INTRODUCTION
It is apparently a simple fact that we know, but how we know really or what makes this knowing possible is not so simple as it seems to be. More complicated are even the problems, whether our knowledge regarding different objects is true or false; whether the objects we know are real or unreal etc., which bewilder even the most rational of the men with complexity of facts and multiplicity of answers given by different thinkers who try to contradict each other's thesis. All these diverse views with their arguments and counter-arguments seem to even a little discerning mind to be beset with absurdities and limitations in some stage or other. All systems are limited. All methods are only applicable within their respective boundaries. The world of objects is too manifold and perplexing to be comprehended by any such method and system. It is as the great Advaita-teacher Vidyārānya says, "Even though all the learned men try to determine the nature of the world, ignorance confronts them in some stage or other". So it is declared as Māyā which is indeterminable (anirvacanīya). All the systems are partial and no system is capable of accounting for the world in its entirety. However, human guest and curiosity cannot be satiated with merely a skeptical or agnostic end. Nor can utilitarianism resist it from seeking

1. Pañcadasī, 6.143.
after the ultimate. Inspite of attempts made by many as the pragmatists and utilitarians to limit it to ordinary human experience, this quest for something more remains intact.

While great sciences endeavour to find out the principles underlying the things of the phenomenal existence, great philosophies have attempted to explain the ultimate basis of them. Till now the quest of science is limited to the material world. The philosophical systems, on the other hand, are fraught with contradicting ideas. Different philosophical systems devise different methods to understand and explain the world of experience according to their peculiar world-views. Still the problem eludes all such methods and categories.

**Advaita** epistemology unlike other systems of philosophy does not aim at establishing a method or some methods of knowledge. It admits the inherent want in intellect as well as the indeterminable character of *Māyā* which appears as the phenomenal world. Systems, methods, concepts and categories are applicable within a specific level. So attempt at systematisation necessarily limits itself. The dialectical method which the Advaitins adopt to criticise the opponents views and the conclusion which they arrive at make it clear that **Advaita** epistemology is not conclusive but suggestive. It does not aim at establishing a method of knowledge but tries to go beyond all methods. Instead of explaining only the problem of knowledge it tries to transcend all such 'explanations and find out their root which needs no further explanation.
To quote T.M.P. Mahadevan, "The purpose for which a study of the problem of knowledge is undertaken is not to solve the problem but to go beyond it. The empirical situation in knowledge which demands the distinction of three factors cognizer, cognition and object cognised does not admit of a satisfactory explanation. While the systems of philosophy that are opposed to Advaita imagine that they have offered an explanation, Advaita shows that the problem is inexplicable on the level of relative experience. When this level is transcended in the plenary non-dual experience, there is no longer any problem to be solved. Any epistemological analysis can be useful only in so far as it makes us become awake to this truth".  

In view of this Advaita cannot be classified as a system of metaphysics amongst other rival systems. It cannot be limited by what we call philosophy. It is the symbolic name of the principle of non-duality and plenary experience which is beyond all conflicts and contradictions. A philosophical system presents a specific view of the world of experience which it tries to justify through reasoning and speculation. A system has necessarily a point of view to maintain; so necessarily there is conflict with other systems. But the truth which Advaita stands for is based neither on speculation nor on reasoning. It is self-valid, self-sufficient and the

fundamental basis of all, which sustains and gives values to all. It is noteworthy to quote Gaudapāda - "The dualists, firm in their own views oppose each other’s views, but this has no quarrel with them". This is the main feature of Advaita which differentiates it from what we call philosophical systems. It is not that in Advaita literature we do not find hot arguments and counter-arguments refuting the stand of the opponents. In fact the great Advaita dialecticians like Śrīhāra, Citsukha and Madhusūdana have refuted ruthlessly the views of the non-Advaitic systems. Even Śrī Saṅkara has severely criticised the views of the opponents. But what is intended by describing it as beyond contradiction is that the ultimate Truth of Advaita, the Brahman cannot be made an object of controversy as it is beyond the limitations of words and mind. Śruti is the only proof for its existence. It cannot be denied nor can it be asserted otherwise.

Criticism and refutation of the non-Advaitic views are made in the way of the dualists (non-Advaitins), as there can be no conflict in the way of Advaita. Vidyāranya beautifully expresses it - "Let allegation and its refutation be made by the language of the dualists, but in the language of Advaita there is no allegation nor its refutation". So in the manner of the dualists the Advaita dialecticians have refuted the views of the opponents. Śrīhāra the great Advaita dialectician while

refuting charges of the opponents that the world cannot be indeterminable says - "In the manner of others it is said that indeterminability of the world is established. But in fact, we desisting from establishing all reality and unreality of the world take our support in the self-valid Brahman". 5

It is said that the aim of Advaita epistemology is not to establish some methods of knowledge but to go beyond all methods as the central truth of Advaita is not one amongst others which are the objects of these methods of knowledge. The six methods or means of knowledge (pramāṇa) which are accepted and discussed by the Advaitins are only accepted provisionally in so far as the empirical truth is concerned. It is interesting that none of the great Ācāryas of Advaita tradition has expounded the six means of knowledge systematically. Only Vedānta Paribhāṣā of Dharmaśāyādhvarinda which does it, belongs to a very late period not earlier to the seventeenth century. It possesses neither the profundity of the great Advaita classics like the Pañcapādikā, Vivaraṇa, Pancadāśī, etc. nor the logical subtlety of the irresistible dialectical works like Khandana, Citsukhī or Advaita Siddhi, etc., though it tries to explain Advaita epistemology in the manner of the non-Advaitic system, thus giving it a verbal perfection. The acceptance of the six


parakīya-rity-edam-ucyate viśvaya anirvacanīyatā
paryavaśyāti iti, etc.
pramanas may be due to the principle that from the empirical standpoint the view of the Bhattas is to be accepted by the Advaitin (vyavahāre bhāṭṭānayah, Vivarana Prameya Saṅgṛaha, p.54). But in fact, Advaita has nothing to do with such questions as to how many pramanas are there etc., as the basic truth of Advaita the Brahman transcends all the pramanas.

It cannot be said that the Brahman, being the object of śabda pramāṇa also comes under the consideration of the pramanas, as only in a secondary way the śrutī is said to be proof for the existence of the Brahman. Śaṅkara says that śrutī etc. are not proof for the existence of Brahman in the same way as they are regarding dharma, but śrutī and anubhava (direct experience), etc. are proof as far as possible (yathāsaṃbhavam). It is important to note the words "as far as possible". The fact is that śrutī is said to be pramāṇa for the existence of Brahman as long as avidyā prevails. Like other means of knowledge it also requires avidyā. Śaṅkara says that all the epistemic transactions both ordinary and scriptural are made possible, keeping ahead this mutual identification of the self and the not-self known as avidyā. The process of knowing which requires the activity of the pramāṇa (knower) is made possible by avidyā as without the later there can be no activity in the self as it is free from all contacts. Thus, subjectivity (pramāṇa-tva) is only the creation of avidyā. So even the scriptural testimony

6. Śārikkā Bhāṣya, p.52.
being a means of knowledge requires knowersness (pramārttvā) which is based on avidyā. It only gives an idea of the ultimate truth so that the Brahman is not limited to it. Valid knowledge arising out of śrutī only takes away ignorance which causes the appearance of difference between the jīva and the Brahman; but it does not manifest the Brahman positively. So the transcendence of the Brahman remains intact.

Though anubhava (direct experience) is said to be pramāṇa for the existence of Brahman, it only means that direct knowledge takes away avidyā but cannot reveal the Brahman as an object (visaya). The Advaitins have made it clear that in the case of knowing the Brahman pervasion by phala (phalavāpyatva) is not admitted as it is self-luminous, but pervasion by vṛtti is only admitted for the destruction of avidyā. Thus both śrutī and anubhava are secondarily said to be pramāṇa for the existence of Brahman in so far as they destroy false appearance, but they cannot manifest it positively. It is interesting to note that the Brahman is only indicated (lakṣya) by śabda but not expressed (vācyā), though latter is said be the pramāṇa regarding the Brahman. So the Brahman is declared to be beyond

9. Ibid., pp.263-264.
all means of knowledge (aprameya). It is notable that unlike other objects of knowledge Brahman is eternal and real whereas its pramanas are non-real, having validity only in the empirical level.

One objection may be raised against this Advaita view. How can the pramanas which are not themselves real prove the reality or otherwise of anything? Being unreal, they are capable of neither proving nor disproving anything. In this way the arguments of the Advaitins against the opponents are rendered valueless, as without accepting the reality of the pramanas they try to disprove the doctrines of others. In response to this allegation, Srīharsa says that acceptance of their reality is not the regulating factor (niyamaka) of their ability to prove or disprove anything. What is required for the validity of a pramāṇa is its being free from fallacies. The non-Advaitins like the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas who accept the reality of the pramanas, refute each other's contention which make it clear that acceptance of their reality is not the same as their validity.\textsuperscript{12} The fact is that validity of the pramanas only means their functional reality, but not reality in the sense of unsublatability. Answering the question as to how can the object known through pramāṇa be false, Madhusūdana says that in the empirical knowledge, validity in the sense of expressing the ultimate reality is not accepted.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{itemize}
\item 12. K.K.K., p.8.
\item 13. Advaita Siddhi, p.472.
\end{itemize}
(paramārthika sattva) which means unsublatable is not required for the functional character of the things of the world, as some sort of functionality is also there in the false experience.  

As the object of valid knowledge can either be false or real in so far as validity means only empirical validity, the object of the valid knowledge regarding the Brahman viz. the Brahman is real, whereas its knowledge is non-real (atātvika). The difference is that both valid empirical knowledge and its object are non-real, whereas in the case of the Brahman, it itself is real and its knowledge is non-real, nothing except the Brahman being admitted as real. It is to be borne in mind that psychosis-knowledge (vṛtti jñāna) which includes both the knowledge of the Brahman and the knowledge of the world is false, the limiting factor (mithyātva vacchedaka) of falsity being the same dsyaatva, etc. But the svarūpa- jñāna which is Brahman itself is only real.  

It may be asked how can Advaita be established if the validity of the knowledge arising out of Vedānta and Vedānta itself be false. Refuting this Madhusūdana states that reality of verbal testimony and its knowledge is not required for the reality of its object. It cannot be said that the object is false, the validity of its knowledge being false. In the indeterminate knowledge (nirvikalpaka) which is different

14. A.S., p.496.
from both valid and invalid knowledge, the opponents even admit non-sublation of the object. So the opponents even admit a real to be an object of the knowledge which is not valid like indeterminate knowledge. What is necessary for the falsity of the object is the invalidity of knowledge which means knowledge, having that as prakāra in something which does not have that (tad-abhāvavati tatprakāravādi). In the case of the knowledge regarding the Brahman, such invalidity is not there though such knowledge is not real like other worldly objects. Thus the Brahman is real though its knowledge is non-real.

The primary aim of Advaita epistemology is to prove that the manifold world consisting of mātr, māna and meya (knower, means of knowing and knowable) termed as drṣya, in contrast to caitanya termed as drk, is false inasmuch as it is superimposed on and revealed by the latter viz. the caitanya. The secondary aim is to show that the epistemic order is not affected, though the whole universe is superimposed on one intelligence and is revealed by it. The non-Advaitins challenge the Advaita view that if all the things that are knowable are revealed by one eternal ever-shining Brahman Intelligence, all of them must be revealed at the same time. There should not be an order that a thing is known to one knower and not known to another. How is it that a thing is

known when another is not known? The Advaitins in great details refute their objection by discussing the unaffectedness of epistemic order. This discussion is technically known as prati-karma-vyavasthā. The Advaitins prove that though one caitanya is the revealer of all objects there is no contingency of revelation of all objects at the same time. In connection with it various means of knowledge or pramāṇas are discussed. But this is not the aim of Advaita as all the vyavasthās(orders) like prati-karma-vyavasthā(epistemic order), the order of jīva and īśvara, etc. are only valid from the empirical point of view. Madhusudana Sarasvatī has made it clear that all the vyavasthās being valid from the point of view of empirical uses (vyavahāra) and being non-existent from the ultimate view, there is no discrepancy.16 So prati-karma-vyavasthā in Advaita Vedānta only aims at explaining the world of experience instead of proving its reality. Thus, Advaita is not against systems and methods, but it only intends to show that all our systems and methods are only valid within a certain limitation beyond which they are meaningless.

But this is not tantamount to agnosticism. According to agnosticism knowledge is not possible beyond the phenomenal existence. But the Brahman of Advaita Vedānta is not unknowable. It is very much possible to know the Brahman though in a non-conventional way. Verbal testimony and the last psychosis

16. evam vyavahāratad sarvavyavasthāpapatteh paramārthatah, etc., Siddhānta-sindhu, p.172.
(prāmāṇa vṛtti) which finally takes away avidyā are said to be means to achieve knowledge regarding the Brahman. In the case of the latter viz. in the last psychosis vṛtti-vyāpti is only accepted but not phala-vyāpti, Brahman being illumination itself. In fact, the Brahman does not need any pramāṇa for its existence, as it is the basis of all pramāṇas, it sustains them and gives value to them. Sureśvara puts it beautifully in his Vārtika, "How can one doubt where pramāṇa (means of valid knowledge) apramāṇa (means of invalid knowledge) and pramābhāsa (false knowledge) give rise to pramaṇa (valid knowledge)". 17 It means that caitanya being the basis of all knowledge both valid and invalid cannot be doubted, as doubt is a kind of invalid knowledge which pre-supposes caitanya for its very possibility. Śaṅkara says that the self cannot be doubted as it is the very person who denies it. 18 Indeed, the Advaitins have found out something which needs no explanation as it is the fountain-head of all explanations. All explanations are possible only in so far as they refer to this indispensable basis either directly or indirectly. So, unlike other systems of philosophy Advaita epistemology does not aim at devising some means of knowledge in order to explain its conception of reality, but it discusses the means of knowledge only to prove that the world of experience with its diversity can very well be explained even though we accept reality as one without a second.

18. S.Bh., pp.508-509.
In other systems of philosophy epistemological considerations are made in order to prove a certain world-view. On the other hand, epistemology cannot be possible unless a specific world-view is kept in mind. The realists define knowledge in such a manner that it proves the reality of the external objects; the non-realists, on the other hand, define it in a different way which gives an altogether different result. Thus there occurs a vicious circle between metaphysic and epistemology. Though Advaita epistemology is based on its view of reality, such a difficulty does not arise as its reality the Brahman needs no epistemological consideration for its establishment, as it is the basis of all of them and also transcends them.

In view of this, divergence of opinions regarding some vital principles of Advaita like jīva, Īśvara, etc. among the Advaitins of the post-Śaṅkara age can be well understood. Some critics think that after Śaṅkara the neo-Advaitins differed from each other and tried to maintain their views without understanding their master's view. Others even go far as to disprove the validity of all of them. The difference of Bhāmatī and Vivaraṇa schools is well-known. Even in some works of Advaita like Siddhāntaleśa Saṅgraha we find numerous contradicting views of different Advaita preceptors all of which cannot be accepted apparently. But such apparent contradictions have nothing to prove their invalidity. Different views regarding jīva, Īśvara, etc. are said to be ways of explanation or
prakriyās which aim at making others understand the truth of Advaita. In so far as they succeed in it they are valid. But as such their reality is not accepted. Madhūṣūdana Śrāsvarā has made it clear in his siddhāntabindu, "Though the formations (kalpanā) of difference like that of the jīva and Īśvara, etc. are made by the human mind only (purusabuddhimātraprabhavah), they are reproduced by the śāstras as they are conducive to the attainment of the ultimate knowledge (tattva-jñāna).

Referring to Śureśvara a great authority in Advaita tradition, Madhūṣūdana says that wherever any opposition arises among the views of Vedānta (here means Advaita Vedānta) this is the explanation of them. Śureśvara's Vartika which is reverentially quoted by some great teachers of Advaita tradition like Vidyārānya and Madhūṣūdana says that by whichever method one may attain proficiency in the knowledge of the inner self, that method is said to be a prakriyā (way of explanation) and is valid. Gaudapāda confirms this when he says that creation which is expounded through the example of clay, gold, etc. is only means to understand Advaita. Indeed, the great teachers of Advaita like Madhūṣūdana and Appaya Dīksita have asserted and justified all the views of the previous Ācharyas. So all the seemingly contradictory views like eka-jīva-vāda, aneka-jīva-vāda, the theories of reflection and limitation, etc. regarding the jīva are valid. This is beautifully described

by Appaya Diksita - "The good saying (discourses on Advaita) issued from the beautiful lotus-face of Bhagavatpāda (Śrī Śaṅkara) which takes away birth, diversified a thousand fold on reaching the previous Ācāryas (of Advaita Vedānta) like the Ganges which originating from the foot of Viṣṇu gets diversified on reaching different lands, remains Victoriously". Thus, the difference among the later Advaitins is only apparent but not real as all of them agree with the central truth of Advaita that Brahmān is one without a second and that the world is false. This explanation of the Advaitins suggest the fact that all the views in so far as they are not inconsistent with the basic truth of Advaita and are not contradicted by other pramanās are acceptable to the Advaitins from the empirical point of view.

Different theories or views within Advaita are given by the Ācāryas keeping in view the gradation of the adhikārins (persons qualified to make inquiry regarding the Brahmān). Sarvajñatman says that a man of low intelligence accepts modification (paṁśūna): a man whose sins of mind are washed away sees vivarta (false imposition) but a man whose mind is fixed on the Brahmān only sees the non-dual eternal abode. Three views (drsti-traya) expounded by him are meant for three types of adhikārins or a person in three successive stages of self-realisation. The first view known as āropa-drsti or view of superimposition according to which the world is real with its cause is meant for the lowest adhikārī. In the second the

apavāda-drṣṭi (sublation view), the world appears as false, though its cause the brahman appears as real. This is otherwise known as vivarta-vāda. In the third the sampūrṇa-drṣṭi (perfect view) the world ceases to appear either as real or false and the non-dual reality only comes to vision. This is also known as ajāta-vāda. The sublation view which holds that the world is false is also divided into two viz. eka-jīva-vāda the theory advocating oneness of the jīva, otherwise known as drṣṭi-srṣṭi and aneka-jīva-vāda the theory according to which jīvas are many. In the hierarchy of the views, parināma-vāda, vivarta-vāda (in the sense of many jīva theory), drṣṭi-srṣṭi and ajāta-vāda come successively. Among them the latter views are superior to the former views successively. Prati-karma-vyavasthā or epistemic order is only possible in the two former stages and is applicable only to the inferior adhikārins. Madhusūdana has made it clear that epistemic order is only meant for the inferior adhikārins.23 Thus different theories of Advaita are preached by the Ācāryas from the points of view of different adhikārins. Vidyārāṇya aptly gives the remark after discussing various theories of jīva and īśvara that all of them are free from faults, as prakriyās are only devised for the understanding of the truth (tattva) of Advaita.24

Advaita primarily signifies the brahman which is non-dual, Existence, Knowledge and Bliss and is free from three

23. AsS., p. 534.
sorts of difference. The *Mandukya Upanisad* uses this word in the above sense and further identifies it with the *atman*. In a secondary sense this word signifies *Brahma-vidya*. Śaṅkara uses the word *Advaita-vidya* in this sense. Even in this sense its primary meaning is the intuitive knowledge of the *Brahman* which takes away *avidya* the cause of *samsāra*. Secondarily it signifies the works which expound this truth of non-duality. These works beginning with the *Upanisads* including various treatises written by latter Advaitins form what is known as *Advaita* Vedānta. So far as efforts are made to expound *Advaita* in terms of concepts and categories, *Advaita* is said to be a system of philosophy. But as the vision of Truth it is beyond philosophy.

These works operate in two ways viz. by negating what is not the *Brahman* and by affirming positively what it is. So we see two different categories of *Advaita* manuals those positively expound the knowledge of the *Brahman* and others which refute the standpoints that regard themselves as opposed to *Advaita*. This second kind of activity predominates the later *Advaita* works, though refutation of the non-*Advaitic* views is not alien to the earlier works like that of Śaṅkara and Gaudapāda. The basic characteristic of these later works is that they employ

26. Śaṅkara’s comm. on *G.U.*, p.29.
long dialectical arguments which analyse minutely with utmost perfection the thought-systems of the non-Advaitins and reduce their position to absurdity. The other aim of these polemical works is to defend the Advaita-view by showing that it is consistent well-defined which can explain itself as well as the world of experience. To achieve this they subject each concept of both Advaitic and non-Advaitic systems to minute analysis and rigorous criticism in which aspect the Advaitins seem to have attained such an excellence that it cannot possibly be surpassed. It is clear that their aim is not to prove the existence of the Brahman, simply because no bulk of arguments how much irrefutable they may be can prove it, as direct experience (aparoksa-nubhuti) and sruti are only capable of this. However, their achievement consists in their giving clarity to many ambiguous and bewildering concepts, thus, clarifying the path of philosophical inquiry which gives intellectual knowledge though not the intuitive knowledge of the Brahman.

After Śaṅkara and his direct disciples a great achievement in the tradition of Advaita is the writing of Vivaraṇa by Prakāśatman (1200 A.D.). This epoch-making work which is endowed with philosophical profundity, logical subtlety and clarity of exposition influenced most of the great writers of Advaita tradition who came after its writing. Another great work which marked the dawn of neo-Advaita literature is the Khandana-Khanda-Khādyam of Śrīharsa. It
paved the way for the writing of the great dialectical works the Citsukhi of Citsukha and the Advaita Siddhi of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Indeed, these three works form what is known as bhūḥ, bhuvah and svah of Advaita dialectics. Thus, Advaita Siddhi is the culmination of Advaita dialectics. It contains both the philosophical depth of Vivarana and analytical sharpness of khandana. Its uniqueness is that it defends and synthesises all the important doctrines and views of the previous Advaita teachers without considering whether they belong to a particular Advaita school though Madhusūdana has definite predilection for the Vivarana school. Synthesis of the apparently conflicting views of the Advaita schools is the greatest achievement of Madhusūdana. His works like Advaita Siddhi and Siddhāntabindu can be designated truly as digest of the whole Advaita literature in contrast to the Siddhāntaleśa of Appaya Diksita which can be described only as a compendium of the Advaita-views.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī the last great writer in the tradition of Advaita belongs to the sixteenth century A.D. He was born in Bengal and his name before assuming sannyāsa was Kamalanayana. He studied the whole Advaita literature under the able guidance of Mādhava Sarasvatī and was initiated into sannyāsa by Viśveśvara Sarasvatī. He is said to be a friend of Tulasīdāsa the writer of Rāmacaritamānanasa and was associated with Benaras and Puri. His reference to lord Jagannātha

in Vedānta Kalpa Latikā as the lord of blue mountain (nīlā-cala-
ayākā) proves the truth of the legend that he came to Puri and
was associated with this place for a long time. He is said to
have defeated Mahārānātha Tarkāvāgīśa and Gadādhara Bhattācārya
the eminent writers of Navya-nyāya in a debate. His famous
debate with Vyāsatīrtha the writer of Nyāyāmṛta and the champion
of Mādhva school of dualism is well-known. In fact, Advaita Siddhi
is the refutation of Nyāyāmṛta. In the days of Śaṅkara Advaita
Vedānta had to face formidable opponents among the Buddhists and
the Jainas. At the time of Śrīharaśa Advaita had to encounter the
Naiyāyakas, but at the time of Madhusūdana the most formidable
opponents of Advaita were the Mādhvas.

It is clear from the discussions of Madhusūdana
that the allegations of the non-Advaitins against Advaita is
partly due to linguistic confusion and partly due to inability
to grasp the highest truth of Advaita. He showed their hollowness
and reasserted the views of the previous Advaita teachers. In
doing so, Madhusūdana has analysed like other Advaita
dialecticians, each and every concept very minutely and has
shown that what the Advaitins say is not only logically
conceivable as it is well-defined, but it is actually possible
as valid means of knowledge testifies to its actual possibility.

31. navadvipe samāyate madhusūdanavākpatau/
cakalpe tarkāvāgīśah kātaro'bhūd gadādharaḥ//
It is conspicuous that much elaboration and clarification of some concepts by the later Advaitins are due to the attack of the non-Advaitins. If the objections of the non-Advaitins are withdrawn they become to some extent irrelevant and superfluous. However, nobody can deny that these clarifications made by the later Advaitins are very much helpful in understanding the basic truth of Advaita. We may take into consideration one of them as an example of Advaita dialectics.

After the discussion of five definitions of falsity in Advaita Siddhi the opponent asks whether this falsity itself is false. If falsity is unsublatable (not false), then Advaita cannot be established as apart from the Brahman there will be another unsublatable principle viz. falsity. If falsity of the world is false, the reality of the world will be implied, its falsity itself being false.\(^{32}\) The opponent adduces the famous logical axiom that among the two opposite characteristics (dharma) intended to be proved in a substance (dharmin), if one is false, then the other must be true to prove their contention.

The answer of the Advaitin to this charge is that even though falsity of the world itself is false, there is no implication of the reality of the world. There only the falsity of one among the two opposite characteristics is proved in something where the determinant of falsity (mithyātvā-vacchedaka) is not present in both the characteristics. If the determinant of

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\(^{32}\) A.S., pp.207-210
falsity is there in both the opposite characteristics, both the opposite characteristics can be false alike. In the shell (sūkṣṭa) either of the silverness (raja-tatva) and its absence (tad-abhāva) is false, but both cannot be false at the same time as the determinant of falsity in both these characteristics is different. Silverness and its absence are also mutually exclusive (parasparā-bhāva-rūpa). So they cannot be false in the shell at the same time.

But the falsity of the falsity of the world does not imply the reality of the world as the determinant of falsity (mithyātva-vacchedaka) is common to both the world and its falsity. Here the determinant of falsity is capability of being seen (dravyatva) and inertness, etc. which lie in all except the cit. Whatever is different from drk is drṣya. So, the characteristic drṣyatva is there in both the world and its falsity. So both are false alike.33

This is the precise answer of Madhusūdana to the opponent's charge. But this charge can also be refuted in other ways. An analysis of the concept 'falsity' shows that it only means the absence of the object in its supposed locus where it seems to be present all the time. But the opponents think it to be a real entity for which they make such an allegation. But in fact, when the world is sublated, nothing remains unsublatable as its falsity. Thus falsity of the world after negating the

33. A.S., pp.207-212.
world negates itself. Madhusūdana's answer gives much clarity to the concept in showing that the determining factor of falsity not only falsifies the world but proves that no artificial hindrance can pose any difficulty in establishing Advaita. Anything different from drk whatever may be its status is false as drṣyātva is common to all of the world. In this way Madhusūdana like other later Advaitins have refuted the allegations of the non-Advaitins by clarifying the concepts of Advaita.

It is said that Madhusūdana's presentation of Advaita marks the culmination of Advaita dialectic. But the personality of this great Advaitin has many facets. He combines in his personality matchless dialectical skill with loftiest intuition and rare emotional trait of a profound devotee. We find the display of this profound devotion in his commentary of the Bhagavad Gītā and other devotional works like Bhaktirasayana, etc. His appealing verses which we find here and there in all of his works bear an unmistakeable note of self-realisation. His profound knowledge of the scriptures is decorated with remarkable humbleness. This is known from a verse in Advaita Siddhi where he says that in writing such works on Advaita he only reasserts what is said by others as everything is there in the Śastraś and is taught clearly by the preceptors.34 His respect towards his teachers knows no bound. This is prominent in a verse where he says that whatever is right in

34. A.S., p.854.
his work belongs to his guru and whatever is wrong is due to him. Purusottama his disciple and commentator rightly testifies to his great learning when he says that the words of his teacher, full of meaning as they are though meant for the novice, are understood even by a few old pandits, rich in knowledge, with much difficulty. Thus after Śaṅkara Madhusūdana is ranked among the great teachers of Advaita tradition like Sureśvara, Padmapāda, Prakahātman, Śrīharsa, Citsukha and Vidyārānya.

The present work intends to make a study of Advaita epistemology with special reference to Advaita Siddhi of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Only some portions of this highly abstruse work are taken for study in this connection. The usual method of discussing the six means of knowledge which are elaborately discussed in the Vedānta Paribhaṣā and are expounded in D.M. Dutta's work 'The Six Ways of Knowing' is not adopted here, as following Madhusūdana it is sought to be proved that the discussion of methods of knowledge is not an end in itself but a means to strengthen the falsity of the world. In fact, Madhusūdana has discussed them only to show that though the world is false, the epistemic order is not shattered. Prati-karma-vyavasthā which includes the six methods of knowledge is discussed in Advaita Siddhi just after supporting arguments (anukula-tarka) for proving the falsity of the word in order to strengthen the latter. Thus, the aim of discussing the means of knowledge in Advaita is not to prove them but to transcend them.

35. S.B., p.178.
36. Purusottama Sarasvati's comm. on S.B., p.83