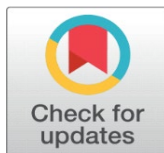
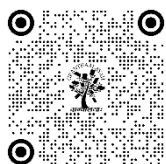


# SHANKARACHARYA'S OUTLOOKS ON IMPERMANENCE NATURE OF LIFE AND WORLD AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS SPIRITUAL VALUES ON THE LIGHT OF HIS FAMOUS VERSE "BRAHMAN SATYA JAGAT MITHYA"

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## ABSTRACT

Shankaracharya, the great philosopher of Advaita Vedanta is one of the prominent figures in Indian Philosophy, who gives more importance on realizing the spiritual values of life and the world. Generally, values mean some ideas which help us to realize the reality behind the surface. Values are the fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate human actions or attitudes.

The spiritual values of Shankaracharya's philosophy can be guessed from his famous statement that "Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya, Jiva Brahmaiva Napara", which means "Brahma is the only reality, the world is eventually untrue and the individual soul is non-different from Brahma". Shankaracharya's ideas of spirituality have great significance for mankind, because it enables a person to realize the true nature of life and world.

According to Shankaracharya, the world is mere appearance and it is not ultimately real. Due to our ignorance we think the unreal world as real. In the real sense, the world is the product of Maya or Avidya. Maya is a power which covers the real nature of the world and projects the unreal as like the activities of a magician.

According to Shankaracharya, like the world our body is also mere appearance. The Soul or Spirit which is behind our body is only real. According to Shankaracharya, there is no separate identity of Soul or Jiva apart from Brahma. Jiva is insensible of the basic solidarity and takes as it were differences to be genuine and wrongly respects himself as specialist and enjoyer.

According to Shankaracharya, ignorance is the cause of bondage. Ignorance is removed by intuition of the identity of the Atman or Self or Brahma is known as liberation or Moksha, which is the result of spiritual realization of life and world.

**Keywords:** Spiritual Values, Spiritual Values of Life and World, Ignorance, Maya, Bondage and Libration or Moksha

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is essential and has influenced the human beings ever since the ancient civilization. Spirituality is the study of reality. The word reality is derived from the Latin word 'realize' which means legal 'property matter' and the current meaning is 'true existence'. Spirituality is the study of what is beyond our outer world. In the profound study of philosophy, it is thought that everything we can see with our eyes is just a surface. These are not true. Only the reality that exists behind this surface is real. Therefore, spirituality is the method of realizing the reality of life and the world.

Upanisads, Gita and the Brahmasutra are known as Prasthanatraya of Advaita Vedanta. In reality, no study on Shankaracharya's philosophy is conceivable without an inclination to his article on the triple text. While the Gita is mainly concerned with ethical problems, Upanishads and Brahmasutras are mainly concerned with metaphysical or spiritual

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problems. But, it is not true that the Gita is not concerned with other issues except ethics. Similarly, we cannot say that Upanishads and Brahmasutras are not concerned with other issues except ontological or spiritual values. More or less the triple text of Vedanta philosophy deals with the issues, ethics as well as spirituality.

Shankaracharya's ideas of spirituality had great significance for mankind, because it enables a person in realizing the true nature of life and world. Shankaracharya's idea of spirituality is considered very much relevant in our present time, because the realization of the true nature of life and world can work as panacea to resolve the burning issues of present unrest society.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Houston, P. D., & Sokolow, S. L. (2006)** in their book "The Spirituality Dimension of Leadership" mentioned that spirituality requires a person to make a concerted effort to go outside of the self to locate that part of the human being that's more than fabric which once found gives a association to the interminable.

**Krishna (2018)** said that according to Shankaracharya Spirit of man is identical to the supreme beings or Brahman and cause of suffering and errors are due to our failure to realize this oneness. One who is able to realize this unity can attain Moksha or liberation. The world has no ontological reality. The entire world consisting of 'namaroopa' (names and forms) is only an appearance and has no reality. Brahman is the only reality.

**Menon (2023)** in his book said that, in Shankaracharya's view, the origin of good and evil as opposite qualities resides in the object due to our Avidya or ignorance caused by Maya, which can be rightly translated as 'illusion'. Due to illusion oneself think other self or Jivas are separate from him. The error of feeling separate from other selves is the source of suffering. The effect of Maya is active till the individual soul identifies himself with his body, mind and senses, all together which is known as 'ego'. The liberated or illumined person is called a Jivanmukta or free soul.

## 3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The problem of this research work is stated as "Shankaracharya's Outlooks on Impermanence Nature of Life and World and the Significance of Its Spiritual Values on the Light of his Famous Verse "Brahman Satya Jagat Mithya". The main reason of concentrating on the problem is to grow attention on non-material values and make realization among the human beings about true nature of life and world. Generally in the present time it is commonly notice that the non-material values are neglected and give more importance on material needs. But, the non-material or spiritual values are considered as essential elements for peaceful society and the better life in real sense and without which a society cannot run in the proper dimension of progress.

## 4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present time is normally called a time of science and technology and therefore it is usually thought that its role is much more vital than the non-material values. But without realization of spiritual values human beings cannot understand the true nature of life and world. The purpose of spiritual education is to fulfill the divine potentiality of children and to prepare them for life by giving them the tools they need to keep on learning throughout the many experiences.

The present study will focused on spiritual values of Shankaracharya's philosophy, because though many studies has been done on the different aspects of his philosophy, but the study on the relevance of spiritual values of Shankaracharya's philosophy in present society is not done till date. So, the present study gives more importance on the necessity of spiritual values of Shankaracharya's philosophy as the way of realization of true nature of life and world.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study sets the following objectives and the researcher will try to fulfill the same. The objectives of the present study are-

- To find out the spiritual values of life in Shankaracharya's philosophy.

- To find out the spiritual values of world in Shankaracharya's philosophy.
- To create the sense of realization of true nature of life and world.
- To highlight the causes of bondage and the ways of liberation or Moksha.

## 6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are some definite research questions of this study which are set according to the aim and objectives of this study. The following research questions are set for the present study.

- What is the Spiritual values of Life and World?
- What is the impact of Maya in produce false error?
- What is the nature of Brahman?
- What is the nature of bondage and liberation?

## 7. METHODOLOGY

The aim of present study is to find out the importance of spiritual values of life and world in the light of Advaita Vedanta philosophy of Shankaracharya. The descriptive and analytic methods of research have been adopted for the present study, and it will characterize the present study as qualitative.

The study on the topic "A Comprehensive Study on Spiritual Values of Life and World in the Light of Advaita Vedanta Philosophy of Shankaracharya" is mainly based on literature review. Both primary and secondary data sources have been used in the present study regarding the collection of data.

## 8. SIGNIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The significance of the present study is considered as top most relevant in the present society. Because, the spiritual analysis and realization of life and world helps us to visualized the real nature of them. Proper realization of life and world helps us to find the right ways of livelihood and developed the sense of humanity. That is the reason, the spiritual realization of life and world is considered as the panacea of all kind of social evils in the present materialistic society.

## 9. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Shankaracharya distinguishes between empirical reality and ontological reality. According to him, the empirical reality is mere appearance and known by lower knowledge. On the other hand, ontological reality is absolute truth and known by higher knowledge. Higher knowledge is the result of realization of true nature of life and world. Brahman is the highest reality and is the subject of higher knowledge, while the life and world are empirical reality, which are not true and the subject of lower knowledge.

According to Shankaracharya, Brahman is the only reality. There is no reality in this world which is equal to Brahman. That is why Bharman is said as a supreme reality. Brahman and Atman or the Supreme Self is synonymous terms. Individual self or jiva is the cause of our existence. Our body is like a shadow of Atman of Self. The existence of a shadow of a tree will survive until the existence of the tree. Like this, the existence of our body is possible until Jive or self is inside our body. So, our body is not permanent. It has birth and passing and the things which have starting and finishing and birth and passing are not genuine.

## 10. CONCEPT OF MAYA

The fact that the world is a creation of Maya is not true. It has two aspects- one is Avarana and another is Vikshepa. The former being the negative aspect of concealment and the latter is positive aspect of projection. Maya is the inherent power or potency of Brahman. Maya is absolutely dependent on Brahman and is inseparable from it. Though the Maya is a power of Brahman yet Brahman is not influenced by Maya just as the magician is not affected by his magic.

Maya is like an illusion as we are mistaken of rope to be a snake. Due to our ignorance we think the world as real. The knowledge of snake is true for us during the illusion though it has no existence. It is a false knowledge. The false knowledge of snake will be vanishing when we will be able to see the real existence of the rope. Like this we can realize the true nature of life and world when we will be able to realize the impermanence nature of them.

## 11. BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

Atman is naturally one, eternal and universal consciousness. It is eternally liberated. Due to ignorance it produces the psychophysical life is the cause of bondage. Feeling of separation of Atman from Brahman is the root cause of bondage.

Though Atman is reality and consciousness and is present everywhere, yet it is perceived by the eye of wisdom alone. But, whose vision is obscured by ignorance is not able to see the illumine Atman, as the blind person does not see the bright sun. Atman never undergoes changes and the buddhi is never endowed with consciousness. But, man believes Atman to be identical with the buddhi and falls under such delusions as that he is the seer and the knower.

The knowledge produced by the realization of the true nature of reality destroys immediately the ignorance characterized by the notions of 'I' and 'mine'. The Yogi blessed with total illumination sees, through the eyes of knowledge, the whole universe in his possess self and respects everything as the self and nothing else. As fire can burn anything, so knowledge is the direct cause of liberation. Liberation cannot be attained without knowledge. The feeling of oneness between Atman and Brahman is the pure knowledge and it can lead the way of liberation.

The person is known as liberated who is able to experience this wonderful state and is able to go beyond the cycle of joy and sorrow, birth and death. As long as the person seated on the throne of attachment with the body, mind and senses he will experience all the fleeting emotions of love-hate and pain-pleasure. According to Shankaracharya, we see diversity where there is unity and many where is one because of ignorance. Shankaracharya said, the spirit of man is identical to the Supreme Being, but due to our sufferings and errors we are unable to realize this oneness. The person who has achieved this realization can attain Moksha or liberation. So, the Moksha is achieved only when the Supreme Truth is realized.

Realization of Brahman is considered as Summum Bonum in Shankaracharya's philosophy. Brahman can be realized only through perfect knowledge or wisdom. Such perfect knowledge is essential to study the Vedas and perform the activities as prescribed in Vedas such as fasting, prayer and ascetic knowledge. Performing duties rightly and unselfishly towards family, friends and society also help to refine the mind. These are considered as the means of realizing the supreme end.

Shankaracharya distinguishes four stages of spiritual progression of self. Out of these four stages the fourth and highest state of soul is realization of complete identity of themselves with Brahman. This kind of realization comes through the highest or absolute knowledge. At this level, there is not even knowledge of Brahman.

## 12. CONCLUSION

In the conclusion it can be said that realization of spiritual values of life and world is very much essential for the welfare of human beings as well as the society. In the modern time, very unlikely it is seen that in the present education system more importance has been given to intellectual knowledge. In the present time it is commonly heard that the present time is a time of science and technology and we follow the material values ahead of spiritual values. But, we should remember that all the actions and works of science are controlled by human mind. If the human mind is not purified then we get series of incidents like Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The inquisitive human mind with the help of science and technology invents many more, which has both positive and negative uses. If the human mind is not purified through proper knowledge and values, they will use the scientific products for destructive purposes. But with the help of proper knowledge the human mind will be purified and the products of science and technology will definitely be used for the betterment of human beings.

Now the National Educational Policy 2020 has given more importance on Indian Knowledge System which is based on value education. The Indian knowledge system comprise of Jnana, Vignan and Jeevan Darshan that have evolved out of experience, observation, experimentation and rigorous analysis. Because, the foundation of Indian Knowledge System was Vedic literature, the Upanishads, the Vedas and the Upavedas, which always gives importance on value education.

Indian Knowledge System has given importance not only on intellectual development but also the development of moral & spiritual values and skill based education. The aim of education is not only gathering knowledge, but also earning the skills of life.

According to the law of rebirth of Indian philosophy there is a spirit or soul behind our body. Our body is not permanent but spirit or soul which is behind our body is permanent. So, according to the law of karma after this life our soul will take another birth to enjoy the effect of the works of previous life, which remained unfulfilled. Because according to the law of causation of logic, it is said that every effect has a cause. It means that, every effect is produced from some definite cause. In the same way, the works which have been done in our life would definitely produce some effect and we are responsible and have to enjoy that effect in any way either within this life or after this life.

We should always remember that our life is not permanent or everlasting. Life and passing are just like the two sides of the same coin. Therefore, in a sense, there is no ultimate meaning of human life. So, in our lifetime we should do the good works which produces good effects in terms of both individuals as well as society. Then only we may hope a peaceful society in which our future generation can learn good things and good ideology.

Hope that this study will help people to understand the spiritual values of our life and world.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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