Chapter I

ABSOLUTE (I)

Integral Identity of the Being

The main fundamental problems of philosophy are reality and appearance and their relation to each other. Now, from the Advaita standpoint, reality involves the integral identity of the being. Differences and plurality are thus denied to be real. The Advaita School has always maintained the sharp distinction between the truth metaphysical and the truth empirical. All empirical experiences, therefore, may not be metaphysically real. Hence the plurality and differences that appear as real in the empirical level may not be metaphysically real. The Advaitins hold that they are real empirically, but, viewed from the metaphysical standpoint, we cannot accept them as real.

So far as it can be affirmed by examining the method followed by the dialecticians (Advaita School) to substantiate the truth, the Advaitins hold that the 'Sruti, yukti and anubhava i.e. the holy scripture (the Upanisads), pure reason and intuitive knowledge - these three together help us in substantiating the ultimate metaphysical truth. Now, according to the Advaita interpretation the whole of the scripture (the Upanisads) establishes the absolute integral identity as the supreme and ultimate truth. With the help -of-
of the method chalked out by the Mīmāṃsakas Samkarites prove that there cannot be any doubt that according to the holy scripture, the plurality and differences that appear in the empirical level can never be real ultimately. Denying all those differences conceived and comprehended in our practical life the scripture professes the absolute identity of the being which is the highest and ultimate truth. The method followed by the Vedaṅtists after the Mīmāṃsakas involves the process of analysis by which we can determine the ultimate conclusion of those preachings embodied in the Upaniṣada. All those preachings if taken together must lead us to some one conclusion, and that as the Advaitins have it is the reality of the absolute homogeneous identity by exclusion of all kinds of differences ever conceived by our thought. There are altogether six indicatories (liṅga) called - Tātparya liṅgas (Proofs of the import) viz. 1) Unakrama and Unasamphāra (the beginning and end), 2) Abhyāsa (repetition), 3) Apūrvatā (the theme previously unknown), 4) Phala (the ultimate result), 5) Arthavāda (explicatory statement) and 6) Upapatti (the underlying reason)*, which taken together complete the process and lead unvaryingly to that sole conclusion. The famous dialogue of Svetaketu with his father narrated in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (Sixth Chapter) has been analysed subsequently by the teachers (of the Advaita School) after the above process and it has been proved thereby that the main purport and the ultimate conclusion of it cannot be anything else but that which

*Liṅgāni tu upakramopasamphāraḥbhyāsā-पुर्वताः-phatārthavādopapattyākhyātihār-(Vedānta Sar, p.183.
Calcutta Ed)
has been affirmed by themselves, viz. the absolute identity of Being as the ultimate truth.

After the Sruti comes Yukti (reason). As thorough intellectuals Saṅkarites accept reason as an indispensable factor for substantiating the ultimate truth. In fact, with all their respect for the scripture Saṅkarites admit that to convince the practical mind the scripture is not enough. To convince the practical mind - wholly unconscious of the higher truth, the same fact professed in the Scripture should be examined and analysed in the light of reason. And the reasoning if it is flawless and perfect must lead to the same conclusions arrived through the analysis of the scriptural teachings by following the method of exegetical tests as mentioned above. The Advaita philosophers, therefore, uphold the absolute identity of being and deny the ultimate reality of difference (bheda) thereby, because the reality of all those differences conceived in the empirical level is not only denied in the scripture but is inconsistent also when judged from the standpoint of reason. Indeed as it has been proved by the teachers of Advaita School the ultimate reality of difference does not stand to reason.

The main fact is, Reality must exclude difference because difference includes relativity. The ultimate reality or the supreme truth must involve absolute non-relational existence because it is absolute truth and exists -therefore-
therefore as the prior and presupposition of all relational facts. Difference (bheda) on the other hand implies relational existence. Difference is not an absolute concept. We experience difference always in relation to some differentiating object or idea. Hence the supreme truth as nonrelational existence must exclude all kinds of differences. It has been said therefore condemning the doctrine of identity in difference - (Bhedabheda-vāda) - that identity and difference - as they are mutually opposing ideas - cannot coexist together. Again of identity and difference, difference is untenable as it involves relativity and hinges upon identity from beginning to end. So the supreme truth is identity alone.

Moreover, the category of difference (bheda) cannot be substantiated in their opinion by any valid means of proof. The Advaitins deny the validity and authenticity of the experience of difference. Difference - if it is revealed in perception - must be something positive because the perception of negation (abhāva) has been denied. Now the positive difference as it is generally accepted - must either be the basic character of a thing - (Vastusvarūpa) or it may be an attribute (dharma) of it. Sankarites however mark the inconsistency in either of these assumptions. Mañjana Miśra, Ānandabodha, Citsukha and all the dialecticians (Advaita) elaborately discuss the inconsistencies in admitting difference in either of these forms. There are two main inconsistencies pointed out by all of them. And those furnish sufficient reason for denying difference in either of those forms mentioned above.

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The Advaitins hold, if difference is accepted as the basic character of a thing (Vastusvarūpa), according to the first alternative, then in perception the object and its difference must be revealed simultaneously. This has been admitted indeed by some of the teachers who maintain the ultimate reality of difference. In Rāmānuja's opinion for instance, difference as basic character of a thing is revealed in perception along with an object. This is the accepted view of the school (Rāmānuja) that an object is revealed in perception along with its difference though we comprehend the difference discursively later on in relation to some differentiating object or idea. From the Advaita standpoint however difference can never be revealed in perception simultaneously with the object itself, because, our practical experience convinces us that it is revealed afterwards with the comprehension of some differentiating object or idea. In fact, difference, if we accept it as the basic character of a thing, must realise its character independent of any other thing and we should comprehend difference in that case at once with the revelation of the object itself. Being identical with the thing itself as its basic character, difference should be revealed as soon as the object is revealed. And in that case the comprehension of difference cannot be delayed. So the assumption that difference is revealed along with the object though it is comprehended later on in relation to some differentiating object or idea, is utterly inconsistent. This implies, in fact, that difference (bheda) is not really the basic character of a thing. This is the main inconsistency pointed out by all the dialecticians (Advaita School) against the theory of āvatārūpbheda (basal difference). At
the beginning of his contention against svarūpbheda
Citsukhācārya mentions therefore this relational character of difference. And along with this he points out three more inconsistencies. If we assume, says Citsukha, that difference is the basic character of a thing with the differentiating object - (because difference realises its character through the differentiating object), then there is practically no difference at all, for the differentiating object along with the difference should be the basic character of the thing and therefore identical with the thing. Again, difference being the basic character of each object the integrity of a thing shall be totally lost.

Lastly, if difference is accepted as the basic character of a thing then erroneous apprehension, nondiscrimination and doubt cannot arise at all. As in the above case the revelation of object should always be with its difference which constitutes its basic character, so the peculiar characteristics of a particular object, which differentiate it from all other objects and thus constitute the difference, should be revealed to us at once. Therefore, there cannot arise any doubt as to the particular object revealed in perception. In the same manner nondiscrimination is not possible in this case, because whenever an object is revealed in perception it is revealed with its difference. And doubt and nondiscrimination being ruled out of court, there is no chance of erroneous apprehension.

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1. Śāpekgatvāt sābadhēca tatvēvaita prasaṅgataḥ
   Ekābhavādasamadeḥāt na rupap vastuno bhidsa
   (Tattvapradīpikā - Chap.II.p.167.
   Bombay Ed).
In the same manner there are inconsistencies also in the second assumption that difference is an attribute of a thing. The main inconsistency in this second assumption is that it leads to infinite regress and thus ends in a fallacy. The fact is, the identity of a thing with its attribute is impossible. The idea of attribute is based essentially on the notion of difference. So difference as an attribute involves a second difference which should be equally an attribute, and thus it leads to an infinite regress ending in a fallacy. In this case also Citsukhācārya points out other inconsistencies along with the main one pointed out by all the dialecticians. In Citsukhācārya's opinion there are two more inconsistencies in this case. In the first place, if difference is an attribute of a thing then the object and its difference cannot be revealed together in perception. As it is generally admitted and which seems also plausible from the standpoint of reason, a thing and its attributes must have their revelation separately at first. Then after they are revealed separately we can have the judgmental knowledge (vibhājīnaṇa) revealing the concrete object with its attributes. Therefore, in this case also, both the object and its difference must be revealed separately at first. Then, after they are revealed separately, we can have the knowledge in which the object will be revealed with its difference (bhedā) that exists as its predicate. Now —again—

1. Yugapadgraḥanāyogād anavasthā-prasāṅgatasṛ
Paraspara-srayatvāccha dhāma-bhedēpi nakṣadhāḥ.
(Tattvapradīpika - Ch-II.P-169.
Bombay Ed).
again, if the object and its difference are revealed separately, the question arises, which of them is revealed at first, i.e. whether we perceive first the object and then its difference or we perceive first the difference and then the object. The second alternative is untenable because we cannot comprehend the difference as an unattached characteristic prior to the revelation of the object itself. The relational character of difference, in fact, stands in the way of the above assumption. Difference always presupposes two data — (1) that which is distinguished and (2) that from which it is distinguished. A thing can differ from another thing and not from itself. So difference is a bipolar concept and cannot be self-contained. Then there remains only the first alternative. But, if we maintain the first alternative we shall have to face a new inconsistency. According to the first alternative the revelation of difference follows the revelation of the object, which will have it as a predicate. Now the selfsame perception cannot reveal the object and its difference in the above way. There must be two different experiences — one revealing the object only and another revealing its difference only. And this leads to the conclusion that when we perceive the object we do not perceive difference. Again when we perceive difference we do not perceive the object. The perception of the object has preceded the perception of difference. Thus the object and its difference cannot be revealed simultaneously in some one experience. Lastly, there is the possibility of interdependence because the comprehension of difference is not possible unless we comprehend the object itself in relation to some differentiating object or idea. Again the comprehension of an object in relation to some differentiating -object-
object or idea cannot be possible unless we comprehend the underlying difference which separates them as two different objects. Therefore, there is interdependence in this manner. And this interdependence is a fallacy which shall stand in the way of substantiating difference in the above way. The Advaitins conclude therefore that in the face of these inconsistencies we cannot admit difference to be an attribute of a thing.

From the logical standpoint the experience of difference on which we affirm the reality of difference thus turn out to be subjective because there is no objective difference on account of the incompatibility involved in the concept. The teachers of the school affirm that the notion of plurality and difference inherent with the finite mind is at the root of the experience of the plurality and difference in the empirical level. And this notion is not ultimately valid. It is avidva or illusion. In reality there is one integral being. The plurality and difference perceived in the empirical level are all created by the mind and are superimposed on that one integral existence that excludes them in reality. The dialecticians prove that the plurality and difference of the objects within the empirical order imply in fact their falsity. The fact is, each of those many objects different from each other excludes and contradicts each other. But the underlying being remains unaffected. A jar and a piece of cloth for instance exclude each other and thus they involve the contradiction of each other. But the concept of existence as such attached to those objects is neither excluded in the above manner nor does it involve contradiction.

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The existence attached to those objects continues intact transcending the exclusion and contradiction of the objects interse. The idea of the exclusion and contradiction of the existence itself along with the objects has been condemned by the Advaita Philosophers, because that implies the plurality of existence which is without warrant. Indeed, there is no reason for admitting this because we equally affirm the existence of all objects. Though the objects are different from one another, their existence is always the same. All objects in other words exist equally though they are different from one another. Now the mutual exclusion and contradiction of the objects imply their falsity because reality excludes that. The dialecticians illustrate the illusory appearances in error. The illusory objects that simultaneously appear in error being superimposed on some real object exclude and contradict one another. The illusory serpent and the illusory trace of water appearing simultaneously in error being superimposed on a piece of rope exclude and contradict each other. But the rope which is the basis of those appearances and which is real (from the empirical standpoint indeed) remains intact transcending the mutual exclusion and contradiction of those illusory appearances. Therefore, the being or existence attached to the different empirical objects is real as it continues (like the piece of rope in the above case) transcending the exclusion and contradiction that the objects involve. But the objects are all false alike. Hence ultimately the truth belongs to that basal and fundamental character, viz. being which transcends the plurality and differences,
since all the empirical objects having plurality and difference are found to be unreal alike. Moreover, viewed properly, the plurality of objects is inconsistent with the identical existence, because one and many can never be conceived to be identical. Thus with the help of reason the Advaitins prove that the ultimate truth must exclude the plurality and difference that appear in the empirical level.

After the reason comes intuition. The intuition holds the most prominent place in the Vedānta Philosophy. And the difference of the Advaita school in its interpretation of the vedāntic doctrine from all other systems is due mainly to its epistemological position. From the Advaita standpoint in fact, difference and relativity cannot be accepted as real ultimately, because experience contradicts that. By the analysis of the character of experience we have found that the difference and relativity confronted in the empirical level can never be actually revealed in perception. Apart from the inconsistencies which riddle the concept of difference and make intuition of difference a chimera, the very character and nature of experience exclude this possibility. So, Reality should be nonrelational existence untouched by difference.

To show that the very nature and character of experience excludes the possibility of revelation of difference in perception, we should analyse here the nature and character of experience after the Advaita philosophers. The Advaitins entertain two types of experiences called savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka, i.e. relational and nonrelational. These two types of -experience-
experience have also been acknowledged by many others. The Naiyāyikas, for instance, maintain two types of experience under the above name. But there is fundamental difference with the Naiyāyikas regarding the character and content of these cognitive acts.

Viewed from the Naiyāyika's standpoint, knowledge or experience is but a psychic phenomenon as it comes to exist through the accidental contact of the soul with the mind. Both the soul and the mind are equally insentient. But through their mutual contact consciousness originates and it exists as the evanescent property of the soul qualifying the being. Secondly, from the Naiyāyika's standpoint, consciousness shares the fleeting character with all other psychic phenomena. And thirdly, the Naiyāyikas hold that, experience is a process that involves recognition. But the Advaitins hold just the opposite view. Śaṅkara has condemned the Nyāya School for differentiating consciousness from the being. In the Vedānta, we shall discuss that later on. Consciousness is the basic character of the being. And to the Advaita philosophers consciousness as the basic character of the being is not only inseparable from it, but it is nondifferentiable from the being itself. Therefore consciousness is its basic character and consequently it is as permanent as the being itself.

The fleeting character of consciousness established by the Naiyāyikas as well as by many others has therefore been repudiated on the above basis. Consciousness neither changes nor does it cease to exist at a certain stage like the-

*Kenopaniṣad-bhāṣya - 2/4, pages 88, 89 (Poona Ed).*
the psychic states. According to the Advaita analysis, consciousness is static, immutable and eternal in character. But though consciousness in reality includes the above character, still in the empirical level it seems to be changing, because we superimpose the changing character of the objects and the mental states on the static immutable experience that reveals them by turn. The fact is that in the empirical level or in the plane of mind (in dream as well as in waking) experience has always an objective reference. Experience always implies the experience of some object. Pure experience detached from the object that it reveals has obviously no meaning to us. Now the objects presented to our experience in the empirical level are numerous and they are different from one another. The experience that reveals those objects is pure revelation (prakṣa). And revelation as revelation involves no change. The revelation of different objects for instance is always the same though the objects which are revealed by experience are different from one another. But out of ignorance we fail to distinguish the static character of experiencing consciousness from the changing character of the psychosis and its contents. The above character of experience is accepted by the Advaita teachers because of the inconsistency involved in the admission of the fleeting character of experience. Indeed, if experiencing consciousness originates and ceases to exist at a certain stage like our psychic acts (which the fleeting character of experience implies), there will be no proof of any thing. Experience as awareness cannot subs-
substantiate those facts, since, prior to its origination and after its dissolution experience does not exist at all to substantiate its own origination and dissolution respectively. And there is no other possible means to substantiate those facts. As there is no revelation or expression without experient consciousness, nothing can be revealed or substantiated thereby without aid of the latter.

On this ground the Advaitins hold that we cannot deny the continuity of experience (Pure Consciousness) at any stage of our life. Knowledge or experience exists in fact under all circumstances and at each stage of our life. All incidents, all our positions and negations, presuppose experience which reveals them. Indeed, if there exists any such stage in our practical life when consciousness drops altogether we cannot possibly recall that state afterwards. Having no consciousness to express or to illumine it, that state is bound to pass unknown. Therefore, the Advaitins hold that even in sushupti (i.e. deep sleep) - when we think that consciousness had dropped altogether because there is no cognition revealing the object as it is in waking (āvrat) and in dream (svaṇṇa), consciousness remains though it does not reveal any thing concrete. If we deny this fact, how can we explain the recollection which follows afterwards when we are awakened? In sushupti (deep sleep) there is no experience revealing something concrete, and when we are awakened we distinctly remember that state of non-apprehension. This recollection itself is impossible unless we admit that consciousness remained intact to reveal that state of non-apprehension. So we cannot deny the continuity of knowledge even.
even when we enter the state like susunti. Therefore, whether we perceive any thing (any object) or not consciousness remains all the same. Thus the Advaitins prove that to deny consciousness is to posit it in another way.

Let us examine the Nyaya doctrine of cognition. The followers of Sankara scout this as paradoxical. Cognition implies revelation because the cognition of an object means the revelation of it. Now the revelation of revelation sounds paradoxical indeed. Moreover experience cannot reveal an object without being known itself. Our practical experience at least contradicts that suggestion. Whenever an object is revealed in experience we are conscious about it at that very instant, so that we can affirm the revelation of the particular object as soon as it is revealed. Such experience is always immediate. Besides, the distinction between experience and the object it reveals shall drop if cognition were to know itself to be known by another. Because, in that case, cognition in turn becomes an object as it reveals itself in the same way as it reveals an object. But an object cannot reveal an object. It is cognition, which is altogether different in character from the object that reveals the object. Considering all these facts the Advaitins reject the Naiyayika's assertion. The dialecticians have noted also the inconsistency in Naiyayika's assertion that the second-awareness (anuyavasāva) which follows the first awareness (vyavasāva) reveals it. In that case, the first awareness revealing the object shall remain unknown until the second awareness reveals it. And this is untenable because (according to Naiyayikas process of origination) two experiences cannot come to exist simultaneously. «Again when the second
awareness arises the first awareness to be revealed cease, to exist because experience according to this school is momentary.

The whole theory of perceptual knowledge as set forth by the Naiyāyikas has been shown by Gitsukha\textsuperscript{1} to founder on the rock of rational examination. Suppose there is one experience called 'A'. It only reveals the object without being revealed. But what then is the proof of the cognition? What enables us to assert that an object is revealed by a cognition if the latter remains unintuited and nonrevealed at the time? The Naiyāyika's reply that a second cognition proves the first is only an eyewash. Apart from the difficulty of unattested existence of the second cognition like the first, the process of epistemology as assumed by the Naiyāyika reveals its absurdity. The condition of the emergence of a cognition is the mind's contact with the soul. The question arises, whether the first contact persists when the second cognition takes place? In other words, is the mind-soul contact which makes the second cognition possible, the same as of the first cognition or a different one? If it is the same, then there is no reason why the second cognition should not occur when the first cognition occurs, the condition of their emergence being identical. In other words, each cognition should be known as soon as it comes into being or at the latest in the second instant. The second cognition also will be known in the like process. It is more straightforward therefore to hold that each cognition becomes known \textit{co ipso}.

If however the mind-soul contact responsible for the second cognition be numerically different, there will be a deadlock. No cognition will ever lend itself to be cognised by another. According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory—conjunction or disjunction is occasioned by movement. Now there must elapse at least four moments between the first conjunction (mind-soul contact) and the second. The first contact can be destroyed by a movement of the mind in the first moment. Then disjunction will take place in the second moment. Then the cessation of the first contact in the third moment and lastly a new contact of the mind with the soul in the fourth moment. But in the meantime the first cognition must have ceased to exist being fleeting in character and the second cognition will have nothing to cognise.

Again, on the same ground, the Advaitins hold that the existence of cognition is self-substantiated. The proof of an idea depends on its cognition. Hence, to substantiate the reality of cognition we need not depend on any other aid. Knowledge is thus found to be self-established, self-evident and self-demonstrated in all cases.

Now, due to the above differences as to the nature and character of experience, the two types of experience which have equally been entertained by the Nyāya School, have altogether a different import in the Advaita philosophy. In the Advaita Philosophy those two types of experience, called savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka i.e. relational and nonrelational, involve respectively two different phases of experience. In the empirical phase experience is relational and determinate. But
in the transcendental phase experience is always non-relational and indeterminate. This transcendental phase of experience has totally been missed by the Nyāya philosophers. In the transcendental phase experience is nonrelational and indeterminate because of the absolute homogeneity of consciousness which excludes difference and relativity of any form. The witnessing consciousness (sākṣa-śaṅkā) is eternally there as a self-substantially principle which remains unvariant and uniform. The relations and contents of empirical cognitions vary at every instance and if the empirical cognitions were to be their own proof, as the Buddhists hold them to be, they would have no connecting link. Thus the successive experiences will be as different and discrete as those belonging to different knowing subjects are. This will knock out the possibility of personal identity. The Naiyāyika-realist will be the last person to endorse this position and to dismiss the idea of personal identity as an illusion in agreement with the Buddhists. The series of cognition as cognisant of the preceding ones has been found to be impossible. So there must be admitted at the source an eternal abiding conscious principle which owns and appropriates the different cognitions in the empirical plane as its own events and constituting its own career. This abiding consciousness is called by the Vedāntist (Advaita school) the witness-consciousness which illumines all that occurs in the mental apparatus. It is unaffected by the plurality of the mental states, but illumines them and expresses them all the while. This transcendental witness-consciousness cannot but be a self-identical principle because if it were to cease and to be superseded by another, the...
continuity and personal identity of the epistemic subject would have no raison d'etre. We have spoken of this transcendental consciousness as experience and there can be no plurality in it.

So far as our practical experience convinces us, experience seems to be a dynamic process that determines the character of an outside object, interrelating the subject and object. In other words, experience involves the synthetic activity which unfolds the relation, reveals the difference and synthesises ultimately all those different relational parts into a concrete unity. Viewed from the empirical standpoint, therefore, experience is the concrete unit—the judgment. So, from the empirical standpoint, the Advaitins accept the relational experience. But the presumption that experience is always relational has been denied and denied on the ground that there are actually such stages in our life when experience presents itself in a different form i.e. in nonrelational form and excludes altogether the above activity. The Advaitins illustrate susupti (deep sleep) in support of their view. In susupti consciousness exists but it exists in a different form. The synthetic activity which experience involves in the other two states i.e. in dream (svapna) and in waking (jâgrat) does not exist in the above state of deep sleep. Thus the whole character of experience changes in this state. Therefore, as experience is not always relational and as it does not always involve the synthetic activity, so the Advaitins hold that we must accept the two types
of experience. Experience originally excludes in their opinion the relational character and the synthetic activity, but in the plane of mind it appears in the above character and includes the above activity which we affirm according to our practical experience.

Now, the Advaitins maintain those two types of experience but they do not admit the dynamic character of experience. Those who maintain experience as a dynamic process hold that experience is originally of indeterminate character but as a dynamic process experience passes from the original nonrelational and indeterminate stage to the relational and determinate stage. But the Saṅkarites are out and out transcendentalists. Experience, in their opinion, is not a dynamic process. Experience is the immutable eternal principle - the foundational basis of all positions and negations according to our conceptual thinking. Without knowledge there is no revelation. Experience therefore illuminates everything, each incident or each idea inside (the mind) and outside. So experience is the presupposition of all empirical facts. And it excludes as such all those characteristics that we affirm according to our conceptual thinking. So from the Advaita standpoint experience is always static revelation and it involves immutable character. Therefore, viewed from the Advaita standpoint, the relational experience involves thought or buddhi. The synthetic activity that we confront in the plane of mind belongs to thought. Intuition or pure experience on the other hand is nonrelational static revelation. Thus the two types—
types of experience include thought and pure cognition - (buddhi and anubhuti) - respectively.

Thought is the psychic mode through which the empirical facts are cognised. The cognition implies essentially the revelation or expression. Now the mind is insentient and therefore it neither reveals itself nor does it illuminate anything. But the pure cognition exists at the background and it illumines the mind. While illumining the mind consciousness becomes reflected in the psychic mode which starts to determine the object. Thus the revelation proper takes place through the reflected consciousness called sidābhāsa. But pure cognition though it illumines every thing cannot determine the empirical objects outside without being reflected in the psychic mode. Through the medium of the mind it reveals the empirical objects around us. So it has been said that the revelation of the empirical objects is accidental. The main purport of this assertion is that consciousness pure and simple does not involve proof or dis-proof. Nor it involves the activity of determining the particular object. It exists only at the background and illumines different phases of the psychological stages of experience. It equally reveals therefore the states of apprehension and nonapprehension and exists as the witness of both valid cognition and erroneous apprehension in this empirical level. It is in point of fact an alogical or supra-logical fact. So pure cognition does not necessarily reveal a particular object which is an accidental event for experience. To be more explicit, experience involves the immediate revelation. But it does not necessarily involve something to be revealed. In susupti (deep sleep) for
instance there is no revelation of object though consciousness remains. To the Advaita Philosophers in fact, the relation between experience and the object of experience is always accidental and occurs through the medium of the mind. So pure experience is called nonrelational. It does not involve the relativity like thought though everything - each object and each fact of our empirical life is illumined by its own expression. Again, the mind is apt to change and transformation as it belongs to the world of changeful matter. With the impression of each object presented successively, the mind changes and transforms itself. Thus thought involves change and transformation. Moreover, as there is intercession of the activity of thought so also there exist such stages where there is no such activity as we find it in susupti and samādhi. But transcendent experience exists at the background illumining all these facts and involves just the opposite character.

Thus the Advaitins differentiate between thought and pure cognition - (sākṣipratvaksā). This distinction, according to the teachers of the school, escapes our notice in the empirical life; so confusion arises. We identify thought with consciousness. Thus identifying thought with consciousness we superimpose on experience all those characteristics - the relativity and change, the synthetic activity and the fleeting character - which are repugnant to its character in reality.

Now distinguishing pure cognition from thought the Advaitins have succeeded to establish that difference and relativity appear only in the plane of thought. In the level
of pure cognition there is neither any difference nor any relational existence that we find in the plane of thought. Pure cognition, in fact, involves only the pure expression. Even when an empirical object is revealed in perception experience reveals only the bare existence. Then thought, by its 'inherent' synthetic activity unfolds the relations, substantiates the differences and synthesises ultimately all those different relational parts into a concrete unity. Thus in the empirical level difference and relativity appear and they have reality empirically. But thought has its origin and use in the world of change. The ultimate truth transcends the operation of thought. Therefore, in the plane of pure intuition when the ultimate truth is revealed the plurality and difference that appear in the plane of thought disappear altogether. And the individual comprehends in this plane the bare nonrelational experience untouched by difference and relativity.

So from the Advaita standpoint the ultimate truth excludes all kinds of differences. Viewed from the Advaita standpoint not only the extreme form of dualism but the concrete unity of Rāmānuja and the generic or causal unity of Bhāskara are also equally untenable. Both of those philosophers (Rāmānuja and Bhāskara) belonging to the empiricist school of Vedānta admit that, the plurality and differences that appear in the empirical level should be accepted as ultimate and real. The concrete unity proposed by Rāmānuja involves plurality and difference. So also Bhāskara's generic or causal unity involves the -plurality-
plurality and difference. But from the Advaita standpoint reality excludes all kinds of differences known as - Svagata-bheda, Sitalativa-bheda and Vijatiya-bheda. As it excludes svagata-bheda (internal difference) the concrete unity of Ramanuja and the generic or causal unity of Bhaskara are equally impossible. And as it excludes equally the Sitalativa-bheda (homogenous difference) and Vijatiya-bheda (heterogenous difference) so the dualistic schemes of Vedanta as well as the dualistic scheme of Sankhya are equally impossible. In the Chandogya Bhashya this has been said therefore that reality which exists as the prius and presupposition of all facts involve the absolute integral identity of the being and it excludes consequently the three kinds of differences known as svagata-bheda, Sitalativa-bheda and Vijatiya-bheda

In the Dasasloki Sankara has clearly explained the Advaita position. Sankara says there that the identity should not be taken for numerical identity. Numerical identity involves the plurality but there is no plurality in reality. Again, neither we should take the identity for unity or the negatory of difference because that implies existence of difference in some form and in some stage. But in reality there is no difference. So the term 'Advaya' which has been frequently used to exhibit the character of the supreme truth implies here absolute

1. See Sankara's commentary on Chandogya upanishad (6/2, p.286 Poona Ed)
   See also the Commentary of Anandagiri - (6/2, P.284 Vanivilas Press Ed).
2. Dasasloki - Siddhantabindu - 51.10.
integral identity which implies indeed the absolute nonrelational existence. This is the supreme and sole truth viewed from the Advaita standpoint. Thus in the Advaita philosophy the Upanisadic monism has been interpreted in its extreme form. The empiricist schools of Vedanta have always tried for a synthesis. The Viśīcīnadvītāvād of Rāmānuja and the Bhedabheda safeguard of Bhāskara embody that synthesis in a most perfect form. The finite and infinite, one and many, difference and identity have been synthesised together in both of these doctrines. The Advaitins hold that this synthesis is impossible. In the Sārīraka-Bhāṣya Bhāskara says that from the empirical standpoint we entertain indeed the difference along with the identity. But metaphysically difference has been denied. From the metaphysical standpoint, therefore, the supreme truth is absolute identity. So in the Advaita system Brahman or reality is called 'Saccidānanda mayā - which means the absolute integral identity of being consciousness and bliss.


INDETERMINATE BEING

From the metaphysical standpoint the Advaitins have substantiated as we have seen in the foregoing pages, the absolute identity as the supreme truth. In the Advaita system Brahman or the supreme and ultimate truth is the integral identity of being bliss and consciousness. The Upanisad characterises the supreme truth as sat (being),
cit (consciousness) and ānanda (bliss). Therefore, reality according to the Vedāntists, is being, consciousness and bliss. Now in the theistic Vedānta consciousness (cit) and bliss (ānanda) are always the qualities or attributes of the being. But to the Advaita philosophers the Absolute is indeterminate being. Hence consciousness and bliss cannot be the qualities or attributes of the being. As reality involves the absolute identity so consciousness and bliss should be taken as identical with the being, otherwise, if we differentiate consciousness and bliss from the being by taking them as different attributes of the being, then the proposed identity substantiated as the sole and supreme truth—shall be lost altogether. With the basic idea of identity Sankarites start to criticise the idea of the determinate existence with consciousness and bliss as its predicates. As it has been said, the relation between a thing and its qualities is a riddle after all. If the qualities are something altogether different from the being itself then the relation can hardly be substantiated. Difference, in fact, means mutual exclusion. So two different concepts cannot be united on a permanent basis through any relation. Nor the relation is possible if there is identity because relation implies difference.

Some of the teachers (Rāmānujists) who entertain the determinate existence of the being hold indeed that identity itself is a relation. But, in fact, identity is no relation inasmuch as relation presupposes at least two terms which must be different. It is nonsense to
speak of relation in an identical feet. To assert that
'\(A\)' is identical with 'A' involves the conceptual dif-
ferentiation of 'A\(^*\)' from 'A', which is absurd ontologi-
cally. There is another possible alternative indeed
maintained by the Māmāsakas as well as by the Bhās-
karites and that is the identity in difference. So the
thing and its quality may involve identity in difference
(bhedābheda). On empirical consideration the Advaitins
admit this after the Māmāsakas, but metaphysically this
is not tenable, because identity and difference are
opposing ideas and therefore cannot exist together. So
determinate existence implies the difference that exists
between a thing and its qualities. But in reality there
is no difference as such. And secondly, the relation
between the thing and its quantities cannot be substan-
tiated. Whether there is identity or there is difference,
or there are both identity and difference, the riddle is
the same. Hence the Absolute is indeterminate being. And
Reality excludes as such the moral, ethical and spiritual
qualities generally attributed to it by the ordinary
religious mind. Thus consciousness and bliss are iden-
tical with the being. They are not predicates or quali-
ties of the being though for the purpose of religious
devotion and the exigencies of logical thought they are
to be considered as separate and distinct.

The presumption that indeterminate being is
practically non-being cannot be accepted indeed. From
the metaphysical viewpoint being is a concept prior to
every thing and if it is devoid of every other thing,
if it is devoid of all qualities, it does not lose its
basic nature, i.e. indeterminateness. In the Advaita
Vedānta-
Vedānta thesis is beyond anti-thesis and synthesis. The indeterminate "being is not necessarily non-being. Even the conception of void or non-being presupposes the being as it has been well established in the Pañcadaśī. The contention that pure being is nothing better than non-being is rather inspired by empirical bias.

REALITY AS CONSCIOUSNESS

According to our previous analysis Being is identical with consciousness. Saṅkarites hold that we cannot deny the identity of the being with consciousness, because the absolute truth can never be the object of experience. All through Saṅkarites maintain the distinction between ārka and  ādṛśya i.e., experience and the object of experience. The object of experience is always false though experience itself is real. Here the fact is, from the Advaita standpoint, the object that experience reveals appears but accidentally. The Advaitins deny any natural relation between experience and the object revealed by experience. And the reason is - there is nothing in common between ārka and ādṛśya; they involve rather the opposing character which separates them perpetually from each other. Knowledge or experience, for instance is all-expression. It can reveal the object by its own expression; whereas the object, which experience thus reveals, has no inherent self-expression. So it is revealed only when experience reveals it by its own inherent expression. Due to this fact the Advaitins deny any natural relation between consciousness and its object. The subject-object relation

1. सून्यम् सैद्ध तत् भ्रुसे सदयोगम वा सदात्मतम
(Pañcadasī - Chap - 2/Sl.32)
relation (visaya-visavibhava-sambandha) generally accepted in this case, has also been denied. The main point is -
experience is experience. The Advaitins deny - as we have noted already, that experience to be experience must re-
veal some object and thus it shall always exist being
related with the object. So the relation between experience
and the object of experience is not natural. The relation
is accidental and the relation being accidental the reve-
lation of object is nothing but accidental. And this
implies that the object of experience appear to exist and
associates itself with consciousness but accidentally. The
fact is - the object to be revealed by experience is always
insentient because it is bereft of an inherent expression
and therefore bereft of consciousness. Consciousness
involves expression because where there is consciousness
there is also the expression. So the object which has no
inherent expression is insentient or bereft of conscious-
ness. Now an insentient object having no inherent expres-
sion cannot substantiate its own existence by expressing
itself. When knowledge reveals it accidentally the object
appears to exist. Prior to this expression we cannot
affirm whether the particular object really exists or not.
And viewed properly, the existence of the object without
its expression is hardly conceivable. So the Advaitins
conclude that the object of experience appears and comes
to exist but accidentally being revealed by experience.
That which appears and comes to exist but accidentally
cannot be real. So the object of experience (drsya) is
-always-
always false. Hence the Advaitins identify the being with consciousness. Reality as consciousness involves inherent expression and it never appears as such as an object of experience, which according to our previous analysis, is insentient and false.

As the supreme truth is identical with consciousness and therefore cannot depend like an insentient object on an outside aid for its own revelation, so it involves self-expression (svapnakāśita). Now in the Upaniṣad we find that the transcendental effulgence illumines everything - each item of existence that belongs to this world (tasya bhūsā sarvamidam bībhūti). So the supreme truth is all-expressive. Reality as consciousness reveals indeed everything by its own light. Now, it is generally assumed that the all-expressive being expresses itself by its own light. In other words the transcendental being expresses itself in the same way as it expresses everything else. So viewed from this standpoint the being is not really self-expressive because, if we admit the self-expressiveness of the being it will lead us to the subject-object fallacy. The same thing cannot be the subject (viguṣṭa) and object (vīṣaya) both at the same time of its own activity. So the being is not self-expressive, but the being is expression itself. Therefore, from the Advaita standpoint the self-expression implies that the
self is expression or the self is identical with expression.

On the above basis Citsukhaçarya\* says that self-expression implies immediacy without ever being the object of experience. And viewed properly, the immediacy without ever being the object of experience is possible for the being, because the being is identical with consciousness. Consciousness - as we have noted it already - is different in character from the insentient object that it expresses and illumines by its own expression. So, consciousness cannot be revealed in the same way like an object which has no inherent expression and therefore depends on an outside aid viz. consciousness, for its own revelation. Again consciousness which reveals every thing cannot reveal itself in the same way as it reveals an object. By an apt illustration Sankara shows the inconsistency in it. Indeed the burning fire burns and illumines everything around it but it neither burns nor illumines itself. In the same manner consciousness which reveals everything by its own expression does not reveal itself. Consciousness or experience, in fact, is immediate revelation itself. So, when experience reveals an object the object appears immediately before us. Therefore, the transcendental truth identical with consciousness (cit) is immediate by nature. Citsukhaçarya's definition, which we have noted above, thus implies the immediacy of experience that the Absolute involves being identical with consciousness.

\*Na tāvat svaśayi prakāśa laksanā-sambhavah
Avedyatva sti aparokṣayayavrāha-yogatayah
tat laksanatvāt (Tattvapradīpikā - Chap 1/p 9. Bombay Ed)

Na hi pradīpāḥ, svarūpābhivaktāḥ prakāśantaraṁanyati
pekṣate svate वा.
Thus, the supreme truth is sentient experience itself and it excludes as such insentience in any shape and form. Insentient objects that appear in the empirical level are all individual units. Each of these objects appears being determined by space and time as well as by name and form. Thus they are all finite units. Reality as sentient experience ipso facto excludes all those limitations. The Upanishad characterises the truth as 'Ananta' - the Infinite'. And, the true infinite transcends spatial and temporal limitations as well as it transcends the finite character determined by name and form. Again the change and transformation that befall a finite object equally fall short of reality, because reality as permanent experience excludes the change and transformation that an empirical object involves. We conclude that, being is sentient experience. It involves infinite eternal existence beyond the change and modifications of this empirical world; and it shines by itself in infinite glory shedding its light on each empirical object - those ephemeral forms that appear being illumined by this eternal glow - this transcendental effulgence.

REALITY AS BLISS

As consciousness is the basic character of reality so bliss is also identified as the basic character of it. Now reality as bliss (Śānta) is not merely the negation of pain, though as supreme bliss, the highest pitch of happiness and the ultimate source of all our pleasure and joy it excludes naturally pain and afflictions. Reality is, therefore, all bliss and no pain.

There is divergence of opinion on bliss as an element of the constitution of the Absolute. Śaṅkhyā, -Yoga-
Yoga and the Nyāya-Vaśiśṭka schools are of the view that the description of the Absolute as bliss is only a figurative representation of the truth that a perfect being is free from all limitations, and limitations mean pain. Were the Absolute possessed of bliss as an element of its constitution the aspirants after ultimate freedom would be actuated by the desire for this bliss. But desire is necessary concomitant and condition of bondage; and can never be an instrument of perfection. It is expressly asserted in the scripture that only a man who has controlled his desire and is perfectly self-controlled can be qualified for this consummation. If the acquisition of bliss were the incentive to this striving for liberation, the spiritual aspirant would be swept by impulse and thus be unfit like a degenerate soul. So bliss is nothing but negation of pain and suffering.

The Vedāntists however consider such objection as inspired by misconception of the nature of bliss. Bliss or happiness thus entertained merely as negation of pain (duhkhabhāva) has therefore been contested by the Vedāntists of different schools. Bliss, according to them, is something positive. Among the Advaita philosophers Maṇḍana Miśra has criticised most strongly the theory of negatory bliss. The contention that cessation of pain is euphemistically called pleasure, cannot be true even from the empirical standpoint. One feels pleasure and pain simultaneously when tormented by heat he enters a lake of cool water. He feels pleasure in the part immersed in

the water and pain in the upper part exposed to the heat of the sun. It cannot be argued that the feeling of pleasure is due to the absence of other sort of pain. The pleasure felt is only a sensation of relief from the pain which is felt in the other part. But if pleasure be the absence of some other kind of pain, the sinner who suffers pain in a hell ought to feel happy because he does not undergo greater pain which is current in another hell. The pain derived from one sense would be reduced to pleasure on account of the absence of pain through other senses. Furthermore a person who has no pain comes to experience pleasure on the enjoyment of particular delicacies, and even when a person feels the pang of hunger the relish of delicacy does not consist of the cessation of pain only. Hunger is satisfied by any sort of food. But when a costlier dish is purchased the result is not merely appeasement of hunger. The cessation of the pain of hunger does not admit of degrees of excellence. It is only pleasure that can be conceived to have qualitative differences. The preference for costlier and daintier dish proves that the enjoyment of food produces varying degree of satisfaction which cannot merely be a negation of pain. So bliss is not merely the negation of pain but bliss is positive - as positive as pain itself.

Vedanta in fact depends essentially on the natural urge of our mind to arrive at the above conclusion. What we all seek and try to acquire with the best of our effort is perfect and complete happiness. So, we want also the total extermination of pain and suffering.
so that we shall be able to enjoy the best of happiness without any distraction. Thus, what we really seek and seek so urgently is not the mere extermination of pain and afflictions but the attainment of the perfect and the highest pitch of happiness. On this ground Vedanta holds the theory of positive bliss and identifies it with the supreme truth. Bliss is therefore the basic character of reality and as such bliss is the ultimate end of our metaphysical search.

Now, from the Advaita standpoint being is identical with bliss. So Reality is not blissful (ānandamaya) as it is generally held, but Reality is bliss. This distinction arises from the transcendental conception of bliss. Reality as blissful involves the dynamic conception of bliss. As we find in the theistic Vedanta bliss or ānanda is the integral part of the supreme truth, which can be differentiated from the being. Ānanda is a dynamic process which has both identity and difference with the being. We can differentiate it from the being though it cannot be separated from the being. The Advaitins on the other hand insist on absolute identity. Bliss cannot be differentiated from the being because it is not the joyous expression as it supposes to be, but it is being itself.

From the above viewpoint reality as bliss implies completeness - the completeness which transcends the spatial and temporal distinctions. Bliss is not necessarily an element of feeling which is fleeting and ultimately nonexisting. The tendency of distinguishing bliss from the being comes, in fact, from excessive stress on the feeling aspect of our life. Bliss in the sense of completeness is the basic character of the infinite being and it is nondifferentiable from the being.
Thus consciousness and bliss both are identical with the being. But it should also be added here that, bliss and consciousness should not be differentiated and taken as separate aspects of the being, because bliss (ānanda) and consciousness (cit) are identical. It is affirmed that being, bliss and consciousness are ontologically a simple identity. Thus, there is absolute identity of the being bliss and consciousness. Therefore the being includes the bliss and consciousness. Bliss includes the being and consciousness and consciousness includes the other two in the same way.

The fact that bliss, consciousness and being, though ontologically a simple identity, are expressed and conceived by us by means of different terms shows only the limitation of human thought and language which are by their very nature incapable of reaching the ultimate truth. The finite mind fails utterly to comprehend this absolute homogeneous identity. And it is far more difficult to express it in language. Human vocabulary is too poor to express the transcendental character far beyond the reach of our thought. All these have been repeatedly said in the Upanishads, and the Advaitins hold that this is the reason for separately mentioning being bliss and consciousness though these ideas are nondifferentiable in reality. As soon as the finite mind seeks to grasp the transcendental truth its homogeneity is lost. In the plane of thought therefore, being, bliss and consciousness are revealed as separate aspects of reality.

Thus bliss and consciousness are identical. It has been
been said to confirm this fact that metaphysically consciousness of pain even as consciousness is identical with bliss, whereas insentient objects even though they are objects of pleasure essentially involve pain. Viewed properly bliss is not bliss, unless it has its revelation. And bliss as reality must have permanent revelation. So bliss cannot be differentiated from consciousness.

(iii)

PRATYAGATMAN

Now the distinction between the supreme transcendental self and the individual self (i.e., paramatman and jīvātman) has been denied in the Advaita Philosophy, because there is no difference in reality. All such differences, as we have seen before, (X.1.20) are created by thought while reality excludes them altogether. Hence the Advaitins hold that the supreme transcendental being is our immediate self. But, reality identified with our immediate self does not stand for the empirical 'I'. Sāmkritas distinguish the self from the ego - the empirical 'I'. The ego is the subject. It is the centre of activity and the centre of experience and it records all impressions. But the self is not the subject. In empirical life we cannot discriminate between the self and the ego. And this is due to our sheer ignorance of the true nature and the real position of the self. So we identify the self as subject and the ego appears as the real self, though in reality, the subject is the reflection of our real self and exists as the constant locus of activity and experience in the empirical level. The Advaitins hold that it has epistemological reality (in the plane of thought) but not metaphysical reality. The real self is presented in it and is the basis of it.

-As-
As we find in the Upanishad the self or the inner being is the detached nonrelational consciousness (asaṁkhyāt) transcending the change and modifications confronted by us in the realm of object. Now, the self as subject cannot include those characteristics. The self as subject in fact involves relativity. The subject and object are relational ideas and exist in relation to each other. So also, being the centre and locus of activity as subject the self cannot totally exclude the change and transformation.

As the Śaṅkarites hold - through a false association that leads to a false identity with the ego - which is essentially an element of the mind - the self appears as subject. And all these happen because avidyā screens the real being. So the self appears as subject being associated with the mind.1

Viewed from the Advaita standpoint therefore the self is different from the subject. And reality as self, therefore, does not imply the empirical 'I'. That the ego involves the association of the self with the not-self has been aptly elucidated in the Vivarāga. The Vivaranaśārya says that the ego is the centre of opposing ideas as pleasure and pain, consciousness and unconsciousness, which belong respectively to the self and not-self - the sentient being and insentient mind. Therefore the ego acting as the subject involves the association of the self and not-self.

To distinguish the self from the subject the Advaitins identify the self - the supreme truth - as the omnipotent...

1. See, Adhyāsaṁbhāṣya.
omnipotent, omniscient being - God of religion - though in reality the theological concept does not represent the pure metaphysical truth. In the Advaita Vedánta God is also an appearance of the Absolute. And the ultimate reality is no other entity but our immediate self - i.e., Pratyagātman.

We have seen that reality involves the integral identity of being bliss and consciousness. According to the Śāṅkharites the self excludes all forms of distinction (bheda) as it remains transcending the spatial and temporal limitation and is a nonrelational entity which has been affirmed more than once in the Upaniṣadic texts. The self, in other words, is a transconceptual being and it excludes as such the differences confronted by us within the realm of our conceptual thinking.

Moreover, the Advaitins deny consciousness either to be the activity or to be the quality of the self. Consciousness - as we find it in other systems of our philosophy - has been separated from the being and has been accepted either as an activity or as a quality of the being. But in fact, consciousness as the presupposition of all those facts that we affirm according to our conceptual thinking, cannot be identified as either of those facts. To the Advaita philosophers, consciousness is the basic fundamental principle. And consciousness exists as such as the prior and presupposition of all those positions and negations in the realm of finite ideas. Consciousness cannot be identified.
identified either as a quality (ṣuna) or as an activity (kriya) both of which are conceived and posited by thought whose activity is limited in the plain of finite ideas.

Besides, the Advaitins maintain the identity of the self with consciousness, because the self - as they say - is always immediate in nature. This has been affirmed on the ground that we may deny all other objects, and there may be doubt about their existence, but we can neither deny the existence of the self nor there is any doubt about its existence. So the self is always immediate. Vivaranācārya affirms that, as both the self and consciousness are immediate by nature, they can never be revealed as objects of experience. Indeed, as the revelation of some object presupposes consciousness that reveals it, so it presupposes the existence of the self. The self is, therefore, the sentient being - immediate by nature. And this implies its identity with consciousness which is equally immediate in nature. The self involves, in fact, the immediacy of consciousness - the self-expression.

The tendency of differentiating the self from consciousness originates from the fact that in empirical life we identify the self with the subject - the centre and locus of experience. But the Advaitins distinguish the self from the subject. The self therefore is not the centre and locus of experience though it appears as such in our empirical field of experience. In reality

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the self is sentient experience itself.

While commenting on the word 'pratibodhavidita' in his commentary on the Kenopanisad, Śaṅkara shows us the inconsistency in entertaining consciousness either as an activity or as a quality of the self. In both of those cases the self should involve relativity, change and finitude all of which are impossible in the self so far as the Upanisad says. Śaṅkara accordingly concludes that the self is identical with consciousness and it exists as the basic intelligence - the fundamental expression revealing each turn of our thought and illumining each phase of its activity. Therefore in the Advaita system the self has been denominated as 'Sāksin' (the basic intelligence). There is subtle distinction between sāksin - which means the basic intelligence and premāṅ, the subject or the agent of cognition. This distinction has been missed by most of the philosophers and they have tried to prove that 'sāksin' means the cogniser. But the fact is the self as sāksin - the basic intelligence, involves absolute nonrelational existence, whereas the subject involves relativity as it exists as one of the relational units of judgment which comprises three relational units as jñāna, jñāta and jñeyā - or the subject, object and cognition. Sāksin or the basic intelligence illumines equally the subject and object.

Then again the self is absolute bliss. As the Upaniṣad preaches on the basis of our common experience -

our self-love excels all our love and attachment. All our love and attraction indeed centre round the self as all the objects of our love are either directly related to us according to our empirical consciousness or they are objects of some selfish gain. This, Sankarites hold, implies that the self is absolute bliss. As we have seen before, bliss or happiness is the end of our all searches. So it has intrinsic value to us. Now as our self-love is supreme and it excels all our love and attractions, the self must involve absolute bliss. Being the nature of bliss, and being nondifferentiable from bliss, the self has got such attraction for us. In the empirical life the self appears as associated with the body, mind and senses, and we identify those insentient objects as our immediate self, because we lose sight of the fundamental distinction that separates the self from not-self. Therefore in the empirical life our love and attractions centre round the body, mind and senses. But the self is absolute bliss and consciousness, and the supreme truth is no other entity but our immediate self.

It has again been repeatedly affirmed in the Upaniṣad that the supreme truth - the Absolute - can neither be known nor can it remain unknown. According to the Advaita philosophers this version of the Upaniṣad definitely implies that the Absolute is our immediate self - our inner being. The fact is - the self -

2. Pañcadasī - 1/9(?)
3. Anyadeva tadviditādatho aviditādhabi - Kenopaniṣad - 1/4
as transcendental, transconceptual being cannot be known in the sense that a concrete object is known. But this does not confirm that the self remains unknown. That the self is not an entity which remains forever unknown can be verified by the fact that there does not arise any such doubt at any stage of our life as to whether the self exists or not. The self is immediate always. We are conscious about its existence though it can never be revealed in perception like an object with concrete form.

Though the Advaitins are pure transcendentalists and have displayed a sceptic attitude (as is generally supposed) by denying the reality of the conceptual world with the plurality and difference, still the sceptic conclusion has been avoided by positing the self as the ultimate truth. So Sāṅkara says that as the supreme truth does not involve the concrete relational existence so neither it involves the nonbeing (śūnya) because the supreme truth is self and the self excludes negation or contradiction. Indeed the self-excludes negation or contradiction because it exists as the witness (sākṣin) of all our affirmations and negations according to our conceptual thinking. Therefore in the Chāndogya Bhasya* and similarly in other places Sāṅkara has strongly condemned the agnostic conclusion according to which the beginning and end is in the nonbeing.

To sum up: The ultimate reality, which is the only reality from the metaphysical point of view, is an integral unit of being, consciousness and bliss without limitation.

1. Na śūnyam na ca-śūnyamadvaitavatvāt
   (Dashabali Siddhāntabindu - Sl.10)
*Chāndogya Bhasya - 6/2/1 p.248, Poona Edition
limitation or differentiation internal or external. It does not require any extraordinary power of ratiocination to discern the truth that being must be the character of the ultimate prius of existence, because the denial of it involves the affirmation of nonbeing as the ultimate fact. But absolute nonbeing without reference to a positive fact either as its basis or as its determination is inconceivable by logical thought. Although a school of Buddhist philosophers, the Sūnyavādins, are represented to hold this view, so far as the criticism of Brahminical philosophers purports it to be, it is riddled with self-contradiction. Inconceivability is no proof of the falsity of a philosophical conclusion, but logical contradiction is. The logical basis of Vedānta has been asserted to consist of threefold proof, viz. authoritative revelation as embodied in the Śruti texts, rational consistency (yukti) and pure uncontradicted intuition (anubhūti). Though the ultimate truth cannot be reached by logical thought, because the former is ex hypothesi, the prius and presupposition of existence and thought, and cannot be deductively derived from more general proposition, yet it must be such that it must transcend logical inconsistency. Truth cannot be irrational, and the supremest and most convincing evidence of irrationality is self-discrepancy and self-contradiction. As the Pañcavāda has observed that the assertion or contemplation of non-being presupposes the consciousness of
it it cannot be absolute truth. The denial of consciousness involves an affirmation of it and so by the inner dialectic of self-contradiction it refutes itself. The ultimate prius of the phenomenal order must therefore be a fact which must involve being as its integral character. It stands to reason to conclude that the minimum character of the ultimate basis of the phenomenal order must be being, whatever else it may have or not.

It may be contended that let this, viz., being be the sole character of it and the affirmation of consciousness and bliss is not logically necessary. Let being be an unconscious fact like the prakṛti of Sāṃkhya. This has been elaborately considered in the Vedānta Sūtra and later literature and found to be an impossible position. An unconscious being cannot be proved except by consciousness, and as we have observed, the relation of subject and object is logically inconceivable. So Being cannot be different from consciousness on pain of self-contradiction. But it is possible that the consciousness be the ultimate reality without reference to being. But this also is not maintainable. Without self-contradiction, consciousness, which is not being will be nonbeing and we have seen that nonbeing cannot be the truth. So the two must be one.

As regards integration of bliss, it is involved by the infinity and freedom of the ultimate truth. Pain is the necessary concomitant of finitude and limitation and unfreedom. Bliss is not the negation of pain, but pain is. A tertium quid between this and reality is only a logical abstraction for which there is warrant in logic or psychology. The empirical proofs have been found to be a pointer.
to this truth. The integration of the three concepts in one indivisible reality is not logically conceivable, but not incompatible with logical thought. On the contrary it is the conclusion which is compelled by irrefragable logical necessity.