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VEDĀNTA DARŚANA AND THE ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract

This article explores the ethical challenges of contemporary society amid globalization, technological advancement, and rapid social transformation. The emergence of hyper-reality or hyper-māyā has deepened human disconnection from ultimate consciousness, reinforcing ego and avidyā. In response, the search for a relevant ethical framework becomes increasingly urgent. This study examines how the principles of Vedānta Darśana can offer philosophical and practical foundations for an ethically grounded and spiritually conscious society. Using a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach based on primary Vedānta sources, the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad-Gītā, Brahma Sūtra, and Ātmabodha, this research highlights that Hindu ethics center on moral integrity, harmony of thought, speech, and action, and self-transformation rather than ritual or status. In a world bound by avidyā-māyā and hyper-māyā, the Vedāntic principle of ādvaita (fundamental unity) and Brahman consciousness provides a holistic vision to counter moral fragmentation. Spiritual disciplines such as tapa, śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana guide individuals toward vidyā-māyā, realizing their divine essence and aligning all actions, physical or digital, with universal harmony. Thus, Vedānta Darśana extends beyond classical philosophy, offering a timeless and applicable ethical framework to address modern moral dilemmas and foster a just, harmonious, and spiritually awakened society.

Keywords: *Vedānta Darśana,* Hindu Ethics, Ideal Society, *Hyper-māyā, Brahman* Consciousness, Self-transformation.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of an increasingly complex era of globalization, societies across the world are confronted with a wide range of ethical challenges. Moral crises, social conflicts, and the degradation of human values have emerged as pressing issues in many regions (Bauman, 2000: 5-6). Within this context, the search for a solid ethical foundation to guide the development of an ideal society has become increasingly urgent (Taylor, 2007: 473-474). The rapid advancement of technology, shifting cultural patterns, and intensified cross-cultural interactions have added further layers of complexity to the ethical dilemmas humanity faces today. Consequently, it is essential to explore ethical frameworks that are not only normative and relevant to modern challenges but also capable of offering sustainable and holistic solutions for fostering harmony and collective consciousness within society.

Religion is one of the key elements that can serve as a source of ethical inspiration within society. In this context, Hinduism, with its profound philosophical and spiritual heritage, offers deep insights into ethics and morality (Bilimoria et al., 2007: 3–4). Concepts such as *dharma* (duty or obligation), karma (the law of cause and effect), and *ahiṃsā* (non-harming) provide a strong ethical foundation for the development of social order (Flood, 1996: 52–53). The teachings found in sacred Hindu texts such as the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* offer valuable guidance on how individuals can live ethically and contribute to the greater good (Radhakrishnan, 2014: xi–xii). Thus, the Hindu tradition holds significant potential to shape the ethical framework necessary for building a more harmonious and just society.

Hinduism encompasses diverse philosophical traditions (*darśanas*) that offer various perspectives on understanding reality and existence. Among them, *Vedānta Darśana*, one of the oldest schools of Hindu philosophy, provides a unique viewpoint on the nature of reality and the role of human beings in fostering an ethical society (Radhakrishnan, 1953: 430). Rooted in the *prasthānatrayī*, i.e., the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the *Brahma Sūtra*, *Vedānta* presents a holistic understanding of existence, emphasizing the fundamental unity of all life forms (Deutsch, 1969: 3-4). Based on the teaching that all beings are intrinsically connected through *Brahman*, *Vedānta* serves as a compelling stimulus for promoting universal harmony and solidarity. The implicit ethical principles embedded within *Vedānta* possess significant potential to contribute to the development of a more harmonious and spiritually conscious society (Sharma, 2000: 221-222).

Although *Vedānta Darśana* has been extensively studied in the contexts of metaphysics and spirituality, in-depth exploration of its connection to social ethics and the construction of an ideal society remains relatively limited. Although prior studies have explored *Vedānta* in metaphysical and theological terms, its potential as a foundation for digital-age ethics has not been adequately theorized. This research seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how the relevant principles of *Vedānta* can be applied within contemporary social contexts to establish an ethical foundation for an ideal society, one that goes beyond being merely normative and instead serves as a practical framework for thought and action. Through an analysis of the relationship between *Vedāntic* spiritual concepts and present-day social realities, this study endeavors to demonstrate how the teachings of *Vedānta* can offer both conceptual insights and practical guidance in addressing the diverse ethical challenges faced by modern society.

By integrating insights from *Vedānta Darśana* with contemporary ethical issues, this study aspires to make a significant contribution to the discourse on constructing an ideal society. The findings of this research are expected not only to enrich our understanding of classical Hindu philosophy but also to offer fresh perspectives for addressing ethical challenges in the modern era (Sen, 2009). Furthermore, this study aims to provide practical guidance on applying *Vedāntic* principles within current social contexts, thereby fostering the development of a more just and harmonious society. In doing so, it seeks to demonstrate the enduring

relevance of *Vedānta* teachings in shaping an ethical framework capable of navigating the dynamic and complex nature of contemporary world.

II. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method using a descriptive analytical approach. The qualitative-descriptive method is adopted as it enables an in-depth exploration and analysis of descriptive data, which are subsequently articulated narratively. The study applies a hermeneutic textual analysis to interpret key *Vedānta* scriptures, situating their ethical insights within the framework of contemporary moral philosophy. Data were collected through a literature review technique, a method aimed at discovering, developing, or testing the validity of knowledge by critically examining relevant texts and academic sources (Pohan, 2007; in Yakin, 2023: 46). The information utilized in this research was derived from primary *Vedānta* philosophical texts, books, scholarly articles, theses, dissertations, and other supporting sources that contribute to the comprehensive understanding and analysis of the study's focus.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Ideal Etics in Hinduism

In Hinduism, the concept of ideal ethics is not only reflected in well-known texts such as the *Itihāsa* and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* but is also deeply embedded in other scriptures, one of which is the *Sārasamuccaya*. This text, composed of 517 *śloka* (verses), serves as a concise essence of the *Mahābhārata*, containing extensive ethical and moral guidelines that are highly practical for application in everyday life (Sudharta, 2009; Tim Pengkaji dan Penerjemah Pustaka Suci Veda, 2021). One significant verse from the *Sārasamuccaya*, namely *śloka* 163, explicitly defines the foundational principles of ethics and morality for an individual as follows:

> *adrohaḥ sarvvabhūteṣu kāyena manasā girā; anugrahaśca dānaṁ ca śīlametadvidurbudhāḥ.*
>
> Translation:
>
> Thinking, speaking, and acting without malice, with kindness, sincerity, and generosity, this constitutes virtuous behavior. (Tim Pengkaji dan Penerjemah Pustaka Suci Veda, 2021: 122)

This *śloka* highlights the essential importance of harmony between thought, speech, and action in living an ethical life. This teaching subsequently inspired the concept of *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, which is widely recognized among Hindu communities in the Indonesian archipelago as an ethical framework emphasizing the purity of thought, speech, and deed in every act of *karma* (Kantriani, 2020: 129). The emphasis on the term *adrohaḥ*, which can be translated as "absence of hatred" or "complete sincerity," is a core principle in guiding how a Hindu individual should perform *karma* ethically. Without this foundation, actions risk being driven by ego, which inevitably leads the world toward disharmony.

Furthermore, *Sārasamuccaya śloka* 167 states: *"jyāyāṁsamapi śīlena vihīnaṁ naiva pūjayet; api śūdraṁ tu dharmmajñaṁ sadvṛttaṁ cāpi pūjayet"*, which can be translated as: *"Even if a person holds a high social status but lacks virtuous conduct, they are not worthy of respect; on the other hand, even a 'śūdra' (one of lower social standing) who is knowledgeable in dharma and demonstrates righteous behavior deserves to be honored"* (Tim Pengkaji dan Penerjemah Pustaka Suci Veda, 2021: 124–125). This *śloka* illustrates that, in Hindu ethics, an individual's value is not determined by their social rank or caste (*trah*) but rather by their moral qualities, understanding of ethical principles, and the way they embody and practice *dharma* in every breath of their life.

Moreover, *Sārasamuccaya śloka* 170 further emphasizes: *"sarvve ca vedāḥ saha ṣaḍbhiraṅgaiḥ ṣāṅkhyaṁ purāṇaṁ ca kule ca janma; sarvvāṇi naitāni gatirbhavanti śilāvyapetasya narasya rājan"*, which translates to: *"For anyone who has mastered the Vedas, the six auxiliary branches of knowledge, the Sāṁkhya philosophy, etc., and the Purāṇas, and is born into a high lineage, all these are meaningless if they lack śīla (moral virtue)"* (Tim Pengkaji dan Penerjemah Pustaka Suci Veda, 2021: 126). Through this *śloka*, Hindu teachings strongly assert that

neither profound knowledge nor elevated social standing holds true value in the absence of moral character and ethical conduct (*śīla*). Beyond intellectual mastery and material achievement, the "ultimate" aim of spiritual knowledge in Hinduism is the transformation of one's character and the cultivation of virtuous behavior (Rambachan, 2015). This highlights that the true essence of learning and status lies not in external recognition, but in the inner refinement of ethics and integrity.

The analysis of the aforementioned *śloka* verses demonstrates that ideal ethics in Hinduism is not solely concerned with the acquisition of knowledge or the performance of rituals but is fundamentally oriented toward self-transformation and the embodiment of ethical behavior in daily life. Hindu ethics emphasizes the vital harmony between thought, speech, and action, valuing individuals based on their moral qualities rather than their social status, and positioning ethical character as the ultimate aim of all spiritual knowledge and practice (Bilimoria et al., 2007). In the context of contemporary society, these ethical principles undoubtedly provide valuable guidance. However, the critical question arises as to how such profound values can retain relevance and be meaningfully embraced by modern individuals. This challenge becomes increasingly significant in a world dominated by materialism, individualism, and heightened competition among people. The subsequent section will examine the conditions of contemporary society and explore how *Vedānta Darśana* offers insights and solutions to address these ethical challenges effectively.

B. Contemporary Society in Hyper-Reality: From *Māyā* to *Hyper-Māyā*

Contemporary society has undergone significant transformations marked by globalization, technological dependence, increased emphasis on education, consumerism, rationalism, secularization, and democratization (Savelyev, 2013: 1678–1679). These shifts have shaped a complex and dynamic social landscape, introducing new challenges in the understanding and application of ethics. In analyzing contemporary society, Baudrillard and Beck identify three key characteristics that define this era: (1) *hyper-reality* and simulation (*simulacra*), (2) risk and uncertainty, and (3) the intensification of individualization and social fragmentation (Beck, 1992; Baudrillard in Kellner, 2019). These characteristics do not merely transform the structural fabric of society but also deeply influence how individuals interact with one another and make ethical decisions in today's modern context.

Hyper-reality, as conceptualized by Baudrillard, refers to a condition in which reality is replaced by a simulation of reality (Baudrillard, 1994: 1–2). In this context, social media serves as the most evident arena illustrating the phenomenon of *hyper-reality*. Individuals frequently present versions of themselves online that differ significantly from their offline identities, constructing digital personas that may diverge markedly from their real-life selves. Furthermore, social media enables people to act and speak in ways they might refrain during face-to-face interactions, often disregarding conventional ethical norms and boundaries (Turkle, 2011: 179-180). While in offline spaces an individual may behave politely toward others, in online environments the same person may display entirely different, and at times unethical, behavior.

From the *Vedānta* standpoint, *hyper-māyā* does not merely represent a sociological phenomenon, but a metaphysical intensification of *ahaṃkāra*, wherein the self's identification with digital constructs deepens the illusion of separateness.

This phenomenon gives rise to what may be termed *hyper-māyā*, which is a concept that extends the Hindu understanding of *māyā* into the context of contemporary digital realities. In *Vedānta* philosophy, *māyā* is understood as the cosmic illusion that veils the ultimate reality (*Brahman*) and engenders *avidyā*, or ignorance (Dasgupta, 1922; Gupta, 2022). *Hyper-māyā*, in this sense, can be seen as an additional layer of illusion created by digital technologies and social media, further obscuring an individual's capacity to perceive ultimate reality and to act ethically. Attachment to this digitally constructed realm distances individuals from their inherent divine qualities, as their consciousness becomes increasingly

enshrouded by not just one but two layers of illusion, i.e., *māyā* and *hyper-māyā*. As a result, individuals often engage in *karma* driven by *ego*, amplified by instant feedback loops and the constant pursuit of social validation offered by digital platforms. Any action (*karma*) rooted in *avidyā*, as a fundamental ignorance of one's true nature as intrinsically unified with all existence, can lead to harmful behavior toward oneself and others, and in some cases, deliberate acts of harm (Rambachan, 2015). Ultimately, *hyper-māyā* illustrates how digital environments can magnify ignorance and ego-driven actions, making the pursuit of ethical awareness and spiritual clarity even more challenging in the modern age.

The ethical challenges posed by *hyper-māyā* are further compounded by the characteristics of a risk-laden society, as identified by Beck. The uncertainty and inherent risks of modern life often drive individuals to seek security and certainty within virtual spaces, which paradoxically tend to heighten anxiety and foster social isolation (Beck, 1992). Moreover, the growing intensification of individualization and social fragmentation makes the implementation of collective ethics increasingly difficult. In such a fragmented society, where each individual holds their own "truth" reinforced by social media algorithms, the pursuit of ethical consensus becomes a formidable challenge in contemporary social dynamics (Bauman, 2000). This illustrates how the digital age not only reshapes ethical boundaries but also complicates the shared moral foundations necessary for building a harmonious society.

Furthermore, Vedānta's understanding of the fundamental unity of all existence (*ādvaita*) may offer a unique perspective for addressing the ethical challenges of the *hyper-māyā* era, a notion that will be examined further in the following section. If we can recognize that our actions in the digital realm, just as in the physical world, carry tangible consequences and impact the cosmic unity of existence, then it becomes possible to cultivate a new, more responsible digital ethic. The transition from *māyā* to *hyper-māyā* in contemporary society has introduced increasingly complex ethical dilemmas. However, by integrating *Vedāntic* philosophical insights on reality with a critical analysis of modern social conditions, it may be possible to develop a more comprehensive ethical framework capable of addressing the moral challenges of the *hyper-māyā* age. Ultimately, it is interesting to see how *Vedānta* could provide the conceptual foundation for re-establishing ethical awareness that transcends illusion and restores harmony in both digital and physical spheres of human interaction.

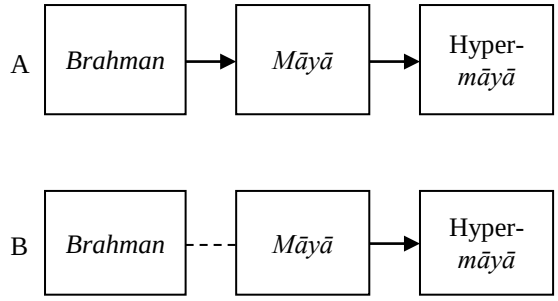
C. A New Reality: A *Vedāntic* Conceptualization

Vedānta Darśana offers a profound and relevant conceptual framework for understanding the complexity of contemporary reality. Within this philosophical system, three levels of reality can be delineated to help explain the dynamics of ethics in modern society: *Brahman*, *māyā*, and a newly emerging concept we may call *hyper-māyā* (as a derivative of *māyā*). At the level of *Brahman*, which represents the highest state of consciousness, *Vedānta* identifies *Brahman* as the absolute reality that transcends all dualities and distinctions (Vireswarananda, 1936: 25–26; Deutsch, 1969: 9; Gupta, 2022: 92–93). In this state of *Brahman*-consciousness, the individual attains a profound understanding of the fundamental unity of all existence. At this level, the purest form of ethics emerges from a consciousness that is fully connected to the Divine and free from *ego-avidyā*, because in the realm of *Brahman*, duality dissolves, rendering the notion of ego-based selfhood irrelevant. Thus, the reality of *Brahman* constitutes a state of divinized awareness, in which every action arises naturally in harmony with universal virtue.

At the level of *māyā*, individual consciousness becomes enveloped by *avidyā* (ignorance), giving rise to the ego-bound self (Tattvabodha 10.2; Gurubhaktananda, 2017: 63). When consciousness is driven by this narrow sense of ego, every act of *karma* is influenced by self-centered tendencies. The individual begins to identify with a limited, constructed identity, leading to actions that prioritize personal or group interests while perceiving the world through the lens of duality, distinguishing

"self" from "others" or "one's group" from "another." As individual and collective actions within this plane generate various products and constructs, their accumulation gives rise to a new layer of reality, what is now referred to as *hyper-reality*, or in Vedāntic terms, *hyper-māyā*. This concept extends the classical understanding of *māyā* to contemporary society, which has created an entirely new dimension of simulated and digital realities. If *māyā* is the first veil obscuring *Brahman*, *hyper-māyā* can be seen as a second veil, born from *māyā* itself, that further conceals the light of *Brahman*-consciousness. At this stage, as Baudrillard (1994: 6) explains, reality is replaced by signs of reality, creating a state of *hyper-reality*. Within the Vedāntic framework, this condition can be interpreted as an intensification of the ego, generating what may be called a "hyper-ego." Consequently, actions (*karma*) that originate within the realm of *māyā* become increasingly exaggerated and ego-driven in the space of *hyper-māyā*.

Figure 1. Visualization of the Process of *Brahman*-Consciousness and Its Influence on the Realms of *Māyā* and *Hyper-māyā*



Note:

⟶ : Connected

------ : Disconnected

(Source: Author's illustration)

At the level of *hyper-māyā*, individual *karma* becomes increasingly extreme and egocentric. Turkle (2011: 179) observes that in digital environments, "people often act in ways they would not in face-to-face interactions." While an individual might restrain themselves from unethical or *adharma* behavior in the physical world, or within the realm of *māyā*, the same person may act without such restraint in the sphere of *hyper-māyā*, where the boundaries and social norms of the real world no longer fully apply. This phenomenon illustrates how *hyper-māyā* amplifies tendencies toward harmful behavior, fueled by an intensified sense of separation or difference from others. The critical question that arises is how humanity can cultivate its awareness to reconnect with *Brahman*-consciousness, fostering a divine awareness that illuminates and guides every act of *karma* in both the realms of *māyā* and *hyper-māyā*. As illustrated in Figure 1.A, this process reflects the nurturing of a consciousness aligned with *Brahman*, whereas Figure 1.B depicts the detrimental state of a self disconnected from its divine source.

The critical question that emerges from this analysis is how the individual can move from this fragmented, ego-bound consciousness toward one illuminated by divine awareness. *Vedānta Darśana* addresses this transformation not merely as a matter of belief but as a disciplined process of self-purification and realization. This transition, known as the movement from *avidyā-māyā* to *vidyā-māyā*, constitutes the essential ethical journey in Vedāntic thought, where knowledge (*jñāna*) and discipline (*tapas*) converge to awaken Brahman-consciousness.

D. From *Avidyā-Māyā* to *Vidyā-Māyā*: The Importance of Knowledge and Discipline in Realizing Divine Ethics

The transition from *avidyā-māyā* to *vidyā-māyā* represents a transformative journey of consciousness, one that lies at the heart of Vedāntic ethics. While *avidyā-māyā* denotes ignorance and misidentification of the self with the ego and its sensory constructs, *vidyā-māyā* refers to the enlightened perception that sees through illusion without rejecting the phenomenal world. Rather than escaping reality, *vidyā-māyā* reorients human perception so that every act becomes aligned with *Brahman*-consciousness or the spirit of the true nature of the Self. This transformation does not occur through intellectual effort alone, but through an integrated discipline that

harmonizes knowledge (*jñāna*) and practice (*tapas*).

Hindu philosophy, particularly through the lens of *Vedānta*, proposes that ignorance (*avidyā*) functions as the root of *adharma*. It manifests when the individual consciousness identifies itself as separate from the totality of existence. Within the realm of *hyper-māyā*, this separation is further reinforced by digital illusions that amplify *ahaṃkāra* or the ego-sense that constantly seeks validation and comparison. Thus, the modern individual's ethical disorientation is not merely a sociological issue, but a metaphysical one, which is a deep alienation from one's divine nature.

The journey toward *vidyā-māyā* begins with *tapa* or conscious discipline aimed at purification of mind and senses. In particular, its opening *śloka* of Ātmabodha provides a foundational insight, as follows:

> *tapobhiḥ kṣīṇapāpānāṃ śāntānāṃ vītarāgiṇām*.
> Translation:
> With the purification of all sins through the practice of *tapa* (austerity and self-discipline), one attains a peaceful heart, free from all worldly desires.
> (Gurubhaktananda, 2017: 5)

This śloka affirms that only those purified by austerity and free from attachment can attain peace. In the context of contemporary life, *tapa* can be understood as digital restraint, mindful consumption of information, and intentional withdrawal from distractions that perpetuate *avidyā*. It is an ethical as well as psychological discipline that prepares consciousness to receive higher knowledge.

Ātmabodha 2 continues: "In comparison with other means, knowledge, indeed, is the single direct means for liberation. As fire is for cooking, so is knowledge - without it liberation is not possible (Gurubhaktananda, 2017: 8). This *śloka* underscores the crucial role of True Knowledge, emphasizing that among the many possible means of purifying the "impurities" and "darkness" that veil human consciousness, only True Knowledge can lead to liberation or free the self from these layers of ignorance; just as no meal can be prepared without fire, there can be no liberation without True Knowledge (Gurubhaktananda, 2017: 8). Furthermore, *jñāna* is not theoretical learning but direct insight or the immediate recognition that the self (*Ātman*) and Brahman are one. In practical terms, this means cultivating awareness in which ethical action arises spontaneously from the recognition of unity, not from external compulsion or social approval.

As the mind becomes clarified, the aspirant engages in the triadic discipline of *śravaṇa* (listening), *manana* (reflection), and *nididhyāsana* (deep contemplation), which together ignite the "fire of knowledge" described in Ātmabodha 66, stating as follows:

> *śravaṇādibhiruddīptajñānāgnipa ritāpitaḥ; jīvaḥ sarvamalānmuktaḥ svarṇavaddyotate svayam.*
> Translation:
> Through the disciplined practices of *Vedānta* (such as *śravaṇa* and others), the "Fire of Knowledge" is kindled; its heat purifies the *Jīva* from all impurities, just as precious metal (gold) is refined from the dirt that clings to it and shines with its natural brilliance.
> (Gurubhaktananda, 2017: 84)

This *śloka* highlights the essential importance of a systematic and disciplined approach to *Vedāntic* practice, particularly *śravaṇa* (listening to the teachings), *manana* (reflecting upon them), and *nididhyāsana* (deep meditation and internalization) (Rambachan, 2015: 134-135; Gupta, 2022: 114-115). The metaphor of gold purified by fire captures the ethical essence of *Vedānta*: that purity of action is not imposed from without but radiates naturally when the inner consciousness is illumined.

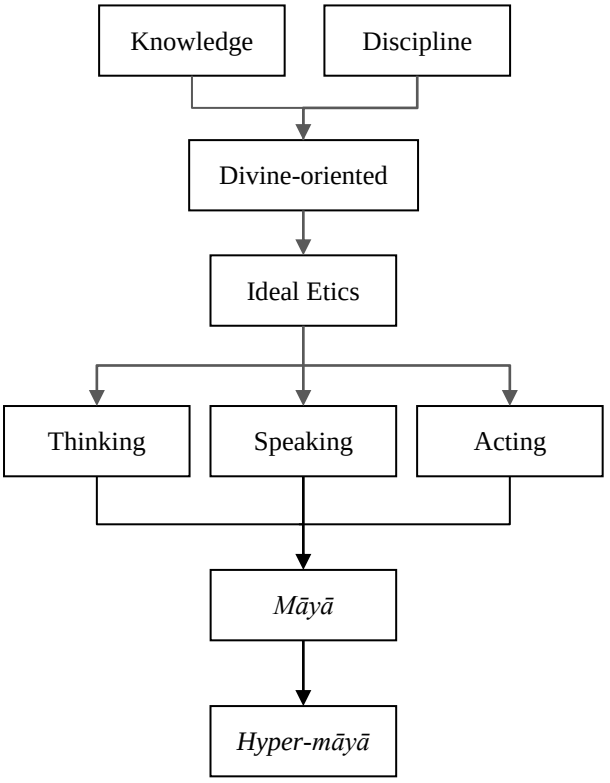
Through this disciplined process, *avidyā-māyā* gradually dissolves and *vidyā-māyā* emerges, not as illusion negated but as illusion illumined. The world remains, but it is now seen as the manifestation of *Brahman* rather than as a field of egoic competition. Every interaction, whether physical or digital, becomes an opportunity to express divine qualities such as compassion (*dayā*), non-

harming (*ahiṃsā*), and truthfulness (*satya*). In this state, ethics ceases to be rule-bound and becomes a natural expression of realized awareness.

In conclusion, *vidyā-māyā* serves as the transformative bridge between ignorance and liberation, between fragmented modern existence and the unified consciousness of *Brahman*. It allows the individual to act within the world while remaining unattached to its illusions, what the Bhagavad-Gītā II.50, calls *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, "skill in action." The ethical person, from this Vedāntic standpoint, is not one who merely follows codes but one whose every act reflects the awareness of universal unity. Such transformation offers a profound alternative to the moral fragmentation of the hyper-*māyā* age, demonstrating that the realization of *Brahman* is not withdrawal from life but the perfection of ethical engagement within the *Brahman*.

The principles and practices required to realize the divine nature of the self, as the foundation for ethical conduct in contemporary society, are illustrated in Figure 2. Knowledge of *Brahman*, representing the universal essence of the true Self, together with disciplined effort to recognize and actualize this truth through *vidyā-māyā* forms the starting point of the process toward ideal ethics. The presence of knowledge and discipline is fundamental in enabling individuals to cultivate divine awareness within themselves. When one's consciousness becomes fully connected with *Brahman*, the divine dimension of the self is realized, making the ethical ideals described in most Hindu texts not only conceptually meaningful but practically attainable. At this stage, thought, speech, and action naturally reflect divine virtues and manifest harmony in daily life.

Figure 2. Visualization of the transformative pathway



Note:

→ : Influenced

(Source: Author's illustration)

This transformative journey thus represents the ethical core of *Vedānta Darśana*, the reorientation of human consciousness from illusion to illumination. In practical terms, the realization of *vidyā-māyā* translates into ethical mindfulness in all domains of life (personal, social, and digital). When awareness is grounded in the recognition of *Brahman*, every sphere of activity becomes a field of sacred responsibility (*dharma-kṣetra*), where the practice of knowledge and discipline manifests as compassion, balance, and moral clarity.

Negative or harmful thoughts, words, and actions have stemmed from an unawakened state of consciousness, disconnected from the divine nature of the self. However, when this divine nature is realized, all *karma*, including every action expressed in both *māyā* and *hyper-māyā*, becomes inspired by divine qualities and directed toward universal unity and harmony. Through the cultivation of True Knowledge and the disciplined practices

outlined in the *Vedānta* tradition, contemporary individuals can navigate the transition from *avidyā-māyā* to *vidyā-māyā*. This transformative process allows for the realization of *Brahman*-consciousness within oneself, ensuring that every *karma*, whether performed online or offline, becomes a manifestation of divine ethics that upholds interconnectedness, compassion, and cosmic harmony.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the ethical foundations of Hindu thought, particularly those articulated through *Vedānta Darśana*, provide not only metaphysical insight but also a practical framework for constructing an ideal society. At its core, Hindu ethics rests upon the harmony of thought, speech, and action (*Tri Kaya Parisudha*), affirming that moral worth is defined not by social status or ritual observance, but by inner transformation and the cultivation of self-awareness. The essence of ethical life, therefore, lies in aligning human consciousness with the unity of *Brahman*, the ultimate reality that underlies all existence.

In the context of contemporary civilization, characterized by the overwhelming presence of *hyper-reality* or *hyper-māyā*, ethical disorientation has become increasingly pronounced. The digital age magnifies *avidyā* and *ahaṃkāra*, creating a deep separation between individuals and their divine consciousness. This condition results in fragmented values, moral relativism, and emotional alienation, as actions are driven more by virtual validation than by spiritual awareness. Against this backdrop, *Vedānta Darśana* offers a transformative paradigm, which is a pathway that leads from *avidyā-māya* (ignorance and illusion) to *vidyā-māyā*, illumined understanding and divine-centered ethics.

Through *tapa* (self-discipline), the cultivation of *True Knowledge* (*jñāna*), and the meditative triad of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*, individuals can transcend the dominance of illusion while remaining engaged in the world. In this process, ethical behavior no longer arises from external obligation but from awakened awareness. When consciousness is illumined by *vidyā-māyā*, every action, be it in physical or digital space, becomes a manifestation of divine harmony (*ṛta*). Thus, *Vedānta Darśana* transforms ethics from a system of moral rules into a living realization of unity and compassion.

This philosophical insight holds immense contemporary relevance. In a world entangled within *hyper-māyā*, *Vedānta* provides the cognitive and spiritual tools to cultivate what may be called "digital *dharma*", an ethical mindfulness that governs interaction in both virtual and real domains. By realizing the inherent divinity of the self and recognizing all beings as expressions of Brahman, humanity can rediscover integrity, empathy, and purpose amidst technological and cultural complexity. In the Indonesian Hindu context, this realization resonates with the principle of *Tat Tvam Asi*, the recognition that all beings share one divine essence, forming the moral foundation for social harmony and environmental responsibility.

Therefore, *Vedānta Darśana* should not be confined to the study of ancient metaphysics. It offers a timeless ethical compass for navigating the modern age, guiding individuals and societies toward justice, harmony, and spiritual awakening. The journey from *avidyā* to *vidyā* is not an escape from the world but its sanctification, where every act of *karma* reflects the consciousness of Brahman and contributes to the realization of a compassionate, harmonious, and enlightened global society.

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