

Vedānta (Advaitavāda)

The empirical world is the unfolding of undifferentiated names and forms. It is superimposed on the Ātman or Brahman, which is different from empirical names and forms. Though it is one, eternal, pure, conscious, and free, it appears to be the manifold world of appearance. Duality ~~with~~ which infects the world appearance is mere appearance. Non-duality of or Brahman is ontologically real. Duality is the object of Avidyā/Ajñāna; while non-duality is the object of intuition. When ajñāna is destroyed by intuition, duality vanishes, and non-dual Brahman shines forth. When Brahman is known, duality does not exist. Empirical selves/objects are not metaphysically real, but appearances.

The world appearance is false - mere māya. Both external objects and mental modes are unreal, like illusory snake in a rope, and the like. But though the world appearance is unreal, it is not absolutely unreal like a hare's horn, or a barren woman's son. The world has not illusory reality. Even illusions are not objectless, because they have foundation in empirical objects. A rope is an empirical object which is mistaken for a snake. An illusion cannot exist separated from the empirical object, which is its substrate. It is unreal in comparison with its substrate.

The empirical world are unreal in comparison with Brahman, which is the only ontological reality. They have ~~a~~ relative or pragmatic reality. They are real in comparison with illusory objects. Illusory objects are unreal because they do not serve practical needs. But empirical objects have pragmatic reality, because they serve the practical purposes of life. When the empirical self realizes its identity with Brahman, ~~it is no longer deluded~~