CHAPTER 1

THE RELEVANCE OF SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONY IN ADVAITA

Appayadiksita does not discuss in his Siddhantalelesangraha all the ways of knowing acceptable to Vedantic orthodoxy. As any primer of Vedanta fundamentals will tell us, Vedantic epistemology elaborates six ways of knowing, namely, perception (Pratyaksa), inference (Anumana), analogy (Upamanda), Verbal Testimony (Sabda Pramana or Agama), Presumption (Arthapatti) and non-cognition (Anupalabdhi). This is a theme worn threadbare and we do not propose to re-enter upon a discussion of it. Following Appaya we shall take up for consideration verbal testimony (Sabda Pramana) and its special status in Advaita epistemology. Other ways of knowing will be referred to in accordance with their relevance to this particular Pramana and the comparative efficacy of the latter in bringing us face to face with the Mysterium Tremendum.

Sabda Pramana is an autonomous source of knowledge. We have an instance of Sabda Pramana when the knowledge derived from a sentence is not made available through any other channel and when it is not cancelled by other 'Pramana'.

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A few words about the nature of valid knowledge (Prama) will not be out of place here. The validity of verbal testimony as a source of knowledge is a cardinal tenet of Vedanta epistemology. This validity has been assailed on various grounds but these have been effectively rebutted by Vedanta exponents. The topic has been discussed at length by Dr. N. Dutta in his 'Six ways of Knowing' and in an essay contributed by him to the book 'Recent Indian philosophy.' Verbal testimony has sometimes been equated with inferential knowledge, for we first believe in the trustworthiness of a given authority and the infer to the validity of the belief or knowledge emanating therefrom.

It is doubtful whether the credibility of a particular testimony rests on inference. The truth rather appears to be that unless we have grounds to discredit or impugn the veracity of what we hear, we lend credence to whatever knowledge comes to us through verbal testimony. In this context Dr. N. Dutta quotes approvingly from Professor Montague's book "Ways of Knowing (Chapter 'Authoritarianism') "we accept on trust nine-tenths of what we are told to be true, Man is a suggestible animal and tends to believe what is said to him unless he has some positive reason for doubting the honesty or competence of his informant".

True authorities complier, and it becomes sometimes a problem as to which of them is to be believed, "but this is not peculiar

to testimony alone, it is common to all methods (perception, inference), more or less ...... Again, the conflict between two authorities may not always and wholly drive us to a foreign method; it may be solved through the testimony of another authority.

Both perception and inference sometimes turn out to be defective, but that does not vitiate their standing as sources of authentic knowledge. The same charge cannot comprise the status of 'Abdaprāmāṇa' either.

"I learn from the words of a friend that he is glad. Though inference I may ascertain that — as he is truthful, his statement is true. But this inference does not say that he is glad, which information has to be gathered only from the words of the friend."

Thus inference cannot affect the competence of verbal testimony to furnish new facts. Inference may be used to validate the knowledge of those facts, but knowledge itself is not derived from inference.

The Vedanta Sāriṣṭhāna (Agraṇa Prakāraṇa) gives two types of valid knowledge (1) अध्यात्मिक अनुभव that which intimates the reality of things empirical (2) मूल अनुभव that which establishes the validity of transcendental truths. It is, however, to be borne in mind that all empirical knowledge is only provisionally valid, i.e. till the dawn of Brahms-knowledge and thus the means employed to validate this knowledge are provisional, too. We can operate with them this side of the


2. Ibid. P. 204.
realization of the identity of Jiva and Brahman. But they become insensible in the super-sensuous sphere of absolute reality where only the (Upanisad-avakyas) which are valid. Sankara quotes Sundara pandya in his commentary on the 4th-sutra of Badarayana:

That is, the empirical means of knowledge are valid only so long as the truth of the 'sutra' does not dawn upon us. Just as the identity of self and body holds so long as the perception of Brahman is not forthcoming.

Advaitins, unlike the Buddhists, attach great importance to what is known as 'Sabda-pramana'. It is pertinent to remark here that on account of its faith in Buddhavacana, the Buddhist position appears to be similar to that of Vedanta in some respects and seems not to be that of absolute antithesis. But the concept of Sabda-Pramana is construed in a peculiar sense by the Vedantins, and this sense excludes the Buddhists from the fold of Sabda-Pramana-Vadins. Sabda-Pramana is of two types,
according as it is based on the words of a trust worthy person (Apta-Kurusa), or on the words of the scripture. The authority of the words of a reliable person is tentative in that it can be subjected to reason and otherwise scrutinised. But the authority of the scripture is absolute for it is beyond the pale of argumentative reason. The first is and the second for in the first an appeal lies to reason, perception and inference but in the case of scriptural statements such an appeal is inadmissible. Thus the knowledge gained through Apatvavacan or the words of a reliable person is accessible to other means of knowledge while other means of knowledge are inapplicable to the attestation of scriptural statements.

The authenticity of Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaiseshika and hindred systems comes in the category of for these are subject to examination by reason, and their validity is provisional unless it is vouched for by reason. The followers of the above systems regard the sruti as a particular form of and are not shy of dragging it to the court of reason. They have faith in the veda but only so far as the veda is in accord with reason. The veda is thus for them . Therefore these systems are regarded as but not .

The position of the Vedantins in regard to sruti is different. According to them, in its own sphere, i.e. the sphere of metaphysical truth, the authority of the sruti is
absolute and does not stand in need of authentication by any other means of knowledge. The scriptural passages dealing with metaphysical truth are, सुप्रमाणम् and human reason is constitutionally debarred from encroaching on the sphere of sruti. The two sutras of अनुलोकम् I.1-3 and II.1-1 establish the inviolability of vedic truth by reason. Vaisespati misra too, says

Now if the Buddhists are to be regarded as sabda-pramana-vedins, in accordance with the vedantic conception the words of the Buddha should, firstly, be regarded as, i.e. they should not be ascribed to any particular person. But the Buddhavacana is, by definition, the word of a particular person. Secondly, it should not be subject to the jurisdiction of reason. But the Buddha himself called upon his disciples to accept his teaching only if it was in consonance with reason. Thus the Buddhists do not measure up to the vedantic definition of a sabda-pramana Vadin.

When even the Astika systems (like Yoga, and Samkhya) are not regarded as sabda pramana vedins, how can this designation apply to Nastika darshanas like Buddhism. I may add that I am not using the word Nastika in the sense of nihilist - a sense it never bears in philosophical disputation in Sanskrit. I give it the traditional meaning of one who does not believe in the veda.
To the Vedantins, then, the scripture is a valid means of knowledge. The sages bear witness to the reality of Advaitic experience and just as in ordinary life we cannot set aside the testimony of persons we know to be reliable, similarly it is illogical to demand that we should disbelieve the utterances of sages who are, by common consent, seers of truth. Words, according to the Advaitin, are endowed with the capacity to generate recollection and knowledge.

Words are endowed with the capacity to generate both the primary and the secondary senses, when the context rejects the primary sense, that is, when the interpretation of a word does not yield a logically tenable meaning in a particular context, we have recourse to the secondary sense. The secondary sense is of three types (1) Jahalleksana, where the primary sense is overthrown and the secondary sense instated due to its relation to the primary sense. In the sentence 'the village is on the Ganges' the word Ganges, being a stream of water, cannot be the locus of the village; hence it surrenders its primary sense and the contiguous sense of 'the bank of the Ganges' is accepted instead. (ii) Ajasalleksana, which does not completely over-throw the primary sense but accepts it along with the secondary sense. In the sentence 'thirty hands are at work', the word hands stands for manual labourers, (iii) Jhahajahalleksana or bhagadtyagalaksana wherein part of the primary sense of a word is excluded and part accepted. In the sentence 'this
is the same Devadatta that I saw at Lahore, reference to time is excluded and time the identity of Devadatta is established Vedantic mahavakyas like 'Aham Brahma-asmi' or 'Tattwamasi' fall in this category.

According to Mandana verbal testimony leads only to mediate knowledge and it is prasankhyana or constant contemplation that converts this mediate knowledge into the certitude of direct, intuitive vision. The collaborative efficacy of jnana and prasankhyana is set forth by Mandana in Brahma-siddhi, and Vaiseskapi mīśra is indebted thereto. Suresvara is vehemently opposed to the view that Vedanta mahavakyas are by themselves inadequate and incompetent to bring about the miracle of final liberation. He urges among other considerations that if liberation is brought about by prasankhyana, then as something that is effectuated in time it is liable to lapse. The mainstay of his rejoinder is the fact that if the mahavakyas become ancillary to meditation they are belittled of their authoritative character. If verbal testimony is by its nature productive of mediate knowledge only at several removes from the heart of the ultimate mystery then no amount of meditation can make it modify its nature. The inherent nature of a thing can no more undergo transformation than fire can lose its property of heat. The conclusion of the Vivarana polemic is that 'abda-pramana' yields both mediate and immediate knowledge according
as the object to which it relates is immediate or otherwise. Since Brahman is experience in its greatest immediacy Mahavakyas can yield immediate knowledge of it. 1

The Mahavakyas purport to reveal the immediate knowledge of the identity of jive and Brahman. It is true that even after Sravana such an immediate knowledge may not dawn. This is, however, due not to any incapacity on the part of the Mahavakyas but because there are inward obstacles like evil propensities, dispositions and erroneous conceptions which stand in the way of the perfect and unmistakable revelation of the ultimate reality. What is to be done in such a situation is not to take to meditation but to make a thorough inquiry into the purport of the Mahavakyas. Such an inquiry will exterminate the obstacles and lead to the drawing of the immediate identity of jive and Brahman. This theory of Suresvara and his followers is known as 'Sabdasahityasaktivada' and attributes mysterious power to words.

Siddhantadesasagreha mentions a school of Advaitins who consider verbal testimony to be potent enough for the achievement of immediate knowledge. Appaya cites a number of samanidada passages which corroborate the view that Mahavakyas by themselves are adequate to the task of winning redemption. This view is in accord with the Vivarana School. Next Appaya also mentions
the view of those who hold that although words by themselves are not efficacious for release, yet in collaboration with a mind stripped of evil it can win the ultimate emancipation for the fettered soul. Just as an ordinary offering poured into fire does not generate 'Aparva', but when this offering is made in accordance with ritualistic prescriptions, it is invested with the potency to generate it, so words reinforced by a mind trained in asceticism acquire a particular power. This is in accord with the view of Vedanta and Vacaspati.

A pertinent question raised in 'iddhantelessa-saṁyāsa about the position of the Advaitin is whether verbal testimony which establishes Brahman as the reality par excellence is by itself real or unreal. If it is real then the absolute reality of Brahman is undermined for we have a rival reality in Sabda-pramana. If it is unreal then what it reveals or points out also becomes unreal. We do not lend credence to the statements of a person we know to be a liar.

Appaya also gives the view of the Advaitin who seeks to meet the above objection to his cardinal tenet of the non-duality of Brahman. The empirical and the phenomenal are no doubt of a lower grade of reality than the noumenal, but that does not mean that they cannot serve as signs or supports or
means to the knowledge of Brahman. According to the Vedantic
texts Brahman is defined as the highest reality. This attribute
does not apply to 'Agnihotra' nor to the fruit of 'Agnihotra'
which both belong to the same plane of reality, namely, the
empirical. Even if the Vedantic texts here and there refer to
'Agnihotra' and its fruit as real, their reality stands cancelled
in virtue of the fact that the texts on non-duality are more
potent and valid. There is no evidence to demonstrate that
evidence and what it seeks to establish should both, belong to
the same order of reality or validity.¹

It may be objected that the testimony of scripture is
rendered invalid by perception which reveals a world character-
ised by plurality. The oneness of Brahman is sublated by the
plurality of the things of the world. Appayadikātita gives the
view of Tattvasuddhikara in rebuttal of the above argument.
According to the author of Tattvasuddhikara even perception reveals
more existence, the substratum of a plurality of objects. One
may object that in such a case the perceptive act should take
the form 'this is existence' and not 'this is a jar'. But the
author of Tattva-suddhi holds that even as in the 'rope-snake'
ilusion the 'this' belongs to the substratum rope but is
referred to the snake due to the ignorance of the percipient,
similarly in all perception, 'Thisness' or objectivity really
belongs to the substratum Brahman but is erroneously referred
to the empirical objects due to Avidya. The operation of the
senses is confined to the cognizance of the 'This' alone. The
According to the author of Nyayasmādhī the world is existent because it is shot through and through with the 'existence' of Brahman. Just as the redness of the Japa-flower apparently belongs to the crystal which is lying beside it, similarly existence which is 'Brahman only apparently belongs to the jar. In this context it is proper to give an account of the function of 'mental states' according to the system of Advaita.

Though all things of empirical existence are but illusory impositions on pure intelligence, yet for the knowledge of specific objects it has been admitted even in Advaita system that it can rise through specific mental states (vrttis). Apart from the illumination of the external world it cannot be admitted that the manifold world without is absolutely real, because, if this appearance were ultimate, if the object were wholly other and independent of the subject, knowledge of it, except perhaps in a remote and mediate fashion, would be impossible. For the subject would have to be linked to the object by a relation in the process of cognition, and it is not possible for us to discover any true relation between consciousness and the object of consciousness. Consciousness must have
some kind of connection with the object which it illuminates, for had it not been so there would not be any knowledge at any time. But it is not possible to imagine any kind of connection between consciousness and objects, for it can neither be anyoga nor samayya. Even supposing that there might be a third type of relation between subject and object, then, too, the objects of empirical existence ought to be assumed to be superimposed upon self luminous intelligence, because, otherwise, their cognition or manifestation would be quite impossible.

Though this consciousness is self luminous, its luminosity like that of a glow-worm is only in respect of itself; in respect of the object, however, it is inert. Then once it has been admitted that all the worldly objects have a common base for their being superimposed upon, then the revelation of the objects is intelligible. What happens is simply this, that the reality (chit) which subsists in all objects as the same identical one reveals the object as soon as its veil is removed by association with the vrtti (mental state).

The author of Śaṅkaraśāstra resolves the conflict between perception and scriptural testimony in his own way. According to him perception is not an authentic means of knowledge at all. A means of knowledge has for its function the revelation of unknowable objects. But objects like jars and tables are not unknowable. They are not affected by the veil of
Avidya. It is the self-luminous Brahman that is the object of Avidya and a true means of knowledge tears aside the veil of Avidya from the face of Brahman. Thus there is no conflict between perception on the one hand and scriptural testimony on the other, when the status of a pramana is denied to perception the question of its conflict with sruti does not arise at all.

There is another school of Advaitins who uphold the doctrine not of the non-existence of empirical objects but of their unreality. Empirical objects are unreal because they are subject to relativity. The reality of these objects is not impugned until the knowledge of Brahman is revealed. Unless Brahman becomes a reality all the categories of empirical knowledge are applicable to them. Only the knower of Brahman can affirm the non-reality of the world of objects.

Some Advaitins have recourse to what is known in Vedic exegesis as 'Apachchedāryeya' to establish the superiority of sruti as against perceptual evidence. Apachchedāryeya lays down that all later propositions whose truth is established by negating an earlier one should hold the field, a later cognition which comes into its own by sublating an earlier one
should be acceptable. The cognition of nacre following and sublating the cognition of silver is the more valid of the two. The witness of the scripture is stronger than the witness of perceptual experience, because its rise follows that of the latter and renders it invalid.

Moreover, it will be a sweeping generalisation to say that perception is at odds with the apprehension of nonduality. Difference as such is never apprehended by perception. The object of perception is something particular and to say that a general truth like 'particulars are different from each other' is apprehended simultaneously is to exceed the limits of perceptual knowledge. My perception of two things cannot be formulated in a proposition like this 'My cognition of the table is different from my cognition of the chair'. This does not mean that the difference between objects on the empirical phase is being denied; that would mean chaos and land the men concerned in the madhouse. What is meant is that the notion of difference is not sustainable dialectically. It is not the place to essay a critique of difference. The vedantic conclusion is to acknowledge its tentative validity but to deny its ultimacy. We are not supposed to mix up the empirical and transcendental planes. Herein lies the rationale of the concept of 'Anirvacaniya'. Cognitions are different from each other but only on the 'Vyavahara' plane. This difference cannot be articulated logically. As effects of Maya things are anirvacaniya. But there is no guarantee that this difference is unsublatable.
Non-duality is unsublatable for we cannot perceive the non-dual cit or consciousness. It is what immediately affirms itself, what is self-luminous, and the objects from which it is sought to distinguish it do not belong to the same plane of reality. Cit or consciousness and objects cannot be brought into any relation that is logically tenable and, therefore, its non-dual character cannot be jeopardised. The illusory snake plus the rope do not make two things.

The empirical existence of plurality is not denied by the scripture; what is denied is its ultimate reality. No doubt there are scriptural texts like

(There is no multiplicity here) which seem to present a ticklish problem. They constitute a challenge to perception but it is perception, which is their mainstay. How does the Advaitist reconcile his conception of Sruti Pramanya with the implications of the above view? Being the support of agnana, perception should carry the more weight. In the case of Apeacheda the posterior sublates the prior but no such sequence obtains between agnana and perception. Perception is the stronger because

केष नाना वासित रिभिष श्रवणि - भूतिनि: स्वप्न्येण्युपपान्तां- बोक्तां ।

दीर्घेनुषे ुष्मे ॥
letters and words which set-forth the Ṛgvedic doctrine are received through perception.

The above view is sought to be rebutted on the following ground. Valid knowledge need not invariably depend on right perception of words and letters. The mis perception of the utterance 'bring the bull' as 'bring the bullock' does not stand in the way of valid knowledge and ensued action. The denial of even empirical existence of words constitutes no difficulty for both valid and illusionary perception have some

1. The discussion relates to the validity of the 'Aparachada Nyâya' in the domain of Vedic exegetics and whether the evidence of perception contradicts that of the scripture. I have been stating the grounds on which the orthodox Vedic commentators hold scriptural testimony to be stronger than perceptual evidence. On page 104 I state what is known to Sanskrit polemics as 'विभावः' i.e. the view of the imagined opponent that is given in order to be rebutted. The end sentence 'perception is the stronger......' is अशात्सरं and it is rebutted on page and subsequent pages. There is apparent contradiction between the following two sentences:

i) It will be a sweeping generalization to say that perception is at odds with the apprehension of non-duality.

ii) Non-duality is unsublatable for we cannot perceive the non-dual cit.

I have brought forth a number of contentions in support of the Vedântic view that perception does not and cannot cancel the apprehension of non-duality. By the 'apprehension of non-duality' I mean the experience of the Vedântic sage who has in his own person come face to face with the ne plus ultra of Vedântic quest. Then I say in (i) that non-duality is unsublatable because we cannot perceive the non-dual cit. I do not mean that the non-dual cit is altogether inapprehensible. It is inapprehensible by the common man. Non-duality is unsublatable because in the case of the Sage its gráha is subsequent to the perception of multiplicity and according to the aparachada nyâya is the true experience of the two. In the case of the common too non-duality is unsublatable because he does not experience it.
elements in common and these may ensure validity of knowledge.

Appaya states the view of another school to resolve the opposition between the smuti and perceptual knowledge. They uphold the doctrine of the existence of the world to all intents and purposes till the knowledge of Brahman dawns. The apprehension of silver in nacre is valid and the apparent reality of silver is rightly affirmed till it is sublated by the knowledge of nacre. The world is thus not altogether unreal, but is perceived to be so with the dawn of gnosia or the supreme identity of Brahman and jiva. Another consideration also reveals the inadequacy of the view that perception negates scriptural testimony. In common parlance what is negated is not absolutely non-existent. Then I say that 'this is not my cow' I simply that my cow exists elsewhere. To say of nacre that this is not silver is to imply the existence of real silver somewhere else. Similarly reality which is denied of the world is affirmed to be existent elsewhere, that is, in Brahman. That is denied is not the apparent reality of the world and hence of letters and words which constitute scripture and are part of the world, but their absolute reality.
Sense-perception has no approach to Brahman. The effect does not and cannot reveal the nature of the cause. The reasons are obvious. Brahman cannot be objectified. It is devoid of external marks, and cannot, therefore, be apprehended by the senses. The problem is whether the validity of scripture in this sphere is open to question at the hands of sense-perception. For if sense-perception contradicts scriptural authority then the latter is overthrown. According to Shankara the spheres of sense-perception and scriptural testimony are distinct from each other, and, therefore, they cannot come into conflict with each other.\(^1\) The function of scriptural testimony is to reveal what is not ordinarily available to the senses, what is super-sensuous. But the senses can operate in the world of empirical objects alone. That is why sense-perception and scriptural testimony cannot refute each other. They are each of them authoritative in their own province.

Apparent the deliveries of the scripture conflict with the findings of perception as far as the condition of the empirical ego is concerned. For the jiva is found to be subject to decay and death and the victim of a thousand sorrows. The scripture, on the other hand, tells us that the jiva is one mass of delight, that it is unchangeable and beyond the vicissitudes of fortune. But the Adwaitin does not find it difficult to resolve the opposition between these two viewpoints. According
to him perception has for its sphere the objectified jiva and not jiva as he is in his own nature.

It may be objected by the pluralist that perception reveals a diversity of objects while the scripture affirms absolute identity and condemns all plurality as illusion. The two, therefore, are in obvious conflict, so that if one of them is true the position of the other becomes untenable. But the Advaitin says that jiva does not affirm the absolute unreality of empirical diversity. It does not question its relative validity. It is only when the absolute is realised that the apparent pluralism of the world comes to be questioned. Perception, moreover, never gives us unsublatable truth. One perception is subject to correction at the hands of another. In other cases inference can be a corrective of perception. But Vedantic knowledge is not subject to sublation. That the knowledge of absolute reality sublates is not the relative reality of differences but its claim to absoluteness. Reality and unreality can no more co-exist than can light and darkness. The knowledge of oneness cannot co-exist with the knowledge of diversity that is the mark of the empirical world. Thus multiplicity is true but only contingently while non-difference is absolutely true.

Another doctrine of Vedanta which seems to be inconsonant with the evidence of perception is the identity of jiva and
Brahman. That jiva is Brahman is the cardinal doctrine of Vedanta. But perception has no locus standi in the matter for neither jiva nor Brahman is presented to it. It is true that the empirical jiva is different from God but the difference is due to adjuncts which are superimposed on jives and not to their inherent nature.

What is the status of yogi-pratyaksa or yogic intuition in the epistemology of Vedanta? This is a pertinent question for this intuition is regarded as competent to reveal super-sensible truth by the yoga, Nyaya and Vaisesika schools. The yogacara school of Buddhism too, denying as it does the validity of scriptural authority, seeks to authenticate its deliveries about the ultimate reality by an appeal to the testimony of trance states. It is believed that mind comes to achieve a specific potency under the influence of yoga and is thus able to have a vision of that which is denied to the worldly man in his condition of avidya or unenlightenment.

But for the Advaitic tradition as expounded by Sankara and his followers, the intuition of the yogi, is not capable of revealing the nature of the ultimate reality. The practice of yoga is efficacious in other directions; it can tone up the body; it can extend our control over the unruly mind but to expect that it will lead to the perception of non-duality is to make a very tall claim indeed. Yoga can be an accessory to the knowledge of Brahman; it can be a symbol of our earnestness to dig into the root of things but beyond that it has no capacity
to penetrate. Both Sankara and Madhusudana Saraswati have rejected the claim of elaborate yogic techniques to lay bare the nature of the Real. According to Sankara it is only mediocre yogis who are devoid of the knowledge of Atman as identical with the mind who indulge in strenuous exercises to tame the mind.

Madhusudana Saraswati says that Sankara has nowhere affirmed the need of yoga for the followers of Advaita. For those who regard everything other than the self as false, mind too is condemned to the status of something imaginary and all attempts to control it become a battle against phantoms.

The yogin has his powers of perception whetted as a result of undergoing yogic discipline but the sphere within which these powers range is that of the senses. It is, therefore, not possible for the yogin merely by proficiency in his esoteric technique to cross the realm of empirical reality and to envision the transcendental verity.

In the Siddhante-sastra of Appayyadikshita discuss the view of Shankaritirtha that yoga is an ancillary to the achievement of gnosis. The Advaita tradition is unanimous in holding that
knowledge is the open sesame to the mystery of the self but there are differences regarding its exclusive validity. Bheratitirtha expounds knowledge as an alternative path to the sumum bonum in his panchasati. According to Bheratitirtha, Saṃkhya is the way par excellence for those souls who are of high intellectual calibre and can undertake a rigorous ruthless enquiry into the nature of the self. Such souls do not draw back in aversion or horror at the bitter draught offered by logic. But there are others who are not ripe intellectually. For them he regards yoga or contemplation on the attributeless Brahman as efficacious for release. If it be said that contemplation cannot be operative in regard to an entity that is void of attributes, then by the same argument Brahman goes beyond the pale of knowledge also, for knowledge too can fix itself only on some attribute. It is true that the man who undertakes yogic discipline is at the outset of his novitiate not fully conversant with Brahman but we cannot say that he is altogether ignorant of it. Just as a worshipper of images looks not at images but through them to the referent, similarly in the contemplative process, the yogi may feel shed upon him the fore-glow of the Divine Transcendence. Yoga is of the nature of Śāntānābhinawa, that is, an illusion that consummates our endeavours and brings our desires to fulfilment. A traveller
who is thirsty may descry from afar the glimmering sands of a river bed and thinking them to be a sheet of water may hasten thereto. He finds that he mistook the sands for water. But the river-bed may contain a streak of water, which though invisible from afar, is none the less there. This may help him to quench his thirst. Thus an illusion led him to water. So the practice of Yoga may also lead us to the summum bonum. Elaborating the view of Bharatitirtha appaya observes that just as Aevena accompanied by thought (technically known as Samkhyā) is one way to gnosis, so yoga or contemplation on the unqualified Divine is another. There is ample scriptural testimony for this view.

What is the status assigned to reasoning in the epistemology of Vedanta? It is well known that the ultimate court of appeal in Vedanta is Shruti. Does this mean that this implicit reliance on the shruti amounts to a dogma? Human knowledge is of necessity valid only in the objective realm and it cannot without stultifying its nature penetrate into the recesses of subjectivity. The deepest recess is the self. That is why the Vedantic doctors affirm the inability of mere reasoning to reach the self. Self-knowledge derives from the shruti. Reasoned knowledge is notoriously slippery. Arguments which appear to be cogent and
unanswerable on the face of it are taken to bits by dialecticians who excel one another in manipulating concepts. Sankara has no faith in reasoning that affirms its independence of the deliverances of sruti. Only that reasoning is welcome to him which follows obediently in the wake of sruti. It will, however, be unfair to Sankara if we were to put him down as an uncompromising misologist. The authority of reason cannot so lightly be brushed aside. Even to define the limits of reason we have to call in the help of reason. Moreover, it is reason and reason alone which can help us to reconcile the mutually divergent utterances of sruti. It is with the help of reason alone that we can affirm the interpretation of Sankara to be valid as against a host of other interpretations advanced by others.

The Advaita of Sankara, therefore, does not question the validity of reasoning in the empirical sphere. Sankara's remark that a hundred srutis declaring the fire to be cold will carry no credence is well-known. But reasoning cannot establish Brahman for Brahman has no specific attribute and thus provides no foothold for reason.

The reasoning resorted to by the Nyaya school to establish the existence of God is fallacious according to Appayadiksita. Appaya says that we cannot infer the existence of a maker from the evidence of the empirical world for the world might well be
the outcome of multiple authorship. In the world we often witness elaborate artefacts which owe their existence to the co-ordinated efforts of many designers and executors. Even the dispensation of the fruits of virtues and vices may be presided over by a multiplicity of supernatural powers. Reasoning can render the existence of God probable but mere probability cannot lead us to the summa bonum. Unless reasoning is buttressed by scriptural testimony and is in accord with it we are likely to be landed in that nihilism which renders Buddhism unacceptable to orthodox tradition. No rational explanation can reconcile the abyssal misery of the world with an omniscient God without convicting Him of malice, nor can the activity that goes to make the world accord with His eternal self-sufficient bliss. Rational theology is a tissue of unresolved puzzles and antinomies.

We may re-state the attitude of the Advaita School towards reason. If the canons of knowledge trespass upon spheres to which they are not adequate, they prove abortive. Nostrain of eyes can reveal to us the nature of a melody. So reason by itself is not adequate to the task of unravelling the mystery of Brahman. But reasoning that is not in conflict with scriptural witness, means, that is in accord with Brâmanas, is not to be abjured. In fact Sankara himself has used logic with
devastating effect to demolish rival, metaphysical doctrines in the 'Tarkapadi' of his commentary on the Brahma-sutras. Srevasa, manasa and nididhyansana are the three steps to the realization of the supreme identity. The mahavekyas may be heard but they can sink into the mind only when the hard crusts of scepticism and contrary beliefs are dissolved by a ruthless application of logical argumentation prosecuted with an eye on its consonance with scriptural witness. Logic by itself however, is powerless to reveal the nature of the supreme truth. Suresvara in his Naishkarmysaiddhi tells us that even though smoke enables us to infer the existence of fire we cannot know whether it is lit by burning mango wood or oak wood. So reason may establish Brahman but the nature of Brahman is revealed only through ati, or scriptural. Mahavekyas.

A philosophical doctrine, or system must be conform to reason. The question therefore arises: how can we regard the Advaita doctrine as philosophical since it appeals to ati and regards the ati as superior to the dictates of reason? Vasaspati says that all scriptural passages are not equally relevant in the clarification of the Advaita doctrine. Only the purposeful passages (and there are numerous passages which have no bearing on this doctrine) are to be appealed to.
We can decide the relevancy of the texts by the following criteria: (i) the initial and the concluding passages should be in harmony with each other; (ii) repetition; (iii) novelty; (iv) utility; (v) eulogy of the theme in hand and depreciation of its opposite; (vi) rationality. A consideration of Vedantic texts in the light of these criteria shows that their final purport is the establishment of Advaita. Since it is reason alone which can enable us to distinguish the purposeful passage from what is otherwise, it is clear that the appeal to scripture is not meant to depreciate reason.

The appeal to scripture is not meant to deny the validity of reason. But it is wrong to think that the knowledge revealed to the sages of the scriptures is illogical. The sages moved in a sphere where the recognized modes of cognition yield no results. Ordinary perception is the starting point of the process of knowledge but if we stopped with it there would be no progress. Scriptural knowledge gives us the experience of the sages and in its own sphere it is as genuine as sensible knowledge is in the sphere of perception and rational in that of logic.

The question now arises: Is then Vedanta not based on dogma or disbelief in reason as a revealer of reality? Reason, however, is not completely abandoned by the Vedantin. In the first instance the whole of the realm of reality is not open to reason. Neither the processes of the unconscious mind nor the super-conscious state of Samadhi are available to the
scrutiny of reason. But, then, reason is not condemned. It is reason itself which becomes aware of its limitations, and consents to withdraw its claims. There is another aspect of the matter, too. The Vedantist does not exclude the rational approach in respect of the determination of the content of scripture.

We appeal to sruti only in realms which are super-sensuous. Even for declaring which sruti is to be accepted for the determination of the nature of Brahman our final court of appeals is reason. For obviously sruti contains much matter that is not directly relevant to Brahman-inquiry. It is reason which enables us to make the distinction.

But the Vedantin does not believe in the ultimate reality of seads for that would lead to the rejection of his fundamental thesis that there is but one reality, Brahman. That sruti or sabda-pramaṇa leads to the knowledge of the ultimate means that even the unreal can enable us to confront the real. Nightmarish visions in a dream, though illusory, enable us to wake up. The status of the sruti is of the same kind.

Though none dare belittle the achievements of modern science. The limitations of scientific knowledge have been widely commented upon and one could quote endless from eminent thinkers in support of the thesis that scientific epistemology is defective and inadequate. The contentions of such thinkers are (1) that scientific knowledge is fragmentary (2) that science, by its very nature can throw no light on human ends and is wholly engrossed in the fashioning of means. One can say
in opposition to the above views that (1) science gives us truth. The whole truth and nothing but the truth; (2) it can reveal, like ethics, what ends are desirable and what are not. I have, however, not been able to come across a single estimable thinker up-holding the above contentions. The inadequacy of scientific knowledge has been recognised so often that to labour it seems superfluous. Bernard Phillips observes, "In other words, just as there is a level of immediate knowledge which is below the level of reason, so also is there a higher mode of immediacy which is supra-rational. Beyond scientific experience, there is spiritual experience; and a genuine empiricism will take stock of all modes of experience and not confine itself to only one sort. Knowledge through concepts confirmed by sex-experience is the pattern of science and in relation to its purposes this form of knowledge has by its eminent successfully vindicated itself. But the success of the scientific method in relation of one area of experience implies nothing as to the possibility or feasibility of quite different approaches for totally different areas of experience. The spiritual view of life is founded on another sort of experience which is non-conceptual in essence."

Analytical or scientific knowledge cannot prove itself. It depends on the senses, knowledge gained through the senses is the material of scientific or analytical knowledge. But even sense-knowledge depends for its truth on other sources or

epistemological considerations. In the first instance knowledge depends on the proper functioning or exercise of our sense organs. Our tastes and inclinations, too, play a part in determining its nature. Every sense object is characterised by a number of qualities but our senses whose play is controlled and determined by our proclivities can obtain only a fragmentary knowledge of its character. The chemist is aware of certain properties of water but the same have no worth in the eyes of the thirsty man. Thus knowledge gained through the senses is fragmentary in nature and the scientific intellect has to operate on these incomplete data with the result that scientific knowledge too remains dubious and partial. Knowledge is thus of many types. Scientific knowledge cannot take account of all the qualities of a flower. Science can tell us only about its sensible qualities. But it can give us no information about the beauty of the flower which compels the poet to sing. This beauty is not achieved through the eye but through the heart that is appreciative of aesthetic charm. This subtle beauty cannot be analysed by science. A psychologist can analyse emotions like anger, love and jealousy in a clear and convincing manner but more psychological analysis does not reveal the true nature of these emotions. One cannot arrive at a true knowledge of their character through analysis or perusal of books. It is only by identification with them that we know something of the reality that underlies them. To know anger is to become angry. To know love means to have a plunge into it. It is only through a change of mind that we come face to face with the reality of the emotional life whereas the knowledge of outer objects is dependent
on sense-organs which are comparatively gross in nature.

Indian philosophy believes that true knowledge can be achieved only through this change in consciousness. It is wrong to think that only scientific knowledge gives us the real while religion wanders in the realm of myth and imagination.

As a matter of fact in religion and science we are face to face with two different types of knowledge, each requiring different capacities for assimilation. Religious knowledge demands a certain kind of preparation and so does scientific knowledge. It is wrong to think that science moves in the objective sphere while religion is confined to subjective fancy.

Indian thought aims at intuition, Bodhi, enlightenment. The Upanished \(^1\) says that there is a fundamental reality knowing which we come to know everything. This reality is Brahman and it is revealed to those who have purified their mind of evil, cant, hypocrisy and delusion without this preliminary preparation all enquiry into the nature of Brahman will prove to be futile. The scientist in his laboratory discovers certain truths which remain a mystery for the layman. But the layman lends credence to them because the sphere of scientific knowledge is closed to him while the scientist can enter it with the help of his apparatus and specialised aptitude. Similarly the knower of Brahman has attained his specific insights, through tapas, aseesi and intense thought. The layman can no more object to Brahman-knowledge than he can to scientific knowledge.

\(^1\) Chandogya Upanished, VI. 1. 1, 3.
The impartial character of scientific knowledge is only apparent. For it is by excluding those characteristics of the object (like the beauty of the flower) of which it cannot take account, that scientific knowledge can become impartial. The higher levels of human consciousness like the Vijnanamaya and Anandamayakosa are beyond its approach. Science thus is unable to deal with the totality of human experience and as such its contribution to human welfare can be only limited in character.

One can listen to lectures on scientific subjects and become instructed therein. But spiritual knowledge cannot be given out in spoonfuls. Spiritual knowledge demands efforts that involve the deepest layers of our personality. Science can furnish us with means but mere accumulation of means cannot give any clue to the mystery of life, the riddle that we are called upon to solve and answer. By mere accumulation of means and by trying to keep the right ends before its view western civilization has reached a crisis. The sruti is thus a record of spiritual experience, we can no more throw doubt on the revelation of scientific knowledge. The authority of scripture in its particular sphere is thus beyond all doubt. It is only in matters where the ordinary means of knowledge fail to guide us that we have recourse to sruti.