



सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

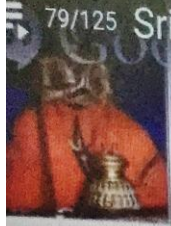
The myth stating that 'The existence of Avidya can be proved'



Advaita view-point

The existence of Avidya can be proved by three possible means:

1. Based on the theory of 'error'
 2. By Inference
 3. By Verbal testimony – Upanishadic passages and the 'arthapatti' that is based on the Upanishadic passages
- 3A. Smriti Passages as also Purana passages

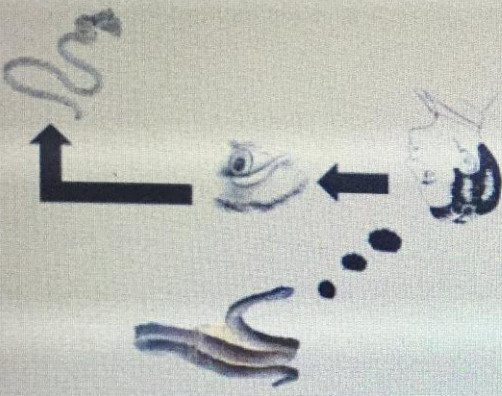


सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

The myth stating that 'Avidya is undefinable'

Avidya can be proved as a positive entity by perception. Anirvacaniyatva is explained as being neither *sat*, existent, nor *asat*, non-existent, but different from both, *sadasadvilaksanam*. This uniqueness, says Rāmānuja, is itself unique, because it cannot be proved by any *pramāna*. All cognitions are of things either existing or not existing.

अनिर्वचनीयत्वं च किमभिप्रेतम् ? सदसद्विलक्षणत्वमिति चेत्; तथाविधस्य वस्तुनः प्रमाणशून्यत्वेन अनिर्वचनीयत्वं स्यात् । एतदुक्तं भवति—सर्वं हि वस्तुजातं प्रतीतिव्यवस्थाप्यम् । सर्वा च प्रतीतिस्सदसदाकारा । सदसदाकारायास्तु प्रतीतेस्सदसद्विलक्षणं विषय इत्यभ्युपगममाने सर्वं सर्वप्रतीतेर्विषयस्स्यात्—इति ॥ इत्यनिर्वचनीयत्वानुपपत्तिः ।



Which is सत्

Therefore one has to accept the existence of the serpent the serpent?

If not, then why did not he cognize a lion or tiger in place of NO?

It been totally non-existent?

Would the person have been able to cognize a serpent had

'This is a serpent' on seeing a rope.

1st instance: A person gets a cognition

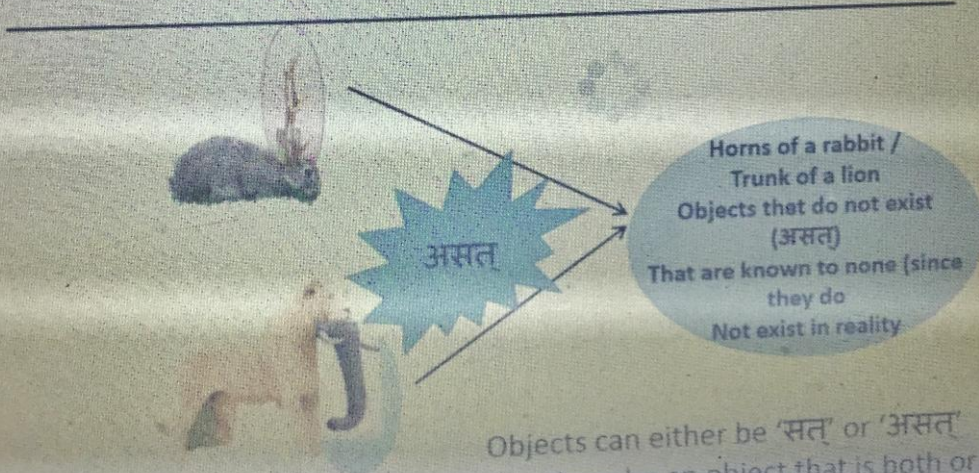
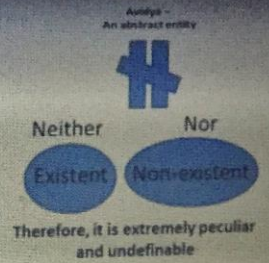
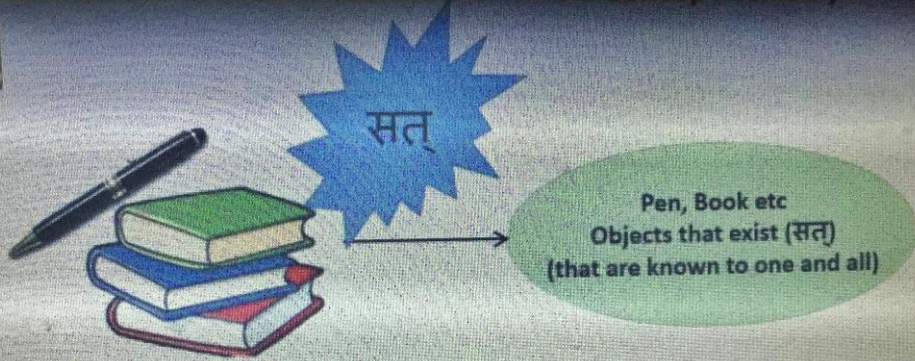
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that is attained on seeing a an illusion 'this is a snake, that taking the example of nor असत्'. We will prove object that is neither सत् 'yes' there can exist an



अविद्या: अविद्या and अनिरवचनीय (anirvacaniyānupapatti of Maha Siddhanta)

Sribhashyam 47: Avidya and Anirvacaniya (anirvacaniyānupapatti of Maha Siddhanta)



Objects can either be 'सत्' or 'असत्'
Can there be an object that is both or neither of them?



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प्रमाणानुगतेन अनिर्वचनीयत्वं स्यात् । एतदुक्तं भवति—सर्वं हि वस्तुजातं प्रतीतिव्य
वस्थाप्यम् । सर्वा च प्रतीतिस्सदसदाकारा । सदसदाकारायास्तु प्रतीतेस्सदसद्विलक्षणं विषय
इत्यभ्युपगम्यमाने सर्वं सर्वप्रतीतिविषयस्स्यात्—इति ॥ इत्यनिर्वचनीयत्वानुपपत्तिः ।

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Sribhashyam 46: What is the Nature of Avidyā? (svārūpānupapatti of Maha Siddhanta)



सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

The myth of the nature of Avidya

Summary of 'Svarupanupapatti'

The nature (svarupa) of avidyā: Avidyā must be either real or unreal; there is no other possibility. But neither of these is possible. If avidyā is real, non-dualism collapses into dualism. If it is unreal, we are driven to self-contradiction or infinite regress.

अत्रमाधिष्ठानभूतायास्तु साक्षाद्दृशेर्माध्यमिकपक्षप्रसङ्गेनापारमार्थ्यानिभ्युपगमाच्च । द्रष्टृदृश्ययो-
स्तदवच्छिन्नाया दृशेश्च काल्पनिकत्वेन मूलदोषान्तरापेक्षयाऽनवस्था स्यात् । अथेतत्परि-
जिहीर्षया परमार्थसत्यनुभूतिरेव ब्रह्मरूपा दोष इति चेत्; ब्रह्मैव चेद्दोषः, प्रपञ्चदर्शनस्यैव
तन्मूलं स्यात्; किं प्रपञ्चतुल्याविद्यान्तरपरिकल्पनेन ? ब्रह्मणो दोषत्वे सति तस्य नित्यत्वेना-
निर्मोक्षश्च स्यात् । अतो यावद्ब्रह्मव्यतिरिक्तपारमार्थिकदोषानभ्युपगमः; न तावद्भ्रान्तिरूप-

मादित, भवति ॥ इति स्वरूपानुपपत्तिः ।

32:30 / 1:01:13



सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

The myth of the nature of Avidya

3. Svarupa-anupapatti

Detailed Explanation:

According to the Advaita, Brahman is pure perception, anubhutimātra, not connected with any perceiver or thing perceived. As such, if Avidyā conceals Brahman, assuming that it rests in Brahman, that is, svāsrāyadosa, Rāmānuja asks whether it is real or unreal.

It cannot be real as everything other than Brahman is unreal in Advaita.

If it is unreal, it should be identified with seer, seen or another perception. It cannot be identical with anubhāti, perception, for Brahman alone is the perception unconnected with things and as avidyā is unreal, Brahman will also be unreal which will land Advaita in the portals of Mādhyamika nihilism.

If it is identified with seer or seen, both of which are unreal, avidyā itself being unreal, and another dosa must be found for the appearance of the avidyā. That is, as the avidyā is said to be the cause of the unreal perception of things and the unreal seer, there should be a cause for the unreal avidya which in its turn will require another and so on, resulting in ad infinitum, and anavasthā. If on the other hand avidyā is identified with Brahman it becomes real and there can be no removal

of it.

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सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

The myth of the nature of Avidya

QUESTION: Is Avidya an real object / entity or not?

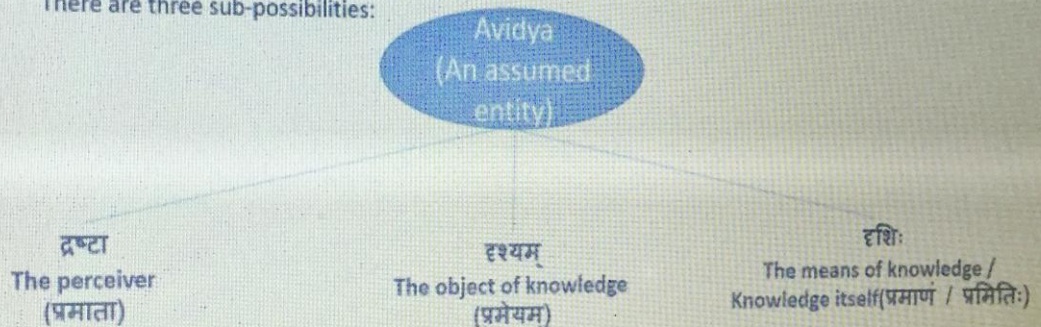
Possibility No. 1:

If yes, then you have accepted the existence of another real object / entity other than Brahman which suffices to say that 'Advaita' (non-duality / monism) is incorrect

Possibility No. 2:

If Avidya is not a real object / entity, then what is it?

There are three sub-possibilities:



None of the above three are possible due to the ensuing reasons!

अपि च, निविषया निराश्रया स्वप्रकाशेयमनुभूतिस्स्वाश्रयदोषवशादनन्ताश्रयमनन्त-
विषयमात्मानमनुभवतीत्यत्र किमयं स्वाश्रयदोषः परमार्थभूतः ? उतापरमार्थभूत इति
विवेचनीयम् । न तावत्परमार्थः, अनभ्युपगमात् । नाप्यपरमार्थः, तथा सति हि द्रष्टृत्वेन
वा दृश्यत्वेन वा दृशित्वेन चाऽभ्युपगमनीयः । नतावद्दृशिः, दृशित्वरूपमेवानभ्युपगमात्;

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महासिद्धान्तः सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

तिरोधानानुपपत्तिः

The myth of the obscuration of the
Brahman due of Avidya

Myth No. 2

Possibility No.1 is also untenable

The first is not possible because the light that is Brahman does not appear but always present. So Avidyà must destroy the light. But Brahman is not a substance with light as its attribute, in which case it can remain even after its light is destroyed.

Possibility No. 2 is untenable as already explained:

As Brahman is Himself the prakàsa, the tirodhàna can only mean the destruction of Brahman.

अतो ज्ञानस्वरूपस्य ब्रह्मणो विरोधादेव नाज्ञानाश्रयत्वम् ॥ इत्याश्रयानुपपत्तिः ।

किञ्च, अविद्यया प्रकाशकस्वरूपं ब्रह्म तिरोहितमिति वदता स्वरूपनाश एवोक्त-
स्यात् । प्रकाशतिरोधानं नाम प्रकाशोत्पत्तिप्रतिबन्धो विद्यमानस्य विनाशो वा । प्रकाश-
स्यानुत्पाद्यत्वाभ्युपगमेन प्रकाशतिरोधानं प्रकाशनाश एव ॥ इति तिरोधानानुपपत्तिः ।

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Sribhashyam 46: What is the Nature of Avidyā? (svarūpānupapatti of Maha Siddhanta)

सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

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जिहीर्षया परमार्थसत्यनुभूतिरेव ब्रह्मरूपा दोष इति चेत्; ब्रह्मैव चेद्दोषः, प्रपञ्चदर्शनस्यैव
तन्मूलं स्यात्; किं प्रपञ्चतुल्याविद्यान्तरपरिकल्पनेन ? ब्रह्मणो दोषत्वे सति तस्य नित्यत्वेना-
निर्मोक्षश्च स्यात् । अतो यावद्ब्रह्मव्यतिरिक्तपारमार्थिकदोषानभ्युपगमः; न तावद्भ्रान्तिरुप-
पादितः भवति ॥ इति स्वरूपानुपपत्तिः ।



महासिद्धान्तः सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

तिरोधानानुपपत्तिः

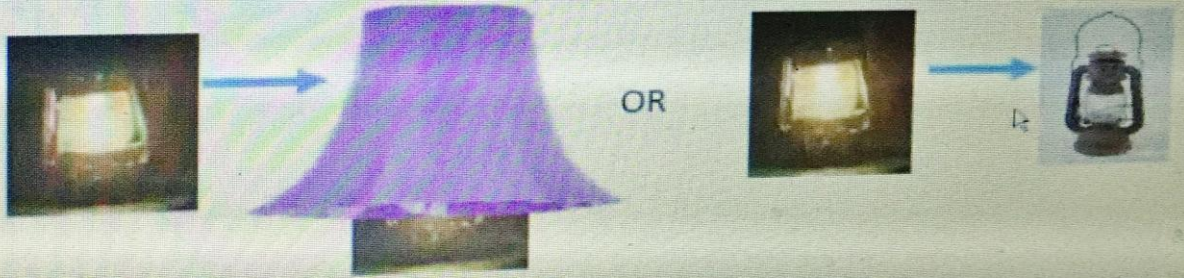
The myth of the obscuration of the Brahman due of Avidya

Myth No. 1



What do you actually mean by Obscurity 'तिरोधान' of the Brahman? There are 2 possibilities:

1. प्रकशोत्पत्तिप्रतिबन्धः (Preventing the illumination from being generated / shone)
 2. विद्यमानस्य विनाशः (Destroying the illumination)
- Which of the these two (illustrated below) is intended?



Tirodhàna, obscuration must be of two kinds. Either it should prevent the light from appearing or it should destroy the light that appeared.



महासिद्धान्तः सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

तिरोधानानुपपत्तिः

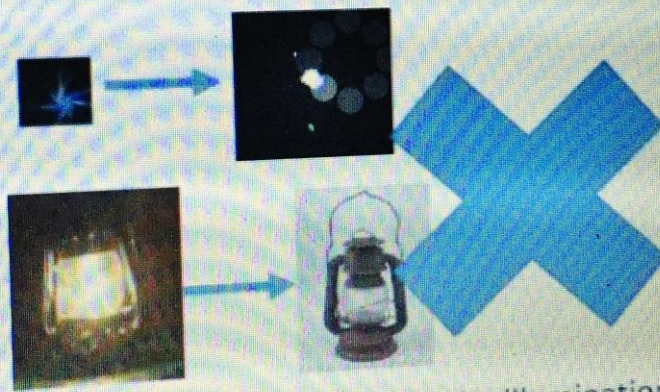
The myth of the obscuration of the Brahman due of Avidya

Myth No. 2

Possibility No.2 is untenable



(Original State)



विद्यमानस्य विनाशः (Destruction of the illumination) is not possible, because, Brahman which is of the illumination is said to be eternal by you people (Advaitin-s)

महासिद्धान्तः सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

The myth of the obscuration of the Brahman due of Avidya

Simple explanation of Tirodhananupapatti

The Advaitin next comes up with the argument that the knowledge which is opposed to avidyà does not have Brahman as its subject but the unreality of everything other than Brahman. Ràmànuja asks whether the avidyà to which this knowledge is opposed is about the real knowledge of Brahman or about the reality of the universe. It cannot be the former, says Ràmànuja, 'na tàvat brahmayàthàtmyajràna-virodhi atadvìuayatvàt' because it is said that Brahman is not the subject of the knowledge which removes Avidyà. (prapañcamithyàtva-jrànaś tatsatyatva-rāpa- ajrànena virudhyate)



महासिद्धान्तः सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

तिरोधानानुपपत्तिः

The myth of the obscuration of the Brahman due of Avidya

Myth No. 2



Advaita view-point

Avidya causes Obscurity 'तिरोधान' of the Brahman

Phase No. 1

Original State



Original state of Brahman that is of the nature of illumination (प्रकाशैकस्वरूपम्)

Phase No. 2

Advent of Avidya



Avidya – An abstract entity

Phase No. 3

Effect of Avidya



The illuminate Brahman becomes obscure (तिरोहित) The process is known as 'तिरोधान'

Phase No. 4

Effect of eliding of Avidya



The illuminate Brahman Returns to its Original state of illumination as the Obscurity 'तिरोधान' is removed



महासिद्धान्तः

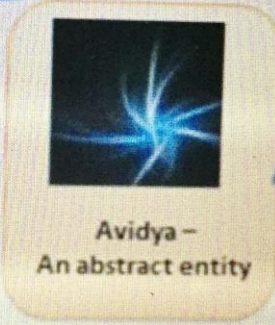
सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

आश्रयानुपपत्तिः



Where does this Avidya exist?
In the Brahman or in the Individual Soul?

1. The Individual Soul (IS) cannot be the repository of Avidya, since there is no IS in reality (according to Advaita philosophy)
2. The Supreme Brahman cannot be the repository of Avidya since it is of the nature of Supreme Knowledge, Bliss etc and it cannot be the locus of a fallacious entity. Therefore neither of the options are tenable!



Supreme Brahman



Cit / Individual soul

Neither of the above two possibilities are tenable

Therefore the theory of Avidya put forth by the philosophy of Advaita is incorrect!

तदयुक्तम्; सा हि किमाश्रित्य भ्रमं जनयति ? न तावज्जीवमाश्रित्य; अविद्यापरिकल्पितत्वा-
ज्जीवभावस्य । नापि ब्रह्माश्रित्य; तस्य स्वयंप्रकाशज्ञानस्वरूपत्वेनाविद्याविरोधित्वात् । सा हि

सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

The myth of the repository of Avidya



Avidya - An abstract entity



Neither

Nor

Existent

Non-existent

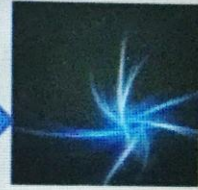
Therefore, it is extremely peculiar and undefinable



Advaita view-point



Supreme Brahman



Avidya - An abstract entity



Acit / matter



Cit / Individual soul

यदप्युच्यते—निविशेपे स्वयंप्रकाशे वस्तुनि दोषपरिकल्पितमोशिशितव्याह्यनन्तविकल्पं
सर्वं जगत् । दोषश्च स्वरूपतिरोधानविधिचित्रविक्षेपकरी सदसदनिर्वचनीयाज्जाह्विद्या ।
सा चावश्याभ्युपगमनीया; *अनृतेन हि प्रत्यूढाः इत्यादिभिः श्रुतिभिः, ब्रह्मणस्तत्त्वमस्यादि-
वाक्यसामानाधिकरण्यावगतजीवैक्यानुपपत्त्या च । सा तु न सती, भ्रान्तिबाधयोरयोगात् ।
नाप्यसती, ह्यातिबाधयोश्चायोगात् । अतः कोटिद्वयविनिर्मुक्तयेमविद्येति तत्त्वविदः—इति ।

hashyam 44: What is the Locus of Avidya? (āśrayānupapatti of Maha Siddhanta)



1. अविद्या cannot be said to असत् since its effect is experienced: The effect is the Supreme Brahman showing itself as the Jivatma-s and the insentient objects
2. अविद्या cannot be said to सत् since it does not really exist; The Upanishads Ordain that there is only **one real object** in the world and that is the Supreme Brahman. Therefore one accepts that अविद्या exists in reality, then it would contradict the Upanishads.



Avidya –
An abstract entity



Neither

Nor

Existent

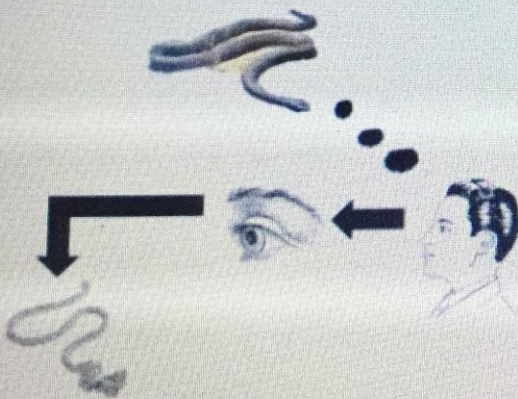
Non-existent

Therefore, it is extremely peculiar
and undefinable

hashyam 44: What is the Locus of Avidya? (āśrayānupapatti of Maha Siddhanta)



Yes, there can exist an object that is neither सत् nor असत्. We will prove that taking the example of an illusion 'this is a snake' that is attained on seeing a rope



1st instance: A person gets a cognition 'This is a serpent' on seeing a rope.

Would the person have been able to cognize a serpent had it been totally non-existent?

No!

If not, then why did not he cognize a lion or tiger in place of the serpent?

Therefore one has to accept the existence of the serpent Which is 'सत्'

सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

आश्रयानुपपत्तिः

Myth No. 3

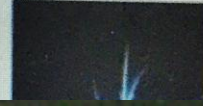
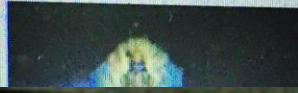
The myth of the repository of Avidya



Avidya -
An abstract entity



Advaita view-point



म 47: Avidya and Anirvacaniya (anirvacaniyānupapatti of
सिद्धान्तः
धानुपपत्तयः
The myth stating that 'Avidya is undefinable'

It cannot be proved as a positive entity by perception. Anirvacaniyatva is explained as not *sat*, existent, nor *asat*, non-existent, but different from both, *sadasadvit*. As *avidya*, says Rāmānuja, is itself unique, because it cannot be proved by any of the methods of things either existing or not existing.

निर्वचनीयत्वं च किमभिप्रेतम् ? सदसद्विलक्षणत्वमिति चेत्; तथैव
अनिर्वचनीयत्वं स्यात् । एतदुक्तं भवति—सर्वं हि वस्तु
सर्वं च प्रतीतिस्सदसदाकारा । सदसदाकारायास्तु प्रतीतेस्सदसद
प्रतीते सर्वं सर्वप्रतीतेविषयस्स्यात्—इति ॥ इत्यनिर्वचनीयत्वानुपपत्तिः

महासिद्धान्तः

सप्तविधानुपपत्तयः

अनुपपत्तिः = error / misconception / myth; '**sapta-vidha-anupapatti**' = seven-fold error

Bhagavan Ramanuja highlights **seven important errors** in the theory of 'Avidya' and how it enables the Supreme Brahman to show itself as is the Jivatma and the Acit entities Really exist. This is popularly known as 'sapta-vidha-anupapatti' among Vedanta scholars

Points to be noted in this context:

1. Historical background
2. The prevailing situation in society at the time
3. The role played by Advaita philosophy during such a time
4. The complexities thereof
5. The reason for Ramanuja to take great pains to refute the theory of Advaita, especially the 'Avidya' aspect

Other related points