

# Avidyā is jñāna-virOdhi not jñāna-abhāva

Jaishankar Narayanan, Acharya at Ārsha Vidyā Varshini Gurukulam

## Introduction

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the discredited opinions of Nagesha Bhatta, the 17<sup>th</sup> century author of Vaiyākāraṇa-siddhānta-laghumanjusha on avidyā, were repackaged by some people who did not properly understand the traditional teaching of advaita sampradaya. They further went on a tirade against all the sampradaya-vit acharyas other than Gaudapada, Shankara and Sureshvaracharya claiming that they have distorted advaita. These opinions have caused some confusion and those who are desirous of moksha should not be heeding these people. Let us see how this causes confusion.

1. Ajñāna is jñāna-abhāva and avidyā is beginning-less, cause-less vyakta-adhyāsa
2. Shankara and Upanishads teach that on gaining jñānam, avidyā is completely destroyed and jñāni is sākshāt brahman - brahma vid brahmaiva bhavati
3. So according to 1. vyakta-adhyāsa is destroyed if avidyā is destroyed
4. So I should not perceive dvaita if I am a jñāni
5. Keep waiting for dvaita to be destroyed so that it is not available for perception. Even though it gets destroyed every night when I sleep, it comes back somehow cause-lessly from 'jñāna-abhāva bīja' (which is absurd as how can abhāva be a bīja)
6. This has made advaita into some mystical thing where the dvaita vanishes in the wake of knowledge although the same people vehemently oppose Yoga Sadhana and samadhi unnecessarily.

The crucial thing misunderstood in the above is jñāni is brahman but brahman is not jñāni. This inequality is crucial thing to be understood from the 2.16 bhāṣya and chandogya 6th chapter bhāṣya. The kāraṇa-ananyatvam of kārya which is asat has to be understood properly. That is why even Mahavakyas like tat tvam asi are equations of tat - jagat kāraṇam brahma (not shuddham nirgunam brahma) and tvam - jiva and the identity arrived at as both being ananya from nirgunam brahma. Nirgunam Brahma is both tat and tvam from vyavahāra and neither from paramārtha.

From vyavahāra brahman is both jñāni and ajñāni. But only the jñāni knows this and is free, while the ajñāni suffers from ajñāna and its kārya which is samsara.

## Summary

Let me first summarize the points showing why avidyā is jñāna-virOdhi and not jñāna-abhāva.

1. नञ् *nañ* pratyaya meaning in the word avidyā is vidyā-virodhi and not vidyā-abhāva. I give supporting statements from the bhāṣya.
2. avidyā is mentioned as a covering in multiple places in both Gita and bhāṣyas. bhāṣyakāra himself argues that covering implies a covered by and covered entities and a covering cannot be abhāva. so avidyā cannot be an abhāva.
3. bhāṣyakāra does not accept any abhāva at all. He says abhāva is just bhāva-pratiyogi (opposed to existence) and cannot have any vishesha (qualities and activities etc.). As soon as you associate it

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with any quality or activity it is to be taken as bhAva only. So jñāna-abhāva also is only bhāvarupa as per bhāṣyakāra. Also jñāna-abhāva proponents actually use avidyā-kalpita, avidyā-adhyaropita etc. associating their abhāva with activities making it a bhāvarupa only.

4. avidyā is spoken of as bīja (seed), kāraṇa / hetu (cause) in multiple places. A kāraṇa can never be an abhāva according to bhāṣyakāra and even common sense, as something cannot be even perceived if the locus is not bhAvarupa, let alone something being created / projected from nothing.

5. bhāṣyakāra in Māndukya kārikā bhāṣya and Br Su bhāṣya 3.2.9 explicitly states that if avidyā bīja (causal state) is not accepted in sleep and pralaya then individual jīvas cannot re-emerge from sleep / pralaya and mukta-purushas can have rebirth and if this seed is absent then jñāna will not have anything to burn and become useless. jñāna-abhāva proponents have gone against this and made this bīja as abhāva.

6. bhāṣyakāra in Br Up 3.8.12 bhāṣya, in Br Su Bh 3.2.9, Br Su Bh 4.1.3 and BG 14.3 bhāṣya refers to avidyā as an upAdhi. This upAdhi can never be an abhāva as it is accepted as asat / mithyA.

7. Finally bhāṣyakāra says avidyā / ignorance is experienced and has to be included amongst names and forms and so it cannot be abhāva.

8. ajñāna has been mentioned as a shakti in Upanishads. How can this shakti / power be an abhāva?

## नञ् nañ pratyaya meaning

avidyā is vidyā prefixed with नञ् nañ pratyaya. नञ् nañ can have six different meanings but the relevant ones here are विरोधः (*virodhaḥ*) and अभावः (*abhāvaḥ*). jñāna-abhāva proponents claim in words like avidyā and ajñāna it is jñāna abhāva. The traditional teachers including my Guru taught us that in avidyā and ajñāna the meaning is to be taken as jñāna virOdhi. Now I will give Bhāṣya reference where bhāṣyakāra explicitly states avidyā is vidyāvīrOdhi

योऽयं लौकिको वैदिकश्च व्यवहारः स उत्पन्नविवेकज्ञानस्य स्थितप्रज्ञस्य अविद्याकार्यत्वात् अविद्यानिवृत्तौ निवर्तते, अविद्यायाश्च विद्याविरोधात् निवृत्तिः, इत्येतमर्थं स्फुटीकुर्वन् आह

*yo'yam laukiko vaidikaśca vyavahāraḥ sa utpannavivekajñānasya sthitaprajñasya avidyākāryatvāt avidyānivṛttau nivartate, avidyāyāśca vidyāvīrodhāt nivṛtīḥ, ityetamarthaṃ sphuṭīkurvan āha* – BG 2.69 intro Bhāṣya

Here bhāṣyakāra clearly states अविद्यायाश्च विद्याविरोधात् निवृत्तिः - avidyāyāśca vidyāvīrOdhiAt nivṛtīḥ - avidyā being opposed to vidyā - its destruction. This avidyā cannot be vyakta adhyAsa as claimed by jñāna-abhāva proponents as the BG verse is talking about the difference in a jñāni's drishti versus an ajñāni's drishti. So dvaita-perception is not a problem but how one perceives is the problem. So once mUIAvidyā is destroyed dvaita is seen as asat and brahman alone is seen as sat.

Further Br Up. Bh 3.3 Intro he says अनभिव्यक्तिः अज्ञानम् अभिव्यक्तिलक्षणेन ज्ञानेन विरुध्यते ; - *anabhivyaktiḥ ajñānam abhivyaktīlakṣaṇena jñānena virudhyate* ; - Ignorance which is non-manifestation (covering) is opposed to Knowledge which manifests (brings to light).

## avidyā is AvaraNa

Further avidyā / ajñāna is presented as that which has the nature of covering - आवरणात्मक by both Bhagavān in Gita and bhāṣyakāra.

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अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥

*ajñānenāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ* ॥ BG 5.15

In BG 5.15 Bh अज्ञानेन आवृतं ज्ञानं विवेकविज्ञानम् , तेन मुह्यन्ति 'करोमि कारयामि भोक्ष्ये भोजयामि' इत्येवं मोहं गच्छन्ति अविवेकिनः संसारिणो जन्तवः - *ajñānena āvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ vivekavijñānam , tena muhyanti 'karomi kārayāmi bhokṣye bhojayāmi' ityevaṃ moham gacchanti avivekinaḥ saṃsāriṇo jantavaḥ* - knowledge, discriminating wisdom; remains covered by ignorance. Due to which the beings, the non-discriminating people in the world become deluded.

In BG 5.16 Bh ज्ञानेन तु येन अज्ञानेन आवृताः मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः तत् अज्ञानं येषां जन्तूनां विवेकज्ञानेन आत्मविषयेण नाशितम् आत्मनः भवति - *jñānena tu yena ajñānena āvṛtāḥ muhyanti jantavaḥ tat ajñānaṃ yeṣāṃ jantūnāṃ vivekajñānena ātmaviṣayeṇa nāśitam ātmanaḥ bhavati* - that ignorance of theirs - being covered by which beings get deluded - becomes destroyed.

Both covering by abhāva and destruction of abhāva is meaningless. Here also this destruction or covering cannot refer to vyakta-adhyāsa as Bhagavān immediately talks about panditas as samadarshinah - पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः *paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ* BG 5.18. Again dvaita perception is not an issue but how one perceives is the problem.

Further in BG 13.2 bhāṣya अविद्यायाः तामसत्वात् । तामसो हि प्रत्ययः, आवरणात्मकत्वात् अविद्या विपरीतग्राहकः, संशयोपस्थापको वा, अग्रहणात्मको वा ; विवेकप्रकाशभावे तदभावात् , तामसे च आवरणात्मके तिमिरादिदोषे सति अग्रहणादेः अविद्यात्रयस्य उपलब्धेः ॥

*avidyāyāḥ tāmasatvāt / tāmaso hi pratyayaḥ, āvaraṇātmakatvāt avidyā viparītagrāhakaḥ, saṃśayopasthāpako vā, agrahaṇātmako vā ; vivekaprakāśabhāve tadabhāvat , tāmaso ca āvaraṇātmake timirādidoṣe sati agrahaṇādeḥ avidyātrayasya upalabdheḥ ॥*

Ignorance is of the nature of tamas. Since ignorance has the nature of covering, it is indeed cognised as born of tamas; it makes one perceive contrarily, or it arouses doubt, or it leads to non-perception. For it disappears with the presence of light of discrimination. And the three kind of ignorance, non-perception etc., are experienced when there are such defects as blindness etc. which are forms of tamas and have the nature of covering.

Tamas is considered to be an existent entity in vyavahāra and one of the three Gunas.

Further in Br Up 1.4.16 Bhāṣya वस्तुस्वरूपावरणात्मिका हि सा - *vastusvarūpāvaraṇātmikā hi sā* - It merely covers / conceals the nature of a thing - with reference to avidyā.

Further let us see Br Up 1.2.1 and its bhāṣya which is famously known as Ghata bhāṣya.

नैवेह किञ्चनाग्र आसीन्मृत्युनैवेदमावृतमासीत् - *naiveha kiñcanāgra āsīnmṛtyunaivedamāvṛtamāsīt* - There was nothing at all here in the beginning. It was only covered by death (Hiranyagarbha) says the sruti

Bhāṣya - नैवेह किञ्चनाग्र आसीत् इह संसारमण्डले, किञ्चन किञ्चिदपि नामरूपप्रविभक्तविशेषम् , नैवासीत् न बभूव, अग्रे प्रागुत्पत्तेर्मनआदेः - *naiveha kiñcanāgra āsīt iha saṃsāramaṇḍale, kiñcana kiñcidapi nāmarūpapravibhaktaviśeṣam , naivāsīt na babhūva, agre prāgutpattermanaādeḥ* - There was nothing at all here in the beginning in the samsAra-mandala (universe) differentiated as Names and forms before the creation (manifestation) of mind etc.

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The buddhist purvapakshi (jñāna-abhāva proponents are in the same league) says किं शून्यमेव बभूव ? शून्यमेव स्यात् ; 'नैवेह किञ्चन' इति श्रुतेः, न कार्य कारणं वासीत् ; - *kiṃ śūnyameva babhūva ? śūnyameva syāt ; 'naiveha kiñcana' iti śruteḥ, na kāryaṃ kāraṇaṃ vāsīt ;* - Was it only void (abhāva)? It must be because Sruti itself says 'There was nothing at all here'. Similarly jñāna-abhāva proponents say bhāṣyakāra himself says यदि ज्ञानाभावः, यदि संशयज्ञानम् , यदि विपरीतज्ञानं वा उच्यते अज्ञानमिति सर्वं हि तत् ज्ञानेनैव निवर्त्यते ; *yadi jñānābhāvaḥ, yadi saṁśayañānam , yadi viparītañānam vā ucyate ajñānamiti sarvaṃ hi tat jñānenaiva nivartyate ;* Br Up 3.3 Bh Intro.- Ignorance whether it manifests as lack or want of knowledge or doubt or erroneous cognition - all these are removed by knowledge. They hold on to this jñāna-abhāva mentioned by bhāṣyakāra for which he answers in the ghata bhāṣya given below.

न, 'मृत्युनैवेदमावृतामासीत्' इति श्रुतेः ; यदि हि किञ्चिदपि नासीत् , येनाव्रियते यच्चाव्रियते, तदा नावक्ष्यत् , 'मृत्युनैवेदमावृतम्' इति ; न हि भवति गगनकुसुमच्छन्नो वन्ध्यापुत्र इति ; ब्रवीति च 'मृत्युनैवेदमावृतामासीत्' इति । तस्मात् येनावृतं कारणेन, यच्चावृतं कार्यम् , प्रागुत्पत्तेस्तदुभयमासीत् , श्रुतेः प्रामाण्यात् , अनुमेयत्वाच्च । *na, 'mṛtyunaivedamāvṛtamāsīt' iti śruteḥ ; yadi hi kiñcidapi nāsīt, yenāvriyate yaccāvriyate, tadā nāvakṣyat, 'mṛtyunaivedamāvṛtam' iti ; na hi bhavati gaganakusumacchanno vandhyāputra iti ; bravīti ca 'mṛtyunaivedamāvṛtamāsīt' iti / tasmāt yenāvṛtaṃ kāraṇena, yaccāvṛtaṃ kāryam , prāgutpattestadubhayamāsīt , śruteḥ prāmāṇyāt , anumeyatvācca /*

No. The Sruti says 'It was covered only by death'; Had there been absolutely nothing either to cover or to be covered, the Sruti would not have said, ' It was covered by Death.' For it never happens that a barren woman's son is covered with flowers springing from the sky. Yet the Sruti says, ' It was covered only by Death.' Therefore on the basis of the Sruti pramANa and inference we conclude that the cause which covered, and the effect which was covered, were both existent before the origin of the universe.

### All types of abhāva are also bhāvarūpa only

Further he makes an emphatic statement not accepting any of the four categories of abhāva.

अपि च, चतुर्विधानामभावानाम् , घटस्येतरेतराभावो घटादन्यो दृष्टः – यथा घटाभावः पटादिरेव, न घटस्वरूपमेव । न च घटाभावः सन्नपटः अभावात्मकः ; किं तर्हि ? भावरूप एव । एवं घटस्य प्राक्प्रध्वंसात्यन्ताभावानामपि घटादन्यत्वं स्यात् , घटेन व्यपदिश्यमानत्वात् , घटस्येतरेतराभाववत् ; तथैव भावात्मकताभावानाम् ।

*api ca, caturvidhānāmbhāvānām , ghaṭasyetaretarābhāvo ghaṭādanyo dr̥ṣṭaḥ — yathā ghaṭābhāvaḥ paṭādireva, na ghaṭasvarūpameva / na ca ghaṭābhāvaḥ sanpaṭaḥ abhāvātmakaḥ ; kiṃ tarhi ? bhāvarūpa eva / evaṃ ghaṭasya prākpradhvaṃsātyantābhāvānāmapi ghaṭādanyatvaṃ syāt , ghaṭena vyapadiśyamānatvāt , ghaṭasyetaretarābhāvavāt ; tathaiva bhāvātmakatābhāvānām /*

Moreover, of the four kinds of absence (abhāva) relating to, say, a pot, we observe that what is called mutual non-existence is other than the pot : The absence of a pot is a cloth or some other thing, not the pot itself. But the cloth, although it is the absence of a pot, is not a nonentity, but a positive entity. Similarly the previous non-existence, the non-existence due to destruction, and absolute non-existence must also be other than the pot ; for they are

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spoken of in terms of it, as in the case of the mutual exclusion relating to it. And these non-existences must also (like the cloth, for instance) be positive entities.

Mere non-existence (abhāva) cannot be related to an act or a quality. Imaginary in itself, it can never be related to any other thing. It is therefore a mere play of words to speak of abhāva as if it were a thing in itself, just as it is a play of words to speak of the body of a stone-image.

So in vyavahAra bhāṣyakāra does not accept any abhāva at all. You can replace घट (pot) with jñāna in the above statement and have to arrive at the conclusion that even what is proposed as jñāna-abhāva by some proponents is bhAvarupa according to bhāṣyakāra.

Further in Tai Up Sambandha bhāṣya अन्यथा हि अभावादभावोत्पत्तिरिति सर्वप्रमाणव्याकोप इति । -

*anyathā hi abhāvādbhāvotpattiriti sarvapramāṇavyākopa iti* / - Otherwise we would be led to conclude that a positive effect springs out of a mere absence, — a conclusion which is opposed to all means of knowledge (pramANa). Further in the same bhāṣya:

प्रध्वंसाभावोऽप्यारभ्यत इति न सम्भवति अभावस्य विशेषाभावाद्विकल्पमात्रमेतत् । भावप्रतियोगी ह्यभावः । यथा ह्यभिन्नोऽपि भावो घटपटादिभिर्विशेष्यते भिन्न इव घटभावः पटभाव इति, एवं निर्विशेषोऽप्यभावः क्रियागुणयोगाद्द्रव्यादिवद्विकल्प्यते । न ह्यभाव उत्पलादिवद्विशेषणसहभावी । विशेषणवत्त्वे भाव एव स्यात् ।

*pradhvaṃsābhāvo'pyārabhyata iti na sambhavati abhāvasya viśeṣābhāvādvikalpamātrametat / bhāvapratiyogī hyabhāvaḥ / yathā hyabhinno'pi bhāvo ghaṭapaṭādibhirviśeṣyate bhinna iva ghaṭabhāvaḥ paṭabhāva iti, evaṃ nirviśeṣo'pyabhāvaḥ kriyāguṇayogāddravvyādivadvikalpyate / na hyabhāva utpalādivadvīṣeṣaṇasahabhāvī / viśeṣaṇavattve bhāva eva syāt /*

To say that pradhvamsAbhāva, — non-existence of a thing after destruction, — is produced is only a play of words, as nothing can be a quality (विशेष) of non-existence. Non-existence is indeed only the opposite of existence. Just as existence, though one and the same throughout, is yet distinguished by cloth, pot, and so on, — e.g., we speak of the existence of a cloth, the existence of a pot, and so on, — so also, though abhāva or non-existence is in itself devoid of all distinctions, yet it is spoken of as different and in association with different acts or qualities as though it were a substance etc. Non-existence cannot, indeed, co-exist with attributes as the blue lotus co-exists with its attributes. If it were possessed of attributes, then it would come under the category of bhava or being.

## avidyā as a Cause / Seed of nāma-rUpa / Samsāra

avidyā has been mentioned as bīja, hetu and kāraṇa in numerous places in bhāṣya. Only a few references are given below.

तेषामविद्यादेः संसारबीजस्य विशरणाद्धिंसनाद्विनाशनादित्यनेनार्थयोगेन विद्योपनिषदित्युच्यते ।  
*teṣāmavidyādeḥ saṃsārabījasya viśaraṇāddhiṃsanādvinaśanādityanenārthayogena vidyopanīṣadityucyate* / Kata Up sambandha bh

For those mumukshus it splits up, injures, or destroys the seeds of worldly existence such as ignorance etc., so Knowledge is called upanishad.

स्वाभाविकस्याज्ञानस्य संसारबीजस्य निवृत्त्यर्थ - *svābhāvikasyājñānasya saṃsārabījasya nivṛttyartham*  
Kata Up 1.1.20 Bh

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For the elimination of the natural ignorance, which is the seed of a life of becoming (samsāra).

अनाद्यविद्याप्रसुप्ताः उत्तिष्ठत हे जन्तवः .. जाग्रत अज्ञाननिद्राया घोररूपायाः सर्वानर्थबीजभूतायाः क्षयं कुरुत ।  
*anādyavidyāprasuptāḥ uttiṣṭhata he jantavaḥ .. jāgrata ajñānanidrāyā ghorarūpāyāḥ*  
*sarvānarthabījabhūtāyāḥ kṣayaṃ kuruta / Kata Up 1.3.14 Bh*

You beings, who are sleeping in ignorance that has no beginning, arise ...awake— put an end to the sleep of ignorance which is terrible by nature and is the seed of all undesirables.

तस्मादविद्याकामकर्मापादानहेतुनिवृत्तौ स्वात्मन्यवस्थानं मोक्ष इति ।

*tasmādaavidyākāmakarmopādānahetunivṛttau svātmanyavasthānaṃ mokṣa iti / Tai Up*  
Sambandha bhāṣya

moksha is being established in one's own Self on the removal of avidyā and kAma, on account of which one takes to karma.

अतः अशेषोपद्रवबीजस्य अज्ञानस्य निवृत्त्यर्थं *ataḥ aśeṣopadravabījasya ajñānasya nivṛttyartham* Tai  
Up 2.1.1 Bh intro

Therefore, for the extinction of ajñāna or ignorance which is the seed of all problems / troubles.

आनन्दमयान्तैराकाशादिभूतारब्धैरविद्याकृतैः *ānandamayāntairākāśādibhūtārabdhairavidyākṛtaiḥ* Tai  
Up 2.3.1 Bh

Starting from akAsha etc. bhuta (elements) to Anandamaya created by avidyā.

अविद्याकृतत्वात् जाग्रत्स्वप्नयोः ; यदन्यग्रहणं जाग्रत्स्वप्नयोः, तदविद्याकृतम् *avidyākṛtatvāt*  
*jāgratsvapnayoh ; yadanyagrahaṇaṃ jāgratsvapnayoh, tadavidyākṛtam* Tai Up 2.8.5 Bh

Waking and dream are created by avidyā; that which is cognized as other in waking and dream is created by avidyā.

संसारबीजाविद्यादिदोषनिवृत्तिदर्शनाच्च । *samsārabījāvidyādidoṣanivṛttidarśanācca / Br up 1.3.1 Bh*

Since the removal of defects - ignorance etc. which are the seeds of samsara, is seen.

स च अविद्या सर्वस्यानर्थस्य प्रसवबीजम्; *sa ca avidyā sarvasyānarthasya prasavabījam;* Br. Up 3.5.1  
bhāṣya.

And that avidyā is the potential seed of all undesirables.

इदम् अविद्यायाः सत्त्वं सह कार्येण प्रदर्शितम् *idam avidyāyāḥ satattvaṃ saha kāryeṇa pradarśitam* Br  
up 4.3.20 Bh

This nature of ignorance along with its effects has been shown.

शुद्धं निर्मलमविद्यामलरहितमिति कारणशरीरप्रतिषेधः। *śuddhaṃ nirmalamavidyāmalarahitamiti*  
*kāraṇaśarīrapraṭiṣedhaḥ / Isha Up 8 Bh*

Pure, without taint, without the impurity of ignorance - thereby is negated the causal body

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तस्यापरमार्थरूपमविद्याकृतं रज्जुसर्पादिसममुक्तं पादत्रयलक्षणं बीजाङ्कुरस्थानीयम् ..... नप्रज्ञानघनमिति सुषुप्तावस्थाप्रतिषेधः, बीजभावाविवेकस्वरूपत्वात् ; *tasyāparamārtharūpamavidyākṛtaṃ rajjusarpādisamamuktaṃ pādātrayalakṣaṇaṃ bījāṅkurasthānīyam ..... naprajñānaghanamiti susuptāvasthāpratiṣedhaḥ, bījabhāvāvivekasvarūpatvāt ;* Mand Up 7 bh

The self's empirical / phenomenal (aparamArtha) form created by avidyā said to be equivalent to rope-snake having three quarters (waking, dream and deep sleep) having the status of seed-sprout...not a mass of consciousness negates the deep sleep state which is the seed state where everything is indistinguishable.

अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते । *anādimāyayā supto yadā jīvaḥ prabudhyate / māṃḍūkyā kārīkā* 1.16

When the individual jIva sleeping due to beginningless māyā (avidyā) wakes up

योऽयं संसारी जीवः, सः उभयलक्षणेन तत्त्वाप्रतिबोधरूपेण बीजात्मना, अन्यथाग्रहणलक्षणेन चानादिकालप्रवृत्तेन मायालक्षणेन स्वापेन .... नास्मिन्नविद्यातमोबीजं निद्रा विद्यत इति अनिद्रम् ; अनिद्रं हि तत्तुरीयम् ; *yo'yaṃ saṃsārī jīvaḥ, saḥ ubhayalakṣaṇena tattvāpratibodharūpeṇa bījātmanā, anyathāgrahaṇalakṣaṇena cānādikālapravṛttena māyālakṣaṇena svāpena .... nāsminnavidyātamobījaṃ nidrā vidyata iti anidram ; anidraṃ hi tatturīyam ;* māṃḍūkyā kārīkā 1.16 Bh

This samsArI jIva who is characterised by both, non-cognition of the reality which is of the nature of a seed and by the cognition of reality differently and by the beginningless activity of sleep characterised as māyā (avidyā)... That in which the seed of tamasic avidyā - sleep, is not present thus it is anidram (without sleep); anidram indeed is that tureeyam.

प्रेयस्तु अविद्याकार्यम् इति .. अविद्या च सह कार्येण हातव्या इति श्रुतिस्मृतिन्यायेभ्यः अवगम्यते *preyastu avidyākāryam iti .. avidyā ca saha kāryeṇa hātavyā iti śrutismṛtinyāyebhyaḥ avagamyate* BG 13.2 Bh

Worldly accomplishments (preyas) are effects of ignorance...Ignorance along with its effects should be destroyed thus we ascertain from sruti, smriti and logic.

अविद्यादिसंसारबीजनिवृत्तिद्वारेण जन्माभावः उक्तः । *avidyādisaṃsārabījanivṛttidvāreṇa janmābhāvaḥ uktaḥ /* BG 13.27 intro

The absence of rebirth is said to be through the removal ignorance etc. which are the seeds of samsAra.

विद्यया तस्या बीजशक्तेर्दाहात् । अविद्यात्मिका हि सा बीजशक्तिरव्यक्तशब्दनिर्देश्या परमेश्वराश्रया मायामयी महासुषुप्तिः, यस्यां स्वरूपप्रतिबोधरहिताः शेरते संसारिणो जीवाः ।

*vidyayā tasyā bījaśakterdāhāt / avidyātmikā hi sā bījaśaktiravyaktaśabdanirdeśyā paramēśvarāśrayā māyāmayī mahāsuṣuptiḥ, yasyāṃ svarūpapratibodharahitāḥ śerate saṃsāriṇo jīvāḥ /* Br Su Bh 1.4.3

For the muktas the seed power of (avidyā / māyā) is burnt by knowledge. That seed power (shakti) is indeed nothing but avidyā, which is denoted by the word avyakta (unmanifest) which has parameshvara as its locus, which is māyāmayI great sleep in which the jIvas sleep without any cognition of their own nature.

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तत्त्वाग्रहणान्यथाग्रहणाभ्यां बीजफलभावाभ्यां तौ यथोक्तौ विश्वतैजसौ बद्धौ सङ्गृहीतौ इष्येते । प्राज्ञस्तु बीजभावेनैव बद्धः । तत्त्वाप्रतिबोधमात्रमेव हि बीजं प्राज्ञत्वे निमित्तम् । ततः द्वौ तौ बीजफलभावौ तत्त्वाग्रहणान्यथाग्रहणे तुरीये न सिध्यतः न विद्येते, न सम्भवत इत्यर्थः ॥

*tattvāgrahaṇānyathāgrahaṇābhyāṃ bījaphalabhāvābhyāṃ tau yathoktau viśvataijasau baddhau saṅgrhītau iṣyete / prājñastu bījabhāvenaiva baddhaḥ / tattvāpratibodhamātrameva hi bījaṃ prājñatve nimittam / tataḥ dvau tau bījaphalabhāvau tattvāgrahaṇānyathāgrahaṇe turīye na sidhyataḥ na vidyete, na sambhavata ityārthaḥ // māṃḍūkya kārikā 1.11 bh*

Those two vishva and taijasa as said earlier are held to be bound by both the seed state and the fruit / effect state which manifest as non-cognition and erroneous cognition of reality. But prAjna is bound only by the seed state. The non-cognition of the reality alone is the seed for the state of prAjna. Therefore both these seed / causal and fruit / effect state which manifest as non-cognition and erroneous cognition of reality do not exist, is not possible, in turiya.

अविद्याबीजप्रसूतं वेद्यं बाह्यं द्वैतम् – प्राज्ञो न किञ्चन संवेत्ति, यथा विश्वतैजसौ ; ततश्चासौ तत्त्वाग्रहणेन तमसा अन्यथाग्रहणबीजभूतेन बद्धो भवति ।

*avidyābījaprasūtaṃ vedyaṃ bāhyaṃ dvaitam — prājño na kiñcana saṃveti, yathā viśvataijasau ; tataścāsau tattvāgrahaṇena tamasā anyathāgrahaṇabījabhūtena baddho bhavati / māṃḍūkya kārikā 1.12 bh*

prājna does not cognize any external object, duality born of the seed of avidyā like vishva and taijasa. Therefore he is bound by the tamas of non cognition of reality which is in the form of the seed for erroneous cognition.

In all the above if you substitute abhāva for bīja, kāraṇa etc. it will make it absurd. Finally let us see how bhāsyakāra himself says why this bīja cannot be abhāva.

निर्बीजतयैव चेत् , सति प्रलीनानां सम्पन्नानां सुषुप्तिप्रलययोः पुनरुत्थानानुपपत्तिः स्यात् ; मुक्तानां च पुनरुत्पत्तिप्रसङ्गः, बीजाभावाविशेषात् , ज्ञानदाह्यबीजाभावे च ज्ञानानर्थक्यप्रसङ्गः ; तस्मात्सबीजत्वाभ्युपगमेनैव सतः प्राणत्वव्यपदेशः, सर्वश्रुतिषु च कारणत्वव्यपदेशः । ... 'नेति नेति' (बृ. उ. २ । ३ । ६) इत्यादिना बीजत्वापनयनेन व्यपदेशः । तामबीजावस्थां तस्यैव प्राज्ञशब्दवाच्यस्य तुरीयत्वेन देहादिसम्बन्धजागृदादिरहितां पारमार्थिकीं पृथग्वक्ष्यति । बीजावस्थापि 'न किञ्चिदवेदिषम्' इत्युत्थितस्य प्रत्ययदर्शनाद्देहेऽनुभूयत एवेति त्रिधा देहे व्यवस्थित इत्युच्यते ॥

*nirbījatayaiva cet , sati pralīnānāṃ sampannānāṃ suṣuptipralayayoḥ punarutthānānupapattiḥ syāt ; muktānāṃ ca punarutpattiprasaṅgaḥ , bījabhāvāviśeṣāt , jñānadāhyabījābhāve ca jñānānarthakyaprasaṅgaḥ ; tasmātsabījatvābhyupagamenaiva sataḥ prāṇatvavyapadeśaḥ , sarvaśrutiṣu ca kāraṇatvavyapadeśaḥ / ... 'neti neti' (br. u. 2 / 3 / 6) ityādinā*

*bījatvāpanayanena vyapadeśaḥ / tāmbījāvasthāṃ tasyaiva prājñāśabdavācyasya turīyatvena dehādisambandhajāgradādirahitāṃ pāramārthikīṃ pṛthagvakṣyati / bījāvasthāpi 'na kiñcidavediṣam' ityutthitasya pratyayadarśanāddehe'nubhūyata eveti tridhā dehe vyavasthita ityucyate // māṃḍūkya kārikā 1.2 bh*

If brahman in its seedless state is meant there, then the individuals who merged in deep sleep and pralaya (dissolution) cannot reemerge and there will be the possibility of rebirth of muktas (those who attained moksha) for in either case the absence of the seed / cause is common. Besides in the

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absence of any seed to be burnt by knowledge, knowledge itself becomes useless. (jñāna-abhāva proponents made the very seed itself an absence going against the bhāṣya here. I don't know what explanation they give here! jñāna-abhāva proponents have no understanding of Upanishads and Shankara's Ontology. They think the waves somehow affect the water or the pot affects the reality / satyatva of clay. They refuse to understand that a bīja which is as unreal as the world in sleep is not going to create any advaita-hAni.) Shankara further clarifies that this adhyāropa avidyā bīja is negated by vākyas like 'neti neti' etc. and so jñāna has its purpose.

Further

परमार्थदर्शनात् ब्रह्मवित् तृतीयं बीजभावं दग्ध्वा आत्मानं प्रविष्ट इति न पुनर्जायते, तुरीयस्याबीजत्वात् ।  
*paramārthadarśanāt brahmavit tṛtīyaṃ bījabhāvaṃ dagdhvā ātmānaṃ praviṣṭa iti na punarjāyate, turīyasyābījatvāt / mAndUkya Up 12 Bh*

With vision of paramArtha the knower of brahman, having burnt the seed state which is the third, enters oneself thus does not have rebirth, as turiya is free from any seed / cause.

The same topic is also discussed in Br Su 3.2.9 स एव तु कर्मानुस्मृतिशब्दविधिभ्यः ॥ *sa eva tu karmānusmṛtiśabdavidhibhyaḥ ॥*

यत्पुनरुक्तम् – यथा जलराशौ प्रक्षिप्तो जलबिन्दुर्नोद्धर्तुं शक्यते, एवं सति सम्पन्नो जीवो नोत्पतितुमर्हतीति, तत्परिह्रियते – युक्तं तत्र विवेककारणाभावात् जलबिन्दोरनुद्धरणम् , इह तु विद्यते विवेककारणम् – कर्म च अविद्या च, इति वैषम्यम् ; दृश्यते च दुर्विवेचयोरप्यस्मज्जातीयैः क्षीरोदकयोः संसृष्टयोः हंसेन विवेचनम् । अपि च न जीवो नाम कश्चित्परस्मादन्यो विद्यते, यो जलबिन्दुरिव जलराशेः सतो विविच्येत ; सदेव तु उपाधिसम्पर्काज्जीव इत्युपचर्यते इत्यसकृत्प्रपञ्चितम् ; एवं सति यावदेकोपाधिगता बन्धानुवृत्तिः, तावदेकजीवव्यवहारः ; उपाध्यन्तरगतायां तु बन्धानुवृत्तौ जीवान्तरव्यवहारः ; स एवायमुपाधिः स्वापप्रबोधयोः बीजाङ्कुरन्यायेन – इत्यतः स एव जीवः प्रतिबुध्यत इति युक्तम् ॥

*yatpunaruktam — yathā jalarāśau prakṣipto jalabindurnoddhartuṃ śakyate, evaṃ sati sampanno jīvo notpatitumarhatīti, tatparihriyate — yuktam tatra vivekakāraṇābhāvāt jalabindoranuddharaṇam , iha tu vidyate vivekakāraṇam — karma ca avidyā ca, iti vaiṣamyam ; dṛśyate ca durvivecayorapyasmajjātiyaiḥ kṣīrodakayoḥ saṃsṛṣṭayoḥ haṃsena vivecanam / api ca na jīvo nāma kaścitparasmādanyo vidyate, yo jalabinduriva jalarāśeḥ sato vivicyeta ; sadeva tu upādhisamparkājjīva ityupacaryate ityasakṛtprapañcitam ; evaṃ sati yāvadekopādhigatā bandhānuvṛtṭiḥ, tāvadekajīvavyavahāraḥ ; upādhyantaragatāyām tu bandhānuvṛttau jīvāntaravyavahāraḥ ; sa evāyamupādhiḥ svāpaprabodhayoḥ bījāṅkuranyāyena — ityataḥ sa eva jīvaḥ pratibudhyata iti yuktam ॥ Br Su 3.2.9 Bh*

And it was argued that just as a drop of water thrown into a mass of water cannot be singled out, so also an individual jīva merging in Existence cannot spring up again. That is being refuted. In the analogy it is quite in order to say that the (selfsame) drop of water cannot be singled out, since there is nothing to mark out its individuality. But here we have karma and ignorance as the factors making the (individual) distinction. The two cases are thus different. Moreover, it is a matter of experience that though milk and water, when mixed together, 'cannot be separated by anyone of the human race, still they can be separated by Swans. Besides, there is no such entity, different from the paramatma, which has to be distinguished from Existence like a drop of water from a mass of water. It has been shown more than once that Existence (sat) Itself comes to be called indirectly a jīva,

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because of the intervention of limiting adjuncts / conditioning factors (upAdhi). This being the case, as long as a jIva continues to be bound up with a particular set of adjuncts (upAdhi), so long do we deal with it as the very same one; and when it comes to be bound up with another set of adjuncts (upAdhi), we deal with it as though it is different. That very same set of adjuncts (upAdhi) persists in sleep and wakefulness on the maxim of the seed and seedling, so that the reasonable position is that the selfsame individual jIva wakes up from sleep.

### Any cause / seed cannot be an abhāva

This kāraṇa / hetu / bīja can never be an abhāva as bhāṣyakāra argues in BG 18.48 Bh

काणादानां हि असतः भावः, सतश्च अभावः, इति इदं मतम् अभागवतम् । अभागवतमपि न्यायवच्चेत् को दोषः इति चेत् , उच्यते – दोषवत्तु इदम् , सर्वप्रमाणविरोधात् । कथम् ? यदि तावत् द्रव्यणुकादि द्रव्यं प्राक् उत्पत्तेः अत्यन्तमेव असत् , उत्पन्नं च स्थितं कञ्चित् कालं पुनः अत्यन्तमेव असत्त्वम् आपद्यते, तथा च सति असदेव सत् जायते, सदेव असत्त्वम् आपद्यते, अभावः भावो भवति, भावश्च अभावो भवति ; तत्र अभावः जायमानः प्राक् उत्पत्तेः शशविषाणकल्पः समवाय्यसमवायिनिमित्ताख्यं कारणम् अपेक्ष्य जायते इति । न च एवम् अभावः उत्पद्यते, कारणं च अपेक्षते इति शक्यं वक्तुम् , असतां शशविषाणादीनाम् अदर्शनात् । भावात्मकाश्चेत् घटादयः उत्पद्यमानाः, किञ्चित् अभिव्यक्तिमात्रे कारणम् अपेक्ष्य उत्पद्यन्ते इति शक्यं प्रतिपत्तुम् । किञ्च, असतश्च सतश्च सद्भावे असद्भावे न क्वचित् प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारेषु विश्वासः कस्यचित् स्यात् , 'सत् सदेव असत् असदेव' इति निश्चयानुपपत्तेः ॥

kāṇādānāṃ hi asataḥ bhāvaḥ, sataśca abhāvaḥ, iti idaṃ matam abhāgavatam । abhāgavatamapi nyāyavaccet ko doṣaḥ iti cet , ucyate — doṣavattu idam , sarvapramāṇavirodhāt । katham ? yadi tāvat dvyaṇukādi dravyaṃ prāk utpatteh atyantameva asat , utpannaṃ ca sthitaṃ kañcit kālāṃ punaḥ atyantameva asattvam āpadyate, tathā ca sati asadeva sat jāyate, sadeva asattvam āpadyate, abhāvaḥ bhāvo bhavati, bhāvaśca abhāvo bhavati ; tatra abhāvaḥ jāyamānaḥ prāk utpatteh śaśaviṣāṇakalpaḥ samavāyīyasamavāyiniṃmittākhyam kāraṇam apekṣya jāyate iti । na ca evam abhāvaḥ utpadyate, kāraṇam ca apekṣate iti śakyaṃ vaktum , asatām śaśaviṣāṇādīnām adarśanāt । bhāvātmakāścet ghaṭādayaḥ utpadyamānāḥ, kiñcit abhivyaktimātre kāraṇam apekṣya utpadyante iti śakyaṃ pratipattum । kiñca, asataśca sataśca sadbhāve asadbhāve na kvacit pramāṇaprameyavyavahāreṣu viśvāsaḥ kasyacit syāt , 'sat sadeva asat asadeva' iti niścayānupapatteḥ ॥

KANadas (jñāna-abhāva proponents too) hold the view that from non-existence existence originates and existence gets destroyed and becomes non-existence, which is not Lord Krishna's view. What is wrong with this if it is logical even though it is not in accordance with the Lord's view? It is wrong because it is contradicted by all means of knowledge. How? if things like a dvyanuka (dyad of two atoms) be absolutely non-existent before origination, and after origination continue for a little while, and again become absolutely non-existent, then, in that case, the existent which was really non-existent comes into being, a non-entity becomes an entity, and an entity becomes a non-entity! If this be the view, then the non-entity that is to take birth is comparable to the horns of a hare before it is born, and it comes into being with the help of what are called material (inherent), non-material (non-inherent) and efficient causes. But it cannot be said that non-existence has origination in this way, or that it depends on some cause, since this is not seen in the case of non-existent things like horns of a hare, etc. If such things as pot etc. which are being produced be of the nature of (potentially) existing things, then it can be accepted that they originate by depending on some cause

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which merely manifests them. Moreover, if the non-existent becomes existent, and the existent becomes non-existent, then nobody will have any faith while dealing with any of the means of valid knowledge or objects of such knowledge, because the conviction will be lacking that the existent is existent and the non-existent is non-existent!

यदस्ति, तद्विशेषतो गृह्यते ; यथा घटादि । यन्नास्ति, तन्नोपलभ्यते ; यथा शशविषाणादि । तथा नोपलभ्यते ब्रह्म ; तस्माद्विशेषतः अग्रहणान्नास्तीति । तन्न, आकाशादिकारणत्वादब्रह्मणः । न नास्ति ब्रह्म । कस्मात् ? आकाशादि हि सर्वं कार्यं ब्रह्मणो जातं गृह्यते ; यस्माच्च जायते किञ्चित् , तदस्तीति दृष्टं लोके, यथा घटाङ्कुरादिकारणं मृद्बीजादि ; तस्मादाकाशादिकारणत्वादस्ति ब्रह्म । न चासतो जातं किञ्चिद्गृह्यते लोके कार्यम् । असतश्चेन्नामरूपादि कार्यम् , निरात्मकत्वान्नोपलभ्येत ; उपलभ्यते तु ; तस्मादस्ति ब्रह्म । असतश्चेत्कार्यं गृह्यमाणमपि असदन्वितमेव स्यात् ; न चैवम् ; तस्मादस्ति ब्रह्म । तत्र 'कथमसतः सज्जायेत' (छा. उ. ६ । २ । २) इति श्रुत्यन्तरमसतः सज्जन्मासम्भवमन्वाचष्टे न्यायतः । तस्मात्सदेव ब्रह्मेति युक्तम् ।

*yadasti, tadviśeṣato gr̥hyate ; yathā ghaṭādi / yannāsti, tannopalabhyate ; yathā śāśaviṣāṇādi / tathā nopalabhyate brahma ; tasmādvīśeṣataḥ agrahaṇānnāstīti / tanna, ākāśādīkāraṇatvādbrahmaṇaḥ / na nāsti brahma / kasmāt ? ākāśādi hi sarvaṃ kāryaṃ brahmaṇo jātaṃ gr̥hyate ; yasmācca jāyate kiñcit , tadastīti dṛṣṭaṃ loke, yathā ghaṭāṅkurādīkāraṇaṃ mṛdbījādi ; tasmādākāśādīkāraṇatvādasti brahma / na cāsato jātaṃ kiñcidgr̥hyate loke kāryam / asataścennāmarūpādi kāryam , nirātmakatvānnopalabhyeta ; upalabhyate tu ; tasmādasti brahma / asataścetkāryaṃ gr̥hyamāṇamapi asadanvitameva syāt ; na caivam ; tasmādasti brahma / tatra 'kathamasataḥ sajjāyeta' (chā. u. 6 / 2 / 2) iti śrutyantaramasataḥ sajjanmāsambhavamānvācaṣṭe nyāyataḥ / tasmātsadeva brahmeti yuktam / Tai Up 2.6.1 Bh*

Whatever exists is perceived as possessed of distinctive attributes, as for instance a pot etc. Whatever is non-existent is not perceived, as for instance the horn of a hare etc. Brahman is not perceived in that way. So Brahman does not exist, since It is not perceived as possessed of distinguishing attributes. No, since Brahman is the cause of space etc. It is not a fact that Brahman does not exist. Why? Since all the products of Brahman, such as space etc., are perceived. It is a matter of common experience in this world that any thing from which something is produced does exist, as for instance, earth, seed, etc., which are the causes of a pot, a sprout, etc. So Brahman does exist, since It is the cause of space etc. Nor is any effect perceived in this world as having been produced from non-entity. If such effects as name and form had originated from nonentity, they should not have been perceived since they have no reality. But, as a matter of fact, they are perceived. Hence Brahman exists. Should any effect originate from nonentity, it should be understood as an unreality even while being perceived. But facts point otherwise. Therefore Brahman exists. Pertaining to this another Vedic text—"How can a thing, that exists, come out of a thing that does not?" (Ch.Up VI.ii.2) —points out the logical impossibility of the creation of something out of nothing. Therefore, it stands to reason that Brahman is a reality.

In Tai Up 2.7.1 Bh

असद्वा इदमग्र आसीत् । असदिति व्याकृतनामरूपविशेषविपरीतरूपम् अव्याकृतं ब्रह्म उच्यते ; न पुनरत्यन्तमेवासत् । न ह्यसतः सज्जन्मास्ति ।

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*asadvā idamagra āsīt / asaditi vyākṛtanāmarūpaviśeṣaviparītarūpam avyākṛtaṃ brahma ucyate ; na punaratyantamevāsāt / na hyasataḥ sajjanmāsti /*

In the beginning all this was but the unmanifested (Brahman). By the word asat is meant the undifferentiated Brahman as contrasted with the state in which distinctions of name and form become manifested. Not that absolute non-existence is meant, for the existent cannot come out of the non-existent.

Further in BG 4.18 the purvapakshi argues that if one does not do nityakarma then one will attract pratyavAya-dosha. bhāṣyakāra does not accept this as an abhāva cannot produce any dosha.

नापि नित्यानाम् अकरणात् अभावात् प्रत्यवायभावोत्पत्तिः, 'नासतो विद्यते भावः' (भ. गी. २ । १६) इति वचनात् 'कथं असतः सज्जायेत' (छा. उ. ६ । २ । २) इति च दर्शितम् असतः सज्जन्मप्रतिषेधात् । असतः सदुत्पत्तिं ब्रुवता असदेव सद्भवेत् , सच्चापि असत् भवेत् इत्युक्तं स्यात् । तच्च अयुक्तम् , सर्वप्रमाणविरोधात् ।

*nāpi nityānām akaraṇāt abhāvāt pratyavāyabhāvotpattiḥ, 'nāsato vidyate bhāvah' (bha. gī. 2 / 16) iti vacanāt 'katham asataḥ sajjāyeta' (chā. u. 6 / 2 / 2) iti ca darśitam asataḥ sajjanmapratīṣedhāt / asataḥ sadutpattiṃ bruvatā asadeva sadbhavet , saccāpi asat bhavet ityuktaṃ syāt / tacca ayuktam , sarvapramāṇavirodhāt / BG 4.18 Bh*

Nor even can any pratyavAya, which is an entity, arise from the nonperformance of nityakarmas, which is a non-entity, for there is the statement, 'Of the unreal there is no being' (2.16), and (in the Upaniṣad) it has been pointed out, 'How can existence originate from non-existence?' (Ch. 4.2.2). Since emergence of the existent from the non-existent has been denied, therefore anyone's assertion that the existent originates from the non-existent will amount to saying that a non-entity becomes an entity, and an entity becomes a non-entity! And that is not rational because it runs counter to all the means of valid knowledge.

Further in Br Su नासतोऽदृष्टत्वात् ॥ *nāsato'drṣṭatvāt* ॥ 2.2.26 ॥ Something does not come out of nothing, for this does not accord with experience. In the bhāṣya to this sutra it is concluded thus

तस्मादसद्भ्यः शशविषाणादिभ्यः सदुत्पत्त्यदर्शनात् , सद्भ्यश्च सुवर्णादिभ्यः सदुत्पत्तिदर्शनात् , अनुपपन्नोऽयमभावाद्भावोत्पत्त्यभ्युपगमः । *tasmādasadbhyaḥ śaśaviṣāṇādibhyaḥ sadutpattyadarśanāt , sadbhyaśca suvarṇādibhyaḥ sadutpattidarśanāt , anupapanno'yamabhāvādbhāvotpattyabhyupagamaḥ /*

Accordingly since nothing that actually exists is seen to result from nonentities like the horn of a hare etc., and since it is seen that from existing things like gold etc. originate existing things (like necklace etc.), the assertion of something coming out of nothing cannot be substantiated.

## avidyā is an upAdhi

In Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 3.8.12 bhāṣya, the below is mentioned.

अविद्याकामकर्मविशिष्टकार्यकरणोपाधिरात्मा संसारी जीव उच्यते ;  
*avidyākāmakarmaviśiṣṭakāryakaraṇopādhirātmā saṃsārī jīva ucyate ;*

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When the unconditioned self (निरुपाधिक आत्मा) is conditioned by the body-mind-sense complex which is characterised by ignorance, desire and activities it is called samsArI jlva.

From the above it is clear that for the embodied individual jlva starting from ignorance up to the physical body, all are conditioning factors (upAdhis) resulting in the jlva becoming a samsArI.

As quoted earlier in Brahma Sutra 3.2.9 bhāṣya it is mentioned that avidyā and karma are conditioning factors (upAdhis) based on which one jlva is differentiated from another and they persist as a seed even in deep sleep due to which an individual wakes up as an individual after deep sleep.

In Brahma Sutra 4.1.3 bhāṣya, this avidyā is shown to be mithyA and so not affecting brahman being ekam eva adviteeyam.

योऽपि दोषश्चोद्यते कैश्चित् – अविद्यया किल आत्मनः सद्वितीयत्वात् अद्वैतानुपपत्तिरिति, सोऽपि एतेन प्रत्युक्तः । *yo'pi doṣaścodyate kaiścit — avidyayā kila ātmanah sadvitiyatvāt advaitānupapattiriti, so'pi etena pratyuktaḥ* / Br Su 4.1.3 Bh

The fault/objection that is put forward by some, that non-duality is untenable because the self has duality due to avidyā, that also is answered by this (discussion).” That is, avidyā is mithyA.

In Bhagavad Gita 14.3 अविद्याकामकर्मोपाधिस्वरूपानुविधायिनं क्षेत्रज्ञं क्षेत्रेण संयोजयामि इत्यर्थः । - *avidyākāmakarmopādhisvarūpānuvidhāyinaṃ kṣetrajñam kṣetreṇa saṃyojayāmi ityarthah* - I bring the field (क्षेत्र) into association with the Knower of the field (क्षेत्रज्ञ) who conforms to the nature of the limiting adjuncts / conditioning factors (उपाधि), viz. ignorance, desire and activity.

Further in Br Up 3.5.1 bhāṣya नामरूपोपाध्यस्तित्वे 'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्' (छा. उ. ६ । २ । १) 'नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन' (बृ. उ. ४ । ४ । १९) इति श्रुतयो विरुध्येरन्निति चेत् – न, सलिलफेनदृष्टान्तेन परिहृतत्वात् मृदादिदृष्टान्तैश्च ; - *nāmarūpopādhyaṣṭitve 'ekamevādvitīyam' (chā. u. 6 / 2 / 1) 'neha nānāsti kiñcana' (br. u. 4 / 4 / 19) iti śrutayo virudhyeranniti cet — na, salilaphenadrṣṭāntena parihṛtatvāt mṛdādidṣṭāntaiśca* ; - If we accept the existence of nAmarUpa-upAdhis (conditioning factors) won't it go against the shruti statements like 'ekam eva adviteeyam' and 'neha nAnA asti kinchana' ? No. It has been answered with the water-foam analogy and clay-pot, gold-lump etc. analogies (upAdhi is only a name and form without any existence of its own).

This upAdhi / conditioning factor cannot be an atyanta asat jñāna-abhāva.

### avidyā is perceived / experienced

Finally as per bhāṣyakāra ignorance is also perceived / experienced and so it cannot be abhāva

अविद्या च स्वानुभवेन रूप्यते - मूढोऽहम् अविविक्तं मम विज्ञानम् इति । तथा विद्याविवेको अनुभूयते । उपदिशन्ति च अन्येभ्य आत्मनो विद्यां बुधाः । तथा च अन्ये अवधारयन्ति । तस्मात् नामरूपपक्षस्यैव विद्याविद्ये नामरूपे च ; न आत्मधर्मो

*avidyā ca svānubhavena rūpyate - mūḍho'ham aviviktaṃ mama vijñānam iti / tathā vidyāviveko anubhūyate / upadiśanti ca anyebhya ātmano vidyāṃ budhāḥ / tathā ca anye*

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*avadhārayanti / tasmāt nāmarūpapakṣasyaiva vidyāvidye nāmarūpe ca ; na ātmadharmāu -*  
Tai Up 2.8.5 Bh

And ignorance is ascertained by such forms of its perception as, “I am ignorant”, “My knowledge is indistinct”. Similarly, the difference of knowledge (from the Self ) is perceived, and the enlightened people communicate the knowledge of the Self to others; and so, too, others grasp it. Accordingly, knowledge and ignorance are to be ranked with name and form; they are not attributes of the Self.

### ajñāna is mentioned in Katharudra Upanishad

Shankara in Br Up 3.5.1 Bhāṣya quotes the Katharudra Upanishad to establish that one can give up signs (lingas) like yajnopavita, shikha etc. while taking to pArivrAjyam / sannyAsa.

‘यज्ञोपवीतं वेदांश्च सर्वं तद्वर्जयेद्यतिः’ (क. रु. २) इति श्रुतेः ।

‘yajñopavītaṃ vedāṃśca sarvaṃ tadvarjayedyatiḥ’ (ka. ru. 2) iti śruteḥ ।

This is one of the 108 Upanishads commented by Upanishad Brahmayogin. It is listed as 83rd in Muktikopanishad list of 108 Upanishads. The below verse is from this Upanishad

प्रत्यगात्मानमज्ञानमायाशक्तेश्च साक्षिणम् ।

एकं ब्रह्माहमस्मीति ब्रह्मैव भवति स्वयम् ॥ १२॥

*pratyagātmānamajñānamāyāśakteśca sākṣiṇam ।*

*ekaṃ brahmāhamasmīti brahmaiva bhavati svayam ॥ 12 ॥*

He who realizes his own Self, which is the witness of the power called ignorance and mAyA, knowing ‘I am Brahman alone ’ becomes Brahman Itself

The inner self is the witness of ajñāna shakti. How can this shakti witnessed by the inner self be abhāva?