

## Śrībhāṣya

[Introduction to be added.]

In the following summary, “ET” refers to the Sanskrit edition and English translation by R. D. Karmarkar, three volumes (Poona: University of Poona, 1959, 1962, and 1964). “T” refer to Georg Thibaut’s translation in the Sacred Books of the East (republished, New York, Dover Press, 1962). The paragraph divisions are according to Karmarkar. The summarizing follows Karmarkar’s Sanskrit text, which he says (p. ix) is, excepting punctuation, almost identical to the edition in the Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series. The effort has also been guided by Karmarkar’s translation and notes as well as by the elegant English but generally, though not invariably, less faithful renderings of Thibaut.



Para. 1 (ET 1, T 3). In introductory verses, Rāmānuja does “something auspicious” (*maṅgala*), namely, saluting Brahman, the abode of Śrī, and praying that intelligent people will appreciate his preserving the nectar of the true teaching of the Upaniṣads.

Para. 2 (ET 2-3, T 3-5; sūtra 1.1.1). Without an introduction or *avatāra* in the fashion of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja explains the words of the sūtra: “Then, therefore, desire to know Brahman” (*atha ato brahma-jijñāsā*). “Then” means sequence, implying that after the Veda has been studied (including its best part, the Upaniṣads), so that the impermanence of the fruits of sacrifices and all works is known, and an intense desire for liberation (*mokṣa*) has arisen, a person comes then to desire to know Brahman. The word “therefore” indicates that this desire follows upon the former as an effect from a cause. “Brahman” means the Supreme Person, whose auspicious attributes are unlimited. Knowledge of Brahman is what is desired.

Para. 3-6 (ET 3-7, T 5-8). That such knowledge of works and their fruit has occurred is how the sūtra is read by the Vṛttikāra (Baudhāyana). Thus there is sequentiality with the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* which concerns itself with the prior part of the Veda and the teaching of religious duty (*dharma*) and its fruits. Inquiry into works and inquiry into Brahman are a single teaching (*śāstra*). Accordingly, one who has learned the Veda from a good teacher, especially “his own text” (*svādhyāya*), passes into a state of fitness for something else, namely, consideration of the teaching about the embodied self in accordance with Upaniṣadic passages about the impermanence of the fruits of works in contrast with the permanence of knowledge of Brahman.

*Objection:* All that is required can be got from the Veda alone, namely, that works have impermanent fruit whereas meditation on Brahman has as its fruit the nectar of immortality. What is the point, then, of inquiry into religious duty (why bother with Pūrva Mīmāṃsā)?

*Answer* (by Rāmānuja): By the same reasoning, why inquire into Brahman if all can be got from the Veda?

*Objection:* Yes, but the understanding might not be sufficient to block doubt or misunderstanding. Certainty comes from such inquiry into Brahman.

*Answer:* Recognize then that just likewise there should be reflection on *dharma*.

Para. 7-11 (ET 8-12, T 8-11). *Objector.1:* One who has studied the Upaniṣads meets the prerequisite for inquiry into Brahman; such a person does not need to have studied works (and sacrifices according to Pūrva Mīmāṃsā). This inquiry has as its goal and result utter destruction of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*) which is the root of evil. Knowledge of works presupposes distinctness (*bheda*) and is thus misleading (since Brahman is unitary and homogeneous).

*Objector.2:* But scripture (*śruti*) enjoins knowledge and just certain works so that without an understanding of works (i.e., Vedic sacrifices) one would not know which works are to be conjoined with knowledge.

*Objector.1:* Wrong. Cessation of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*) is all that is relevant, not knowledge of works. Such cessation means the cessation of viewing things as fundamentally distinct, whereas understanding works depends on cognition of distinctness. Furthermore, while it is true that certain works can contribute to the desire for knowledge, none have influence on its actual acquisition. Tranquillity, self-restraint, and other (yogic or meditative) practices are the means once the desire has arisen—such is said by scripture (*Br* 4.4.23 is quoted). An aspirant's mind comes by works through many lifetimes to be cleansed of impurities such that desire for Brahman-knowledge can arise. Then hearing (the Upaniṣads), reflecting, and meditating dispel the idea of beginningless distinctness. The fourfold means is thus (a) discrimination of the permanent and impermanent, (b) tranquillity and self-restraint and other (yogic) means, (c) renunciation of enjoyment of the fruits of works, and (d) desire for liberation. They are the only prerequisites.

In sum, viewing things as distinct is the root of bondage. By knowledge it is eliminated. Such knowledge arises from (understanding) Upaniṣadic texts such as “Thou art That” (*Ch* 6.8.7). Inquiry into works has no relevance.

Para. 12-18.5 (ET 12-23, T 11-19). *Answer* (Rāmānuja's *siddhānta*): What form does this knowledge of Brahman take that, we agree, means the end of spiritual ignorance? It does not take, contrary to your assumption, the form of testimonial knowledge that arises from hearing

statements (even those of the Upaniṣads), but rather the form of meditational knowledge (*upāsanātmika-jñāna*).

*Objection:* As the appearance of two moons is not dispelled (for the astigmatic) by knowledge that there is only one moon, so cognition of Brahman does not dispel spiritual ignorance so long as there are subliminal impressions (*vāsanā*) producing the opposite.

*Answer* (by Rāmānuja): That should not be said. (You can't have it both ways.) If knowledge of the sense of scripture cannot destroy these subliminal impressions, there would, on your view, be no end to spiritual ignorance. The impressions cannot both be uprooted (by the removal of ignorance) and be blockers (of the removal of ignorance)—what prattle!

The appearance of two moons is not a good analogy. There the cause of the error is weakness of sight. Better analogues include the fear, for example, that does come to an end with knowledge of superior might. If subliminal impressions were as you say, then ever increasing beginninglessly they could never be uprooted by meager contemplation (*bhāvanā*) of unity (as learned from scripture)—their power to block knowledge would be overwhelming. Thus the form of knowledge that is meant is meditational (*upāsanā* and *dhyāna*).

Our view is, moreover, in accordance with these Upaniṣadic passages (now quoted, *Br* 4.4.21, *Ch* 8.7.1, *Mu* 2.2.6, *Ka* 1.3.15, *Br* 1.4.15 and 4.5.6, and *Ch* 8.7.1), all of which support the view that meditation is the form taken by liberating knowledge.

The injunction to meditation (*Br* 4.5.6: “The self is to seen, heard, reflected on, and meditated on”) is in accordance with the sense of the other passages. The injunctions to hear and reflect are secondary to that to meditate. (Numerous Upaniṣadic passages and the *Gītā* are quoted to back this up.) Meditation means a steady flow of remembering that takes the form of a “seeing,” *darśana*—which means “takes the form of perception.” Upaniṣadic statements are in favor of these equivalences as well the *Gītā* (many passages are cited).

*Kāṭha* 2.23 is quoted and discussed with reference to similar ideas in the *Gītā*: “This self is not to be realized by exposition (of the Veda), nor by intelligence, nor by much learning. By that one whom this (self) chooses can this (self) be realized. For that person this self reveals its own form.” Only those “most dear” to the Divine (Bhagavān) are fit to be chosen, and these are those who achieve steady meditation. Even *bhakti*, “devotion to the Divine,” really means steady meditation. Other scriptural passages (quoted here) support this view.

The means to accomplish this “steady perceptual remembering” (*dhruvānusmṛti*) include works such as religious sacrifices. Works such as the sacrifices enjoined in various Upaniṣadic passages (quoted here) are to be done without regard for their fruit in order to lessen the hold of the lower “qualities of nature,” the *guṇa*-s of *tamas* (“darkness, inertia,

obscurity’’) and *rajas* (‘‘passion, activity, inquietude’’) so that the pure *sattva* (‘‘light, intelligence, clarity’’) can emerge in the mind and thus steady meditation. This means that we need to understand just what works are enjoined, what religious sacrifices, and to this end we need to study the Karman Mīmāṃsā, i.e., Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. For how to apply scriptural statements to works is explained there. Moreover, discrimination of the permanent and impermanent requires Mīmāṃsā. Thus, inquiry into works is to be antecedent, too (contrary to the opponent’s opinion), to the desire to know Brahman (and thus is meant in the first sūtra by the word ‘‘then’’).

Para. 18.5 (ET 23-30, T 20-24). *Objector.1* (an Advaitin): Brahman as homogeneous consciousness opposed to all particularity is alone the supremely real and valuable (*paramārtha*). Everything else—all the differences of knower, known, and knowing—is an imaginative projection on (or in) Brahman, i.e., is illusory (*mithyā*). This view is substantiated by many scriptural passages (more than two dozen proof texts are cited including passages from the *Gītā* and several from the *Viṣṇu Purāna*).

Illusoriness is marked by being negatable by knowledge of things as they are, as, for example, a cognition of a snake where the substratum object is a rope (i.e., a rope appearing as a snake) is negated by cognition of the rope. Everything of this world—from the gods to men and immovable objects—is negated, or sublated (*bādhita*, ‘‘defeated’’ or ‘‘blocked’’), and shown illusory by realization (*avabodha*) of Brahman. Scriptural statements support this view (eight are cited). Thus it is by *māyā*, which is spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*), that Brahman from its own nature as consciousness becomes screened, and it is by knowledge of the unity of self and Brahman as homogeneous consciousness that spiritual ignorance is negated and distinctions shown to be unreal. (Many scriptural citations are made in support of the claim that Brahman is consciousness and the other claims, too, as well as a forward reference to *Brahmasūtra* 4.1.3.)

Para. 19 (ET 30-31, T 24-25). *Objector.2* (to the Advaitin, objector.1): The negation or cessation of all distinctness is contrary to perception. How then can it possibly be brought about by cognition generated by the meaning of the śāstric teachings (about Brahman)? The conflict between a snake and a rope cognition is between two forms of perception, but here the conflict is between perception and an understanding of śāstric teachings that are themselves based on perception (and thus such understanding gets trumped).

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): Given conflict between two cognitions or claims, how is the defeater/defeated relation (*bādhya-bādhaka-bhāva*) determined (which of the two is which)?

*Objector.2*: Of the two, one will have been produced by a process vitiated by a defect whereas the other will not have been.

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): It's the same principle in the case of the conflict between śāstra and perception. Perception is not the defeater in every controversy. A flame is known by inference to be a series of things, inference thus trumping the false perception that it is a single enduring substance. Whatever is imaginable as otherwise is defeatable; what isn't has to be a defeater. Now cognition of Brahman from the śāstra, which is preserved in unbroken tradition, is not to be suspected of deficiency—Brahman being distinctionless, eternal, pure, free, awakened, self-illuminating, homogeneous consciousness (and a cognition as so cognizing could not imaginably be defeated, Brahman being perfect). The distinctions “established” by perception, inference, and so on, which are capable of deficiencies, are thus not cognized authoritatively—there are no perceptual winners in this conflict.

Para. 20 (ET 32-33, T 25-27). *Objector.2*: But śāstra too has to be defeatable, since there are scriptural statements that presuppose distinctness.

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): True (to an extent); the earlier teaching is defeated by the later dealing with liberation. The same holds for the statements about Brahman having qualities. These are defeated by statements concerning the highest Brahman which has no qualities. Upaniṣadic passages support this view (several are quoted).

Para. 21-22 (ET 33-36, T 27-30). *Objector.2*: In *Tait* 2.1.1, “Brahman is the real, knowledge, the infinite,” the properties of reality, knowledge, etc., are understood (as qualifying Brahman).

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): Not so. The words being all in the same case designate a single entity (i.e., each indicates Brahman, not a property of Brahman's).

*Objector.2*: The reference is to something qualified by many properties.

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): Fool, you understand not reference. The unity of meaning is in the designation by all the words of the same entity.

*Objector.2*: Then the words are all synonyms!

*Advaitin*: The exclusions are different though the same entity is denoted: non-reality, non-sentience, and finiteness, respectively.

Furthermore, in this way there is accordance with *Ch* 6.2.1 that Brahman is the only reality, “one without a second.” Other Upaniṣadic passages are concordant (four are quoted to the effect that Brahman is homogeneous).

*Objector.2*: Then the words (of *Tait* 2.1.1) have to be taken in a secondary or “indicator” sense.

*Advaitin*: That is not a problem. The intended sense of a whole sentence is weightier than the denotative sense of the individual words.

*Objector.2*: With all the words? (Taking the senses together does not render the meaning you want.)

*Advaitin*: Resort to indicator (or secondary) meaning is appropriate here since otherwise the sentence would not make sense.

Para. 23-24 (ET 36-40, T 30-33). (The *Advaitin* continues:) Earlier we said that scripture defeats perception in the case of conflict, but no conflict is actually found since perception itself grasps unparticularized, homogeneous being.

*Objector.2*: How so? What about the different cognitive objects in such perceptions as “There is a pot” and “There is a cloth”? If they all had the same object, the same activity would be prompted (but obviously the former cognition prompts action towards a pot and the latter towards a cloth).

*Answer* (by the *Advaitin*): Does perception, which lasts only an instant and can grasp only a single object or content, grasp the essential nature of the thing in “There is a pot” or its distinctness from other things? It cannot be the latter since grasping of something’s distinctness is dependent upon cognition of the thing it is distinct from (viz., the absential counterrelate, as a cloth would be the thing mutually absent, and thus the counterrelate or absentee, of the property distinctness-from-cloth that lies in the pot). Perceptual prompting of activity has nothing to do with cognition of distinctness since distinctness is not perceptual (in that the counterrelate has to be remembered, e.g. a cloth, as that which a pot is distinct from).

Logicians (Naiyāyikas who champion the view that things are fundamentally distinct), moreover, are unable to give a definition of distinctness. It is not, first of all, something’s essential nature (*svarūpa*), since the counterrelate presupposed in cognition of distinctness could not be cognized even by imagination in that the essential nature of the thing would be the same as the distinctness. “Pot” and “distinctness” would thus be synonyms. Nor can distinctness be a property, since between the property and property-bearer there would have to be some distinctness, and thus an endless series of distinctnesses! Furthermore, there would be the fault of “mutual dependence” if distinctness is cognized when a generic character (i.e., a universal such as pothood) is cognized and a generic character cognized if there is distinctness. Therefore, distinctness being impossible to define, perception illumines just homogeneous being.

With cognitions like, “There is a pot,” or “A pot is being cognized,” there are two (invariable) factors, being and experience. Particularities being excluded as not continuous through all cognition, only being which is continuous (present with every cognition) is real, like the rope that persists while an illusory snake is turned away. The question is the nature of the exclusion with cognitions like “There is a pot.” Things excluded, such as a cloth, are not truly real because as excluded they are not continuous, unlike homogeneous being.

A formal demonstration: Being is supremely real, *since* it is continuous (or ever-present), like such things as the rope with respect to a snake-rope (cognition). Another: Pots and so on are not supremely real, *since* they are not continuous (or ever-present), like such things as the “snake” where the substratum is a rope, etc.

This being the case, experience (or consciousness) is supremely real as continuous (through all cognition).

Para. 25-26 (ET 40-42, T 33-36). *Objector.2*: But experience as having (on your own account) homogeneous being as object (*viṣaya*) is distinct from it.

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): It is not so. Distinctness has been thrown out already on the grounds that it is not the object of perception and cannot be defined. Thus that being stands as “object” of experience is unsupported. Therefore, being *is* experience (or consciousness). And experience as like this is self-proved, since it is experience, which is witness to itself. Never is there experience that is non-illuminating, like a jar; so its illumination depends on nothing but itself.

*Objector.2*: With “This is a pot,” a pot is illumined, not the illumining experience, which, if it were a cognitive object, “The pot is being *experienced*,” would have already occurred (otherwise it would not be fit to be grasped) and would be inferred by another cognition. Experience is like pleasure in always being accompanied by illumining; pleasure never exists without being perceived. But there is no experience of experience. It is like the tip of a finger which is capable of touching other things but not itself.

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): No correlations are available for the inference you presume. Things do not show any “illuminating,” and experience is presupposed in all practical activities (including what people say). Nor is experience known by another. It is rather in establishing everything else itself self-established, self-proved. There is the following formal demonstration: Experience is talked about with respect to its own character (e.g., “It illumines”) independently of any other thing, *since* it is a cause of talk (and all everyday practices, *vyavahāra*) with respect to all other things and their characteristics through their relationship to it, like colors with respect to being perceptible by sight. A color is perceptible itself, and in being in relationship to something colored that thing is perceptible.

And this self-illuminating experience is eternal since there is no “prior absence” of it (“absence of consciousness” is an empty term). How could it be an effect (and transitory), there being no prior absence of it (for any effect E, there is a prior absence of E before E comes about)? That there is no prior absence of it is due to its self-establishment. Experience could never be shown not to exist. How could it, not existing, be an authority for its non-existence?

Para. 27 (ET 42-44, T 36-39). (The Advaitin continues:) Other deformations of being though they too be opposed to origination (e.g., universals such as cowhood and humanity) do not belong to experience (as its attributes).<sup>1</sup> Unoriginated experience does not support diversity with respect to itself. It has the nature of experience alone; it has no attribute fit to be experienced. Since consciousness is void of distinctness, it has to be self-illuminating.

*Objector.2:* Cognizerhood is established from the awareness, “I am cognizing (X).”

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): Wrong. This is founded on error. Experience is not a doer or actor (thus not a cognizer with respect to itself). The notion of a knower is superimposed, like the error that identifies the self with being human and the like. To be a knower is something essentially transitory and insentient, tied up with being an ego. How could agency belong to the changeless witness of all change whose nature is homogeneous being?

That the self does not fall within the domain of the idea of “I” (as in “I am cognizing X”) holds because experience of self is found in deep sleep, a swoon, etc., whereas there is no idea of “I” in these states. If the self were an agent, furthermore, it would be identified with the body, which is insentient.

The insentient ego serves to make manifest consciousness; that is to say, experience makes itself manifest in the “I” notion though it is itself changeless, etc. It is the ego’s substratum. For it is the nature of manifesting to be the abode of the manifested, for example, a mirror manifesting a face, the moon, etc.

*Objector.2:* How can that happen, if the ego is insentient?

*Answer* (by the Advaitin): Take for example the palm of the hand which is made manifest by the sun’s rays falling on it. But it also manifests those rays (reflecting them for the organ of sight).

In deep sleep and liberation, the self appears only in its true nature as homogeneous consciousness without any idea of “I.” Thus a person who has just awakened reflects, “I was unconscious of myself.”

In sum, consciousness alone, from which all distinctions are gone, unparticularized, uniform as homogeneous *cit*, transcendent, eternal, illusorily manifests itself (*vivartate*) as broken up into a variety of distinct things—knowers, objects of knowledge, and knowings. Vedāntic texts are taken up to root out spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*), the basis of that error,

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1. Both Karmarkar and Thibaut get this wrong. Here I read in the regular way *pratibaddha*, “opposed to,” not as “associated with.”

and to acquire spiritual knowledge (*vidyā*) of the unity of the self and Brahman whose nature is eternal, pure, awakened, and free.

Para. 28-29 (ET 45-49, T 39-44). *Answer* (Rāmānuja replies): All this rests on a wrong foundation and bad reasoning, and should be rejected by those who would follow true sources of knowledge and good reasoning.

There is no knowledge source (*pramāṇa*) for the claim that there is a distinctionless reality. All *pramāṇa* reveal objects as distinct from other objects. Also to be rejected is the view that such a thing is established (not by the usual *pramāṇa* but) by one's own immediate experience, since all experience has as its object something marked by distinctness, by some distinct property over and above the property, existence. For (even) thinking has the properties "being-thinking" and "self-illumination." And, as will be explained, in deep sleep, etc., consciousness is qualified by distinctions, too. Moreover, you yourself (you Advaitins) accept many distinct properties (of the self), eternity and so on, and these cannot be shown to be mere being in general. Furthermore, you in arguing with us admit that there are (real) differences of views. Thus that things are particularized is the rational position according to knowledge sources.

Especially testimony (as a *pramāṇa*) is in support of this view in virtue of the way words and sentences convey information. A word is made from a radical and an affix, which have different meanings, and a sentence is composed of words with different meanings. Hence a sentence cannot be the knowledge source for something unparticularized.

Perception, which divides into two types, determinate and indeterminate, is not a knowledge source for anything unparticularized. Determinate perception has for its object something particular inasmuch as (according to the standard definition) its object is qualified by various categories of qualifier such as the generic character (universal). Indeterminate perception is also like this since it is in virtue of it that an object as qualified by a generic character etc. is perceived determinately. It is *indeterminate* as lacking some particularity but not all distinctness. All cognition arises by means of some particularity, "This is such and such." Nothing can be apprehended apart from some special feature of its make or structure, like a cow by its dewlap. Indeterminate perception is a first-time perception of an individual without awareness of its type whereas the determinate grasps an individual as belonging to a class. Thus the determinate is dependent on a prior first-time grasping of an individual that is not yet classified but becomes so on the basis of continuity running through subsequent experiences. Thus the indeterminate is such not because properties or features such as shape etc. on the basis of which a class grouping is to be made are not cognized but rather because the generic character of its object has not yet been determined. Shape etc. are objects of the experience, for nothing with shape can be perceived without its shape being perceived. Thus no

perception has as its object something devoid of all particularity.

For the same reasons, the view is thrown out that perception reveals something as both distinct from other things and non-distinct. With the cognition, “This (is) such” (“Fa”), there is no non-distinctness between the references of the two terms, e.g., “cow” (“a”) and “having-a-dewlap” (“F”)—the difference between the two is patent. This holds in general. Some things, such as universals or generic characters, e.g., cowhood, can qualify only certain things, cows, but are nevertheless as entities different from the individuals they qualify, as with every qualifier-qualificandum relationship. Other things can exist on their own separately and independently from the things they on occasion qualify, as a bracelet from a person wearing it (“She (is) having-a-bracelet”). All this is explained later by the sūtrakāra (*BS* 2.2.31).

Inference, which depends on prior perceptions, has only particularized things as its objects since perception reveals such things only. There may be dispute about the number of the knowledge sources (*pramāṇa*), but the sources acknowledged by everyone concern only things that are particularized.

Para. 30-31 (ET 49-53, T 44-47). (Rāmānuja continues:) It was said (by the Advaitin opponent above, para. 23) that perception cannot have distinctness as its object since (a) it is homogeneous being only and (b) distinctness cannot be defined. Well, these views are to be thrown way out, since the only perceptual objects are things qualified by generic characters (universals) or the like and since generic characters, etc., in being dependent on the things to which they belong prompt talk about distinctness for themselves and the things they belong to. You yourself (Advaitin) admit as much concerning self-awareness (which prompts talk both about awareness and self) and color (which prompts talk both about itself and the colored). Thus the charges of infinite regress and mutual dependence are baseless. Perception may last only a moment but in that moment the object’s generic character is grasped and so both its distinctness from things not having that (generic character, e.g., as horses do not have cowhood) and its distinctness from the thing, the property-bearer, are grasped.

If perception grasped homogeneous being, then “There is a pot” and “There is a cloth” would contradict that grasping. Furthermore, if such being were grasped, then why should a person looking for a horse not be satisfied with a buffalo? Remembering would also be impossible to distinguish from other cognitions (there would be no remembering) because there would be only the one object. Also, no one would be blind or deaf because again there would be one object only.

The sense organs, sight, etc., do not grasp being only but rather their proper objects such as color and the colored thing, sound, etc. If the sense organs grasped homogeneous being, then sacred tradition (*āgama*) would

be mere repetition (*anuvāda*). And Brahman, mere being, would be an object of knowledge (*prameya*) with all the imperfections characteristic of objects such as insentience and perishability. Thus perception has as object only what is qualified by distinct marks such as the thing's structure or configuration (*saṁsthāna*), color, and generic character.

Indeed, configuration is generic character. Since there is nothing other than configuration that is the same with respect to many different things cognized (here a cow, there a cow, and so on), it is the generic character. Configuration is something's distinctive form, and there are distinct configurations (that of a cow, a horse, and so on). And these, it is to be concluded, cowhood, etc., themselves amount to distinctness—on the grounds that no other category is necessary to explain common talk involving generic characteristics. Furthermore, those who want an additional category, the universal, nevertheless accept configuration as real.

*Objection:* If generic character or the like amounts to distinctness, then there should be common talk about distinctness when that is grasped.

*Answer* (by Rāmānuja): True. (But if you meant to imply that such talk does not occur, you're wrong.) For in grasping cowhood one grasps the exclusion of everything that is not a cow, hence distinctness. When something is grasped as a cow, there is no talk of that which is not a cow.

It was said by the Advaitin (para. 18.5) that particular things such as pots and pieces of cloth are not ultimately real since they are excluded or negated. Here there is confusion about the difference between the defeater-defeating relation and continuity in contrast to exclusion. The former holds where there are two contradictory cognitions; there will also be in that case exclusion or negation of the defeated. (But there can be exclusion without contradiction.) There is no contradiction with respect to pots, pieces of cloth, and the like on account of differences of location and time. Cognitions of existence and non-existence of the same thing at the same time and place are contradictory and the less well supported is defeated and negated, for example, cognitions of a snake (a non-rope) and a rope (a non-snake) at the same spot. But that something is not continuous between two different times and places is no reason to say it is unreal.

Therefore, a thing is not just homogeneous being. Also thrown out is the view that experience alone exists, since the difference between experience and particular beings that are its objects is known perceptually.

Para. 32 (ET 53-54, T 47-50). (Rāmānuja continues:) It was said by the Advaitin (para. 25) that consciousness is self-illuminating. Well, it is not for everyone at all times like that, though the self (*ātman*) in having experience (consciousness) as object is that way. One infers the experience of another on the basis of external signs (and so S's consciousness is not self-luminous to T). There is also experience of

one's own past experience, as expressed, e.g., "At the time I knew." So one cannot say that experience (even one's own) is (invariably) self-established. And surely another's experience counts as "experience." The ordinary way we use such words would be gone were we not to count others' experiences and our own past experiences as proper referents of the term. The general proposition that consciousness does not admit of being an object is thus quite wrong.

To be experience means that in the present moment either there is—by the experience's very existence—an indication, an establishing of an object, or a self-illuminating with respect to its own existence and substratum (the self). This nature does not go away when the experience is another's or one's own past experience. Pots and the like are not like this. Thus though experience and pots and the like share the property, "fit to be experienced," they are fundamentally different: experience and not-experience. If being-experience were to depend on something's not being fit to be experienced, then sky-flowers (imaginary objects) would be consciousness. Don't get confused by paradoxes of your own creation in laughably asserting that nothing is experience that is also "fit to be experienced."

Para. 33-35 (ET 55-59, T 50-55). (Rāmānuja continues:) The argument (of the Advaitin) that since consciousness is never absent, there is no "prior absence" of consciousness and therefore it could not originate (since all origination requires a prior absence of that which originates), well, this is like a blind person putting out an arm to be guided by another person who is blind: one unsupported statement "supported" by another equally unsupported. Consciousness itself shows (cognizes) the very prior absence of consciousness that you deny.

*Objection:* How can something be aware of its own absence?

*Answer:* Not all experience is contemporaneous; otherwise we couldn't legitimately speak of past and future experiences.

Of course, no nonintoxicated person would maintain the contemporaneous existence and absence of some particular experiencing. Perception grasps a contemporaneous object; remembering and other means of knowledge can make us know something in the past. Every knowledge source is connected to the object it makes known, but not every knowledge source has an object that is present. Thus it is wrong to say that on the grounds that the object is past remembering does not have an external object. For we can remember things that have been destroyed.

*Objection:* There is no knowledge source to show the prior absence of consciousness.

*Answer:* Yes there is: non-cognition (*an-upalabdhi*) of the right sort of something fit for it (e.g., a prior absence of consciousness).

Furthermore, cognition is subject to temporal constraints such that a perception, for example, does not grasp a pot as existing at all times but

rather contemporaneously. It does not grasp the prior or posterior absence of the pot (since it has authority neither for the time before the pot was produced nor after it has been destroyed). If such consciousness were not so circumscribed, the pot, like the self-consciousness, would be eternal. If self-established self-consciousness were eternal, it would be cognized as eternal. It is not, however, so cognized. Inferences, etc., being of the nature of this consciousness, would also not be circumscribed by time, and their objects would be likewise uncircumscribed.

Nor is there any consciousness without an object. For self-luminosity has been justified (by our opponent himself) on the basis of its illumining of objects, which has been said to be its self-nature. And if it were incapable of illumining itself and other things, “consciousness” would be an empty concept.

Nor are you justified in holding that in deep sleep, etc., pure consciousness manifests itself devoid of all object. If there were consciousness in those states, we would remember it, but we do not.

*Objection:* There is no rule that what has been experienced has to be remembered. So how can non-remembering show the absence of experience?

*Answer:* In the absence of a cause that entirely destroys the memory impressions, such as death, absence of remembering does by rule show absence of (prior) experience.

This is also shown by the reflection prompting a person awakening from sleep to say, “During that time I wasn’t aware of anything.”

More will be said later about the persistence of awareness of an “I” during such states as deep sleep. The self (*ātman*) does have experience then, as will be explained. Our present point is to deny your homogeneous consciousness devoid of all object and without a substratum. Nor could that be experience of the self (*ātman*), as will be argued.

Thus it cannot be maintained that there is no establishing of a prior absence of experience on the grounds that the experience being in existence could not prove the absence of itself. We have shown that experience is fit to be experienced. Therefore the claim that consciousness does not arise is all wrong.

The argument (of the Advaitin) that such non-origination means that other modifications (of consciousness) are impossible (para. 27) is also all wrong. There is a counterexample to the rule on which your reasoning relies, namely, prior absence (the rule being that anything that changes has to have a beginning). A prior of absence (of X) does not itself arise but it does end (with the origination of X). Were you to try to save the rule by restricting its application to positive entities (ruling out absences), then the *a-vidyā*—absence of spiritual knowledge (spiritual ignorance)—that you say is the unoriginated (beginningless) substratum of manifest change

which is to be destroyed by spiritual knowledge, well, would this not be “changing”? Perhaps you will say that the changes of *avidyā* are unreal. So you would distinguish the real and the unreal. But you said all distinctions are unreal!

Furthermore, if the distinction between spiritual knowledge and spiritual ignorance is unreal, then *avidyā* and the self are one.

Differences of view, you yourself admit, are shown by showing differences in things viewed as established by undefeated cognitions, like the differences in items being cut entailing different cuttings.

Para. 36-37 (ET 59-63, T 55-58). (Rāmānuja continues:) The argument (of the Advaitin) that any viewing in virtue of its essential nature cannot have properties that also belong to the viewed, this too is contradicted by your own assertion, namely, that this viewing has such properties as “eternity” and “self-luminosity” as is established by knowledge sources you assert.

Nor may you urge against this that these properties are simply consciousness (*saṃvedana*). Rather they are by nature distinct. “Consciousness” is to be understood as invariably an illumining of an object or of itself, and “self-luminosity” is the illumining of itself with respect to its substratum (the self). “Eternity” is existence at all times. And so on with “unity” and other attributions you make. If these are not objects of consciousness that ground differences, then why do you distinguish the insentient from the self as essentially sentient? Or what do your denials mean?

And how is consciousness known? If it is not known through some property, it is not known period. If you say it is self-proved, we say to whom? If you say the self, then we ask, what is this “self”?

*Objection:* It is consciousness (*saṃvit*).

*Answer:* What then is consciousness other than (what we have said) to be aware of an object or self? Everything you say has its meaning through common usage (but you want to assert and deny attributions, etc., at the same time). Furthermore, consciousness is obviously the property of a person, an agent, who is conscious, a property that is by nature an illumining of something or other.

To elaborate, we know by perception that the agent (of knowing, the knower) endures while the property, so-called “consciousness,” like pleasures and pains, which arise and are destroyed, endures not. The endurance of the agent is proved by recognition, e.g., “This same object was experienced by me previously,” and other common experiences. Recognitions like this and the other cognitions do not occur with regard to consciousness, which is produced, etc., as is established by perception. So how can there be identity there (with the knower, the self, *ātman*)? Continuity establishes an experiencer that endures, not just (somehow, pure) experience. In the way you understand “experience” (*anubhūti*),

no recognition would be possible.

*Objection:* Should not the “I” (in the expression of recognitions and the other cognitions you cite, “I am cognizing this same object that was experienced by me previously”) be understood, in contrast to your view, in the following manner? The “I” in “I am cognizing (X),” etc., is the *ātman*. The objective part—the “I” insofar as it is an object or “you” (and whatever else we say we cognize)—is the object portion over and above homogeneous consciousness.

*Answer:* It is not so. The relation of property and bearer of properties is given perceptually with such cognitions as “I am cognizing X” (in that the “I” indicates the property-possessor and the “am cognizing X” the property possessed).

There are also the following considerations against your theory: (1) “I” is the way an *inner* entity is talked about; (2) one seeks liberation on the basis of the belief that the “I” that is to be liberated is oneself; (3) if such a person thought that liberation was the destruction of the entity she thinks of as herself, she would run from the idea; (4) there would be no way to secure the thesis that there is continuity of consciousness beyond death; (5) consciousness depends on its connection to the self and could not otherwise be proved; (6) likewise, the knower could not otherwise be known; (7) neither the Upaniṣadic passage (*Br* 2.4.15), “By what does one know . . . the knower?” nor the *Gītā* passage (13.1), “. . . they call him the knower of the field,” can be squared with your view; and (8) the sūtra-maker himself says just this (*BS* 2.3.17-18).

In sum, to say what you have, namely, that the “I” part and the “you” part, etc., well, it’s about the same as saying, “My mother has no children.”

Nor can you escape these difficulties by claiming that the “I,” the knowing subject, is in its being illumined dependent on something else, because it is (as you have said it is) self-illuminating.

Para. 38-39 (ET 64-68, T 58-62). (Rāmānuja continues:) Self-luminosity is to be essentially consciousness such that there is no dependence on another in being illumined, like a lamp, a flame. A lamp illumines other things but is not dependent on anything other than itself for illumination. Although light is a quality (*guṇa*) of the fiery element (*tejas*), it is not shared with any other substance, unlike color and so on, qualities that are exhibited by distinct substances. Light is in fact the fiery substance itself in one of its forms in that illumining power belongs to it. But the common practice is to speak of it as belonging to the fiery substance, its substratum. Since many causes come together successively to bring about a flame and its light, flames may be inferred to arise and disappear at successive moments. Analogously, the self is essentially consciousness and has consciousness as its quality. To be of the nature of consciousness means to be self-luminous. This view is supported by

scriptural passages (*Br* 4.5.15, 2.4.12, 4.3.9, 4.3.30, *Ch* 8.12.4, *Br* 4.3.7, *Pr* 4.9, *Br* 2.4.14, *Ch* 7.26.2, 8.12.3, *Pr* 6.5, and *Tait* 2.4.1 are quoted). The sūtra-maker also says this (*BS* 2.1.19).

Therefore, the self-illuminating self is the knower; it is not merely the illuminating. Like the illuminating of a lamp, the self's illuminating belongs to something. The self therefore cannot be (merely) consciousness (*saṃvit*). Furthermore, neither ordinary nor Vedic speech employs terms like "consciousness," "experience," or "cognition," without the presupposition of an agent who cognizes and a cognized object.

With regard to the claim that consciousness constitutes the self because consciousness is not insentient, what does this "non-insentience" amount to? (Your reasoning makes no sense.)

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): "Its illuminating flows out of its existence."

*Response* (by Rāmānuja): This definition is equivocal as applying to flames, etc. It also contradicts your refusal to accept that illuminating is a property over and about consciousness (i.e., when we try to parse your sentence). Furthermore, the occurrence of illumination and existence is not restricted to sentient things, since pleasure and the like are counterexamples.

*Objection*: These are not the self because they are insentient and the illuminating is with respect to another, like a pot.

*Response* (by Rāmānuja): Like the pleasure expressed in "I am enjoying pleasure" (which is had by a person or subject), the cognition, "I am cognizing (X)," appears for or to a knower who is the referent of the word "I." Thus "illuminating for itself alone" is not established as the nature of consciousness. Furthermore, the illuminating nature of cognition depends on connection with the self. Due to such a connection, cognition, like pleasure, is evident to the person who is its subject and substratum and not to anyone else. Therefore the self is not a mere cognizing but the knower, the referent of "I."

It was claimed that there being a knower, etc., is illusory, experience being in reality without object and without substratum, like mother-of-pearl appearing as silver. This view is wrong because, if it were right, the expression would have "experience" (or "cognizing") grammatically co-ordinate with "I" or "experiencer" ("I am experience" instead of "I am experiencing") like ("Silver appears shiney" based on) silver being shiney in appearance. But experience appears as something separate from the experiencer (prompting expressions where uncoordinated terms are used). Does "Devadatta is a staff-bearer" refer to a staff alone?

Para. 40 (ET 68-70, T 62-63). *Objection* (by the Advaitin): That there is a knower is illusory because only to someone identifying self with body ("I am stout," etc.) does there appear to be a knower, etc.

*Answer* (by Rāmānuja): Again wrong. For in that case the experience

that is identified with the self would also be illusory, since the cognitions have the same structure.

*Objection:* Only experience remains undefeated by that (liberating) cognition that sweeps everything else away.

*Answer:* Well, the knower would also be undefeated and therefore also not illusory.

*Objection:* Being-a-knower cannot belong to the self which is (one, single) free from modification whereas a knower is an agent of the action of knowing. Therefore, being-a-knower belongs to the ego which takes the form of the inner organ of sense (*manas* or *antahkaraṇa*). If the self were an agent and the object of “I,” then it would be, like the body, something outward and insentient.

*Answer:* That’s not possible because the inner organ of sense is not conscious but a part of nature, like the body, thus outward, etc., whereas the knower has as its unique feature consciousness.

Furthermore, the knower is not what changes but rather cognition which resides in it. Nevertheless, cognition viewed as the essential property or nature of this (knower), which is eternal, is likewise eternal, as the sūtra-maker himself says (*BS* 2.3.18-19).

In the state called “knowing of the field,” cognition is contracted and is spoken of as arising and setting through the influence of the sense organs and other causes. Here there is an agent of knowledge (who changes). But that is not the natural state of the knower but rather a deviation due to *karman*. The self in its essential nature is unchanging. Only the self can assume the changing nature of a knower, since to the self belongs cognition; the insentient ego could not possibly assume this role.

Para. 41 (*ET* 70-73, *T* 63-65). *Objection* (by the Advaitin): It is possible—through proximity to consciousness, the ego being cast in its shade (as it were).

*Response* (by Rāmānuja): How is this to occur? Which is shaded by which? Consciousness cannot be shaded by the ego since, according to you, it cannot become a knower. The ego cannot be shaded by consciousness since, again, the insentient ego cannot become a knower. Furthermore, this “being cast in the shade of” applies only to objects of vision; neither the self or the ego is an object of sight.

*Objection:* It’s like the mix of the fiery element (*tejas*) in a hot ball of iron (making it seem as though the hotness belongs to the iron ball).

*Response:* This is wrong for essentially the same reasons. You cannot escape the problem of knowership belonging only to the sentient coupled with the insentient nature of the ego.

*Objection:* Well, knowerhood really applies to neither the self nor the ego. But the ego is the “manifest” (*abhivyañjaka*) of experience, like a mirror manifesting an image.

*Response:* The self-luminosity of the self cannot “manifest” in the ego

because of the ego's insentience. (Three verses of *Ātmasiddhi* are quoted to the effect that nothing insentient can "manifest" consciousness.) True knowers of the self cannot help but deride such a view. Thus all the analogies offered, including (para. 27) the rays of the sun as "manifest" by the palm of the hand, are misleading.

Furthermore, the nature of the manifestation of the self through the ego cannot be origination, because the self is inherently self-luminous. Nor can it be illumination, because, according to you, experience is not fit to be the object of another experience. Nor can it be an aid for accomplishing experience of experience, since that is done through (better or worse) connection with the object or removal of impurity through tranquillity, self-restraint, etc.

Para. 42-43 (ET 73-77, T 65-69). (Rāmānuja continues:) Moreover, the ego could aid in the effecting of (self-)experience only if there were obstacles to (self-)experience that were fit to be removed by it, like darkness by a lamp for the perception of color. There are no such obstacles.

*Objection:* Non-knowledge (*ajñāna*) is such an obstacle!

*Response:* Only knowledge can remove non-knowledge. Nor can consciousness be the substratum of non-knowledge since knowledge is what rests there.

Non-knowledge does not rest in mere knowledge, in (your) "witness" bereft of knowerhood and objecthood. As a pot or the like cannot be the substratum of non-knowledge because knowledge cannot reside there, so mere or pure knowledge (not being the abode of knowledge) cannot be what non-knowledge rests in.

If consciousness were accepted to be as you understand it, namely, not an object of knowledge, then were it the substratum of non-knowledge, knowledge could not remove it. For, knowledge removes non-knowledge only with respect to its own object—non-knowledge (B) which is not the "prior absence" of some knowledge (A) is not opposed (to A) and could not prevent its origination—like knowledge of the rope (where the prior absence is its mistaken cognition as a snake).

The manifested/manifesting/manifester relationship does not work with respect to substrata, as we see with respect to lamps and so forth which promote knowledge of things as they are, facilitating knowledge (directly) or the means to it. A mirror is not a manifester of the face, etc., but rather of a certain (epistemic) fault (*doṣa*). Can the ego manifest a similar fault in self-luminous consciousness?

Nor is generic character "manifest" by the individual; rather, an individual (cow, for instance) is made known through the generic character (cowhood) for which it is the abode, the substratum.

Therefore, the ego cannot manifest experience in any way whatsoever.

There is a form of "I" cognition that does not disappear even in deep

sleep, the self flashing forth (*sphurana*), though there is no clear presentation of an I-object due to the obscurity (typical of sleep) and there is lack of awareness of outer objects. This is supported by a typical expression of someone just waking, “I slept well, pleurably,” that implies the existence of a knower and an experiencer of pleasure. In contrast, no one awakening says, “I stood as the witness watching (the display) of non-knowledge.”

*Objection:* “As I am now happy, so then too must I have been while I slept”—is the cognition (the person has upon waking). There is no continuous connection to the waking state, since the I-object is impermanent.

*Response:* Wrong. For the person upon waking reflects about states prior to deep sleep in such a fashion, “I did such and such” (implying continuity).

*Objection:* The person also reflects like this, “During that time I was aware of nothing,” implying that there is no object of cognition (including your I-object).

*Response:* No, there is continuity, as shown by (the very reflection you cite) the “. . . I was aware . . .” Objects other than the self may not have been cognized, but the word “I” (in your expression) refers to the self which persists (as conscious) in deep sleep.

*Objection:* “Then I was not conscious of myself”—this cognition shows the non-continuity of the I-object.

*Response:* Sir, you are not conscious of the contradiction of your statement by your own experience.

*Objection:* What with “of myself” is denied (in “Then I was not conscious of myself”) then (according to you)?

*Response:* Not the essence of the knower, which is continuous, but the I-object qualified by condition of life, caste, etc. The witness is a knower, and it makes no sense to talk of a witness without implying a knower who witnesses. There is a Pāṇini sūtra (of grammar) in support of this (5.2.91 is quoted). The object of “I” is a self-presenting with regard to the self, the self who illumines itself even in deep sleep.

Para. 44-45 (ET 78-82, T 69-72). (Rāmānuja continues:) What was claimed earlier (para. 19), “The I-object does not continue in the state of liberation,” is crude. Liberation is not self-destruction. The I-object is not a property that disappears but that stands in its essence at the cessation of spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*). People seek liberation thinking that it is they themselves who will be free of the miseries of rebirth.

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): Pure illumining, indirectly indicated (*upalakṣita*) by “I,” does remain in the supreme state.

*Response:* No sensible person would strive for the goal with the idea, “When I am dead, pure illumining continues.” No, the self, the inner self, presents itself as “I” in liberation, presents itself to itself.

Whatever illumines to (or for) itself illumines (itself, i.e., presents itself) as “I,” as, for instance, the embodied self, admitted by us both, presents itself in this way. Pots and so on are not like this. Illumining of “I” is not (as you claimed) opposed to liberation and a cause of non-knowledge.

“Non-knowledge” amounts to ignorance of (the self’s) essential nature. Or it can be cognition of something as other than it is or as the very opposite. “I” can capture the essence of the self. When it does, it does not implicate the self in non-knowledge. On the contrary, it destroys spiritual ignorance, as in the case of Vāmadeva and other rishis. This is supported (by the *Gītā* and other sacred texts: numerous verses from the *Gītā* are quoted along with three Upaniṣads).

*Objection:* Why if “I” captures the essence of the self did the Divine (Bhagavān) himself (Krishna) include the ego (*ahaṃkāra*) within the “field,” i.e., nature? (*Gītā* 13.5 is quoted.)

*Answer:* This is said because it is responsible for the egoism associated with the body which belongs to the sphere of the non-self. Pride is another appellation. I-consciousness identified with the body is spiritual ignorance (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 7.10.11 is quoted, and the *Ātmasiddhi*.) The I-object is just the self.

Para. 46-48.5 (ET 82-88, T 73-78). (Rāmānuja continues:) It was said (para. 19) that śāstric teaching defeats perception which depends on distinctions and differences inasmuch as it is otherwise (than veridical, or, inasmuch as it presents its object as other than what it is, i.e.) as rooted in (epistemic) fault (*doṣa*). The problem is that you have not explained this “fault.”

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): It is the endless series of subliminal impressions presuming distinctness (and plurality, *bheda*).

*Response:* Why should we believe that these memory impressions bring about the fault you allege? If you say śāstric teaching, then you reason in a circle. Nor could it be perception that shows śāstra to be the authority, because it too would be vitiated by the “fault.”

*Advaitin:* Śāstric teaching comes later (*para*) as a cause of the knowledge that disperses (the illusion of) the entire display of plurality and distinctness as presented through perception.

*Response:* That’s wrong. “Coming later” cuts no ice. S who is afraid of a snake—and who is deluded since the thing is rope—does not cease to be afraid if told by T *whom S does not trust*, “Don’t be afraid; it’s not a snake.” Similarly for śāstric teaching if it is vitiated by your “fault.”

Therefore, there is no acceptable source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) to support your view, since all depend upon perception being a knowledge source. Your cogitations are not shown.

*Advaitin:* Our positions are supported by knowledge sources in relation to objects to be made known, so long as we are talking about the everyday

world and everyday usages. By the qualification (“the everyday, etc.”) we mean that perception supports *prima facie* views that are shown wrong by arguments.

*Response*: The arguments would not have the status of a knowledge source and would be pointless.

*Advaitin*: Brahman-cognition defeats every perception and all that is based on perception (including s̄āstric teaching) whereas it itself is not defeatable. S̄āstric teaching defeats perception because it has Brahman-cognition as its subject.

*Response*: Imagine a society where everyone is afflicted by cataracts and sees a double moon. No one says it is otherwise, and everyone is in the same way afflicted. There is no defeating of the double-moon cognition; it is nonetheless non-veridical. S̄āstric teaching about Brahman may seem veridical as so far undefeated, but on your view it is nonetheless non-veridical.

On the point there are following formal demonstrations. (1) Brahman as understood by you is unreal, *since* it is the object of a cognition afflicted with *avidyā* (“spiritual ignorance”), like the entire worldly display. (2) Brahman is unreal, *since* it is the object of non-veridical cognition, like the entire worldly display. (3) Brahman is unreal, *since* it is the object of a cognition produced by causes that are unreal, like the entire worldly display.

*Advaitin*: Like false dream cognitions of elephants and the like which nevertheless prove authoritative concerning good or bad luck, Brahman-cognition generated by s̄āstric teaching, although false (or, although “unreal” and therefore false) as rooted in *avidyā*, nonetheless gives rise to veridical cognition of Brahman.

*Response*: That should not be said. For dream objects alone are unreal, not dream cognitions (in that they do occur). Similarly, the cognition of an unreal snake is as a cognition perfectly real, causing fear and the like. When a cognition is defeated through its object being shown to be otherwise or unreal, the defeated cognition is nonetheless real. (Thus your analogy puts things in the wrong way; the object is unreal but the cognition is real.)

Also in the case of apprehension of a letter of the alphabet through apprehension of the individual strokes, there is no apprehension of the real from a cognition of something unreal, since the strokes are real.

*Advaitin*: The strokes give rise to apprehension of the letter, but being-of-the-nature-of-a-letter is unreal.

*Response*: Not so. If it were unreal, it would not be instrumental (to veridical comprehension of the letter). How could the non-existent or indeterminable be shown to be such a means?

*Advaitin*: Understanding the alphabet is the means.

*Response*: This is not an analogue to cognition of the real from the

unreal, and, furthermore, result and means would be identical, in that both would be only of letters. If the means is the stroke insofar as it is not the letter, then all the letters may be comprehended from a single stroke, since the stroke may easily be conceived as “not whatever letter.”

*Advaitin*: It’s like the convention of “Devadatta” denoting a particular individual. A particular stroke by convention taken to be a particular letter (and sound) graspable by hearing gives rise to comprehension of the letter.

*Response*: Quite right. From something real a cognition of something real results; both the stroke and the letter are real. Other analogies from you likewise fail: there is real similarity between a drawing of a buffalo and a real buffalo, and differences in sound are made by differences in tone, etc.

All this goes to show that it is difficult to see how (knowledge of) a reality, Brahman, can arise from sāstric teaching if that teaching (as part of *avidyā*) is itself unreal.

*Advaitin*: The unreal nature of sāstric teaching is not like the sky-flower (an imaginary object). Until the time of cognition of the truth of the (real) reality (*tattva*), sāstric teaching is real (and the teaching true). When that comes about, it ceases being the means of knowing Brahman, pure consciousness, all differences and distinctions being swept away.

*Response*: Not so. The cognition, “There is the sāstric teaching,” is false (and thus there is no reason to believe the teaching). A false cognition of fire produced from a mistaken cognition of mist as smoke has a false (or unreal) object.

Nor has it been shown that (your) Brahman-cognition is not itself defeatable, by (say, the Buddhist view of enlightenment), “Just empty is reality (*tattva*).” Anything that you may claim for your Brahman-cognition could be claimed for this one. But enough with unreasonable, ridiculous arguments. Let us move on.

Para. 48.5-51 (ET 88-100, T 78-86). (Rāmānuja continues:) It has been alleged that the Upaniṣads, e.g., (*Ch* 6.2.1) “Being alone . . . was all this in the beginning,” teach that Brahman is homogeneous cognition, unparticularized. But the passage is taken out of context and misunderstood. What is taught, we see by looking at the full passage, is that Brahman is the material *and* instrumental cause of the world. This is fully explained in my *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, and here we shall go into detail later on.

Other passages (favorites of the Advaitins) are similarly taken out of context. (*Mu* 1.1.5 and *Tait* 2.1.1 are explained in their true sense.) The texts say that Brahman has a host of auspicious properties: eternity, omnipresence, being the source of everything, and so on. (As pointed out) the rules of grammatical agreement or co-ordination demand that there be different senses in using different words in attribution of a single subject,

e.g., “Brahman is the real, knowledge, the infinite.”

“One alone without a second” (*Ch* 6.2.1) teaches that Brahman is the single origin of the world. Thus the meaning is construed with that of other passages without conflict. The words that are negative in form (that the Advaitin is fond of quoting) exclude the idea that there is another all-ruler (or overlord, *adhiṣṭhātr*). The principle is that the teachings of all the recensions (*śākhā*, i.e., all the different Upaniṣads) have to be taken together.

Furthermore, it is correct to read the Upaniṣads as saying that the knower is of the nature of knowledge. But this does not mean that Brahman is distinctionless and only consciousness. (Eight Upaniṣadic passages are cited to show that the knower has the nature of knowledge, *Śve* 6.7-8 being fully quoted and not just indicated by a few words.)

Some Upaniṣadic passages, concerned with the *nirguṇa*, contrast with others concerned with the *saguṇa*. But this is not a contrast between a Brahman “qualityless” and “having qualities,” but between teachings focused on Brahman’s being free of undesirable qualities and those listing Brahman’s auspicious qualities. The former term is also sometimes to be understood as indicating that Brahman’s qualities are infinite. (Several Upaniṣadic passages are cited and analyzed in support of the point.)

*Objection*: What about the text (*Kena* 11) which declares that Brahman is not a cognitive object (*viṣaya*)?

*Answer* (by Rāmānuja): If that were the right reading, then there would not be the texts (*Tait* 2.1.1 and *Mu* 3.2.9) that say that liberation flows from (Brahman-) cognition. Furthermore, that text (*Kena* 11) would be self-contradictory (as having Brahman as its object and saying that Brahman is not such an object).

Other texts (e.g., *Br* 3.4.2) are rightly understood as saying that knowledge is an essential property of Brahman’s, denying that it is an adventitious or accidental quality but not denying that Brahman has knowledge at all. Similarly, texts (e.g., *Tait* 3.6.1) declare that bliss (*ānanda*) is essential to Brahman, not (as Advaitins are wont to think) that Brahman is nothing but bliss.

It has been alleged that several texts (*Br* 2.4.14, 4.4.19, and 4.5.15) deny distinctness and plurality (*bheda*). But what is meant is that the unity of the world derives from the singleness of Brahman, not that differences in the world are unreal—a teaching that stands in contradiction with (*Ch* 6.2.3), “May I become many (*bahu*); may I procreate.” It is laughable that the Upaniṣads would teach that Brahman becomes a variety (or multiplicity, *nānātva*) in accordance with perception and the other knowledge sources and then say that the teaching is wrong. The Upaniṣadic proclamation (*Tait* 2.7.1) is not that fear results only for those who perceive variety or multiplicity. For, there is the passage (*Ch* 3.14.1) that says that meditation on Brahman as everything (i.e., on Brahman as

being a multiplicity) is the way to achieve tranquillity. One has no fear when one realizes that the world with all its differences and multiplicity, from gods to inanimate things, has Brahman as its essential nature (or self).

Para. 52-58 (ET 100-124, T 86-102). *Objection* (by the Advaitin): The *Gītā* and the Purāṇas declare that the supreme reality is unparticularized knowledge.

*Answer* (by Rāmānuja): Wrong. Look at the texts. (Extensive passages from the *Gītā* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* are quoted.) These and other passages declare that (a) Brahman has no inauspicious quality and (b) is the abode of all auspicious qualities, sporting in creating, maintaining, and destroying the world. Even unconscious things are part of Brahman's body. Embodied souls do not recognize their essential nature, being engrossed in "spiritual ignorance" (*avidyā*).

*Objection*: A person devoted to yoga (as taught in the *Gītā* and elsewhere) is not to fill his mind with your idea of Brahman, which is admittedly present when the topic is the soul's (confused) involvement with the changes of nature (*prakṛti*), but rather with the idea of the self as devoid of distinctions and differences (summed up by *VP* 6.7.53): "(A mind) free from delimitations and distinctions."

*Answer*: You misinterpret the passage, ignoring the context. In that chapter (of the Purāṇa), yoga is being taught in eight stages (following the *Yogasūtra*, ch. 2). The discipline through (step five) "control over the sense organs" having been outlined, the passage you quote occurs to specify in what type of state the yogi must have his mind in order to proceed to deeper stages of meditation and concentration. There is no denial of distinctions and differences. (More from *VP*: 6.7.53 along with 6.7.55 and 6.7.69). Indeed, the chapter goes on to declare that God (Bhagavān) is the perfect object for concentration in yoga.

*Objection*: But there is the text (*VP* 1.2.6) that declares that Brahman is essentially knowledge, which implies that all objects are false (or unreal).

*Answer*: Wrong. Brahman, i.e., Viṣṇu, manifests things, as the cause of their origin, etc.—this is the śāstric teaching. There is no defeating of (cognition of) the world's reality.

Śāstric teaching (*Mbh* 1.1.273 is quoted) says also that one should amplify one's understanding of the Veda through study of the epics (*itihāsa*) and the Purāṇas. The difficulty is to understand together the sense of all the received texts. That's why Maitreya (according to *VP*) sought out the revered Parāśara who through yoga brought to immediacy for himself the true meaning of all the statements according to all the recensions (*śākhā*).

And Maitreya asks explicitly by what is this constituted that has been created by Brahman. The answer is Brahman.

The identity between Brahman and the world is not that between two

things that are exactly the same. Rather, the one is pervaded by the other, the world by Brahman as its “inner controller” and self. The world is constituted by Brahman in the sense that it is Brahman’s abundance and body. If the two were strictly identical as the same substance, then we would not be able to make sense of śāstric teaching as a whole and, furthermore, Brahman would be the bearer (essentially) of everything unfortunate (*asubhā*).

Thus the question (*VP* 1.3.1) is appropriate how Brahman, the unsullied, can be the creator, etc., of this world, and the answer (*VP* 1.3.2-3), which is also appropriate, is that it is through Brahman’s essential powers of creation, etc., like heating by fire. Brahman is distinct from everything else, like fire and water, but also has the power to bring about everything.

The (spiritual) error (talked about in *VP* and elsewhere) is not to regard the world—from gods to humans and inanimate things—as real, but rather to regard these things as real apart from Brahman, their self and pervader. The world is not constituted only of gods, humans, etc. The enlightened see everything as having the same self, see everything as the body of Brahman.

Different individual selves are not different in virtue of their essence but rather in virtue of connection with different modifications of nature (such as human bodies). The *Gītā* teaches this sameness (5.18 and 19 are quoted). The line (from *VP* 2.13.86) that there is nothing other (*para*) means that there is nothing other than Brahman in the sense of nothing higher (*para*) and nothing not having that as its self, not that Brahman is unparticularized. The analogy (*VP* 2.14.32) that different selves are like different holes in a flute is meant to bring out sameness of self made differently manifest by different material bodies. The teaching (of the entire section) concerns learning to distinguish the self and the body. It is not possible that the living individual (*jīva*) is strictly identical with the supreme, any more than it is that the self and the body are precisely the same. The sūtras also teach this (*BS* 1.2.21-22, 2.1.22, 4.4.17, 4.4.21, and 1.3.2 are quoted), as well as other authorities (the *BS* *vṛtti* is cited along with many Upaniṣads and *VP* and the *Gītā*).

The mystic sciences (the *vidyās*) that are focused on the supreme teach that meditation should be on Brahman replete with (auspicious) qualities. Imaginative exercises (*bhāvanās*) culminate in meditation on the Highest Brahman who is the “inner controller” and essentially knowledge (as well all other auspicious qualities). The śāstric teachings do not propound, in sum, something as unparticularized (as the supreme). Nor do they propound the unreality of created things. And they do not deny the differences among things conscious, things unconscious, and the Lord (*īśvara*).

Para. 59-60 (ET 124-129, T 102-107). *Objection* (by the Advaitin):

The entire world from the Lord to the controlled (inanimate things) is imaginatively projected, because of a fault, on something self-luminous, unparticularized. That “fault” is beginningless “spiritual ignorance,” *avidyā*—this has to be accepted on the strength of such Upaniṣadic passages as (*Ch* 8.3.2) “By falsehood are they obstructed (and kept from self-realization),” and because otherwise such statements as “Thou art That” could not be understood taking the case co-ordination to indicate that the living individual (*jīva*) is Brahman. This *avidyā* is not to be said to exist, since in that case it could not be defeated and shown to be an error (by Brahman-cognition); it is not to be said not to exist, since in that case it would not be perceived and (later) defeated. It is “impossible to explain” (*anirvacanīya*).

*Answer* (by Rāmānuja): Wrong. Where does *avidyā* reside?—this has to be asked. Not in the living individual (*jīva*) since that (on your view) is a result of *avidyā*. And not in Brahman since Brahman is by nature opposed to *avidyā* as self-luminous knowledge that defeats and dispels this “spiritual ignorance.”

(Nātha Muṇi has said on the second point:) “If Brahman were by nature (the locus of) *avidyā*, then nothing would be able to dispel it” (and so on).

*Objection*: Not by Brahman’s nature as knowledge is the dispelling produced but rather by the knowledge that Brahman is essentially knowledge.

*Answer*: No. You cannot maintain the distinction between the one as opposed to *avidyā* and the other as not, given that both are self-illuminating as (belonging to) what Brahman is essentially.

You yourself rightly reject the view that knowledge is itself “made known by another.” Thus unlike a piece of mother-of-pearl that can be misperceived because its nature is not self-illuminating and thus not opposed to ignorance of itself, Brahman’s nature is self-illuminating. Thus it cannot not be opposed to *avidyā*.

*Objection*: (You reason too much.) Its essential nature is established by its self-experience.

*Answer*: No. Its “being without a second” is established by its self-experience (according to you). But *avidyā* is “with a second” (according to you) and thus as essentially opposed to Brahman could not occur—nor could its defeating and dispelling.

*Objection*: This is a property, not what Brahman is essentially.

*Answer*: No. You yourself presume it proved that Brahman as essentially experience has no properties to be experienced. Therefore (again) Brahman as essentially knowledge could not be the locus of such non-knowledge.

Illuminating and non-illuminating are essentially opposed. The one entails the destruction of the other, as with light.

Furthermore, unless you admit a fault as entirely real over and against Brahman, you cannot explain the fundamental error (of spiritual ignorance). For, untoward consequences face the positions (a) that it is unreal (it could not block spiritual knowledge) and (b) that is real but not separate from Brahman (it could not occur, or if it could it could not be destroyed).

*Objection:* Correct—just what we intended to say. Spiritual ignorance is “impossible to explain” (*anirvacanīya*).

*Answer:* If cognition could have as its object something like that—neither real nor unreal, neither existent nor non-existent—then anything could be its object and indicated. The notion of a “knowledge source” and our entire conception of the way things are would be meaningless.

Para. 61-65 (ET 129-140, T 107-116). *Objection* (by the Advaitin): This *avidyā*, which is a positive entity (*bhāva*), is known by perception and inference. The inference is according to the rule that false appearances have a false (*mithyā*) cause. Thus this entire world comprised of appearances that are shown to be false by knowledge (of Brahman) has a false (or unreal) cause, *avidyā*, i.e., non-knowledge (*ajñāna*), which gives rise to the false appearances—Brahman being the material cause (*upādāna*) insofar as it is conditioned by it. The proving perceptions take the form, “I am ignorant,” “I do not know myself or another,” and so on, which are direct and non-inferential, like “I am happy.”

How perception reveals *avidyā* needs explaining. With the experience, “I am ignorant,” there can be no awareness of knowledge as the counterpositive (or absentee), because a self’s (self-)knowledge—assuming that the self were aware of such a counterpositive—would rule out the possibility of non-knowledge. But if the self were not aware of such a counterpositive, there could be no awareness of its absence (i.e., no awareness of *avidyā* as the prior absence of Brahman-knowledge—but there is awareness of *avidyā* according to the Advaitin). Thus “I am ignorant” or the like is a perception not of an absence but of a positive entity. This can be cognized while there is also cognition of the countercorrelate knowledge as belonging to the same property-bearer (i.e., the self).

*Objector.2* (against the Advaitin): Such non-knowledge as a positive entity would be opposed to the nature of the witness consciousness as illumining things as they are.

*Answer* (by objector.1, the Advaitin): Don’t think like that. There is no opposition between consciousness and non-knowledge. Otherwise, false appearances would not occur.

*Objector.2:* Non-knowledge is always non-knowledge *of* something in particular. And everything that could be that something is in general made known by a “knowledge source.” So how can there be this non-

knowledge, which (according to you) is of the ‘I’ as witness consciousness (since knowledge of the ‘I’ would exclude this non-knowledge)?

*Answer* (by objector.1, the Advaitin): There is no problem here. In the case of things themselves insentient, there does have to be prior knowledge of them for non-knowledge of them to be possible. But the case is different with the witnessing self, who knows itself self-luminously. This is what the non-knowledge here is of.

Thus from perception confirmed by inference *avidyā* is known as a positive entity. The inference—from the nature of any bit of knowledge as removing a non-knowledge that precedes it to this non-knowledge as antecedent to Brahman-knowledge—is supported by the example of a first bit of light destroying antecedent darkness, darkness which is itself a positive entity and not merely the absence of light.

*Response* (by Rāmānuja against the Advaitin, objector.1): Being a positive entity does not rescue your ‘non-knowledge’ from being impossible. Is the inner entity known or not known? If known, then that knowledge excludes your non-knowledge. If not known, then there is no possibility of cognizing such non-knowledge, which is defined by something (knowledge) not known.

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): The knowledge that destroys non-knowledge is cognized lucidly whereas it is known beforehand in a non-lucid manner.

*Response*: The non-knowledge that knowledge destroys is either not lucid-knowledge or not non-lucid-knowledge. The same dilemma faces these alternatives: either (a) the knowledges are not the same if not opposed and so the knowledge would not destroy the non-knowledge, or (b) if they are the same and are opposed, then such non-knowledge is impossible given that the inner entity is known.

Even if light need not be known to cognize darkness as it is, still darkness as ‘the absence of light’ or as ‘opposed to light’ requires that light (in general) be known.

Brahman is by nature eternal, transcendent, self-luminous consciousness, and can have no experience of non-knowledge because of the nature of its self-experience.

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): Brahman can if its nature is obscured.

*Response*: You cannot explain the obscurity alleged, for reasons already rehearsed.

Furthermore, does Brahman’s experience of non-knowledge arise from itself or another? Both options are closed. If from itself, either non-knowledge could not be destroyed or it would cancel out Brahman’s knowledge. If from another, what other? What sort of thing could give rise to knowledge of non-knowledge?

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): Previous non-knowledge.

*Response*: This invites the charge of infinite regress.

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): Yes, non-knowledge is beginningless, and along with Brahman's self-witnessing, simultaneously, non-knowledge hides Brahman (from consciousness).

*Response*: Wrong. Brahman which is essentially consciousness of self would have to be aware of this non-knowledge in order to be “self-witnessing” (since the non-knowledge would be intrinsic to Brahman). There is no getting around the problem of illumining and non-illumining being mutually opposed. Light, for example, is illumining if present, and does not illumine indistinctly.

Thus you cannot avoid the problem by talking about “indistinct” awareness—especially since you view Brahman as *homogeneous* “existence, consciousness, bliss” (*saccidānanda*). Things with parts or multiple attributes can be cognized indistinctly, since one part or another or one attribute or another may be hidden. But Brahman according to you has no divisions.

Furthermore, this *avidyā*, does it cease with the arising of knowledge of reality (*tattva*)? If it does not, then there is no supreme good. If it does, then we have to inquire about what is real.

Is the real distinctly luminous? Does it have such a nature before *avidyā* ceases, or only afterwards? On the first option, *avidyā* and its cessation are impossible. On the second, liberation would not be experience of the eternal, etc., since the real would have changed.

The problem is that you cannot find a place for this *avidyā* which is ruled out at every turn by other things you say. The theorist who wants to explain perceptual illusion by a fault that itself does not exist will find the task difficult. If unreal, non-existent “faults” can have such power over cognition, then it all might as well be the result of the void!

Your purported inference (see above) to *avidyā* is also no good. It proves just the opposite from what you want (namely, knowledge, not non-knowledge). Furthermore, its prover (namely, *since* it (a bit of knowledge) removes non-knowledge that precedes it) deviates (some bits of knowledge do not “remove” anything, e.g., Brahman's timeless knowledge of itself).

There is no support for the rule relied on by the example mentioned, the first bit of light to illumine a dark place. For, light does not illumine in the required sense; only consciousness illumines in that way. Light is an auxiliary cause in the case of certain types of perceptual knowledge. But it does not belong to the proper comparison class relative to your inference. Furthermore, illumining is not just the elimination of a previous obscurity but a making something known in a definite fashion such that it can be captured in everyday speech and the cognition of it guide effort and action.

There are also cogent counterinferences. (Nine formal proofs are

presented.) (1) The non-knowledge under discussion (non-knowledge of Brahman) does not have Brahman, which is homogeneous knowledge, as its locus, *since* it is non-knowledge, like non-knowledge of a piece of mother-of-pearl. (4) Brahman is not the site of non-knowledge, *since* it is not the knower (of non-knowledge), like a pot. (9) Non-knowledge in being a positive entity could not be destroyed by knowledge, *since* it is a positive entity, like a pot.

Para. 65-68 (ET 140-153, T 116-126). *Objection* (by the Advaitin): There is a common experience of fear, etc., being destroyed by knowledge defeating the supposition that made them appear.

*Response* (by Rāmānuja): It is not so. Fear and the like are momentary, and end of their own accord unless again given rise to.

To sum up, inference does not establish non-knowledge as a positive entity. Moreover, the thesis that a false appearance has to be have a false cause is refuted by later reasoning (under sūtra 2.1.4).

Therefore, there is no cognition that has as its object an inexplicable non-knowledge. Such non-knowledge is not to be accepted on the basis of a defeating cognition showing it to be cognized erroneously. For, only that which is known (in general) can be the object of an error that comes to be defeated.

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): A cognition of silver when the thing is mother-of-pearl occurs even at the time of the cognition, “That is not” (being the object of “That”). Since (with the two objects appearing simultaneously as shown by the case co-ordination in the verbalization, “That is not this”) the one thing is not appearing as the other or “otherwise.” The defeated is neither existent nor non-existent but rather “impossible to explain” (*anirvacanīya*).

*Response* (by Rāmānuja): No. At that time, too, you cannot avoid the fact that one thing is appearing in the fashion of another. Real silver (in general) is known. Only by accepting that something is appearing in the fashion of another is it possible to explain cognition, effort based thereon, defeating cognition, or error. Your very understanding of “being impossible to explain” depends on cognition, defeating cognition, and error. Thus, you yourself presuppose that (in illusion) one thing appears in the fashion of another.

Other views, too, of illusion presuppose our “appearing in the fashion of another” position, e.g., the *asat-khyāti* view (the appearance of the “non-existent”) in that the non-existent appears as existent, and the *ātma-khyāti* view (self-appearance) in that “self” appears as object (*artha*). Even in the case of the *akhyāti* view (i.e., the view that there is no non-veridical perception but in so-called illusion there is a failure to cognize the difference between an object presented perceptually, “This,” and one presented by memory, “silver”), there are two cognitions with their different objects (“This” and “silver”) appearing as one (i.e., in the

fashion of another, two cognitions, a perceiving and a remembering appearing as a *single* cognition, “This is silver”).

Furthermore, you who advocate that there is a “silver” not previously experienced and impossible to explain, which is the object of illusion, should explain how this thing comes about. You cannot say by perception of silver, since according to you such perception does not come before (as a cause must) the inexplicable object. Nor is it some fault, as in a sense organ, that is the cause, since nothing belonging to the subject (and deficiencies in sense organs belong to the person misperceiving, the subject) can produce an effect in the thing that is its object. Nor is it the sense organs, since they are causes of (veridical) cognition. And the view that the cause is a beginningless falsity of cognition has been thrown out already.

Moreover, why do you use the word “silver” and talk of a cognition of *silver*, as opposed to some other word like “pot,” if this thing is not previously experienced and is inexplicable?

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): Similarity.

*Response*: Then why do you use the expression “similar to *it* (i.e., silver)” and so on?

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): Connection to the universal (or class character, *jāti*, silverhood).

*Response*: Well, is this *jāti* real or unreal? According to you, it cannot be real, because then it could not be connected to something that is not that (i.e., not real, like your “silver”). It cannot be unreal, since it would not be connected to something real in the sense that it could be the object of the cognition or the word! Enough with such a badly reasoned theory!

Alternatively (there is the following position that also defeats the Advaita view of illusion and spiritual ignorance; sixteen verses from Baudhāyana are quoted):<sup>2</sup> “All cognition accords with an object—this is the view of those who know the Veda. Sacred texts (*śruti*) and other authorities (*smṛti*) teach that everything has the character of everything. Prior to creation (or “emanation,” *sṛṣṭi*) is the intention “May I be many” (securing the interrelation of everything). Phenomena are combinations, for example, the color of fire with its red due to one element, its white to another, and so on. This truth is why in ritual actions some things can substitute for others, there being common parts or natures. Mother-of-pearl is similar to silver. There is the same color and so on in both. Thus sometimes a person who desires silver sees only the

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2. The attribution is apparently Karmarkar’s best guess; Rāmānuja himself mentions no name or epithet.

silver color of an object that is mother-of-pearl due to a defect in the process of sight, and moves to pick it up. But with the defect gone, the difference is experienced and the mother-of-pearl part is known. He desists from such effort and action. The cognition of the color and so on in mother-of-pearl (though sometimes misdirecting action) was in accord with its object. The defeater/defeated relationship is explained by preponderance, whether the properties of silver are predominant, for example. Everyday speech and action are to be explained in this way.’’

In dreams, God (Bhagavān) shapes dreams for individual dreamers, creating objects that are not really there, as attested by scripture (*Bṛ* 4.3.10 and *Kātha* 5.8 are quoted). The sūtra-maker, too, considers and rejects the view (3.2.1 and 3.2.2) that the individual creates dream objects. Throughout a person’s transmigratory existence, he or she differs from the Lord (*īśvara*) precisely in not having the power to create at will real objects fulfilling her individual desires and intentions. This marvelous creation (or emanation, *śṛṣṭi*), which is real, is the Lord’s alone. The distinction between objects created by the Lord that are perceived in common by everyone and those that are created for an individual cognizer makes possible the defeater-defeated relation in that it is the latter that it is defeated (by cognition of intersubjective reality).

The position that all cognition accords with an object (*yathārthatva*) is concordant with the following analyses of illusions commonly cited in philosophic texts: the appearance of a yellow shell is due to the afflicted person’s sight picking up the yellow of bile in the eye, yellow bile that is very near and very real; the crystal that appears red is an illusion due to a rose behind it that is not seen but only its color; the illusion of the wheel of fire is caused by the rapid circling of the torch, the rapidity of the process preventing the non-fiery intervals from being perceived; the double moon by a double instrumentality in sight, and so on. The defects in the processes and the objects cognized are all in general quite real. The position faces no cogent complaint.

Right views are arrived at by legitimate knowledge sources, perception and the rest, and there is no point in trying to show all the errors in wrong views about illusions, since others have pointed them out. Here the right view is that Brahman creates the intersubjective world as well as some objects to be experienced by particular individuals only.

The thesis that scripture teaches a non-knowledge that is neither real nor non-real and “impossible to explain” is false. The texts (commonly cited by Advaitins in favor of this, such as *Ch* 8.3.2, 6.8.7, and 6.3.2, *Kātha* 3.1, *Śve* 4.10, and others) are not to be read in that way. The word *māyā* (for example, in *Śve* 4.10), “And one should know nature as *māyā*,” does not mean something indefinable or false and unreal (*mithyā*). In accordance with other usages (usages in *VP* and other texts are cited), it is said to belong to the Supreme Person as creating a multiple universe. It is

only to the individual that *māyā*, meaning “nature” as composed of the three *guṇas* or strands, is said to be difficult to transcend (*Gītā* 7.14), not to the Lord (nor is it meant that nature is essentially mysterious). The declaration, “Thou art That” (*Ch* 6.8.7), is rightly understood on the supposition that Brahman indwells the individual living being (*jīva*), having the *jīva* as body. It does not require any supposition of non-knowledge (mysteriously) qualifying Brahman.

Para. 69-71 (ET 153-162, T 126-129<sup>3</sup>). (Rāmānuja continues:) The position that Brahman is subject to non-knowledge is not found in the epics or Purāṇas.

*Objection:* The verse (from *VP*, 2.12.38) where it is said, “The stars are Viṣṇu,” states that Brahman is a single reality. The passage goes on to lay out the view that only as qualified by non-knowledge is Brahman the source of the multiple things of this world. (*VP* 2.12.38-45 is analyzed verse by verse in support of this reading.)

*Response* (by Rāmānuja): The passage is not to be read in that way. The non-knowledge referred to is the insentience of some parts of creation. They all nevertheless form part of the body of God, who is their “self” (*ātman*). (Rāmānuja provides the right reading of *VP* 2.12.38-45 in a second verse-by-verse analysis.) Knowledge is God’s true nature; insentience in created things has to do with bodies—the bodies of gods, humans, etc.—manifesting God’s intelligence. The phrase in the text, “is not” (or “non-being”) is used for insentient matter since it changes subject to the will of the “witnesses of the field” according to their *karman*—in contrast to what is not like that, which is referred to as “it is” (or “being”). A similar contrast is expressed elsewhere, e.g., with the words “true” and “false” (*satya* and *asatya*), “conscious” and “non-conscious” (*cit* and *acit*), and so on.

Para. 72-77 (ET 163-179, T 129-143). (Rāmānuja continues:) It is wrong to hold that scriptures teach that spiritual ignorance ceases only upon cognition of a homogeneous Brahman, since this view is contradicted by numerous texts: liberation comes about only from cognition of Brahman with attributes. We have already shown that even the “austere” (*śodhaka*) texts (favored by Advaitins) proclaim a view of Brahman with attributes.

“Thou art That” (with the “Thou” and the “That” in the same grammatical case) does not mean a unity devoid of diversity. The individual (*jīva*) denoted by “Thou” is part of the body of Brahman. If the pronoun were construed as denoting Brahman in its essential nature as

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3. Thibaut does not render para. 71, and follows divergent text for the last lines of 70.

knowledge free of all imperfections, the locus of all auspicious qualities, then Brahman would be imperfect—such is not possible. Furthermore, “That” cannot carry the weight of sublational knowledge, since a defeating sublation requires a positive attribute (e.g., being-mother-of-pearl in the case of sublation of a false silver cognition), and “That” by itself refers to none.

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): The substratum, previously concealed, is known (and expressed) as unconcealed by “That.”

*Response* (by Rāmānuja): No. It is impossible that there be a (perceptual) error and its defeater if the substratum (common to both) is unilluminated. Furthermore, a king deluded that he is a hunter is not undeluded by the mere knowledge that he is a man. Rather, knowing in advance that he is a man, he comes to learn that he is a king and becomes freed from the error.

By taking the two words “That” and “Thou” straightforwardly as Brahman (“That”) as the cause of the world and the individual (“Thou”), the statement says that the *jīva* forms part of the body of Brahman, that Brahman is its innermost self, Brahman, the Inner Controller. This fits with the immediate context (in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*) as well as with other Upaniṣadic proclamations (about a dozen are quoted and analyzed in support of the reading).

These texts show in sum that everything insofar as it is anything other than Brahman forms part of Brahman’s body. “Thou art That” (*Ch* 6.8.7) thus is a special instance of the truth declared in “All this has That as its self” (*Ch* 6.8.7).

Therefore, philosophers espousing unparticularized unity, or “non-distinctness in distinctness” (*bhedābheda*), or “exclusive distinctness” (*kevalabheda*) are wrong. (Viśiṣṭādvaita is the right view.)

*Objection* (by the Advaitin): Then whose identity would it be that is taught (in “Thou art That”)? It is (Brahman’s) the “That.”

*Response* (by Rāmānuja). No. The nature of the “That” has already been explained (in the passage and in other Upaniṣads).

With respect to the “non-distinctness in distinctness” (*bhedābheda*) view,

Para. 78-79 (ET 179-185, T 143-147).

Para. 80-84 (ET 186-94, T 148-156).

[end of commentary on sūtra 1.1.1]