

Obeisance to the Auspicious Guru

The Enlightened Eminently Engage in Empirical Endeavours

An inviolable Law of Vedanta is:

//One who denies a BMI for a Jnani denies a Jnani.

He who denies a Jnani denies himself the Liberating Jnana.//

It is the conclusion of Shankara in Gita verse 4.34:

//..By this the Lord means to say that that Knowledge alone which is imparted by *those who have realized the Truth* – and no other knowledge – can prove effective.//

In this verse the Lord teaches that the aspirant has to approach a Jnani, bow to him, serve him and pose questions on the Atman. If there was no BMI to a Jnani how can one implement the Lord's instruction?

We encounter two types of teaching in the Scripture and Shankara's commentaries. For example, in the Brahmasutra Bhashya we find these two typical teachings:

Teaching 1: 'The embodiedness of the Self is caused by wrong conception and so the person who has reached true knowledge *is free from his body*

even while still alive (Brahma sutra bhashya 1.1.4). [This is termed 'sadyomukti' or instant liberation]

Teaching 2: [Sutra bhashya 4.1.15]“The knowledge of the Self being essentially non-active destroys all works by sublating wrong knowledge; but wrong knowledge – comparable to the appearance of a double moon – **lasts for some time even after it has been sublated**, owing to the impression it has made. Moreover, it is not a matter for dispute at all whether the body of the Knower of Brahman continues to exist for sometime or not. For how can one contest the fact of another possessing the knowledge of Brahman – vouched for by his heart's conviction – and at the same time continuing with the body? This alone has been elaborated in the Shruti and Smriti in the form of teaching of the Sthitaprajna (Man of steady Knowledge). [Here we have the 'jivanmukti' or liberation while alive being depicted]

Now, are these two teachings contradictory? Far from it. They are actually complementary to each other. Nor are they two optional types of teaching where one can choose one and leave out the other. In simple terms, Teaching 1 is the depiction of the Absolute State of Brahman-Atman, the true state of the jiva. That state is the Goal, the end to be attained. Teaching 2 is the means to this end. Since the two teachings are related as means and end, they cannot be contradictory or optional. An aspirant,

Mumukshu, has to be well informed and be clearly aware of teaching 1, the Goal. Keeping this end in mind, he has to internalize that teaching through the medium of the teaching 2. Why is this so? It is because unless he is able to relate the Teaching 2 in terms of living it, he cannot attain the goal specified in teaching 1.

Some Parallels:

We can see some parallels in scriptural literature regarding the above concept of two types of teaching. In the Bhagavad Gita, for example, in the second chapter the Lord teaches the nature of the Self. Atman is not born, never dies, can never be cut, wet, burnt, etc., It is Immutable. This is teaching 1. Soon after this, in this very chapter the Lord, upon a question from Arjuna, gives out the seminal teaching of the Sthitaprajna (the Jivanmukta) the traits of a Man of Steady Knowledge. This is teaching 2. The Lord knows that unless teaching 1 is demonstrated in the life of a human, it is impossible to grasp, work for and attain it. This teaching 2 is further elucidated with more traits and examples in the 12th chapter (parA Bhakta) and the 14th chapter (GuNAteeta). In the 14th ch. Arjuna asks for the specific marks of a guNAteeta in order to internalize them. And Krishna gives out those specific marks.

Another parallel can be seen in the Acharya's Brahmasutra Bhashya itself. The adhyAsa Bhashya, the preamble, contains the teaching 1. Herein the Acharya makes the categorical statement that the problem of samsara,

embodiedness (BMI), and the means to get out of it, viz., the scripture teaching Liberation, all are within the realm of avidya alone. The Self is free of the BMI and therefore cannot have any transaction based on pramatru, pramana and prameya (the triad of knower-knowing-knowable).

After explicitly proclaiming that the Moksha Shastra, the Veda, too operates in the realm of avidya alone, Shankara, in the rest of the Sutra bhashya, embarks upon a detailed, brilliant analysis of the very Vedic passages in their hundreds. He does not create a divide between the teaching 1 of the Atman being unconnected to anything, even the veda, and the very relevance of the veda as applicable to the human in bondage. He makes the rest of the Sutrabhashya an unmatched teaching no.2 where the various aspects of the Veda as relevant to the life of the human in bondage are brought to the fore. Thus Shankara strikes the Gita-type, the Upanishad-type and even the Brahma Sutra-type relationship of 'Goal and Means' between teaching 1 and 2. Two instances of these types we saw already quoted above.

Why is the teaching of jivanmukti (which can never be divorced from the concept of prArabdha) so crucial to the Knowledge of Brahman? Shankara answers this question in the Gita Bhashya 2.55:

//All over the Scripture the characteristics of one who is established in Brahman that are mentioned *are the very means* for attaining that state, for this is attainable by effort.//

That shows that teaching 2 cannot be brushed aside as something unimportant or comparatively 'lower' in gradation compared to teaching 1. Attaining Brahman Knowledge depends upon practicing the jivanmukta traits. It is a *sine qua non*. If such were not the case, the Scripture and Shankara would have stopped with just mentioning the nature of Brahman. That would have meant that there have to be just the first two chapters of Brahmasutra – the samanvaya and avirodha. The third and fourth – saadhana and phala – could have been eliminated. But Vyasacharya takes pain to include these two chapters and Shankara comments on those two chapters too. Again, Lord Krishna need not have cared to teach the traits of the Jivanmukta if He had found them useless and could have stopped with the Atman-nature teaching in the second chapter.

Nowhere does Shankara or Vyasacharya or Krishna say that the Jivanmukta and his conduct is the imagination of the ajnani. On the other hand they all insist that it is imperative on the part of the seeker to give the utmost attention to the jivanmukta and his conduct, for this and this alone will give mukti. Teaching 1 is incomplete and impossible in the absence of teaching 2. Again, teaching 2 by itself will not be effective unless teaching 1 is imbibed free of doubt and misconception.

Sri Sureshwaracharya solves the problem

[The following essay is largely adapted from the explanatory notes appearing in the book titled 'The Naishkarmyasiddhi of Sureshvara', Madras University Philosophical series No. 47 – General Editor: Dr.R.Balasubramanian , Director, Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, 1988]

The question of the Jnani's action or otherwise has been variously discussed. Sri Sureshwaracharya in his Naishkarmyasiddhi handles this question in a deft manner, in accordance with the Advaitic tenets, and without contradicting Shankara.

A question about the conduct of the man of wisdom was raised by him in the verse 4.54: whether a jnani would be governed by scriptural injunctions and prohibitions, or whether he would behave according to his likes. He answered this question by saying that, since the man of enlightenment has no sense of 'I' and 'mine', and has no more identification with the BMI complex after the destruction of avidya, there remains nothing to be accomplished by him by following scriptural injunctions and prohibitions and that moral laxity is inconceivable in his case. The man of enlightenment who has realized the Self and who remains as the Self is no more embodied, **even though he is living**, since wrong knowledge which is the cause of embodiment has been removed. In the words of Shankara 'The embodiedness of the Self is caused by wrong conception and so the

person who has reached true knowledge is free from his body even while still alive (Brahma sutra bhashya 1.1.4).

Sureshvara says in the introduction to verse 4.60 of Naishkarmyasiddhi that there is another **traditional**, sAmpradAyika, **answer** to the same question. Though the knower of Brahman is not bound by the aggregate of BMI and is, therefore, disembodied *from his own perspective*, yet **from the vyavaharika perspective** the body which has been sublated as false continues for sometime till the exhaustion of prarabdha karma through experience. Sureshwara drives home the point by calling our attention to the experience of fear and trembling which continue for some time even after the removal of the illusion of the snake by the knowledge of the object in front as rope. This is called bAdhitanuvritti. In the same way, the continuance of the BMI complex after the sublation of avidya by the knowledge of the Self is a case of badhitaanuvritti. It may be noted that there is no incompatibility between the continuance of the BMI complex and liberation. ...Its continuance itself is not bondage. On the contrary, **attachment to** the BMI is bondage. The Jnani certainly has no such attachment to the BMI. Such a Jnani who is liberated in life plays the role of a preceptor, AchArya, and is engaged in action of his own accord for the sake of lokasangraha, for the preservation of the world-order, for social service, without the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. What Shankara says in His commentary on the Brahma sutra 4.1.15 is worth quoting here:

“The knowledge of the Self being essentially non-active destroys all works by sublating wrong knowledge; but wrong knowledge – comparable to the appearance of a double moon – lasts for some time even after it has been sublating, owing to the impression it has made. Moreover, it is not a matter for dispute at all whether the body of the Knower of Brahman continues to exist for sometime or not. For how can one contest the fact of another possessing the knowledge of Brahman – vouched for by his heart’s conviction – and at the same time continuing with the body?”

The next verse (4.61) of Naishkarmya siddhi is:

//Just as the destruction of an uprooted tree takes place only through the process of withering away, even so the destruction of the body of the one who has known the Self takes place only through the removal (of prarabdha karma).//

In this context, it would be relevant to see what Sureshwaracharya says in 4.51:

This man of enlightenment, seeing within himself the Self, not subject to acceptance or rejection, [conducts himself as follows]:

//He accepts everything and rejects everything. **Acceptance is admission of the world of duality [from the empirical standpoint], and rejection is [its denial] on account of its not being real.**//

If one keeps in mind the distinction between tattva drishti and vyavahara drishti,, the distinction between the perspective of reality and that of the empirical world, one will notice that there is no inconsistency in

Sureshwara's position. Since the man of knowledge knows the truth, he rejects the world of plurality as non-real. A person who knows the shell is no more deceived by the appearance of silver therein, and is in a position to speak of the shell-silver; even so the man of wisdom knows that it is BrahmanAtman which appears as the world of plurality. It means that he accepts the pluralistic universe as an appearance, ie, as empirically real. Since 'acceptance' and 'rejection' are from two different standpoints, there is no defect of inconsistency in Sureshwara's statement.

Moreover, this above stand of the Jnani's vision of the Truth and at the same time the interaction with the world is accepted by Shankara. In His commentary to the BhagavadGita verse 2.16, Shankara concludes by giving out the message of the verse:

// Thus, taking recourse to the way the Jnanis adopt, Arjuna, you too practice forbearance of the opposites viewing them as 'these are really nonexistent, yet they appear to be real'.//

Thus Shankara unambiguously states that the **Jnanis perceive the world but with the clear understanding that it is a mere appearance without any reality of its own.**

It is in the light of the foregoing that some verses (denying the concept of prArabdha) of the Aparokshanubhuti are to be understood. Clearly, these verses denying prarabdha to the Jnani, are from the Jnani's drishti, or

tattva drishti (teaching 1). That which has been stated by Shankara in the prasthanatraya Bhashya categorically in over a dozen places affirming the fact of Jnani's prarabdha (teaching 2) are to be seen, undoubtedly, from the vyavahara drishti. Shankara never confuses the aspirants. A competent Acharya would make it clear to the aspirant the difference in the two standpoints and remove the confusion that could perhaps arise reading the two apparently contradictory teachings given out by Shankara.

In fact, the verse preceding the 'denial' of prarabdha in Aparokshanubhuti reads:

//Oh Bright one! Never losing sight of Self-Knowledge, live the rest of the life experiencing the prarabdha in its entirety. While doing so never give room for **anger, grief, etc.** // 86.

This verse is essentially the teaching 2. How? See the crucial word 'anger, etc.' This is known as 'udvega' in Sanskrit. One can see this word occurring in the Gita multiple times in the context of jivanmukta lakshana.

The verses following the above verse in Aparokshanubhuti constitute the teaching 1. In this case, it is only that teaching 2 precedes teaching 1. Nevertheless, the teaching is not confusing either. What is to be noted is that when prArabdha is denied in the pAramarthic sense, it is definitely emphasized in the vyavaharic sense. Why is this? Is it not that we have to give up the vyavaharic and get hold of the paramarthic? True. But it is

impossible to give up the vyavaharic unless it is sublimated to naturally dove-tail into the paramarthic. That is the reason why jivanmukti is inevitable for the attainment of sadyomukti. Thus, there is absolutely no contradiction in the Aparokshanubhuti with the other statements of Shankara emphasizing prArabdha, both in this work and in His other works. In fact the Vivekachudamani (verses 450 onwards) too denies prArabdha from the ultimate standpoint. The commentary of the Renowned Jivanmukta Acharya Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Swamiji of Sringeri could be read for these verses. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has brought out an English translation of this work.

Shankara emphasizes the prArabdha concept even in His SopAna/sAdhana/upadesha panchaka, the Manisha panchaka, the Kaupina panchaka etc.

A synopsis of the above discussion:

- A Jnani has the tattvadrishhti, the absolute, paramarthika, view of the Self that he is never embodied. He has the knowledge of the unreality of the world that he lives in and interacts with. This is the vyavaharika drishti.
- Prarabdha is admitted to a Jnani by Shankara and Sureshwara only from the vyavaharika standpoint. This is because even the concept of a Jnani is relative. For, we find in the Gaudapadakarika a verse: na nirodho na cha utpatti....(From the

absolute, pAramarthika viewpoint, there is no creation, no dissolution, no seeker, no bondage, no liberated.)

- It is only the lack of discrimination between the two clearly different standpoints adopted by the scripture and the Acharyas that creates confusion.
- Seen from the two standpoints, the dozens of statements of the Acharyas can be neatly docketed in the appropriate slots without overlapping and contradicting.
- Shankara says in the BG verse 'upadekshyanti te jnanam' that the teaching received from a Jnani alone will be fruitful. This comment of Shankara speaks volumes of His/the scriptural view of the Jnani operating with a BMI.

Peace be to All

Essay 2

EMPIRICAL ENGAGEMENTS BY THE ENLIGHTENED IS AN UNDENIABLE FACT

We have incontrovertible evidence from the following sources for the fact of the Enlightened (jnani) engaging in the empirical transactions with a localized BMI:

1. Shruti

2. Smriti
3. Sutra (brahmasutra)
4. Shankara
5. Sureshwara
6. Logic (yukti)
7. Experience (anubhava)

We shall consider some instances from these:

Shruti:

- The Taittiriya Upanishad teaches that the Source from which all these beings have emerged, their ground of sustenance and the abode into which these lapse in dissolution is Brahman. Brahman is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the world. Surely, this is the highest order of empirical engagement. And this is Brahman's function. None can question Brahman's Enlightened status. Shankara establishes in Brihadaranyaka Up. 1.4.10 where occurs the famous Mahavakya 'aham Brahma asmi' that it is Brahman that 'acquires' this realization and thereupon attains the Universal Self status.
- In the Vishnu sahasranama, a collection of a thousand names of Lord Vishnu, there occurs a name 'Brahmavit', 'Knower of Brahman'. Lord

Vishnu is admitted to be the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the universe.

- Shankara addresses Lord Shiva in the ShivAnanda Lahari as 'Adi KuTumbiNe' meaning 'Oh Foremost Family-man!'. Surely none can question the enlightenment of Lord Shiva.
- One might object: These are all mere scriptural statements. Who has seen the Creator Lord with a BMI? The reply is found in the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna had the greatest good fortune of beholding the Lord both in His individual, localized BMI form and also in His Universal BMI Form. Ch. 11.45,46 are proof for this. Brahman, as Lord Krishna was born from a womb, grew up eating, played with the cowherdresses, fought wars, was injured and finally left His mortal body. All this was possible only because He had a localized, but highly powerful BMI.
- In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad there is the AjAtashatru BrAhmaNam (II.i). AjAtashatru, a Kshatriya, a Jnani, is the King. He is approached by a Brahmana named BAIAki, a conceited one, priding himself with an assumed Brahman-Knowledge. He visits the King and offers to teach him Atma vidya and only ends up as the King AjAtashatru's disciple. In the course of the discourse between them AjAtashatru holds Baalaaki by hand and leads him to a sleeping man for conducting some experiments. This episode in the Upanishad

proves that : the Jnani Ajaatashatru had a body, could be a King engaged in empirical duties, had a hand, had eyes, ears, a mouth to talk to Baalaaki and a mind to process the info. received from B and to reply to B. He had legs to walk to the sleeping man, etc. By implication, this Jnani had a stomach which he filled now and then to stay alive. He had prAna too, so that he could be alive. [Although the Upanishad does not specifically mention these things, we, in our deep ajnAna of the Vedanta shastra, are required to 'Discover' them in order to convince ourselves that the Jnani operates with a localized BMI!! What a pity!!]

- In the same Upanishad we have Sage Yajnavalkya, a Jnani who taught King Janaka who also became a Jnani owing to the teaching. Y was a householder, was extremely wealthy and had two wives named KatyAyani and Maitreyi. Some of the finest teachings on Atman emerged from his discourse with Maitreyi. This episode also proves that a Jnani has a localized BMI and operates through that equipment. (hands, feet, mouth, etc. are also to be 'discovered' by us). Y and J undoubtedly enlightened ones, did engage in empirical transactions.
- King Janaka becomes enlightened by the teaching of Y. Y makes the famous statement: 'abhayam vai janaka prAptosi' (O Jananka, you have attained Fearlessness). Soon after this statement, J replies to Y

offering, nay keeping the entirety of his Kingly possessions at the feet of Y for his own use. This shows that a Jnani, Janaka, can and will respond to a name even after realization. He will not turn a deaf ear to names addressed to him just because of his realization of the All-pervading, nirguNa Brahman as his very self.

- This also shows that a BMI for a Jnani is not projected by the ajnanis. Sage Yajnavalkya was Himself a Jnani. He addressed and conversed with Janaka even after Janaka was enlightened.
- In the Valmiki Ramayana there is an occasion when Rama declares: 'AtmAnam mAnuSham manye rAmam dasharatAtmajam' [I regard myself a human named Rama, the son of Dasharatha] Despite the Lord declaring Himself, in all His humility, to be a mere human, with a name and an identity relating Himself as a son of, does it in any way affect the Supremely Realized status of the Lord?
- In the Chandogya Upanishad we have the episode of UddAlaka, a father, a Jnani, discoursing with Shvetaketu, his son. The famous 'Tat tvam asi' teaching is a result of this discourse. Evidently Uddalaka engaged in empirical duties and had a localized BMI. Shvetaketu too became a Jnani, as per the Upanishad.
- In this very Upanishad we have the Narada and Sanatkumara discourse. Sanatkumara is a Jnani approached by Narada. S, over a

long dialogue gives out the teaching to Narada. Evidently, Sanatkumara had a BMI, ears, mouth, mind, etc. to our great surprise.

- In the Taittiriya Upanishad we have the father VaruNa, a Jnani, teaching his son Bhrigu, the Self-knowledge. Again, V should have had a localized BMI, to our utter surprise, in order to successfully communicate with his son, who became a Jnani.
- Bhrigu, sings in great joy, the Eureka, in the words 'Aham annam, aham annam, aham annam..' expressing his attainment of Atman knowledge. Surely, he must have had a mouth, vocal cords, mind, prana, etc. to be alive to give expression to it after attaining Jnana.
- In the Kathopanishad, the Acharya is none other than Lord Yama, the Lord of Death. He imparts Self-knowledge to Nachiketas. Yama, the Jnani, is engaged in the busiest empirical duty, of administering death to the multitudes of beings! The Upanishad speaks of a dialogue between Yama and Nachiketas. Initially, Yama, offers the traditional worship to the visitor Nachiketas, in all humility, by washing Nachiketas' feet. Yama is asked to do this by his women folk. In the course of the teaching, in appreciation of Nachiketas' sharp intellect, Yama gifts him an ornament of high value, from what He himself is wearing. All these events show that Yama, the Enlightened, had a body, hands, eyes, mouth, a virtue-filled mind, etc.

We shall take up the Smriti evidence for the Jnani's engaging in empirical duties:

- The Gita is replete with the proof of the Jnani having a localized BMI. For instance, in the 3rd ch. Krishna teaches that a Jnani should not unsettle the ignorant people who are wedded to karma alone (3.25, 26). He says the Jnani should be a role-model to the ignorant ones **by devoutly engaging himself** in the scripturally ordained karma, of course, with the full realization that he is not the doer.
- In 3.20 He says: Janaka, etc. were engaged in Karma. So you too, Arjuna, do not give up karma. Shankara comments: The wise (Jnani) Kshatriyas of old, such as Janaka and Ashvapati tried by action alone to attain Moksha.
- In 3.24/25 Shankara comments: Suppose, you or any other man thinks that he has achieved his ends and has realized the Self, **even he should work for the welfare of others**, though for himself he may have nothing to do.
- In 3.22 the Blessed Lord shows Himself as an example. Says He: I have nothing whatsoever to achieve in the three worlds.... yet I engage in action.

- In verse 2.55, 56 we have the depiction of a Man of Steady Knowledge: He has a mind that is not tormented by misery, not elated in joy, etc. 'duHkeShu anudvigna manaaH'. This shows that the Enlightened has a mind. Only when there is the possibility of misery, joy, etc. occurring, can there be the question of not being affected by them. Another word here is: manOgatAn kAmAn, that is he rids the mind of all the desires. This also shows that the Jnani has a mind. And it is a localized one. How do we assert this? When a Jnani rids his mind of desires, other ajnAni's do not experience that their minds are also rid of desires. This is proof of the localized state of the Jnani's mind.
- BG 2.61 says that he whose sense organs are controlled is a sthitaprajna. This shows that the Enlightened one has sense organs, indriyas. And these are essentially localized. Proof? When his sense organs are controlled, the other ajnanis who have not done that do not experience the benefit of calm.
- BG 6.20 uses a word 'sthira buddhiH' showing that the Jnani has an intellect that is firm. This is also essentially localized. Proof? When he has a firm intellect, the ajnanins who have not a firm intellect do not experience the Steadiness of Knowledge.
- BG 6.22 says: 'When having obtained It (the Knowledge of Self), he thinks no other acquisition superior to It; when, therein

established, he is not moved even by a great pain.’ Shankara comments: Pain: such as may be caused by a sword-cut, etc. This shows that the Jnani has a physical body. Proof? A sword-cut can be inflicted only on a physical body. And this is essentially localized. For, when the Jnani gets a sword-cut, as for example when Ramana was hit by the thieves, the others around do not experience the pain.

The above instances prove to us that a Jnani has a localized Body, sense organs, mind and intellect and works in the world without any attachment.

There is the instance of a Jnani, Dharma VyAdha, described in the Mahabharata. He was a butcher. Certainly, a butcher’s job is an empirical engagement. He too must have had a physical body, hands to cut the animal flesh, a mind to sell the meat and take the money, etc. All these must have been localized ones only. He had parents whom he served with great devotion. When he was engaged as a butcher, certainly his parents did not experience that they were also cutting the meat, etc. This shows that that Jnani’s BMI was localized.

Let us see some instances of the Enlightened one’s empirical engagements as mentioned in the Brahma sutras:

The sutra 'yAvadadhikAram avasthitiH...' (3.3.32) says: For liberated beings with a mission, there is corporeal existence as long as the mission demands it. One could read the commentary to get more details.

Sutra 4.1.19 says: 'But exhausting the other two through experiencing them one merges in Brahman.' Shankara says: **That the dualistic vision lasts before the fall of the body** (for the enlightened person) is because of the need of exhausting the remaining portion of the prArabdha through experience. But after death there is no such dualistic vision.

This shows that the enlightened one will continue in the BMI, localized, experiencing the fruit of the prArabdha. He will continue to experience duality (although with the firm realization of its unreality) till the fall of the body. This quote from Shankara also teaches us that the Jnani has the Unified Vision of the Self and also the dualistic vision to carry on the empirical engagements. That both these diametrically opposed visions exist in him without contradicting each other is the beauty of Jivanmukti.

A doubt: Has not Shankara declared in the First chapter of the Brahmasutra commentary that all duality will end immediately upon the dawn of Brahman knowledge? Has he forgotten that while making the statement of continuing of duality for the Jnani till death?

Reply: No. What Shankara has stated in the earlier part of Brahmasutra commentary is only the conviction that arises in the Jnani's mind about the

unreality of the dualistic world. This conviction does not mean the disappearance of duality. Hence, there is no contradiction in Shankara's two statements.

Did Acharya Shankara, admitted to be an Enlightened One, have a localized BMI?

We get the answer to this from His own words. In the Taittiriya Upanishad Bhashyam (II.8) we come across a very rare instance of Shankara referring to Himself in the first person singular. All over the commentary literature He refers to Himself, the Advaitin, as 'we shall refute it, we shall consider it' etc. But in this rare instance He says:

//Objection: Because there are many opponents. You are a monist, since you follow the Vedic ideas, while the dualists are many who are outside the Vedic pale and who are opposed to you. Therefore I apprehend that you will not be able to determine.

Reply: **This itself is a blessing for Me that you brand Me as sworn to monism and faced by many who are wedded to plurality. Therefore I shall conquer all! And so I begin the discussion.// His original words are even more striking: 'Yetad eva Mey svasti ayanam. Ato jEShyAmi sarvAn! Arabhe cha chintAm.'**

What is the proof for Shankara's BMI to be a localized one? When He said 'I shall conquer all', the others did not experience that same feeling in their minds: 'I shall conquer all'. This shows that Shankara's intellect as a

commentator was subject to Him alone and did not pervade all others in the universe. In this instance, from His own words we conclude that the Jnani has an ego too. That a Jnani has a body, shareeram, was confirmed by Shankara Himself in the Brahma sutra bhashya quote we saw already. That a Jnani has a mind, intellect, etc. is undeniable. That all these are localized is also unquestionable. And such a mind holds a reflection of consciousness (RC) is also proved beyond doubt. It is only in a RC does a person experience ignorance, samsara. It is with the RC only he does sadhana. It is only in the RC he realizes his own Brahman nature. It is in the RC alone he retains that realization. All this is brought out by Shankara Himself in the Sutra bhashya quote 1.4.15 where He uses the word: 'sva-hRdaya pratyayam brahma bhAvam' which means the Brahmanhood of oneself is experienced by oneself in one's own localized RC. Elsewhere in the Gitabhashya (13.2) He has categorically confirmed that Avidya too is experienced as a pratyaya, a thought. Surely, for being experienced as an object, vishaya, avidya has to be a bhAva padArtha. An unreal object, like a rope-snake, can be an object of experience. But certainly a vandhyA putra, or a hare's horn can not be a vishaya for experience.

When we say that a Jnani's mind is an expanded one what we mean is His vision of the Universal Self. This does not mean that his Self-realization, hunger, thoughts, pain, pleasures, etc. are reflected in/experienced by the unenlightened and vice versa.

Shankara's views on the Enlightened one's Empirical Engagements with an essentially localized BMI has been provided above in the form of His commentaries.

Sureshwaracharya's views on the above are available in the Brihadaranyaka Up. Bhashya Vartika 1.4.10. In the Taittiriya Up. Bhashya Vartika too he gives his views. Ref. 3.77, 78, 79, 81, 82.

In the Naishkarmya siddhi too Sureshwara gives his views about the Jnani's BMI owing to prArabdha karma. For instance he says in 4.62:

//If a person who has realized the non-dual reality could behave as he liked, then what is the difference between a dog and the seer of truth in respect of eating what is prohibited?//

Surely, the above can be said only where there is the possibility of a Jnani, in a localized BMI, to be engaged in empirical transactions. If there is no possibility of a BMI for the Jnani, Sureshwara cannot say the above.

Swami Vidyanaraya has said in the Panchadashi:

jnAninA charitum shakyam samyak rAjyAdi loukikam

[It is very well possible for the Jnani to engage in empirical duties such as administering a Kingdom]. We have seen specific cases of this in the foregoing.

Logic has it that a body that has taken birth, given the occasion for Knowledge to dawn, will not vanish upon realization. This is because, as Shankara has clarified, Brahman Knowledge is an antidote for avidya alone and is not an opposing force for the BMI. Shankara has stated His own experience in this regard in the Sutra bhashya quote 1. 4 15.

In no place does Shankara say that the Jnani's BMI is an imagination on the part of the onlookers. In the Gita bhashya He comments in a place: the actions of a jnani is superposed by the ignorant. What He means by this is: the others believe that the Jnani does these actions with the 'I am the doer' feeling. That alone is the superimposition. If this is not admitted, all the instances quoted by Krishna, etc. will be contradicted.

So what more evidence do we need to prove the fact of Jivanmukti, BMI, praarabdha, etc. for a Jnani?

There is this 'catch-22' situation in denying empirical engagements to the enlightened: (According to the internet Urban Dictionary: 'catch-22' is: A **situation** where both choices would have negative impacts on oneself.)

1. Shankara is not an enlightened Acharya.
2. The Commentaries that we have in the name of Shankara are authored by an ajnAni.

Shankara will have to be regarded as an unenlightened one. Why? Because He wrote the Bhashyam. The Bhashyam can be written only by using the BMI. These are not there for an enlightened. As a result of this, we have to deem the bhashyam that we have now to be a product of some unenlightened person. If we accept Shankara as a Jnani, we cannot hold him to be a bhAshyakAra. The bhashyam also will lose its revelatory nature, prAmANyam, as it is not authored by a Jnani.

This absurdity can be avoided only if we take the path of the Shruti, the Sutra, the Gita, Shankara, Sureshwara, etc. and accept the concepts of Jnani, prArabdha, localized BMI for him, etc.

There is further difficulty for those who, in their ignorance of the Scriptural methods as taught by Shankara, insist that there is no BMI for a jnani. If the Acharya who has introduced this skewed thinking born of his personal understanding is deemed a Jnani by his followers, then his words/writings will be an impossibility as they have to be done with the BMI only. If he is regarded as not enlightened, then his words will have no prAmANyam in this very matter. The Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.8 describes such a case as 'andhenaiva neeyamAnA yathA andhAH', the blind leading the blind.

Empirical engagements of an enlightened cannot be there in the following situations:

- The person kills himself immediately after realization. (But lo! This is also not possible for he won't have a body to be killed or any instrument he can use to kill himself!!)
- The Jnani expends his prArabdha and dies a natural death. (This is the natural, scripturally admitted way.)
- The Jnani immediately after realization goes into irreversible samAdhi and the body withers away in time.

Anubhava or Experience of Jnani-s is also proof for their having a localized BMI. Shankara Himself has expressed it in no uncertain terms.

Logic too is in support of this. Shankara gives the logic: Jnanam is the dispeller of the wrong notion of one's embodiedness. Jnanam is NOT the destroyer of the body. The body, born of natural forces will meet its end in

the natural course. Shankara gives this logic in several places in the commentaries.

Thus, in the foregoing we have considered all the possible sources, pramanams, to establish that the Enlightened ones Eminently Engage in Empirical Endeavours.

It is the opinion of this author that the various topics dealt with here are self-explanatory. If anyone needs further clarification on any of the topics the best recourse is to go to the very source books, references for which are amply provided.

(The above article is dedicated to the Acharyas of the Vedantic tradition who have handed down the esoteric wisdom with the utmost clarity in their infinite compassion to the seeking humanity.)