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Author(s): Michael Comans

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Jan., 1993), pp. 19-38

Published by: [University of Hawai'i Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1399467>

Accessed: 22/12/2012 20:11

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THE QUESTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF *SAMĀDHI* IN MODERN AND CLASSICAL ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

Michael Comans

The word *samādhī*¹ became a part of the vocabulary of a number of Western intellectuals toward the end of the first half of this century. Two well-known writers, Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood, were impressed by Eastern and specifically by Indian thought. Huxley made a popular anthology of Eastern and Western mystical literature under the title *The Perennial Philosophy* (1946), and in his last novel, *Island* (1962), words such as *mokṣa* and *samādhī* occur untranslated. In both these works, Huxley uses the words “false *samādhī*,” implying that the reader was already conversant with what *samādhī* actually is. Isherwood wrote an account of the life of the nineteenth-century Bengali mystic Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, *Ramakrishna and His Disciples* (1959), and he published as the second part of his autobiographical trilogy an account of the years he spent with his own guru, Swāmī Prabhavānanda of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Order, in *My Guru and His Disciple* (1980). Why these writers were drawn toward Eastern spiritual thought, and to the Vedānta teachings in particular, is not the subject for discussion here. But perhaps one significant reason is that with the decline in organized religion after World War I, these writers found in the Vedānta, as presented to them by the followers of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa and his disciple Swāmī Vivekānanda, a spirituality which emphasized the authority of firsthand experience as the only way to verify what was presented as the Truth. The Vedānta, as they saw it, was a “minimum working hypothesis,” which could be validated through cultivating a certain type of experience, and that experience was seen to be a mystical, super-conscious state of awareness called *samādhī*.

Isherwood edited a book of articles titled *Vedanta for the Western World* (1948). In his introduction he emphasizes the centrality of having a direct, personal experience of Reality, which, he says, the Christian writers call “mystic union” and Vedāntists call “samadhi.” Isherwood raises the question as to how Reality can be experienced if it is beyond sense perception, and he answers the question in terms of *samādhī* experience:

Samadhi is said to be a fourth kind of consciousness: it is beyond the states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. Those who have witnessed it as an external phenomenon report that the experiencer appeared to have fallen into a kind of trance. The hair on the head and body stood erect. The half-closed eyes became fixed. Sometimes there was an astonishing loss of weight, or even levitation of the body from the ground. But these are mere symptoms, and tell us nothing. There is only one way to find out what samadhi is like: you must have it yourself.²

Centre for Indian
Studies, University of
Sydney

Philosophy East & West
Volume 43, Number 1
January 1993
19–38

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Huxley and Isherwood did not find Indian spirituality by journeying to India—rather it was India which found them; and the variety of Indian spirituality with which these Englishmen came into contact in California in the late 1930s was that of the Vedānta Society, founded by Swāmī Vivekānanda and his followers, who were monks of the recently established (1886) Order of Rāmakṛṣṇa. If we seek to locate the source of the orientation of spiritual life around the cultivation of *samādhi* experience, which has become one of the principal characteristics of modern Vedānta, it must be traced to Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa himself. Rāmakṛṣṇa was not a Vedāntin in the orthodox sense of one who has received instruction centered on the exegesis of the sacred texts (*śāstra*), which are generally in Sanskrit, from a teacher (*ācārya*), and who then consciously locates himself within that specific body of received teachings (*sampradāya*). Rāmakṛṣṇa, as is well known, affirmed that a variety of diverse disciplines and traditions within Hinduism, and even outside of Hinduism, were valid in that they were all efficacious means toward the same spiritual goal. However, as has been pointed out, it would be most correct to locate Rāmakṛṣṇa's teachings within a Tantric paradigm.³ Tantra is an expressly experience-oriented discipline and it relies upon yoga techniques, particularly those of Haṭha Yoga,⁴ to bring about a *samādhi* experience. Rāmakṛṣṇa frequently underwent trance-like states, which are referred to in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* as *samādhi* experiences. A typical description in the *Gospel* would be the following passage:

At the mere mention of Krishna and Arjuna the Master went into samadhi. In the twinkling of an eye his body became motionless and his eyeballs transfixed, while his breathing could scarcely be noticed.⁵

Rāmakṛṣṇa has himself linked the occurrence of *samādhi* with Kuṇḍaliṇī Yoga, which is referred to in the treatises on Haṭha Yoga and is fundamental to Tantra soteriology. For example, Rāmakṛṣṇa is recorded as having remarked:

A man's spiritual consciousness is not awakened unless his Kundalini is aroused.

The Kundalini dwells in the Muladhara. When it is aroused, it passes along the Sushumna nerve, goes through the centres of Svadhisthana, Manipura, and so on, and at last reaches the head. This is called the movement of the Mahavayu, the Spiritual Current. It culminates in samadhi.⁶

From the above we should be able to see the importance that the *samādhi* experience had in the life and teachings of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa. Such an experience-oriented view of spirituality was a legacy which passed from Rāmakṛṣṇa to Vivekānanda. Vivekānanda was receptive to this view, for it seemed to agree with what he had studied of the British empiricist philosophers and the positivist Auguste Comte, insofar as they

had stressed the centrality of empirical experience. Vivekānanda extended the empiricist epistemology that all knowledge is derived from sense experience into the domain of metaphysics, for he thought that since experience is the basis of all knowledge, then if a metaphysical Reality exists, it, too, ought to be available for direct experience.⁷ And from his association with Rāmakṛṣṇa he gathered that *samādhi* was the experience required in order to know God. In his writings he placed much emphasis on the necessity of attaining *samādhi*. He loosely translated *samādhi* as “super-consciousness,”⁸ and he stated in his work *Rāja-Yoga*, a commentary in English on the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali, that *samādhi* experience was the acme of spiritual life:

Samadhi is the property of every human being—nay, every animal. From the lowest animal to the highest angel, some time or other, each one will have to come to that state, and then, and then alone, will real religion begin for him. Until then we only struggle towards that stage. There is no difference now between us and those who have no religion, because we have no experience. What is concentration good for, save to bring us to that experience? Each one of the steps to attain samadhi has been reasoned out, properly adjusted, scientifically organized, and, when faithfully practised, will surely lead us to the desired end. Then all sorrows cease, all miseries vanish; the seeds of actions will be burnt, and the soul will be free for ever.⁹

Vivekānanda was attracted to Rāmakṛṣṇa for reasons somewhat similar to those that initially attracted Huxley and Isherwood to the Vedānta taught by the followers of Vivekānanda: they all sought some direct, experiential verification of the propositions of religious metaphysics, and they all came to believe that the key to such verification lay in the attainment of a *samādhi* or “super-conscious” experience. This legacy of Rāmakṛṣṇa, the search for an extra-ordinary experience in order to validate spiritual life, not only extended to the West via the Rāmakṛṣṇa Order of monks that Vivekānanda helped to found, but it also became a dominant view within the Western-educated Indian middle class through the spread of Rāmakṛṣṇa-Vivekānanda literature. The modern Indian philosopher, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, an eloquent advocate of the importance of experience in religion, has described *samādhi* in the following manner: “In samadhi or enstatic consciousness we have a sense of immediate contact with ultimate reality.... It is a state of pure apprehension....”¹⁰

At this point the reader may wonder whether we are not stating the obvious, for is it not precisely because *samādhi* is so important that modern Vedāntins such as Vivekānanda and Radhakrishnan gave it such emphasis? It is certainly important to modern Vedānta, but the question can be legitimately raised as to what importance it has in the Upaniṣads, the very source of the Vedānta, and in the classical Vedānta such as in

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the works of Śaṅkara, the most famous of all the Vedānta teachers. That is the topic which we shall now address.

The first point to be noted is that the word *samādhi* does not occur in the ten major Upaniṣads upon which Śaṅkara has commented.¹¹ This is not a matter to be lightly passed over, for if the attainment of *samādhi* is central to the experiential verification of the Vedānta, as we can gather it is, judging by the statements of some modern Vedāntins such as those cited above, then one would legitimately expect the term to appear in the major Upaniṣads which are the very source of the Vedānta. Yet the word does not occur. The closest approximation to the word *samādhi* in the early Upaniṣads is the past passive participle *samāhita* in the *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣads.¹² In both texts the word *samāhita* is not used in the technical meaning of *samādhi*, that is, in the sense of a meditative absorption or *enstasis*, although the closest approximation to this sense occurs in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. In the first reference (*BU* 4.2.1), Yājñavalkya tells Janaka: "You have fully equipped your mind (*samāhitātmā*) with so many secret names [of Brahman, that is, Upaniṣads]."¹³ Here the word *samāhita* should be translated as "concentrated, collected, brought together, or composed."

In the second occurrence (*BU* 4.4.23), Yājñavalkya tells Janaka that a knower of Brahman becomes "calm (*śānta*), controlled (*dānta*), withdrawn from sense pleasures (*uparati*), forbearing (*titikṣu*), and collected in mind (*samāhita*). This reference to *samāhita* is the closest approximation in the Upaniṣads to the term *samādhi*, which is well known in the later yoga literature. However, the two terms are not synonyms, for in the Upaniṣad the word *samāhita* means "collectedness of mind," and there is no reference to a meditation practice leading to the suspension of the faculties such as we find in the literature dealing with yoga. The five mental qualities mentioned in *BU* 4.4.3 later formed, with the addition of faith (*śraddhā*), a list of six qualifications required of a Vedāntic student, and they are frequently to be found at the beginning of Vedāntic texts.¹⁴ In these texts, the past participles used in the Upaniṣads are regularly changed into nominal forms: *śānta* becomes *śama*, *dānta* becomes *dama*, and *samāhita* becomes *samādhāna*, but not the cognate noun *samādhi*. It would thus appear that, while Vedānta authors understood *samāhita* and *samādhāna* as equivalent terms, they did not wish to equate them with the word *samādhi*; otherwise there would have been no reason why that term could not have been used instead of *samādhāna*. But it seems to have been deliberately avoided, except in the case of the later Vedānta work, *Vedāntasāra*, to which we shall have occasion to refer. Thus we would suggest that, in the Vedānta texts, *samādhāna* does not have the same meaning that the word *samādhi* has in yoga texts. This is borne out when we look at how Vedānta authors describe the terms *samāhita* and *samādhāna*. Śaṅkara, in *BU* 4.2.1, glosses *samāhitātmā* as

saṃyuktāmā, “well equipped or connected.” In *BU* 4.4.23, he explains the term *samāhita* as “becoming one-pointed (*aikāgrya*) through dissociation from the movements of the sense-organs and the mind.”¹⁵ The term occurs again in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.24 in the negative form *asamāhita*, which Śaṅkara glosses as “one whose mind is not one-pointed (*anekāgrya*), whose mind is scattered.”¹⁶ In introductory Vedānta manuals, *samādhāna* is also explained by the term “one-pointed” (*ekāgrya*).¹⁷ The word *samādhāna* can thus be understood as having the meaning of “one-pointed” (*ekāgrya*). In the *Yogasūtra*, “one-pointed” (*ekāgrya*) is used to define concentration (*dhāraṇā*),¹⁸ which is the sixth of the eight limbs of Yoga and a preliminary discipline to *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. We may see, then, that the Vedāntic *samādhāna* means “one-pointedness” and would be equivalent to the yoga *dhāraṇā*, but it is not equivalent to the yoga *samādhi*.

The word *samādhi* first appears in the Hindu scriptures in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad* (6.18, 34), a text which does not belong to the strata of the early Upaniṣads¹⁹ and which mentions five of the eight limbs of classical Yoga. The word also occurs in some of the Yoga and *Sannyāsa Upaniṣads* of the *Atharvaveda*.²⁰ *Samādhi* would thus seem to be a part of yogic practice which has entered into the later Upaniṣadic literature through such texts as the Yoga Upaniṣads as a result of what Eliade calls “the constant osmosis between the Upaniṣadic and yogic milieus.”²¹ The diverse teachings of yoga were systematized in Patañjali’s *Yogasūtras*, where it is explained that the goal of yoga is to restrain completely all mental fluctuations (*vṛtti*) so as to bring about the state of *samādhi*. *Samādhi* itself has two stages, *saṃprajñātasamādhi*, or an enstasis where there is still object-consciousness, and *asaṃprajñātasamādhi* or *nirbījasamādhi*, where there is no longer any object-consciousness. *Asaṃprajñātasamādhi* became known in later Vedānta circles as *nirvikalpasamādhi*.²² The point to be noted about yoga is that its whole soteriology is based upon the suppression of mental fluctuations so as to pass firstly into *saṃprajñātasamādhi* and from there, through the complete suppression of all mental fluctuations, into *asaṃprajñātasamādhi*, in which state the Self remains solely in and as itself without being hidden by external, conditioning factors imposed by the mind (*citta*).

When we examine the works of Śaṅkara, however, we find a very sparing use of the word *samādhi*.²³ In the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* he makes three references to *samādhi* as a condition of absorption or enstasis.²⁴ In the first (2.1.9), he implicitly refutes the idea that *samādhi* is, of itself, the means for liberation, for he says:



Though there is the natural eradication of difference in deep sleep and in *samādhi* etc., because false knowledge has not been removed, differences occur once again upon waking just like before.²⁵

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What Śaṅkara says is that duality, such as the fundamental distinction between subject and object, is obliterated in deep sleep and in *samādhi*, as well as in other conditions such as fainting, but duality is only temporarily obliterated for it reappears when one awakes from sleep or regains consciousness after fainting, and it also reappears when the yogī arises from *samādhi*. The reason why duality persists is because false knowledge (*mithyājñāna*) has not been removed. It is evident from this brief statement that Śaṅkara does not consider the attainment of *samādhi* to be a sufficient cause to eradicate false knowledge, and, according to Śaṅkara, since false knowledge is the cause of bondage, *samādhi* cannot therefore be the cause of liberation. The only other significant reference to *samādhi* in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* occurs in the context of a discussion as to whether agentship is an essential property of the self. According to Śaṅkara's interpretation, *sūtras* 2.3.33–39 accept agentship as a property of the self, but *sūtra* 2.3.40 presents the definitive view that agentship is not an intrinsic property of the Self but is a superimposition. The word *samādhi* occurs in 2.3.39 (*samādhy-abhāvāc-ca*), and here Śaṅkara briefly comments, "*samādhi*, whose purpose is the ascertainment of the Self known from the Upaniṣads, is taught in the Vedānta texts such as: 'The Self, my dear, should be seen; it should be heard about, thought about and meditated upon'" (*BU* 2.4.5).²⁶ Śaṅkara shows by the phrase *ātmapratipattiprayojana* ("whose purpose is the ascertainment of the Self") that he acknowledges that the practice of *samādhi* has a role in Vedānta. However, these two references do not in themselves present a conclusive picture of Śaṅkara's thought, for in the first reference it is evident that he does not consider *samādhi* to be a sufficient means for liberation, while in the second he has clearly given it a more positive place as a means for liberation. This second reference, however, has to be treated with some circumspection as it forms the comment upon a *sūtra* which Śaṅkara does not consider to present the definitive view. Another reference to *samādhi*, where it again seems to have a more positive value, occurs in the commentary upon the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* of Gauḍapāda, where in verse 3.37 the word *samādhi* is given as a synonym for the Self. Śaṅkara glosses the word *samādhi* in two different ways, and in the first he says "*samādhi* = because [the Self] can be known through the wisdom arising from *samādhi*."²⁷ Thus we can see that, according to Śaṅkara, *samādhi* has a role to play in Vedānta, but yet the first reference (2.1.9) indicates that this role is perhaps more circumscribed than the modern exponents of Vedānta would have us believe. We will attempt to resolve the matter through a wider examination of Śaṅkara's thought, particularly in regard to his use of yoga.



The first specific mention of yoga is in the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad, and there is a verse in this Upaniṣad which details a type of yoga meditation:

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The discriminating person should restrain speech in the mind, he should restrain the mind in the cognizing self, he should restrain the cognizing self in the 'great self' and restrain that 'great self' in the peaceful Self.²⁸

Śaṅkara introduces this verse with the comment that the Upaniṣad here presents "a means for the ascertainment of that [Self]."²⁹ In his commentary upon *Brahmasūtra* 1.4.1, Śaṅkara refers to this *Kaṭha* verse with the remark that the *śruti* "shows yoga as the means for the apprehension of the Self."³⁰ In his commentary upon *Brahmasūtra* 3.3.15, he again refers to this verse when he says that it is "just for the sake of the clear understanding of the Self that the *śruti* enjoins meditation, viz. 'the discriminating person should restrain speech in the mind...'"³¹ It is therefore evident that Śaṅkara considers the verse above to present a method of yoga meditation leading to Self-knowledge. As to his understanding of this *Kaṭha* verse, he has explained it succinctly in his commentary on *Brahmasūtra* 1.4.1:

This is what is said. 'He should restrain speech in the mind' means that by giving up the operations of the external senses such as the organ of speech and so forth he should remain only as the mind. And since the mind is inclined towards conjecturing about things, he should, by way of seeing the defect involved in conjecturing, restrain it in the intellect whose characteristic consists in determining and which is said here by the word 'cognizing self'. Then bringing about an increase in subtlety, he should restrain that intellect in the 'great self', i.e. the experiencer, or the one-pointed intellect. And he should establish the 'great self' in the peaceful Self, i.e. in that supreme Puruṣa who is the topic under consideration, who is the 'highest goal'.³²

As part of his commentary upon the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad 2.4.11, which forms part of the well known Yājñavalkya-Maitreyī dialogue, Śaṅkara briefly describes a method of contemplation which is similar to the one mentioned in the *Kaṭha* 1.3.13. It is as follows:

[text]... as the skin is the one goal of all kinds of touch [commentary] such as soft or hard, rough or smooth.... By the word 'skin', touch in general that is perceived by the skin, is meant; in it different kinds of touch are merged, like different kinds of water in the ocean, and become nonentities without it, for they were merely its modifications. Similarly, that touch in general, denoted by the word 'skin', is merged in the deliberation of the Manas [mind], that is to say, in a general consideration by it, just as different kinds of touch are included in touch in general perceived by the skin; without this consideration by the Manas it becomes a non-entity. The consideration by the Manas also is merged in a general cognition by the intellect, and becomes non-existent without it. Becoming mere consciousness, it is merged in Pure Intelligence, the Supreme Brahman, like different kinds of water in the ocean. When, through these successive steps, sound and the rest, together with their receiving

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organs, are merged in Pure Intelligence, there are no more limiting adjuncts, and only Brahman, which is Pure Intelligence, comparable to a lump of salt, homogeneous, infinite, boundless and without a break, remains. Therefore the Self alone must be regarded as one without a second.³³

We can see that the type of yoga which Śaṅkara presents here is a method of merging, as it were, the particular (*viśeṣa*) into the general (*sāmānya*). For example, diverse sounds are merged in the sense of hearing, which has greater generality insofar as the sense of hearing is the locus of all sounds. The sense of hearing is merged into the mind, whose nature consists of thinking about things, and the mind is in turn merged into the intellect, which Śaṅkara then says is made into 'mere cognition' (*vijñānamātra*); that is, all particular cognitions resolve into their universal, which is cognition as such, thought without any particular object. And that in turn is merged into its universal, mere Consciousness (*prañāna-ghana*), upon which everything previously referred to ultimately depends. There are two points which ought to be noted concerning Śaṅkara's presentation of yoga which differ from the model we find in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*. The first concerns method. Śaṅkara does not say that all thought forms must be restrained in the manner of the *cittavṛttinirodha* of the *Yogasūtras*. While in other places Śaṅkara has mentioned that meditation involves the withdrawal of the mind from sense objects,³⁴ he has also made it clear that control of the mind (*cittavṛttinirodha*) is "not known as a means of liberation."³⁵ Rather, Śaṅkara's method involves thinking, although it is thinking of a certain type, leading from the involvement in particulars to a contemplation of what is more general and finally to the contemplation of what is most general, that is, Consciousness. Thus Śaṅkara's method of yoga is a meditative exercise of withdrawal from the particular and identification with the universal, leading to contemplation of oneself as the most universal, namely, Consciousness. This approach is different from the classical Yoga of complete thought suppression.

The second point is one of approach, for nowhere does Śaṅkara present the Ātman-Brahman as a goal to be reached. On the contrary, his approach is that the Ātman-Brahman is not something to be acquired since it is one's own nature, and one's own nature is not something that can be attained. This approach has its corollary in his method of negation: the removal of superimpositions in order to discover what is already there, although concealed as it were by all sorts of false identifications based ultimately upon the ignorance of who we really are. Such an approach is different from that of the classical Yoga of the *Yogasūtras*, where a goal is presented in terms of *nirvikalpasamādhi*, which one has to achieve in order to gain liberation. That Śaṅkara's method is one of negation in order to "reveal the ever revealed" is evident throughout

his whole discussion of the role of action in the matter of liberation. In *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.4, an opponent argues that the role of scripture is injunctive—it is to enjoin a person either to do something or to refrain from doing something—and the role of the Upaniṣads, too, after presenting the nature of Brahman, is to enjoin meditation upon Brahman as a means of release.³⁶ Śaṅkara replies that if liberation is to be gained as a result of an action, then liberation must be impermanent. He specifies that actions can only be of four kinds: an action can produce something, or it can modify a thing, or it can be used to obtain something or to purify it.³⁷ He takes up each action in turn and argues that liberation is not something that can be either produced, attained, modified, or purified by any action whether physical, oral, or mental. His main argument is that if liberation is an effect of some kind of action, then liberation would have a beginning and would be time-bound and hence noneternal, and that such a consequence would go against the whole tradition that teaches that liberation is eternal. Śaṅkara's view is that liberation is nothing but being Brahman, and that is one's inherent condition, although it is obscured by ignorance. He says that the whole purpose of the Upaniṣads is just to remove duality, which is a construct of ignorance;³⁸ there is no further need to produce oneness with Brahman, because that already exists. Śaṅkara's frequent use of the phrase “*na heya na-upādeya*” (cannot be rejected or accepted)³⁹ along with the word *Ātman* indicates that the Self cannot be made the object of any kind of action whatsoever. Śaṅkara has summarized all this in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*:

... liberation is not something that can be brought into being. For liberation is just the destruction of bondage, it is not the result of an action. And we have already said that bondage is ignorance and it is not possible that ignorance can be destroyed by action. And action has its capacity in some visible sphere. Action has its capacity in the sphere of production, attainment, modification and purification. Action is able to produce, to make one attain, to modify or to purify. The capacity of an action has no other scope than this, for in the world it is not known to have any other capacity. And liberation is not one of these. We have already said that it is hidden merely by ignorance.⁴⁰



Thus we can see that the perspective of Śaṅkara is fundamentally different from that of the yoga tradition where, although the *puruṣa* is presented as not something to be acquired, liberation is nonetheless a real goal to be attained through a process of mental discipline, which necessitates the complete suppression of all mental activity.

That there is a certain ambivalence toward yoga on the part of the followers of Vedānta can be seen in *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.3, “Thereby the Yoga is refuted,” which offers a rejection of yoga following upon the rejection of Sāṅkhya philosophy. The problem as Śaṅkara sees it is that



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yoga practices are found in the Upaniṣads themselves, so the question arises as to what it is about yoga that needs to be rejected. Śāṅkara says that the refutation of yoga has to do with its claim to be a means of liberation independent from the Vedic revelation. He says, "...the *śruti* rejects the view that there is another means for liberation apart from the knowledge of the oneness of the Self which is revealed in the Veda."⁴¹ He then makes the point that "the followers of Sāṅkhya and Yoga are dualists, they do not see the oneness of the Self."⁴² The point that "the followers of Yoga are dualists" is an interesting one, for if the yogins are dualists even while they are exponents of *asaṃprajñātasamādhi* (*nirvikalpasamādhi*), then such *samādhi* does not of itself give rise to the knowledge of oneness as the modern exponents of Vedānta would have us believe. For if it did, then it would not have been possible for the yogins to be considered dualists. Clearly the modern Vedāntins, in their expectation that *samādhi* is the key to the liberating oneness, have revalued the word and have given it a meaning which it does not bear in the yoga texts. And, we suggest, they have given it an importance which it does not possess in the classical Vedānta, as we are able to discern it in the writings of Śāṅkara.



The matter to be decided is what place *samādhi*, and yoga in general, holds in Śāṅkara's thought. We suggest that his commentary upon the *Bhagavadgītā* contains certain programmatic statements that are of general assistance in determining his views on the place of *samādhi* and yoga in the Advaita scheme of liberation. In the *Gītā*, Śāṅkara very frequently glosses the word yoga when it occurs in a verse by the word *samādhi*, thereby indicating that on many occasions he understands yoga to mean the practice of a certain discipline wherein *samādhi* is the key factor, as in verse 6.19, "...for one who engages in yoga concerning the Self" (*yuñjato yogam ātmanaḥ*), which Śāṅkara glosses as "practices *samādhi* concerning the Self" (*ātmanaḥ samādhim anuṣṭhataḥ*).⁴³ It is evident that he considers *samādhi* as a state wherein normal distinctions are obliterated, as is evident from his statement in 18.66, "the evils of agent-ship and enjoyership etc. are not apprehended in deep sleep or in *samādhi* etc. where there is discontinuation of the flow of the erroneous idea that the Self is identical to the body."⁴⁴ Here, as in his commentary upon *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.9, Śāṅkara links deep sleep and *samādhi*, and it is evident that he recognizes *samādhi* to be a state wherein distinctions are temporarily resolved, as they are in deep sleep.



At the beginning of his commentary upon the *Gītā*, Śāṅkara makes a significant statement concerning the relation of Sāṅkhya to Yoga.⁴⁵ He says that Sāṅkhya means ascertaining the truth about the Self as it really is and that Kṛṣṇa has done this in his teaching from verses 2.11 up until 2.31. He says that *sāṅkhyabuddhi* is the understanding which arises from ascertaining the meaning in its context, and it consists in the understand-

ing that the Self is not an agent of action because the Self is free from the sixfold modifications beginning with coming into being. He states that those people to whom such an understanding becomes natural are called Sāṅkhyas. He then says that Yoga is prior to the rise of the understanding above. Yoga consists of performing disciplines (*sādhana*) that lead to liberation; it presupposes the discrimination between virtue and its opposite, and it depends upon the idea that the Self is other than the body and that it is an agent and an enjoyer. Such an understanding is *yogabuddhi*, and the people who have such an understanding are called Yogins. From this it is clear that Śaṅkara relegates Yoga to the sphere of ignorance (*avidyā*) because the Yogins are those who, unlike the Sāṅkhyas, take the Self to be an agent and an enjoyer while it is really neither. They are, therefore, in Śaṅkara's eyes, not yet knowers of the truth.

Śaṅkara again clearly demarcates Sāṅkhya and Yoga in his comments on verse 2.39, where Kṛṣṇa says, "O Pārtha, this understanding about Sāṅkhya has been imparted to you. Now listen to this understanding about Yoga. . . ." According to Śaṅkara, 'Sāṅkhya' means the "discrimination concerning ultimate truth," and the 'understanding' pertaining to Sāṅkhya means a "knowledge which is the direct cause for the termination of the defect which brings about *saṁsāra* consisting of sorrow and delusion and so forth." He then says that Yoga is the "means to that knowledge" (*tatprāptiyupāya*) and that Yoga consists of both (a) *karmayoga*, that is, performing rites and duties as an offering to the Lord once there has been a relinquishment of opposites (such as like and dislike) through detachment, and (b) *samādhīyoga*.⁴⁶ In 4.38, Śaṅkara again explains the word *yoga* occurring in the verse as referring to both *karmayoga* and *samādhīyoga*.⁴⁷ It is evident that Śaṅkara understands the word *yoga* in the *Gītā* to refer to both *karmayoga* and to the practice of meditation, that is, *samādhīyoga*. It is also evident that he considers *yoga* to be a means leading to Sāṅkhya-knowledge but that it is not the same as Sāṅkhya-knowledge. In 6.20, Śaṅkara says that one apprehends the Self by means of a "mind which has been purified through *samādhi*."⁴⁸

From the evidence of the above we suggest that according to Śaṅkara the role of *samādhi* is supportive—or purifying—and is preliminary to, but not necessarily identical with, the rise of the liberating knowledge. As is well known, Śaṅkara considers that knowledge alone, the insight concerning the truth of things, is what liberates. To this end he places great emphasis upon words, specifically the words of the Upaniṣads, as providing the necessary and even the sufficient means to engender this liberating knowledge. Śaṅkara repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the role of the teacher (*guru/ācārya*) and the sacred texts (*śāstra*) in the matter of liberation. For example the compound *śāstrācāryopadeśa*, "the instruction on the part of the teacher and the scriptures," occurs seven



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times in his commentary on the *Gītā* alone, along with other variations such as *vedāntācāryopadeśa*, and it regularly occurs in his other works as well.⁴⁹ The modern Vedāntin, on the other hand, has overlooked, possibly unknowingly, the importance which sacred language and instruction held in the classical Vedānta as a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and has had to compensate for this by increasing the importance of yogic *samādhi*, which is then put forward to be the necessary and sufficient condition for liberation.

The contrast between the Vedānta of Śaṅkara and some of its modern exponents is clear enough. But it should not be thought that the modern emphasis on yogic *samādhi* is without precedent. As we have mentioned, there is evidence of yoga techniques in the principal Upaniṣads themselves although it did not then have a dominant emphasis, and this is reflected in the approach of Śaṅkara in his commentaries. However, in the centuries following Śaṅkara, Advaitins have exhibited a gradual increase in their reliance upon yoga techniques. This can be shown by examining a few of the Advaita *Prakaraṇagranthas*, noncommentarial compositions by Advaita authors.

The only noncommentarial work that is widely accepted as the composition of Śaṅkara is the *Upadeśasāhasrī*. In this work the word *samādhi* rarely occurs. The word *samāhita* is used in 13.25, and we have previously argued that *samāhita* (concentrated) has a meaning equivalent to the word *samādhāna*, one-pointedness of mind, but it does not have the same meaning as *nirvikalpasamādhi*.⁵⁰ Śaṅkara mentions *samādhi* three times in the *Upadeśasāhasrī*,⁵¹ but he does not extol it; on the contrary, speaking from the understanding that the Self is *nirvikalpa* by nature, he contrasts the Self and the mind and says:

As I have no restlessness (*vikṣepa*) I have hence no absorption (*samādhi*). Restlessness or absorption belong to the mind which is changeable.⁵²

A similar view is expressed in 13.17 and 14.35. In 15.14 Śaṅkara presents a critique of meditation as an essentially dualistically structured activity.⁵³ Furthermore, in 16.39–40, Śaṅkara implicitly criticizes the Sāṅkhya-Yoga view that liberation is dissociation from the association of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*,⁵⁴ when he says:

It is not at all reasonable that liberation is either a connection [with Brahman] or a dissociation [from *prakṛti*]. For an association is non-eternal and the same is true for dissociation also.⁵⁵

Thus it is evident from the above that Śaṅkara implicitly rejects both the soteriology of yoga, namely, that liberation has to be accomplished through the real dissociation of the *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, and the pursuit towards that end, that is, the achievement of *nirvikalpa* or *aśamprajñātasamādhi*.

However such a view became blurred in the writings of post-Śaṅkara Advaitins. This can be briefly shown by examining some later Advaita *prakaraṇa* texts. For example, in the popular fourteenth-century text *Pañcadaśī*, we find a mixture of Vedāntic and Yogic ideas. Towards the conclusion of the first chapter on the “Discrimination of the Real” (*tattvaviveka*), the author explains the Upaniṣad terms *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* (vv. 53–54), and then proceeds to describe the cultivation of *samādhi* as the means whereby the mediate verbal knowledge derived from the Upaniṣads is turned into immediate experience (vv. 59–62). However, in chapter nine, “The Lamp of Meditation” (*dhyānadīpa*), meditation is prescribed for those who do not have the intellectual acuteness to undertake the Self-inquiry; and in chapter seven (v. 265), the author repeats the verse of Śaṅkara from the *Upadeśasāhasī* (“As I have no restlessness”), which was cited above. Therefore it would appear that the *Pañcadaśī* is an early example of a Vedāntic text which is consciously making room for classical Yoga but which has not lost sight of Śaṅkara’s perspective.⁵⁶

The *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* is a popular text in contemporary Vedānta circles and is ascribed to Śaṅkara. However, it is highly unlikely that it is a genuine work of Śaṅkara, for the fact that there are no Sanskrit commentaries on this work by any of the well-known commentators on the works of Śaṅkara would indicate that the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* is either a late composition or that it was not regarded as a work of Śaṅkara by the earlier Advaitins.⁵⁷ In this text, *samādhi* comes in for considerable praise; for example:

Reflection should be considered a hundred times superior to hearing, and meditation a hundred thousand times superior even to reflection, but the *Nirvikalpaka Samādhi* is infinite in its results.⁵⁸

We can observe in this text how *samādhi* is treated as the indispensable requirement for liberation, and we can see in the following verse that *samādhi* is advocated for the same reason as is given in *Yogasūtra* 1.1.4: “at other times [the Self] takes the same form as the mental modifications (*vṛttisārūpyamitaratra*)”:

By the *Nirvikalpaka Samādhi* the truth of Brahman is clearly and definitely realized, but not otherwise, for then the mind, being unstable by nature, is apt to be mixed up with other perceptions.⁵⁹

As a final example of the use of *samādhi* in this work we cite the following verse:

Through the diversity of the supervening conditions (*Upādhis*), a man is apt to think of himself as also full of diversity; but with the removal of these he is again his own Self, the immutable. Therefore the wise man should ever devote himself to the practice of *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* for the dissolution of the *Upādhis*.⁶⁰



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If we compare the idea contained in this verse with the ideas of the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, we find that nowhere in the *Upadeśasāhasrī* does Śaṅkara advocate the dissolution of the *upādhi*: On the contrary, his attitude throughout the *Upadeśasāhasrī* is to show that an *upādhi* is to be negated merely through the knowledge that it is an object, for as an object it cannot be identical with the perceiver; and because an *upādhi* is essentially unreal (*mithyā*), it cannot negate the nondual truth, and therefore no additional effort need be expended for its removal.

As a final example of the increasing tendency to identify Vedānta and Yoga, we refer to a late Vedānta text, the *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda (fifteenth century A.D.). He, like the author of the *Pañcadaśī*, has added *samādhi* to the triad of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*. What is of interest here is that he has reinterpreted *samādhi* to make it conform to Advaitic ideas; for example, *nirvikalpa samādhi* is said to be the state where the mind is without the distinctions of knower, knowledge, and object of knowledge and has become totally merged in the “nondual reality.”⁶¹ Furthermore, this text lists the eight limbs of Yoga practice mentioned by Patañjali (*Yogasūtra* 2.29), suitably reinterpreted to conform to the Vedānta. There are other, later Vedānta texts which also do this.⁶² Thus we see that through the centuries Vedānta has increasingly accommodated itself to Yoga, leading to the almost complete absence of a distinction between the two in modern times.

Conclusion

Although the importance of concentration is evident from the early Upaniṣads (*BU* 4.4.23), a form of yoga practice leading to the absorptive state of *samādhi* is only in evidence in the later texts. We have seen that Śaṅkara does speak of a type of concentration upon the Self which is akin to yoga insofar as there is the withdrawal of the mind from sense objects, but he does not advocate more than that and he does not put forward the view that we find in classical Yoga about the necessity of total thought suppression. We have seen that he has used the word *samādhi* very sparingly, and when he has used it, it was not always in an unambiguously favorable context. It should be clear that Śaṅkara does not set up *nirvikalpasamādhi* as a spiritual goal. For if he had thought it to be an indispensable requirement for liberation, then he would have said so. But he has not said so. Contemplation on the Self is obviously a part of Śaṅkara’s teaching, but his contemplation is directed toward seeing the ever present Self as free from all conditionings rather than toward the attainment of *nirvikalpasamādhi*. This is in significant contrast to many modern Advaitins for whom all of the Vedānta amounts to “theory” which has its experimental counterpart in yoga “practice.” I suggest that their view of Vedānta is a departure from Śaṅkara’s own position. The modern Advaitins, however, are not without their forerunners, and I have

tried to indicate that there has been a gradual increase in *samādhi*-oriented practice in the centuries after Śaṅkara, as we can judge from the later Advaita texts.

NOTES

Abbreviations are used in the notes below as follows:

BSBh *Brahmasūtra-Śāṅkarabhāṣyam with the Commentaries Bhāṣyaratnaprabhā of Govindānanda, Bhāmatī of Vācaspatimiśra and Nyāya-Nirṇaya of Ānandagiri*. Edited by J. L. Sastri. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

BU *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*.

ChU *Chāndogyaopaniṣad*.

US *Upadeśasāhasrī of Sankarācharya, A Thousand Teachings: in Two Parts—Prose and Poetry*. Translated by Swami Jagadānanda. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1979.

- 1 – When the word *samādhi* is used in this article, it refers only to the higher stage of *samādhi* known as *nirvikalpamādhi*, which is an “enstasis without thought constructions.”
- 2 – *Vedanta for the Western World*, ed. C. Isherwood (London: Unwin Books, 1975), p. 15.
- 3 – The three years of continuous Tantric *sādhana* under the direction of the Bhairavī Brāhmaṇī was his longest and most significant training. See W. Neevel, “The Transformation of Śrī Rāmakrishna,” in *Hinduism: New Essays in the History of Religions*, ed. B. Smith (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976). The time spent under the direction of Totapuri, who was said to be an Advaitin, was much shorter than the time spent studying Tantra, and the information available on Totapuri is very meager, so it is difficult to be sure whether he was actually an Advaitin rather than a follower of yoga.
- 4 – M. Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, Bollingen Series, no. 56 (New York: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 227 ff., and *The Haṭhayogapradīpikā of Svātmārāma* (Madras: Adyar Library, 1984), p. 125.
- 5 – Ramakrishna, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 195.
- 6 – *Ibid.*, p. 814. Also cf. pp. 310, 576.

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- 7 – Cf. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1970), vol. 1, p. 470, “If there is a God, you ought to be able to see Him. If not, let Him go.” Also cf. his introduction to *Rāja-Yoga*, pp. 125 ff., and vol. 2, p. 220, “Knowledge can only be got in one way, the way of experience; there is no other way to know.”
- 8 – Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 137, 180, 181, 212, and vol. 5, p. 300.
- 9 – Ibid., vol. 1, p. 188.
- 10 – S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1940), p. 51.
- 11 – G. A. Jacob, *A Concordance to the Principal Upaniṣads and Bhagavadgītā* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971); G. M. Kurulkar, *Sasandarbhanighaṇṭṣusahitā Daśopaniṣadaḥ* (Pune: Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapitha, 1973).
- 12 – *ChU* 8.1.3, 4, 5; *BU* 4.2.1, 4.4.23.
- 13 – *The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, trans. Swami Madhavananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975), p. 410.
- 14 – Cf. *BSBh*, p. 36; *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya*, trans. Swami Madhavananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974), vv. 19–27; *Aparokṣānubhūti or Self-realization of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya*, trans. Swami Vimuktananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977), vv. 3–8.
- 15 – *Ten Principal Upaniṣads with Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, Works of Śaṅkarācārya in Original Sanskrit, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978), p. 937, “*samāhitaḥ indriyāntaḥkaraṇacalanarūpād vyāvṛtya aikāgryarūpena samāhito bhūtvā*.” (Hereafter, all Upaniṣad references containing Śaṅkara’s commentary will be to this work).
- 16 – Ibid., p. 78, “*asamāhitaḥ-anekāgramanā vikṣiptacittaḥ*.”
- 17 – *Tattva Bodha of Sankaracharya* (Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, n.d.), p. 7; *Aparokṣānubhūti* (cited n. 14 above), v. 8.
- 18 – Georg Feuerstein, *The Philosophy of Classical Yoga* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), p. 84.
- 19 – Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (New York: Dover, 1966), pp. 23–26. Also, see Winternitz quoted in S. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), vol. 1, p. 39. Eliade considers the *Maitrāyaṇī* to belong to the same period as the *Bhagavadgītā*, i.e., between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D. (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 124).
- 20 – *Amṛtabindu* 6, 16; *Āruṇeya* 2. It also occurs in the *Bhagavadgītā* at 2.44, 53, 54.

- 21 – Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 114, remarks: “It is true that the Upaniṣads remain in the line of metaphysics and contemplation, whereas yoga employs asceticism and a technique of meditation. But this is not enough to halt the constant osmosis between the Upaniṣadic and yogic milieus.”
- 22 – I do not know why later Vedāntins used the word *nirvikalpa* to characterize what is essentially the yogic *asaṃprajñātasamādhi*. Perhaps they wished to distinguish their practice from that of classical Yoga. The word *nirvikalpaka* was first introduced into the *āstika* (“orthodox”) tradition by Kumāṛila Bhaṭṭa, who used it in his explanation of perception, under the influence of the Buddhist philosopher Dignāga. See D. N. Shastri, *The Philosophy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignāga School* (Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1976), p. 438.
- 23 – I am assuming that Śaṅkara is not the author of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣyaivaraṇa*, as this issue has not yet been settled. See W. Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), chap. 6.
- 24 – *BSBh* 2.1.9 (p. 365, line 6), 2.3.39 (p. 545, line 10), 2.3.40 (p. 551, line 2); *Word Index to the Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śaṅkara*, T. M. P. Mahadevan, general ed., 2 vols. (Madras: University of Madras, 1973).
- 25 – *BSBh* 2.1.9 (p. 365, line 6).
- 26 – *Ibid.*, 2.3.39 (p. 545, line 10).
- 27 – *Māṇḍūkya* 3.37 (p. 224, line 3).
- 28 – *Kaṭha* 1.3.13. Cf. J. Bader, *Meditation in Śaṅkara’s Vedānta* (Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1990), chap. 3.
- 29 – *Kaṭha* 1.3.13 (p. 83, line 11).
- 30 – *BSBh* 1.4.1 (p. 295, line 10).
- 31 – *Ibid.*, 3.3.15 (p. 694, line 12).
- 32 – *Ibid.*, 1.4.1 (p. 295, lines 12 ff.).
- 33 – *BU* 2.4.11 (p. 764, lines 11 ff.). See also Madhavananda, trans., *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (cited n. 13 above), pp. 253 ff. I have cited Madhavananda’s translation here as I cannot make any significant improvement on it.
- 34 – Cf. commentary on *Kaṭha* 1.2.12 and *Bhagavadgītā* 16.1.
- 35 – *BU* 1.4.7 (p. 663, line 9).
- 36 – *BSBh* 1.1.4 (p. 69, line 6).

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- 37 – Ibid., 1.1.4 (p. 79, lines 7 ff.). Also, for the reference to action as consisting of four types, cf. *BU* 3.3.1 (p. 798, lines 22 ff., and p. 801, lines 1 ff.), 4.4.22 (p. 933, lines 21 ff.); *Muṇḍaka* 1.2.12 (p. 152, lines 25 ff.); *US* 17.50; *Śhrī Shankarācharya's Upadeshasāhasrī with the Gloss Padayojanikā*, ed. D. V. Gokhale (Bombay: The Gujarati Printing Press, 1917); *Shri Shankarabhagavatpada's Upadeshasahasri with the Tika of Shri Anandagiri Acharya*, ed. S. Subramanyasastry (Varanasi: Mahesh Research Institute, 1978).
- 38 – *BSBh* 1.1.4 (p. 79, line 1); also *BU* 2.1.20 (p. 739, lines 20 and 24).
- 39 – *BSBh* 1.1.4 (p. 64, lines 2 and 4; p. 84, lines 3 ff.; p. 85, lines 1 ff.; p. 87, lines 4 ff.).
- 40 – *BU* 3.3.1 (p. 798, lines 19 ff.).
- 41 – *BSBh* 2.1.3 (p. 354, lines 1 ff.).
- 42 – Ibid., 2.1.3 (p. 354, line 3).
- 43 – *Bhagavadgītā with Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, Works of Śāṅkarācārya in Original Sanskrit, vol. 11 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978) 6.19 (p. 107, lines 9 ff.), and also 5.21, 6.4, 8.10, 12.6, 13.10, 18.33.
- 44 – Ibid., 18.66 (p. 296, lines 6 ff.).
- 45 – Ibid., introd., 2.11 (p. 9, lines 14 ff.).
- 46 – Ibid., 2.39 (p. 27, lines 13 ff.).
- 47 – Ibid., 4. 38 (p. 80, line 18).
- 48 – Ibid., 6.20 (p. 107, line 16 [my emphasis]).
- 49 – Ibid., 2.21 (p. 20, line 12), 2.63 (p. 36, line 12), 8.8 (p. 128, line 16), 13.30 (p. 215, line 23), 13.34 (p. 217, line 19), 18.16 (p. 263, line 19), 18.17 (p. 264, line 4), 18.50 (p. 281, line 7), 18.55 (p. 284, line 9); *Word-Index to Śāṅkara's Gītābhāṣya*, ed. Francis X. D'Sa (Pune: Institute for the Study of Religion, 1985). Also cf. *BU* 2.1.20 (p. 744, line 23), 2.4.2 (p. 767, line 5), 2.5.15 (p. 776, line 12); *ChU* 6.15.2 (p. 537, line 12), 8.1.6 (p. 571, line 2); *Kaṭha* 1.5.12 (p. 96, line 1); *Muṇḍaka* 1.2.12 (p. 153, line 5), 2.2.7 (p. 162, line 22); *US* 17.51–52.

In an otherwise interesting and insightful article, “The Path of No-path: Śāṅkara and Dōgen on the Paradox of Practice” (*Philosophy East and West* 38, no. 2 [April 1988]), David Loy has come to an erroneous conclusion (p. 133) that “there can be *no* means—not even *śruti*—to realize Brahman...” But if that were the case, it would not be possible to explain Śāṅkara's concerted effort in meticulously commenting on *śruti*; and such a statement also overlooks the numerous references where he states that the *śruti* is the means of knowledge for Brahman. It is precisely because Śāṅkara sees

no other way to arrive at the knowledge of the unconditioned Absolute that he resorts to the sacred words of the Upaniṣads as the means to dispel the ignorance of the ever present Self. Among Western scholars, Śaṅkara's views on *śruti* have been well articulated by W. Halbfass in his discussion of the role of *śruti* in Śaṅkara's thought; see his *Tradition and Reflection* (cited n. 23 above), chap. 5.

50 – *Samādhāna* is mentioned in *US* 17.23–24. Cf. *Tattvabodha* (cited n. 17 above), p. 7: “*samāadhanam kim? cittaikāgratā.*”

51 – *US* 13.14, 17 and 14.35.

52 – *Ibid.*, 13.14.

53 – *Ibid.*, 15.14.

54 – *The Sāṅkhyakārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa*, ed. and trans. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri (Madras: University of Madras, 1973), vv. 20, 21, 66, 68.

55 – *US* 16.39–40.

56 – Cf. *Pañcadaśī of Śrī Vidyāraṇya Swāmī*, trans. Swami Swahananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1975).

57 – There are two commentaries on the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*: one is by a little known writer, Harināthabaṭṭa, and the other is a recent commentary by Śrī Chandraśekhara Bhāratī, who was the Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīṅgiri Maṭha from 1912 to 1954. See R. Thangaswami, *Advaita-Vedānta Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (Madras: University of Madras, 1980), p. 218; *Advaita Grantha Kośa*, prepared by a disciple of Śrī Iṣṭa Siddhinda Saraswati Swami of the Upaniṣad Brahmendra Mutt (Kancheepuram: n.n., n.d.), p. 67. Perhaps the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* is itself a work of one of the Śrīṅgiri Śaṅkarācāryas?

58 – *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (cited n. 14 above), v. 364.

59 – *Ibid.*, v. 365.

60 – *Ibid.*, v. 357.

61 – *Vedāntasāra or the Essence of Vedānta of Sadānanda Yogīndra*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974), p. 110.

62 – The *Aparokṣānubhūti* has been ascribed to Śaṅkara but is unlikely to be a genuine work. See *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, ed. Karl Potter, vol. 3, *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṅkara and His Pupils* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), p. 320. The final forty-four verses (out of 144) describe yoga. Here, however, yoga is consciously reinterpreted within a Vedāntic manner: “The complete forgetfulness of all thought by first making it changeless and then identifying it with Brahman is called Samādhi known as knowledge” (Vimuktananda's trans., cited n. 14 above, v. 124). The *Sarvavedāntasiddhāntasarāṅgraha* is

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another work which is most likely not a work of Śaṅkara. See Thangaswami, *Advaita-Vedānta Literature* (cited n. 57 above), p. 220; Potter, *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṅkara*, p. 339; *Advaita Grantha Kośa* (cited n. 57 above), p. 68. In this work we again find the grafting of yogic *nirvikalpasamādhī* onto Vedānta teachings; see *The Quintessence of Vedanta*, trans. Swami Tattwananda (Ernakulam: Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, 1960), pp. 171 ff.