṛtvā gṛtaṁ pibet yāvajjivet sukham jivet
bhasmī-bhūtasya dehasya punarāgamanam kutaḥ*

Even at the expense of going into debt or stealing, as long as one lives, he should live happily, eat, drink and be merry. After death when the body is consigned to the flames, how can the body rise again from its ashes?

The Māyāvādīs do not accept the authority of God. The one who creates, maintains and annihilates the entire material universe has been demoted to the level of an ordinary *jīvā*, bereft of energy and form. Thus we see that Śaṅkarācārya talks of *brahman* with different grades. For example 'ekam eva advītyam brahma' – One without duality 'brahman' is impersonal; but the existing 'creator-maintainer-annihilator' *brahman* becomes *māyā*'s captive and only creates, maintains and annihilates this universe due to nescience; while *brahman* is also categorised as *jīva*. Sometimes the monists mercifully award *brahman* the title of *Īśvara*, controller. When *brahman* is enthralled by *māyā* or covered by ignorance he receives the nomenclature *īśvara*. However, to apply the term *īśvara* to the *jīvā* is meaningless, for in their logic the tiniest fraction of *brahman*, which is covered by ignorance is known as *jīvā*, and is in reality non-existent. Here I cite a few verses from the Siddhānta-ratnamala –

*advaita vādinām brahma nirviśeṣam vikalpitam
brahma tu brahmasūtrasya sṛṣṭi-sthity ādi-kāraṇam
dṛṣṭvā evaṁ nirmītaṁ vākyam mukhyaṁ gaṇam iti dvayam
brahmaṇo lakṣaṇe bhedaḥ jñāninām śobhate katham
'janmādyasya yato' vākye brahma saśaktikaṁ bhavet
klīvena śaktihīnena sṛṣṭyādi sādhyate katham*

*śaktīnām parihāre tu pratyakṣādi prabādhate
śāstra-yuktyā vinā vastu nāstikenādṛtam hi tat*

These two excerpts describe how the monists' concept of *brahman* is *nirviśeṣam*- formless and impersonal. In consequence of this concept it would be impossible for a formless, non-qualitative *brahman* to carry out the energetic acts of creation, maintenance and destruction. For this reason they formulate a philosophy that *brahman* has a primary nature and a secondary one. The primary nature is the origin of the universe, while the subordinate, secondary nature is inherently unfathomable in nature. However, according to Śrīla Vyāsa's philosophy of 'Vedānta- darśana in the Brahma-Sūtra, the verse beginning with *janmādyasya yataḥ* affirms *brahman* as the cause of the creation. Surely, if *brahman* is the cause of the entire creation, then He cannot be impotent, non-qualitative and impersonal. Seeing the conclusions of the Vedas and Vedānta in this matter the Māyāvādīs have imposed the imaginary distinctions of *mukhya* (principal) and *gauṇa* (secondary) on *brahman*'s nature. How can intelligent *jñāni*'s (philosophers), accept such aberrations and biases? The word *advaita* implies the absence of duality and thus *ipso facto* the aberration that *brahman* has two categories (*mukhya* and *gauṇa*) is an illogical philosophy. If *brahman* is in reality both formless and without attributes, he is impotent – so how is someone who is impotent and without energy capable of any type of creation? By closely inspecting these ideas we can observe that the atheists and Māyāvādīs favour a concept that is not supported by the revealed scriptures. Pious souls however, with sincere natures and *daivika* (godly) qualities, cannot respect these concocted theories. Now compare the next verses, (also from Siddhānta-ratnamālā) with the previous ones, to derive a clearer understanding of how the demoniac and atheistic mind thinks:

*kecid āhuḥ prakṛtyā eva viśvā sṛṣṭir vyavasthitā
teṣām vai puruṣaḥ klīvaḥ kalatram hi tathā eva ca
patyabhāve kumārīṇām santatir yadi dṛśyate
teṣām mate praśamsārhā samāje sā vivarjitā*

The atheist Kapila Muni (of the Sāṅkhya School) claims that in the matter of the universal creation, God is redundant. Nature herself, as the mother is giving birth to the universe, which necessitates no role in this for Puruṣa or the masculine creative energy of God. But if one insists on bringing God into the picture, why describe Him as an impotent controller? How can He be a controller, but be impotent and unable to create? Taking the argument to an even more practical dimension, if we

observe the workings of 'Nature', how is it possible for a female (Nature) to give birth without having union with a male (Puruṣa)? Is it possible for plants to germinate without the energy of the Sun? These simple arguments reveal that their contention that *prakṛti* (material nature) is able to procreate without the help of God is illogical. This verse gives the example of an unmarried, husband-less girl giving birth to children. In the opinion of these Māyāvādī philosophers, it appears that they would present this unfortunate and destructive social occurrence as the absolute basis for the Universal creation. The impersonalist view that material nature is able to procreate without union with the energetic, Supreme Godhead is not only wholly implausible, but is unacceptable to the pious society that always take guidance from authorised Vedic scriptures.

The philosophers of Gautama and Kanada i.e. Nyāyā and Vaiśeṣika respectively are also atheistic. Neither will accept the authority of the Vedas, nor do they believe that there is a Creator of the Universe. The Siddhānta-ratnamala has described them in this manner:

*yadānumilane sṛṣṭiḥ jīva viśvādikam kila
 sḥitis teśam pramā-siddhā parivartana mūlakā
 dhvaṁsas tu kāla-cakreṇa paramāṇu-vibhājane
 svabhāvair ghaṭitam sarvam kim īśaśya prayojanam
 ghaṭa-paṭa-guṇa-jñāne jaḍa-dravya-vicārane
 tārkikānām mahā-mokṣam anyāyena katham bhavet
 'yādṛṣi bhāvanā yasya siddhir bhavati tādṛṣi'
 iti nyāyāt padārthatvaṁ prāpnoti nāstikaḥ sadā
 asat-kāraṇa-vāde hi svīkṛtā'bhāva samsthitih
 sattāhīnasya sattā tu yuktihīnā bhavet sadā
 kārya kāraṇayo rītyā jaḍānna cetanodbhavaḥ
 gītā-vākyam sadā mānyam 'nabhāvo vidyate sataḥ*

Meaning, that both the Nyāyā theoretician Gautama, and Kanada the philosopher of Vaiśeṣika, are of the opinion that the *jīva*, the universe etc. are all created by a fusion of atoms and molecules – and that there is no hand of God in this. This creation is mutable; it can be directly proved. That the creation is mutable can be directly proved. By the influence and progress of time the creation moves towards its own inevitable destruction. The main factor in this is atoms, which fuse together to create the universe, but cause its inevitable annihilation when split apart. Where then is the need for God in this matter? Much like the modern

technological scientists, the atomic structure of all animate things has been fundamentally determined by both of these philosophies. However, what they fail to consider, is the ultimate source of these atoms. Rather they choose to investigate further and further into the mechanics of the material energy while disregarding the elusive realm of consciousness and the life force of the soul. In the name of logic and rhetoric, illogical and irrational views cannot establish a dependable and authentic philosophy. The simple reason is ‘*yādṛṣī bhāvanā yasya siddhir-bhavati tādṛṣī*’ – this maxim states, that each soul attains the result or grade of perfection concomitant to his level (and quality) of consciousness in the form of his desires and the quality of his attitude. According to this maxim the atheists who believe in the atomic theory will ultimately attain a state of inertness of consciousness. When one meditates on something, he attains that goal. Lifeless matter as a meditation will simply lead one into different forms of inanimate consciousness, of which the material nature has much to offer in the form of rocks and stones. In all earnestness, for these philosophers and scientists, real liberation from the mundane is but a distant dream. It is truly irrational to postulate that inanimate things can create animated things. The Bhagavad-gītā has declared that consciousness or awareness cannot be produced from inert, dead matter: ‘*nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ*’ meaning the existence of void, as reality cannot be accepted.

(Footnotes)

¹ Many of these works have been given commentaries and supporting books in all the major international languages. Much of this was achieved recently by the greatly renowned Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* – Śrīla A.C Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda.

² It would be redundant to say the ‘supreme-supreme’ by using the term Parama-Bhagavān’. The term Bhagavān is reserved for He who is the Supreme.

Epilogue

The Insanity of Māyāvāḍism

We have systematically established with logic, arguments and proof that the philosophy promulgated by Śrī Śāṅkarācārya is a covert form of Buddhism called Māyāvāḍism, that it is based on false scriptures and lastly, that it is an *asurika* view. It has been proven beyond doubt that his teachings are a form of monism. The compiler of the Vedas, Śrīla Vyāsadeva has lucidly written in the Padma Purāṇa and in the Bhagavad-gītā that Śāṅkarācārya's philosophy is covert Buddhism', a false, atheistic representation of the scriptural conclusions with the Padma Purāṇa verses unequivocally substantiating these points. In the Gītā, the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa condemns the atheistic teachings of Māyāvāḍis regarding the truth about creation, and so forth, calling persons with such views 'asuras'. In India the two terms atheist and *asura* (demon) are used as expletives – derogatory terms of address. In fact, these two terms should be acknowledged as extremely damning. We have not hesitated in applying them to denounce Māyāvāḍism. The reason is that a totally falsified religion is being propagated, or rather being foisted on innocent people in the name of Vedic spirituality. It is high time that human society is made aware of this stalking danger. We have eagerly presented, without holding back or camouflaging, the essential precepts of the authorised Vedic religion. This may be seen as our attempt at curbing the evil influences of the age of Kali. Our efforts will remain to try and salvage as many innocent souls who are drowning in the ocean of material existence, and who are constantly preyed upon by the sharks of false religion.

We have observed that mostly the educated classes of people like professors, teachers, academics, and *panditas* will lean towards monism and impersonalism. The principal reason for this is that modern education system transmits a doubt-based method of inquiry rather than a faith-based one. They must not keep themselves any further in the dark about the egregious effects of Māyāvāḍism and atheism on the present society and posterity. The precepts of monism are illogical, and lack support from any revealed scriptures. Hence, no one should feel at a loss, that he would become like rudderless drift-wood on the ocean of material existence if he were to renounce the pursuit of monism. Because monism, impersonalism, or Māyāvāḍism are one and the same and their ship is permanently moored in the mire of materialism, incapable of ferrying its passengers to the other side of immortality and liberation.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's commentary to Vedānta-Sūtra or Brahma-Sūtra is crowded with illogical, irrational and unsystematic developments of arguments and theories, all leading to conclusions that are not supported by Vedic truths. For example, one of the most important phrases which acts as a pillar holding up the entire edifice of his philosophy is taken from the Vedas and is grossly misinterpreted. In *ekam eva advitīyam*, the word *advitīyam* has been explained by him as meaning 'without duality', but this is incorrect. The correct meaning of the word is 'one without a second', or 'no one is His equal or superior'. Again the word '*ekam*' has been misinterpreted as meaning the numerical one (1), which in actuality means the great void. The Vaiṣṇava preceptors have meticulously substantiated every assertion they have made. People with limited knowledge and intelligence revert to a deductive process understanding, of *neti neti* – 'not this, not this', for acquiring knowledge. When one is unable to understand the profound and sober purports of the scriptures, he is forced to end his research by coaxing himself to accept the lesser, indirect, sometimes misinterpreted meanings. However, to reject the direct meaning for the indirect, subordinate meaning of words is tantamount to atheism. Thus Śaṅkarācārya grabbed hold of the indirect, subordinate meanings of the Vedic maxims to establish his philosophy of *Brāhmaṇism*, which dispossesses *brahman* of His energies and attributes whereas, in truth *brahman* is the 'Complete Whole', endowed with transcendental attributes, energies and beautiful form. According to Vedānta-sūtra or Brahma-Sūtra 1/1/2 *brahmān* is '*janmādy asya yataḥ*' – the creator, maintainer and annihilator. The same truth has been reiterated in the Upaniṣadās. Śrī Rāmānujācārya comments on the Brahma-Sūtra 1/1/1 – '*sarvatra-brhattva-guṇa-yogena...mukhyavṛttaḥ*' – the direct and principal meaning is that *brahman* is everywhere, and in all circumstances in full possession of His transcendental attributes of unsurpassable and unlimited opulence. All revealed scriptures and the Vaiṣṇava preceptors accept only one concept of *brahman* – He is the Supreme Controller, unequalled and supreme. Śaṅkarācārya's concept of *brahman* is his own concoction.

vedānta-vedyaṁ puruṣaṁ purāṇaṁ
śrī caitanyātmāṁ viśvayoniṁ mahāntam
tam eva viditvā'timṛtyum eti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya

Knowing only Him who is known through the Vedas and the Upaniṣadas, that ancient personality, the omniscient self, the supreme living consciousness, the cause of this creation, the infinite, - knowing Him one attains immortality. There is no other path to the deathless state of transcendence.

Real knowledge and true education comes naturally to those engaged in discussing the philosophy and commentaries of Vedanta, the Vedas, the Upaniṣadas etc. delineated by the Vaiṣṇava preceptors. If we sincerely desire to introduce a complete education in our land then it is imperative to propagate and include in the university syllabus the commentaries of Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, Śrī Nimbarkācārya and especially Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's 'Govinda-Bhāṣya' commentary.

Appendix One

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam predicts birth of Lord Buddha

(Translation and purport taken from the English translation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by Ācārya A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda)¹

First Canto, chapter 3, text 24:

*tataḥ kalau sampravṛtte
sammohāya sura-dviṣām
buddho nāmnāñjana-sutaḥ
kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati*

Then, in the beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Añjanā, in the province of Gayā, just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful theists.

Purport

Lord Buddha, a powerful incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, appeared in the province of Gaya (Bihar) as the son of Añjanā, and He preached the conception of non-violence and deprecated even the animal sacrifices sanctioned in the Vedas. At the time when Lord Buddha appeared, the people in general were atheistic and preferred animal flesh to anything else. On the plea of ‘Vedic sacrifice’, every place was practically turned into a slaughterhouse, and animal killing was engaged in unrestrictedly. Lord Buddha preached non-violence, taking pity on the poor animals. He preached that He did not believe in the tenets of the Vedas and stressed the adverse psychological effects incurred by animal killing. Less intelligent men in the age of Kali, who have no faith in God, followed His principle, and for the time being they were trained in moral discipline and non-violence, the preliminary steps for proceeding further on the path of God realisation. He deluded the atheists because such atheists who followed His principles did not believe in God, but they kept their absolute faith in Lord Buddha, who himself was the incarnation of God. Thus the faithless people were made to believe in God in the form of Lord Buddha. That was the mercy of Lord Buddha: he made the faithless faithful to him.

Killing of animals before the advent of Lord Buddha was the most prominent feature of the society. People claimed that these were Vedic sacrifices. When the Vedas are not accepted through the authoritative disciplic succession, the casual readers of the Vedas are misled by the flowery language of that system of knowledge. In the Bhagavad-gītā a comment has been made on such foolish scholars (*avipaścitaḥ*). The foolish scholars of Vedic literature who do not care to receive the transcendental message through the realised sources of disciplic succession are sure to be bewildered. To them, the ritualistic ceremonies are considered to be all in all. They have no depth of knowledge. According to the Bhagavad-gītā (15.15), *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: the whole system of the Vedas is to lead one gradually to the path of the Supreme Lord. The whole theme of the Vedic literature is to know the Supreme Lord, the individual soul, the cosmic situation and the relation between all these items. When the relation is known, the relative function begins, and as a result of such a function, the ultimate goal of life or going back to Godhead takes place in the easiest manner. Unfortunately, unauthorised scholars of the Vedas become captivated by the purificatory ceremonies only, and natural progress is thereby checked.

To such bewildered persons of atheistic propensity, Lord Buddha is the emblem of theism. He therefore first of all wanted to check the habit of animal killing. The animal-killers are dangerous elements on the path of going back to Godhead. There are two types of animal-killers. The soul is sometimes called the 'animal' or the living being. Therefore, both the slaughterhouses of animals and those who have lost their identity of soul are animal killers.

Mahārāja Parīṣit said that only the animal killer is unable to relish the transcendental message of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, if people are to be educated on the path of Godhead, they must be taught first and foremost to *stop the process of animal killing* as above mentioned. *It is nonsensical to say that animal killing has nothing to do with spiritual realization.* By this dangerous theory many so-called *sannyāsīs* have sprung up by the grace of Kali-yuga who preach animal slaughter under the garb of the Vedas. The subject matter has already been discussed in the conversation between Śrī Caitanya and Maulana Chand Kazi Shaheb. The animal sacrifices as stated in the Vedas are different from the unrestricted animal killing in the slaughterhouse. Because the *asuras* or the so-called scholars of Vedic literatures put forward the evidence of animal killing in the Vedas, Lord Buddha superficially denied the authority of the Vedas. This rejection of the Vedas by Lord Buddha was adopted to save the people from the vice of animal-killing as well as to save the poor animals from the slaughtering

process by their 'big brothers' who clamour for universal brotherhood, peace, justice and equity. There is no justice when there is animal killing. Lord Buddha wanted to stop it completely and therefore His cult of *ahimsā* (non-violence) was propagated not only in India but also outside the country.

Technically Lord Buddha's philosophy is called atheistic because there is no acceptance of the Supreme Lord and because that system of philosophy denied the authority of the Vedas. But that is an act of camouflage by the Lord. Lord Buddha is the incarnation of Godhead. As such, He is the original propounder of Vedic knowledge. He therefore cannot reject Vedic philosophy. Nevertheless, He outwardly rejected the Vedas because the *sura-dviṣa* or demons, being by nature always envious of the devotees of Godhead, try to support cow-killing or animal killing by quoting from the pages of the Vedas. This is now being done by modernised *sannyāsīs*. Lord Buddha had to reject the authority of the Vedas altogether. This is simply technical, and had it not been so he would not have been so accepted as the incarnation of Godhead. Nor would he have been worshipped in the transcendental songs of the poet Jayadeva, who is a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*. Lord Buddha preached the preliminary principles of the Vedas in a manner suitable for the time being, as also did Śaṅkarācārya to establish the authority of the Vedas. Therefore both Lord Buddha and Śaṅkarācārya paved the path of theism, and Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, specifically Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, led the people on the path of realisation of going back to Godhead.

We are glad that people are taking an interest in the non-violent movement of Lord Buddha. But will they take the matter very seriously and close the animal slaughterhouses altogether? *If not, there is no meaning to the ahimsā cult.*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam was composed just prior to the beginning of the age of Kali (about 5,000 years ago), and Lord Buddha appeared about 2,600 years ago. Therefore the in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Lord Buddha is foretold. Such is the authority of this clear scripture. There are many such prophecies, and they are being fulfilled one after another. They will indicate the positive standing of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is without trace of mistake, illusion, cheating and imperfection, which are the four flaws of all conditioned souls. The liberated souls are above these flaws; therefore they can see and foretell things, which are to take place on distant future dates.

(Footnotes)

¹ Courtesy of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

Glossary

A

Ācārya - spiritual preceptor. One who teaches by example.

Advaita-jñāna - knowledge of non-duality. Although in the true sense this refers to the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead who is devoid of all duality, the Māyāvāda conception of *advaita-jñāna* is that the ultimate substance, *brahman*, is devoid of form, qualities, personality, and variegatedness.

Advaita-vāda - the doctrine of non-dualism, monism – the doctrine that emphasises the absolute oneness of the living entities with God. This is often equated with the Māyāvāda theory that everything is ultimately one; that there is no distinction whatsoever between the Supreme Absolute and the individual living entities; that the Supreme is devoid of form, personality, qualities, and activities; and that perfection is to merge oneself into the all-pervading impersonal *brahman*. This doctrine was propagated by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya

Agnostic - A. n. “One who holds that the existence of anything beyond and behind material phenomena is unknown and (so far as can be judged) unknowable, and especially that a First Cause and an unseen world are subjects of which we know nothing.” (courtesy Oxford English Dictionary Unabridged)

Atheist - A. n.

1. “One who denies or disbelieves the existence of a God.”

2. “One who practically denies the existence of a God by disregard of moral obligation to Him; a godless man.” (courtesy Oxford English Dictionary Unabridged)

Avidyā - ignorance, spiritual ignorance, illusion. Ignorance is of four kinds: to mistake that which is impermanent to be permanent, that which is full of misery to be blissful, that which is impure to be pure, and that which is not the self to be the self. *Avidyā* is one of the five types of *kleśa*, or miseries, destroyed by *bhakti*.

B

Bhagavān - the Supreme Lord; the Personality of Godhead. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.5.72-74)– “The word *bhagavat* is used to describe the Supreme *brahman* who possesses all opulences, who is completely pure, and who is the cause of all causes. In the word *bhagavat*, the syllable *bha* has two meanings: one who maintains all living entities and one who is the support of all living entities. Similarly, the syllable *ga* has two meanings: the creator, and one who causes all living entities to obtain the results of *karma* and *jñāna*. Complete opulence, religiosity, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation are known as *bhaga*, or fortune.” (The suffix *vat* means possessing. Thus one who possesses these six fortunes is known as Bhagavān.)

Bhakti - the word *bhakti* comes from the root *bhaj*, which means to serve. Therefore the primary meaning of the word *bhakti* is to render service. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has described the intrinsic characteristics of *bhakti* in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11) as follows: *anyābhilāṣita-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-sīlanam bhaktir uttamā* – “*Uttamā-bhakti*, pure devotional service, is the cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the benefit of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in other words, the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed through all endeavours of body, mind, and speech, and through expression of various spiritual sentiments (*bhāvas*). It is not covered by *jñāna* (knowledge of *nirviśeṣa-brahman*, aimed at impersonal liberation) and *karma* (reward-seeking activity), *yoga* or austerities; and it is completely free from all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Brahmacārī - the first *āśrama* or stage of life in the *varṇāśrama* system; unmarried student life.

Brahma-jñāna - knowledge of impersonal *brahman*; knowledge aiming at impersonal liberation.

Brahman - the spiritual effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of the Lord; the all-pervading, indistinct feature of the Absolute. Depending on the context, this may sometimes refer to the Supreme *brahman*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of *brahman*.

Brāhmaṇā - the highest of the four *varṇas* or castes in the *varṇāśrama* system; a priest or teacher.

Brāhmaṇī - a female *brāhmaṇā*; the wife of a *brāhmaṇā*.

Brahmavāda - the doctrine of indistinct *nirviśeṣa-brahman* which has as its goal the merging of the self into Kṛṣṇa’s effulgence.

Brahmavādī - one who follows the doctrine of *brahma-vāda*.

C

Chaya- shadow.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu - Śrī Kṛṣṇa appearing in the mood of a *bhakta*. Also referred to as Śrī Caitanya, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Gaura, Gauracandra, Gaura-Hari, Gaura-kiśora, Gaurāṅga, Gaurasundara, Gaura, Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya, Nimāi Paṇḍita, Śacīnandana, and Viśvambhara; the Supreme Lord who appeared approximately five hundred years ago (1486 A.D.) in Navadvīpa, West Bengal. Although He is identical to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He appeared with the *bhāva* (internal mood) and *kānti* (bodily complexion) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in order to taste the mellows of Her love for Kṛṣṇa. Assuming the mood of a devotee, He spread love for Kṛṣṇa through the chanting of *śrī-hari-nāma*; *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*.

Kāla - spiritual time which exists eternally in the present without any intervention of past or future.

D

Darśana - seeing, meeting, visiting with, beholding. This word is used primarily in reference to beholding the Deity or advanced devotees. *Darśana* also means doctrine or philosophical system, as in *vedānta-darśana*.

Daśa-mūla - 'ten-roots'. In the *Āyur-veda*, the science of herbal medicine, there are ten roots which, when combined together produce a tonic which sustains life and counteracts disease. Similarly, there are ten ontological principles. When these are properly understood and realised, they destroy the disease of material existence and give life to the soul. The first of these principles is known as *pramāṇa*, the evidence which establishes the existence of the fundamental truths. The other nine principles are known as *prameya*, the truths which are to be established.

The *pramāṇa* refers to the Vedic literature and in particular to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *Bhāgavatam* is the essence of all the *Vedas*; it reveals the most intimate loving feature of the Lord, as well as the soul's potential to unite with the Lord and His eternal associates in their play of divine loving exchange.

Of the nine *prameyas*, the first seven relate to *sambandha-jñāna*, knowledge of the inter-relationship between Śrī Bhagavān, His energies, and the living beings, both conditioned and liberated. The eighth *prameya* relates to *abhidheya-jñāna*, knowledge of the means by which the living entity can become established in an eternal loving relationship with Him. The ninth *prameya* relates to *prayojana*, the ultimate goal to be attained by pursuit of the transcendental path. That goal is known as *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and it takes on infinite varieties when manifest in the different *bhaktas* possessing variegated moods of divine love.

Devas - celestial deities; beings situated in the celestial planets who are endowed with great piety, tremendous lifespans, and superior mental and physical prowess. They are entrusted with specific powers for the purpose of universal administration.

Devatās - same as *devas*.

Dhāma - a holy place of pilgrimage; the abode of the Lord where He appears and enacts His transcendental pastimes.

Dharma - from the verbal root *dhṛ* meaning 'to sustain'; lit. that which sustains; 1) the natural, characteristic function of a thing; that which cannot be separated from its nature; 2) religion in general. 3) the socio-religious duties prescribed in *sāstra* for different classes of persons in the *varṇāśrama* system; one's fixed occupation in relation to the highest ideals known to man. *Dharma* is aspired for by persons who not only desire enjoyment in this world, but who hanker for something more, like Svarga (heavenly planets). For this it is necessary to follow the religious codes outlined in *sāstra*. By following the religious duties prescribed according to *varṇāśrama*, one can enjoy happiness in this life and attain Svarga. The performance of *dharmika* duties is foremost for such people, and therefore their *puruṣārtha* (goal of life) is known as *dharma*. There are many types of *dharma*. *Strī-dharma* (a woman's *dharma*) refers to the duties, behaviour etc., that sustain

the proper nature of a woman. Similarly, *dharmas* such as *puruṣa-dharma*, *brāhmaṇa-dharma*, *sūdra-dharma*; and *sannyāsa-dharma*, are described in *dharma-śāstras*. Ultimately, however, *dharma* means the natural attraction of the part for the whole, the *jīva* for Kṛṣṇa. All of these other *dharmas* are only related to this temporary body, therefore, in the midst of performing them, one must cultivate *ātma-dharma*, the soul's eternal occupation as servant of Kṛṣṇa, so that one can reach the point, either now or tomorrow, of *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, giving up all secondary *dharmas* and taking full shelter of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

G

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas - prominent teachers in the line of Lord Caitanya.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya - the school of Vaiṣṇavism following in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Gautama - is popularly known as Akṣapāda Gautama. According to some scholars, he lived in the 5th century BC and founded the *prācīna*, or older, *nyāya* school of philosophy. He wrote *Nyāya-sūtra*, which is known as the earliest systematic literature of the system. The traditional *nyāya* system as it stands today is mainly based on this work of Gautama. The *Nyāya-sūtra* is divided into five *adhyāyas*, or lessons, usually called books. Each lesson is divided into two *āhnikas*, or daily portions, and these in turn contain a number of *sūtras*, or aphorisms. These *sūtras* are also divided into *prakaraṇas*, or topics, by commentators such as Vātsyāyana and Vācaspati.

Gosvāmī - one who is the master of his senses; a title for those in the renounced order of life. This often refers to the renowned followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu who adopted the lifestyle of mendicants. Descendants of the relatives of such Gosvāmīs or of their *sevāites* often adopt this title merely on the basis of birth. In this way, the title Gosvāmī has evolved into use as a surname. Leading temple administrators are also sometimes referred to as Gosvāmīs.

I

Īśvara - the Supreme Lord or Supreme Controller.

J

Jaimini - the founder of the *pūrva-mīmāṃsā* system of Indian philosophy, better known as the *mīmāṃsā* system. According to modern scholars he composed his *pūrva-mīmāṃsa-sūtra* around the 4th century BC. It deals with the investigation of the nature of *dharma* and lays down the principle interpretation of the Vedic texts on which the performance of sacrifices wholly depends. It describes the different sacrifices and their purposes. The *mīmāṃsa-sūtra* consists of twelve chapters, the first of which deals with the source of knowledge and the validity of the *Vedas*. It is recognised as the basic comprehensive work of the *mīmāṃsa* school of philosophy which gave rise to a host of commentaries and sub-commentaries.

Jānavanta - also known as Jāmbavān *Jñāna* - (1) knowledge, (2) knowledge which leads to impersonal liberation: this concerns the *ātma*'s distinction from matter and its identity with *brahman*.

Jīva Gosvāmī - the son of Śrī Vallabha (Anupama), who was the brother of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. Even as a young boy he was deeply attracted Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He spent his time not in playing but in worshiping Bhagavān with flowers, sandalwood, and other articles. In his youth he went to Vārāṇasī to study Sanskrit under Madhusūdana Vācaspati, a disciple of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. After completing his studies he went to Vṛndāvana and took shelter of his uncles, Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana. After the disappearance of Rūpa and Sanātana, he became the leader amongst all of the Vaiṣṇava followers of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. His numerous literary contributions, which include books such as *Saṭ-sandarbha* and *Gopāl-Campu*, and commentaries on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, have lent support with sāstric evidence to the teachings of Śrī Caitanya. According to *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (194-207) he is Vilāsa Mañjarī in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

K

Kali-yuga - the present age of quarrel and hypocrisy which began five thousand years ago (see *yuga*).

Karma - (1) any activity performed in the course of material existence. (2) pious activities leading to material gain in this world or in the heavenly planets after death. (3) fate; former acts leading to inevitable results.

Kaṇāda - an ancient sage. He is the originator of the *vaiśeṣika* system of Indian philosophy (see *vaiśeṣika* in the Glossary of Terms). The word *kaṇāda* primarily means “one who lives on a small particle of food.” This may have some connection to the basic tenet of the school which says that the universe is formed of the minutest units of matter, called *anu* (the *Nyāya-kandalī* of Śrīdhara may be consulted for further information on this point). Kaṇāda is also referred to by the synonyms of his name, e.g. Kaṇabhuja and Kaṇabhakṣa, or by his genealogical name Kaśyapa. He is also known as Ulūka, which literally means an owl. Tradition explains this name with a story that Lord Śiva appeared before the sage in the form of an owl and revealed the *vaiśeṣika* system to him. It is traditionally believed that Kaṇāda lived and taught in Vārāṇasī.

Kaṇāda is credited with the authorship of the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, the basic text of the system, but the precise dates of his life and work cannot be ascertained. While tradition sets him in the 8th century BC, modern scholarship assigns the composition of the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* to the first century AD. The basic tenets of the system were known to the early compilers of the *Caraka-samhitā* – not only to its final editor, Caraka, but to its original author, Agniveśa, who is thought to have lived several centuries prior to the Christian era. The *vaiśeṣika* philosophy, as propounded in the *sūtra*, is acknowledged by several schools of Buddhist philosophy, particularly the *madhyamikas* and the *vaibhāṣikas*. The Pali work,

Milindapanha, which was written in the 1st century AD, mentions *vaiṣeṣika* as an established branch of Indian learning.

Kapiladeva - an *avatāra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who appeared as the son of Kardama Muni and Devahūti. He taught the true purport of the *sāṅkhya* philosophy to his mother. In this original *sāṅkhya* philosophy of Kapiladeva there are twenty-five principles. Beyond these there is the existence of Śrī Bhagavān, who is the source of the other principles. There was another Kapila who appeared later in the dynasty of Agni who taught an atheistic version of the *sāṅkhya* philosophy. The atheistic *sāṅkhya* accepts the twenty-five principles but denies the existence of God. The *sāṅkhya* of Kapiladeva ultimately culminates in *bhakti*.

Kṛṣṇa - the original Supreme Lord, Svayam Bhagavān. He is *avatārī*, the source of all other *avatāras*. His partial manifestation is the Paramātmā and His bodily effulgence is the all-pervading *brahman*. His body is composed of *sac-cid-ānanda* – eternality, knowledge, and bliss. He is the personification of all spiritual mellows, *raso vai sa*. His father is Nanda Mahārāja, His mother is Yaśodā, His brother is Balarāma, and His eternal consort is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. He is a charming young cowherd boy with a complexion like that of a fresh monsoon raincloud. He wears a brilliant yellow *dhotī*, a peacock feather on His crown, and a garland of fresh forest flowers. He possesses sixty-four primary transcendental qualities, out of which four are unique to Him alone: *venu-mādhurya*, He attracts the entire world and especially the *gopīs* with the melodious sound of His flute; *rūpa-mādhurya*, He possesses extraordinary beauty which captivates the minds of all; *prema-mādhurya*, He is surrounded by intimate loving associates whose *prema* (divine love) is completely unbounded by reverence or formality; and *līlā-mādhurya*, He performs beautiful and enchanting pastimes, amongst which *rāsa-līlā* is the summit.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja - the author of *Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*. He received the *darśana* of Nityānanda Prabhu in a dream and was ordered by Him to go to Vṛndāvana. At the repeated request of the Vaiṣṇavas, and after obtaining the blessings of the Madana-Gopāla Deity, he accepted the task of writing the biography of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He also wrote *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, a description of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's eight-fold daily pastimes, and a commentary known as *Sāraṅga-raṅgadā* on Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura's famous book, *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*. He is Kastūrī Mañjarī in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

Kumāra - The four Kumāras are called Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana and Sanat. Brahmā created them in the beginning of creation from his mind (*manaḥ*). That is why they are called Brahmā's *mānasa-putra* (sons born of his mind). Because of their profound knowledge, they were completely detached from worldly attraction, and they did not give any assistance in their father's task of creation, because they had developed an inclination for impersonal speculation (*brahma-jñāna*). Brahmā was extremely displeased with this, and he prayed to Bhagavān Śrī Hari for the welfare of his sons. Śrī Bhagavān was pleased by Brahmā's prayers, and in His Haṁsa (swan) *avatāra*, He attracted their minds away from dry

impersonal knowledge to the knowledge of pure devotional service on the absolute platform. Because of this, Śānaka Ṛṣi and his brothers are known as *jñāni-bhaktas*. They are the originators of the Nimbāditya disciplic succession.

M

Madhva - the chief *ācārya* of the *Brahmā sampradāya*; born in 1239 near Uḍupī. His father and mother were Śrī Madhyageha Bhaṭṭa and Śrīmatī Vedavidyā. He accepted *dīkṣā* and *sannyāsa* at age twelve from Acyuta-prekṣa. His *sannyāsa* name was Pūrṇaprajña. He wrote commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Brahma-sūtra*, and many other books. He established the doctrine of *dvaita-vāda* which emphasises the eternal distinction between the living entities and the Supreme Lord. He preached vigorously against the *kevalādvaitavāda* teachings of Śrī Śāṅkarācārya.

Mahādeva - a name for Lord Śiva; the great Lord or the chief among the *devas* (see Śiva).

Mahāprabhu - the Supreme Lord, see Caitanya mahāprabhu

Mahāvākya - principal statements or utterances of the *Upaniṣadās*. *Praṇava* (*om*) is the true *mahāvākya* of the *Vedas*. However, Śrī Śāṅkarācārya has widely broadcast four aphorisms as *mahāvākyas*. Therefore, the word *mahāvākya* has come to be associated with these expressions: *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*, "I am *brahman*," (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.10); *tat tvam asi śvetaketo*, "O Śvetaketo, you are that" (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7); *prajñānam brahma*, "The supreme knowledge is *brahman*," (*Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 1.5.3); and *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*, "All the universe is *brahman*." (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 3.14.1.)

Mantra - a mystical verse composed of the names of Śrī Bhagavān which addresses any individual deity. *Mantras* are given to a disciple by a *guru* at the time of *dīkṣā*.

Māyā - illusion; that which is not; Śrī Bhagavān's external potency which influences the living entities to accept the false egoism of being independent enjoyers of this material world. The potency that creates bewilderment, which is responsible for the manifestation of the material world, time, and material activities.

Māyāvāda - the doctrine of illusion; a theory advocated by the impersonalist followers of Śāṅkarācārya which holds that the Lord's form, this material world, and the individual existence of the living entities are *māyā* or false.

Māyāvādī - one who advocates the doctrine of illusion (see *māyāvāda*).

Māyika-tattva - the fundamental truth concerning Bhagavān's deluding potency, which relates to the material world.

Mīmāṃsā - a philosophical doctrine which has two divisions: (1) *pūrva* or *karma-mīmāṃsā* founded by Jaiminī, which advocates that by carrying out the ritualistic *karma* of the *Vedas*, one can attain the celestial planets, and (2) *uttara-*

mīmāṃsā founded by Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsadeva, which deals with the nature of *brahman*. (See *pūrva-mīmāṃsā* and *uttara-mīmāṃsā*).

Mīmāṃsaka - a philosopher. One who adheres to the *mīmāṃsā* philosophical doctrine of which there are two divisions. This usually refers to those who follow the *karma-mīmāṃsā* of Jaimini.

Mleccha - derived from the sanskrit root *mlech* meaning to utter indistinctly (sanskrit) – a foreigner; non-Āryan; a man of an outcaste race; any non-Sanskrit-speaking person who does not conform to the Vedic social and religious customs.

Mukti - liberation from material existence not to be confused with the Buddhist conception of *nirvana*. There are five types of liberation: *sārūpya* (obtaining the same form as Bhagavān), *sāmīpya* (living in close proximity to Bhagavān), *sālokyā* (living on the same planet as Bhagavān), *sārṣṭi* (having the same opulence as Bhagavān), and *sāyujya* (becoming one with Śrī Bhagavān either by merging into His body or by merging into His *brahman* effulgence, *nirvana*). The last type is vehemently rejected by the devotees. Although the other four types of *mukti* are sometimes accepted by devotees as they are not entirely incompatible with *bhakti*, they are never accepted by those who are fixed on attaining unalloyed love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.

Mumukṣā - the desire for liberation.

Mumukṣu - a person who is seeking liberation.

N

Nāma - the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, chanted by *bhaktas* as the main limb of the practice of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Nāma-saṅkīrtana - the practice of chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, especially congregational chanting.

Nārada - a great sage among the *devas*; he is thus known as Devarṣi. He was born from the mind of Brahmā. He is a liberated associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who travels throughout the material and spiritual worlds broadcasting His glories. In Caitanya *līlā* he appears as Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit

Nārāyaṇa - *nāra*—mankind, *ayana*—the shelter of. Means the shelter for mankind. An expansion of Kṛṣṇa; the opulent Lord of Vaikuṅṭha.

Nirvāṇa - A term the Buddhist consider the supreme destination and defined by them as indescribable, devoid of form, quality, diversity, desire and personality. A state of freedom from the shackles of *māyā* and her influence of pain and suffering. Sometimes mistakenly referred to as *mokṣa* or *mukti*. A state of loss of *self* that inexplicably is defined as “ineffable contentment”, especially as it raises the question, “who is it then that is content?” The ‘merging’ or loss of self into a state of *nothingness*. Ontological non-existence.

Nimbāditya - also known as Nimbārkācārya; the head *ācārya* of the Kumāra *sampradāya*. He established the philosophical doctrine of *dvaitādvaita-vāda*, which delineates both the oneness and the distinction of all things with the Lord. He performed his *bhajana* at Dhruva-kṣetra near Govardhana. He wrote a commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* named *Vedānta-saurabha*, as well as *Vedānta-kāmadhenu-daśa-sloka*, *Kṛṣṇa-stavarāja*, *Guruparamparā*, *Vedānta-tattva-bodha*, *Vedānta-siddhānta-pradīpa*, *Svadharmādhva-bodha*, *Aitihya-tattva-siddhānta*, *Rādhāṣṭaka*, and a commentary on *Bhagavad-Gīta*.

Nyāya - the philosophy dealing with a logical analysis of reality, also known as *nyāya-darśana*. This system of philosophy was founded by Maḥarṣi Gautama. The *nyāya-darśana* accepts sixteen principles: 1) *pramāṇa* (evidence; the means to obtain factual knowledge), 2) *prameya* (that which is to be ascertained by real knowledge), 3) *saṁśaya* (doubt about the point to be discussed), 4) *prayojana* (a motive for discussing the point in question), 5) *drṣṭānta* (citing instances or examples), 6) *siddhānta* (demonstrated conclusion of an argument), 7) *avayava* (component parts of a logical argument or syllogism), 8) *tarka* (persuasive reasoning), 9) *nirṇaya* (deduction, conclusion, or application of a conclusive argument), 10) *vāda* (thesis, proposition, or argument), 11) *jalpa* (striking disputation or reply to defeat the argument of the opposition), 12) *vitandā* (destructive criticism; idle carping at the assertions of another without attempting to prove the opposite side of the question) 13) *hetv-ābhāsa* (fallacy; the mere appearance of a reason), 14) *chala* (deceitful disputation; perverting the sense of the opposing party's words), 15) *jāti* (logic based merely on false similarity or dissimilarity), and 16) *nigraha-sthāna* (a weak point in an argument or fault in a syllogism).

According to *nyāya-darśana*, misery is of nineteen types: the material body, the six senses including the mind, the six objects of the senses, and the six transformations – birth, growth, production, maintenance, dwindling, and death. In addition to these, happiness is considered as the twentieth form of misery because it is simply a transformed state of distress. The *naiyāyikas*, adherents of the *nyāya-darśana*, accept four types of evidence: *pratyakṣa* (direct perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (comparison), and *śabda* (the authority of the *Vedas*).

The *nyāya-darśana* accepts the existence of eternal infinitesimal particles known as *paramāṇu*. These, they claim, are the fundamental ingredients from which the creation has sprung. But in order for the creation to take place, there is need of an administrator who is known as Īśvara, Śrī Bhagavān. Bhagavān creates the world by setting the atomic particles in motion. Like these atomic particles, Īśvara is eternal and without beginning. Although the *naiyāyikas* accept the existence of Īśvara, they do not believe that He personally carries out the creation. He is merely the primeval cause. By His desire, the atoms are set into motion whereupon they create all the subtle and gross elements from which the creation comes about.

According to the *nyāya-darśana*, the *jīvas* are innumerable, eternal, and without beginning. The *naiyāyikas* do not think that the *jīvas* are of the nature

of consciousness, but that they are only substantive entities which may be associated with intellectual, volitional, or emotional qualities as a result of a proper combination of causes and conditions. The *nyāya-darśana* advocates that the *jīva* and Īśvara are two entirely separate truths. The *jīva*'s material existence is due to *karma*. The creation occurs under the influence of *karma*, and within the creation the *jīvas* suffer the reactions of their *karma*. Īśvara's sole function is to set the creation in motion and to reward the results of *karma*.

The *naiyāyikas* say that the *jīva* can attain liberation from material existence through philosophical knowledge of the sixteen principles. They define *mukti* as complete cessation of material misery. There is no factual happiness in *mukti*. In this liberated condition the *jīva* is as if unconscious.

Nyāya-śāstra - the *śāstras* dealing with a logical analysis of reality. The precepts of *nyāya* are mostly explained through analogies drawn from an analysis of common objects such as a clay pot (*ghata*) and a piece of cloth (*paṭa*), so these words are repeatedly encountered in discussions of *nyāya*.

P

Pañcōpāsana - worship of the five deities – Sūrya, Gaṇeṣa, Śakti, Śiva, and Viṣṇu.

Pañḍita - *Pañḍā* means 'the intelligence of one who is enlightened by knowledge of the *śāstra*', and the word *pañḍita* refers to one who has such intelligence.

Parabrahma - the Supreme *brahman*, the source of the *brahman* effulgence, Śrī Bhagavān.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī - the uncle of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. He was a resident of Raṅga-kṣetra and a *sannyāsi* of the Śrī Rāmānuja *sampradāya*. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī received *dīkṣā* from him. Prabodhānanda was a worshiper of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, but by the mercy of Śrī Gaurasundara he adopted the worship of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. He wrote many books such as *Śrī Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, *Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhānidhi*, *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, *Saṅgīta-mādhava*, *Āścarya-rāsa-prabandha*, *Śrī Vṛndāvana-sataka*, *Śrī Navadvīpa-sataka*, *Śruti-stuti-vyākhyā*, *Kāmabīja-Kāmagāyatrī-vyākhyāna*, *Gīta-Govinda-vyākhyāna*, and *Śrī Gaura-sudhākara-citrāṣṭaka*. According to *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* (163), in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī is Tuṅghavidyā, one of the *aṣṭa-sakhis* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā

Prakṛti - (1) nature, the material world, the power that creates and regulates the world. (2) matter as opposed to *puruṣa*, spirit. (3) the primordial female energy, a woman or womankind.

Pratibimba - a reflective semblance. This refers of an image which is disconnected from its object, and is therefore compared to a reflection.

Purāṇas - the eighteen historical supplements to the *Vedas*.

Puruṣa - (1) the primeval being as the soul and original source of the universe, the Supreme Being or Soul of the universe. (2) the animating principle in living beings, the soul, spirit as opposed to *prakṛti*, or matter. (3) a male or mankind.

Puruṣārtha - the goals of human attainment. In the Vedic *śāstras* these are classified into four categories: *dharma*, religious duty; *artha*, acquisition of wealth; *kāma*, satisfaction of material desires; and *mokṣa*, liberation from material existence. Beyond all of these is the development of unalloyed love for the Supreme Lord, who is the embodiment of spiritual bliss and transcendental *rasa*. This is known as *parama-puruṣārtha*, the supreme object of attainment.

Pūrva-mīmāṃsā - the philosophy established by Maḥarṣi Jaimini, also known as *jaimini-darśana*. To thoroughly examine a topic and arrive at a conclusion is known as *mīmāṃsā*. *Mīmāṃsā* comes from the verbal root *man*, to think, reflect, or consider. Because in his book, Maḥarṣi Jaimini has established the correct interpretation of the Vedic statements and how they may be decided through logical analysis, this book is known as *mīmāṃsā-grantha*. The *Vedas* have two divisions: *pūrva-kāṇḍa* (the first part), dealing with Vedic *karma*; and *uttarā-kāṇḍa* (the latter part), dealing with the *Upaniṣads* or Vedānta. Since Jaimini's book deals with an analysis of the first part of the *Vedas*, it is called *pūrva-mīmāṃsā*. As Jaimini's philosophy deals exclusively with an analysis of Vedic *karma*, it is also known as *karma-mīmāṃsā*.

Jaimini has minutely examined how Vedic ritualistic *karma* is to be performed and what its results are. He has accepted the *Vedas* as *apauruṣeya* (not created by any man), beginningless, and eternal. His philosophy is established on the basis of the *Vedas*. However, he has given prominence only to Vedic *karma*. He states that the *jīvas* are meant to perform Vedic *karma* only. By proper performance of Vedic *karma*, one can obtain *parama-puruṣārtha*, the supreme goal, which in his opinion refers to the attainment of the celestial planets.

In Jaimini's view, the visible world is *anādi*, without beginning, and it does not undergo destruction. Consequently, there is no need for an omniscient and omnipotent *Īśvara* to carry out the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world. Jaimini accepts the existence of pious and sinful *karma*. According to his doctrine, *karma* automatically yields the results of its own actions. Therefore, there is no need for an *Īśvara* to award the results of *karma*.

R

Rādhā - the eternal consort of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the embodiment of the *hlādinī* potency. She is known as *mahābhāva-svarūpinī*, the personification of the highest ecstasy of divine love. She is the source of all the *gopīs*, the queens of Dvārakā, and the Lakṣmīs of Vaikunṭha. Her father is Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja, Her mother is Kīrtidā, Her brother is Śrīdāma, and Her younger sister is Anaṅga Mañjari. She has an effulgent, golden complexion and She wears blue garments. She is adorned with unlimited auspicious qualities and is the most dearly beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Rāma - a *līlā-avatāra* or pastime *avatāra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; He is the famous hero of the Rāmāyaṇa. He is also known as Rāmacandra, Raghunātha, Dāsarathi-

Rāma, and Rāghava-Rāma. His father was Mahārāja Daśaratha, His mother was Kausalyā, and His wife was Sītā. He had three brothers named Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, and Śatrughna. The celebrated monkey Hanuman was His beloved servant and devotee. After killing the pernicious demon, Rāvaṇa, and rescuing Sītārānī with the help of the monkey army, Rāma returned to Ayodhyā and was crowned king.

Rāmānuja - the celebrated Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* of the Śrī *saṃpradāya* who founded the Vedāntic school which taught the doctrine of *viśiṣṭādvaitavāda*, qualified non-dualism. He lived at Kāñcipuram and Śrī Raṅgam in South India in the 12th century. He is believed to have been an incarnation of Śeṣa and is known also as both Rāmānujācārya and Yatirāja. He wrote commentaries on *Bhagavad-Gīta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Rṣi - a great sage learned in the *Vedas*.

S

Sanātana-dharma - The eternal occupatin of man. Mans eternal constitutional position. See *dharma*

Saṅkīrtana - congregational chanting of the names of Kṛṣṇa.

Sannyāsa - the fourth *āśrama*, or stage of life in the *varṇāśrama* system; renounced ascetic life.

Sannyāsī - a member of the renounced order.

Śaṅkara - another name for Śiva (see Śiva). Sometimes Śaṅkara is used as a short name for Śaṅkarācārya.

Śaṅkarācārya - a celebrated teacher of *Vedānta* philosophy and the reviver of Brāhmanism. He is understood to have been an incarnation of Lord Śiva. He was born in 788 and he died in 820 at the age of thirty-two. According to some accounts of his life, he was born approximately 200 BC. He was born into a Nambūdarīpāda *brāhmaṇa* family in the village of Kālapī or Kāṣala in the province of Kerala. His father's name was Śivaguru and his mother was Subhadrā, also known as Viśiṣṭhā and Viśvajita respectively. The couple worshiped Lord Śiva for a long time to obtain a son, and thus when their son was finally born, he received the name Śaṅkara. His father passed away when Śaṅkara was only three years old. By the time he was six, Śaṅkara was a learned scholar, and he accepted the renounced order at the age of eight. He travelled all over India to suppress the Buddhist doctrine and revive the authority of Vedic *dharma*.

Śaṅkarācārya wrote a famous commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* known as *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, Inquiry into the Nature of the Embodied Spirit. Although he made an invaluable contribution by re-establishing Brāhmanism and the Vedic authority, which laid some groundwork for the teachings of Śrī Caitanya, the precepts he established are at odds with the Vedic conclusion and the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. He declared the Supreme *brahman* to be devoid of form, characteristics, potencies, and qualities. He states that although *brahman* is full of knowledge, it

is not a conscious all-knowing being. Although *brahman* is of the nature of transcendental bliss, it is not a subjective experiencer of that bliss. *brahman* is not the creator of the world. When that featureless *brahman* comes in contact with *māyā*, it assumes material qualities. These ideas have been strongly refuted by all the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*.

Satya - truth, reality; demonstrated conclusion.

Siddhānta - philosophical doctrine or precept; demonstrated conclusion; established end; admitted truth.

Śiromaṇi, Raghunātha - also known as Kāṇāi Śiromaṇi or Kāṇābhāṭṭa; a contemporary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and author of *Dīdhiti*, the famous *nyāya* commentary on the *Tattva-cintāmaṇi* of Gaṅgeśopādhyāya. He was a student of Śrī Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya in Navadīpa. After completing his studies, he went to Mithilā for some time and then returned to Navadīpa to open his own school of *nyāya*. At that time Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma was invited by King Pratāparudra to come to Orissa to be the chief *paṇḍita* in his court. As a result, Śiromaṇi became distinguished as the foremost scholar of *nyāya* in Navadvīpa during his time. According to the *Advaita-prakāśa*, Śiromaṇi desired that his *Dīdhiti* would become the most famous commentary on *Tattva-cintāmaṇi*. However, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had written a commentary on *Tattva-cintāmaṇi* which surpassed the work of Śiromaṇi. Seeing this, Śiromaṇi became despondent. In order to fulfill Śiromaṇi's desire, Mahāprabhu threw His own commentary into the Gaṅgā. Thereafter, Śiromaṇi's commentary became celebrated as the pre-eminent commentary on *Tattva-cintāmaṇi*.

Śiva - a qualitative expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who supervises the material mode of ignorance, and who annihilates the material cosmos; one of the five deities worshiped by the *pañcopāsakas*. His name literally means auspicious. In the *Brahmā-saṁhita* (5.45) it is described that Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumes the form of Lord Śiva for the purpose of carrying out the material creation. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.13.16) Śiva is described as the best of all Vaiṣṇavas: *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhu*.

Smārta - an orthodox *brāhmaṇa*. One who rigidly adheres to the *smṛti-śāstras* (in particular, the *dharma-śāstras* or codes of religious behavior), being overly attached to the external rituals without comprehending the underlying essence of the *śāstra*. They are distinct from the Vaiṣṇava *smārtas* and *smṛti-śāstras* such as *Hari-Bhakti -Vilasa*

Smārta- social and religious ritualistic activities prescribed by the *smṛti-śāstras*.

Śukadeva - the son of Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsadeva and speaker of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parikṣit. In Goloka-dhāma, Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode in the spiritual world, he is the parrot of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Śrī Bhāṣya - The commentary which Reveals the Transcendental Beauty and Opulence of the Lord; a commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* by Śrī Rāmānujācārya.

Śruti - (1) that which is heard. (2) revelation, as distinguished from *smṛti*, tradition; infallible knowledge which was received by Brahmā or by the great sages in the beginning of creation and which descends in disciplic succession from them; the body of literature which was directly manifest from the Supreme Lord. This applies to the original four *Vedas* (also known as the *nigamas*) and the *Upaniṣads*.

Śūnyavāda - the doctrine of nihilism or voidism, which has as its goal complete annihilation of the self.

Sura - a god, divinity, deity, sage; this specifically refers to the *devas* situated in the celestial planets. The *brāhmaṇas* are known as *bhū-sura*, gods on earth, because they represent the Supreme Lord.

T

Tantras - the verbal root *tan* means “to expand”, so *tantra* is that which expands the meaning of the *Vedas*. A class of Vedic literature dealing with a variety of spiritual topics and divided into three branches: the *Āgamas*, *Yāmala*, and principal *Tantras*; a class of works teaching magical and mystical formularies, mostly in the form of dialogues between Śiva and Durgā. These are said to expound upon five subjects: (1) the creation, (2) the destruction of the world, (3) the worship of the gods, (4) the attainment of all objects, especially of six superhuman faculties, and (5) the four methods of union with the supreme spirit by meditation.

Tāntrika - one who is completely versed in the mystical science of the *Tantras*.

Tapasyā - asceticism; austerity.

Tridaṇḍa - a staff which is carried by the Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs*. It consists of three rods symbolising engagement of body, mind, and words in the service of the Lord. These three rods may also signify the eternal existence of the servitor (the *bhakta*), the object of service (Bhagavān), and service, thus distinguishing Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa* from the *māyāvāda ekadaṇḍa sannyāsa*.

U

Uttara-mīmāṃsā - the philosophy established by Vyāsadeva dealing with the latter division of the *Vedas*. After thorough analysis of the *Upaniṣadas*, which comprise the latter portion of the *Vedas*, and the *smṛti-śāstras* which are supplements to the *Upaniṣads*, Vyāsadeva summarised the philosophical conclusions of those treatises in his *Brahma-sūtra*. This *Brahma-sūtra*, or *Vedānta-sūtra*, is also known as *vedānta-darśana* or *uttara-mīmāṃsā*.

Like the other philosophical systems, *vedānta-darśana* accepts certain fundamental principles. The principles of the *vedānta-darśana* are not the imagination of Vyāsadeva, but are established on the basis of the *apauruṣeya-veda-śāstras*, which are understood to have been spoken directly by Śrī Bhagavān.

The statements of Bhagavān are by definition completely free from the defects of mistakes, illusion, cheating, and imperfect senses. On the other hand, the fundamental principles which are accepted in the other systems are products of their authors' imaginations. The other systems are based on man-made *śāstras*, composed by greatly learned sages. As a result they are subject to the defects of human limitation.

The *vedānta-darśana* accepts *brahman* as the supreme fundamental truth. What is the nature of that *brahman*? The first *sūtra* of *vedānta-darśana* states: *athāto brahma-jijñāsā* – “Now, therefore, inquiry should be made into *brahman*.” The entire *vedānta-darśana* is presented in order to answer this inquiry. In the course of analysing what *brahman* is, one also becomes acquainted with the truths of the *jīvas*, the creation, liberation, and other such topics. As this is a vast subject matter, only a brief introduction has been given here.

V

Vaiśeṣika - a later division of the *nyāya* school of philosophy, also known as *vaiśeṣika-darśana*. It was founded by Kaṇāda Ṛṣi and differs from the *nyāya* system of Gautama Kaṇāda accepted six principles: (1) *dravya* (elementary substances which are nine in number – earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, the soul, and the mind), (2) *guṇa* (characteristics of all created things such as form, taste, smell, sound, and tangibility), (3) *karma* (activity), (4) *sāmānya* (universality; the connection of different objects by common properties), (5) *viśeṣa* (individuality; the essential difference between objects), and (6) *samavāya* (inseparable concomitance; the relation which exists between a substance and its qualities, between a whole and its parts, or between a species and its individuals).

According to the *vaiśeṣika-darśana* the *jīvas* are innumerable. The merit or demerit attaching to a man's conduct in one state of existence and the corresponding reward or punishment which he receives in another is called *adr̥ṣṭa* (that which is beyond the reach of consciousness or observation). Due to the force of this unforeseen accumulated *karma*, the *jīva* falls into the cycle of creation and undergoes birth, death, happiness, and distress. When the *jīva* obtains philosophical knowledge of the six principles, his *adr̥ṣṭa* is destroyed and he can attain liberation from the bondage of material existence. The *vaiśeṣikas* define *mukti* as final release from material misery. There is no direct mention of Īśvara in the *vaiśeṣika-darśana* of Kaṇāda.

Vaiśeṣika-jñāna - knowledge of worldly phenomena; classification of such phenomena into various categories such as *dravya* (objects), *guṇa* (qualities) and so on.

Vaiṣṇava - literally means one whose nature is 'of Viṣṇu' in other words, one in whose heart and mind only Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa resides. A *bhakta* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu.

Vaiṣṇava-dharma - the constitutional function of the soul which has as its goal the attainment of love for Kṛṣṇa. This is also known as *jaiva-dharma*, the

fundamental nature of living beings, and *nitya-dharma*, the eternal function of the soul.

Viṣṇu - the Supreme Lord of the cosmos who presides over the material mode of goodness; the supreme amongst the five deities worshiped by the *pañcopāsakas*.

Vivekī - one who discriminates; one whose spiritual consciousness is awakened.

Vyāsadeva - a great sage and empowered incarnation of the Lord. He was also known as Bādarāyaṇa, Dvaipāyana, and Veda-Vyāsa. His father was Parāśara and his mother was Satyavatī. He was the step-brother of Vicitravīrya and Bhīṣma. Because of the untimely death of Vicitravīrya, Satyavatī requested Vyāsa to become the husband of Vicitravīrya's two childless widows. From the womb of Ambikā, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born and from the womb of Ambālikā, Pāṇḍu was born. He was also the father of Vidura by a servant girl. In addition, by his wife Araṇi, Vyāsadeva was the father of the great sage Śrī Śukadeva, who spoke the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to Mahārāja Parikṣit. Vyāsadeva compiled and arranged the *Vedas*, *Vedānta-sūtra*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata*, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and he also established the *uttara-mīmāṃsā* system of philosophy.

Y

Yoga - (1) union, meeting, connection, combination. (2) a spiritual discipline aiming at establishing one's connection with the Supreme. There are many different branches of *yoga* such as *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga*. Unless specified as such, the word *yoga* usually refers to the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system of Patañjali.

Yogī - one who practices the *yoga* system with the goal of realisation of the Paramātmā or of merging into the Lord's personal body.

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