Does Deconstruction Deconstruct?

The Heideggerian project of overcoming Greek metaphysics leads Derrida to the inevitability of deconstructing metaphysics. Derrida differs from Heideggerian search for being in language, which is for him the house of Being. Rather, Derrida was in search of the ‘other’ of language that deconstructs philosophical language.

Derrida agrees that the operative terms of his language are not independent of literary language and that they emerge as the determination of language. Here, the Derridian task of deconstruction of philosophy is at stake as it can be questioned whether deconstruction really deconstructs. Does it not make his prophecy that deconstruction is the contemporary end of philosophy relapsed into the free play of arbitrariness. If Derrida cannot hopefully solve the problem of reference then the claim of deconstruction collapses into a strategy of nihilism.

The following pages are purported to examine whether Derrida’s deconstruction can deconstruct metaphysics. In other words, is there any other way to deconstruct logocentric philosophy other than the non-philosophical
strategy of deconstruction? Does logocentrism constitute any socio-historical or philosophical crisis in our society? Is there any other possibility for any other language as the 'other' of the logocentric language? Does our logocentric definition of man, society, history, progress, culture etc. lead us in the name of civilization to the absurdities such as chemicalization, pollution, genetic distortion, environmental degradation, and the constant possibility of nuclear holocaust .....etc?

5. Difference in History

The ongoing process of global development is opening domains of life previously unknown in human history. These entail challenges, which in turn require further growth not only in the human ability to reason, but also in life as a whole. As these domains are intimately related, they and their presuppositions refer progressively to ever more fields and sets of challenges. It is necessary, therefore, to establish a methodology for entering this net of connections and interrelations, which constitute the contemporary world in order to engage a specific problematic.

Our thesis focuses upon the domain generically called social life and deals with problems belonging to practical reason; its concerns are cultural, ethical and their metaphysical foundations. From this perspective, it is our endeavour to make an attempt to identify the genuine element of human culture and the different streams of culture that prevail in present society. A vibrant culture is regarded as subservient to the ultimate destiny of man. The ethical codes as means of such a culture is provided by spiritual leaders in order to effect the
upliftment of humanity as a whole. This endeavour of spiritual leaders in the course of history shapes religion as a force of unity.

However, culture is intertwined by both religious and rational analysis and expressed with all its complexities in philosophy as it rationalizes the concepts such as God, soul, world, morality, etc, which are the main concerns of religion. Throughout the entire history of man, it may be seen that these two aspects, religious and rational are the two main streams of human culture. In the former case, the strategy of presentation is prophetic experience; in the latter the strategy of derivation is rational speculation. Accordingly it is our endeavour to critically analyse the merits and demerits of these two strategies and their contributions to humanity in contemporary society and the interrelations between them.

The above considerations obviate the necessity to examine genuine constituents of human culture in view of the destiny of man and analyse the nature of pseudo ones with regard to the human predicament as a cultural crisis in modern society. Toward this end a rigorous evaluation of the two strategies is intended to be carried out so as to make it possible to appreciate and appropriate the genuineness of the topic under consideration. As part of the evaluation of the first strategy, it will be most suitable to carry out a close analytical observation of Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction. We wish to show as to who his philosophy exposes the limits of thought in relation to language especially metaphysical language. In his systematic and unremitting task of deconstruction of metaphysics, Derrida speaks about the process of interaction between
metaphysics and prophetic experience as concealment and deconstruction. What follows, then is (i) a reconstruction of Derrida's position, including his practical proposal with respect to stated dichotomy. From this context (ii) the philosophy of the culture of emancipation in Jacques Derrida will be introduced as a theoretical alternative to the two main streams of human culture. This will provide a framework for clarifying (iii) the projected contribution of this study. Resultantly, we intend to exemplify the dynamics between philosophical thought and religion for a new personal and communitary awareness.

**Deconstruction and Prophecy**

According to Derrida Philosophy is different from Prophecy. Deconstruction demonstrates that rather the relationship between them is contradictory. Philosophy searches for an absolute criterion. Derrida contradicts such philosophical gesture. Philosophy of deconstruction is the deconstruction of philosophy. Philosophy provides transcendental telos. It makes the subject possible for objective evaluation. Transcendental telos provide a yardstick of criteria.

But this criterion is not applicable to prophecy. Prophecy dispenses with all philosophical criteria. It is the fundamental aspect of difference between philosophy and prophecy. Prophecy does not deal with an objective criterion. The prophetic word cannot be judged by an external tribunal. Moreover, objective evaluation is not possible in the case of prophecy. It cannot be submitted to any neutral evaluation. It doesn't mean that prophecy is beyond all criteria. The prophetic word itself is its criterion. Derrida says, "all genuine questioning is
summoned by a certain type of eschatology". In the case of prophecy, as seen in history, it involves interrogation. Hence, it inevitably includes its own criteria, which cannot be defined in philosophical terms. According to Derrida, prophecy has its own messianic eschatology. The philosophical criteria are different from prophetic eschatology. The messianic criterion is revealed in prophecy. The prophetic inspiration is its truthfulness. Hence, Derrida don't negate prophetic telos. Rather, according to him, it deconstructs absolute eschatology of classical philosophy. It doesn't mean that deconstruction is prophetic or Derrida has prophetic inspiration. Derrida negates such an inspiration for himself. He is not inspired by any prophetic hope. He rejects that his work has any prophetic function. Even if deconstruction aims at demonstrating internal fissure of logos, it is still within the logocentric language. Prophecy certainly goes far beyond the logocentric dialogue. The prophetic language is different from rhetorical discourse. Deconstruction cannot claim such an allure. Indeed, it interrogates logocentric claims. But it does not mean that deconstruction is prophecy. Still, within the space of rhetoric it performs certain prophetic function. It demonstrates a search for an exodus with its style of questioning as dissemination. According to Derrida, it is a search without hope for hope and goes beyond all philosophical telos. It cannot be expressed in logocentric language as well. It obviates the necessity to think that there is something prophetic in deconstruction and reveals the fundamental nature of such a prophetic search for prophecy.
According to Derrida, it is the symptomatic of a crisis. The crisis certainly is pointed to the proliferation of prophecy. As Derrida says: the dominance of deconstructive trends emphasize bad times for philosophy and in turn, it emphasizes good times for prophecy.¹

Prophecy is the other of philosophy and the human self. The other opposes all self-identities. It is the other to timelessness. Philosophical topology cannot include the other. Criteriology cannot even define it. Deconstruction tries to demonstrate this aspect. In this sense deconstruction is a demonstrative interrogation. It questions the logocentric fixidity of philosophy and affirms the other of logocentrism. Deconstruction demonstrates the fissure in absolute foundation of logos. According to Derrida, the other precedes the logos, the self, etc. It is the other that invokes and provokes the subject. It enables the subject for genuine questioning. Prophetic inspiration is such a genuine interrogation in culture.

Messianic Language and Emancipation

Derrida makes a distinction between logocentric language and prophetic language. In this sense, the latter is the other of the former. Derrida's deconstructive enterprise belongs to the determination of logocentric language. However, it revolts rigorously against the fixidity of the structure of logos. In this sense, Derrida's deconstructive language is not prophetic language or messianic language. His enterprise does not deconstruct the cultural practice within logocentric network. Nevertheless, it interrogates those practices within the structure of language. Language has got a neutral position with reference to
pragmatism. It is the same with deconstruction as far as its language is concerned. Yet its neutrality, for example, in the case of politics allows a reflection on the nature of the political-a-hyper-politicisation.

"When you said that you do not see the necessary relation between deconstruction and pragmatism, I would say 'yes and no' …… But, the fact that deconstruction is apparently politically neutral allows, on the one hand, a reflection on the nature of the political, and on the other hand, and this is what interests me in deconstruction, a hyper-politicization. Deconstruction is hyper-politicizing in following paths and codes which are clearly not traditional, and I believe it awakens politicization in the way I mentioned above, that is, it permits us to think the political and think the democratic by granting us the space necessary in order not to be enclosed in the latter."²

According to Derrida, this aspect of the language is related with the messianic structure of language. It belongs to all languages. In this sense, Derridian language has a deconstructive effect, a prophetic mission. It is the performative dimension of the promise. He relates messianicity to emancipation.

"It is not a question of a messianism that one could easily translate in Judaeo-Christian or Islamic terms, but rather of a messianic structure that belongs to all language. There is no language without the performative dimension of the promise, the minute I open my mouth I am in the promise. Even if I say that 'I don't 308
believe in truth' or whatever, the minute I open my mouth there is a 'believe me' at work. Even when I lie, and perhaps especially when I lie, there is a 'believe me' in play. And this 'I promise you that I am speaking the truth' is a messianic apriori, a promise which .... takes place and qua promise is messianic.  

According to Derrida the messianic a priori is essentially related to emancipation. For him, the messianic experience is not a utopian idea or metaphysics. It happens here and now. It is a promise to believe. It is the messianic moment that happens. It is futuristic without the present of the metaphysics of presence.

The messianic experience of which I spoke takes place here and now; that is, the fact of promising and speaking is an event that takes place here and now and is not utopian ...... That can happen... that can happen, and I promise in opening the future or in leaving the future open. This is not utopian, it is what takes place here and now, in a here and now that I regularly try to dissociate from the present. Although this is difficult to explain briefly in this context, I try to dissociate the theme of singularity happening here and now from the theme of presence and, for me, there can be a here and now without presence.  

The futuristic of messianicity is the emancipation. Hence emancipation cannot be explained in terms of metaphysics. There is no ethico-political decision without messianicity or emancipation.
"I believe that there is an enormous amount to do today for emancipation, ....... the discourse of emancipation into a teleology, a metaphysics, an eschatology, or even a classical messianism. I nonetheless believe that there is no ethico-political decision or gesture without what I would call a 'Yes' to emancipation, to the discourse of emancipation, and even, and I would add, to some messianicity.5

In this sense of messianicity of language, Derrida's deconstruction actively engages itself in the discourse of emancipation. In this messianic structure, deconstruction shows its futuristic character and promises to believe in the historical happenings of messianic experience. Deconstruction rejects all utopian metaphysics, which affirms the messianic promise in history.

Historical Interaction

Enlightenment period has a unique concept of history, which considers history as a system of evolution. The historical evolution is underlined by progress. According to Derrida, enlightenment rationalism hides certain aspects of history. Derrida says that there are certain facts in history, which are repetitive. Some of them that confront us today are ancient. They were hidden in history for a certain period of time. Enlightenment perspectives regard them as part of the linear progress and as new phases of evolution as modified from the old phases. According to Derrida, there are some essential relationships between the old and the new. They appear to be extremely new because of our progressive view of history. It is further enhanced by the fact that they were
hidden for an in between period. Hence, the new is not something extremely modern. They are not occurring for the first time in history. They have a very ancient dimension too. It is only a recurrence in the contemporary period, which is repetitive in historical tradition. History has different traditions of Greek, Roman, Hebraic and the like. Repetition can be seen in all these traditions of culture. In philosophical tradition too, we can see the same recurrence in Plato, Descartes, Kant, etc. The meanings that are appeared to be novel are already preceded. Hence, the phenomenon of repetition is unavoidable in history. History cannot be considered as altogether progressive in a linear direction.

In view of the above, it may be argued that whatever happens today is an unfolding of what had pre-existed in an implicit way in the past. For a certain period of time they were hidden waiting for their time to be explicated. According to Derrida, this is also a part of evolutionary concept of history. It includes the element of progress as evolution from latent state to the state of manifestation. Derrida is against such a development notion of history. According to him, this view excludes the phenomenon of repetition. The phenomenon of recurrence includes the crucial aspects of rupture and mutation. They are the two contradictory affirmations. Phenomenon of repetition affirms that there is rupture in history. Rupture produces gaps in the continuity of history. At the same time, it affirms that there is emergence of hidden meaning through the faults. These are the contradictory affirmations in the form of fissure and mutation. They constitute the broken phases of history as well as new emergence of something old. The emergent novel meanings were hidden in a period of repeating faults.
He calls the emerged meaning as forgotten archives. They are the same ancient archives. They work throughout history and thereby causing discontinuity. These archives are the other of logos. The archives of logos contribute to the linear notion of history. The non-logocentric archives produce repetitively fissures in continuity. They are historical discontinuity as opposed to historical continuity. It is not a pure explication of something that was latent. Hence, it is not a pure break with the past as a new emergence or as a new unfolding but a repetition of the past.

**Trace of the Other**

Derrida also makes a reference to the Husserlian notion of retention, which he calls, trace in the time span of prophetic experiences. Retention is the trace of withdrawal. Derrida adopts Levinas’ standpoint that traces the face of the other. It is the grace of the other. According to Levinas, the trace does not signify the past of the other. Hence, the face is not an image of God or the other. It is not an icon of God. According to Levinas, the revealed God reveals his absence.

“The God who passed is not the model of which the face would be an image. To be in the image of God does not mean to be an icon of God, but to find oneself in his trace. The Revealed God of our Judeo-Christian spirituality maintains all the infinity of his absence, which is in the personal “order” itself. He shows himself only by his trace, as said in Exdous."
According to Levinas the process of revelation or trace is a disturbance, which imprints itself with an irresistible gravity. Derrida agrees with this standpoint and disagrees with Husserl, which regard withdrawal of retention as not produced in the time of everyday representation that modifies the presence of the present. According to Derrida, trace disjoins time and thus dislocating the order of representation. Hence, Derrida calls face as messianic visitation.

"The trace of a withdrawal that orders it as a face": this withdrawal disjoins time itself. If it were produced only in time, in the time of everyday representation, the withdrawal would come to modify only the presence of the present, the now-present, the past-present, or the future-present. But here, this withdrawal, this trace of the face, dislocates the order of temporal presence and representation. Translated into the vocabulary of hospitality, this trace of the face, of the visage, would be called visitation ("A face is of itself a visitation and a transcendence").

Therefore, revelation is visitation. According to Derrida, it is common in Judeo-Christian spirituality. In Exodus it is revealed as Sinai. According to Derrida, this common visit is difficult to be hold as one. There are internal ruptures constituting continuity and discontinuity in history. Hence, Sinai belongs to several disjointed times.

"And precisely in the place where what is situated by the Sinai, or by the name of the Sinai, by the name "Sinai", belongs to several disjointed times, to several different occurrences that it is
perhaps up to us to think together, without, however, synchronizing them or ordering them according to some grand chronology.8

Derrida interrogates the Leviniasian notion of language as hospitality with reference to the question of translating the trace of the other to the vocabulary of hospitality. Hospitality is to be referred back to the passing of visitation. For Derrida, this immerse translation is a limit. Its limit is shown in the case that the trace already passed. Here the laws of hospitality are disturbed by the traumatizing effraction of the other.

"In the words visit and visitation, it is really a question of translating this trace of the other into the vocabulary of hospitality, as we have seemed to assume? Must one not, on the contrary, refer the phenomenon and the possibility of hospitality back to this passing [passee] of visitation so as, first of all, to retranslate them?

... This visit is not a response to an invitation; it exceeds every dialogical relation between host and guest. It must, from all time, have exceeded them. Its traumatizing effraction must have preceded what is so easily called as hospitality — even, as disturbing and pervertible as they already appear, the laws of hospitality.9
Hence, according to Derrida, in history there are two interacting processes of deconstruction and concealment as the two undercurrents of culture with reference to rupture and continuity in time.

**Construction and Deconstruction**

The new emergence of something ancient is the force of deconstruction. It deconstructs the construction in continuity. The continuity in a reverse order conceals the emerged archives through a period of time. The progress of continuity thus has a two phases of concealment and construction. It conceals the non-logocentric archives constructing logocentric archives. Hence, every culture is intertwined by this contradictory process. The process of discontinuity is the internal critique of culture. It is the element of self-interrogation. Through this process a culture distances itself from itself and gets transformed. According to Derrida, culture has the auto-critique element as an essential part of its development. Through the contradictory process it transforms its linguistic concepts as well as foundational institutes. Culture can never become closed. Every culture is haunted by the other. The Greco-Roman civilization is deconstructed by the Judaeo-Christian otherness. Hebraic was the other of Hellenic. Derrida says that the Hebraic is largely Hellenised at present. The process of concealment makes culture intertwined by two undercurrents of logos and prophecy. Judaism and Christianity include the original elements that constitute the other of logos. They are heterogeneous and threaten the monogeneous elements of Greek metaphysics. They unsettle the philosophical identities. It is the deconstructive effect of heterogeneous elements in Judaism.
and Christianity, which deconstruct the Greek logos. The metaphysical terms are deconstructed by the prophetic terms. Translation of Arabic ideas into European languages caused deconstruction from the very beginning of its culture. The Greek concepts were being deconstructed by the prophetic language. Later both the Judaeo-Christian traditions were assimilated into Greek philosophy. Hence, the present culture is the mixture of both heterogeneous and monogeneous elements. It is exemplified by Jewish and Christian theology.

This is quite evident in the words of Immaneul Levinas in which he ends his seminal essay that Greek-Jew is Jew-Greek. Derrida underlies this fact of historical contradictory process of revelation and concealment in his whole enterprise of deconstruction. He finds an attempt made by Levinas in revealing the notion of God from the logocentric language as A-Dieu, the idea of infinity. Derrida says that it is an adieu to Descartes as well as Husserl redirecting the traditional idea of infinity (in me). Derrida accuses Cartesian system that it subordinated the idea of infinity to the search for knowledge. According to Levinas, the infinity does not coincide with self-identical presence or self-consciousness.

"In this sense, it is also a kind of bidding adieu to Descartes. As was suggested earlier, Descartes would probably have hesitated to go along with Levinas in this sort of turning aside or redirecting of the tradition concerning the idea of infinity in me. It is important then to note the exact nature of this redirection, ....... since the whole paradox of the idea of infinity was "subordinated in
the Cartesian system to the search for knowledge." Acknowledging the analogy between his critique and the one levelled by Husserl against Descartes, though confirming the phenomenological interruption of phenomenology that we spoke of earlier. Levinas calls the a-Dieu an "extraordinary structure of the idea of infinity" that coincides neither with the "self-identification of identity" nor with "self-consciousness."

In Indian culture too the contradictory process of revelation and concealment is seen. The metaphysical tradition of Vedas was repeatedly haunted by the other traditions such as Buddhism and even Arabic elements. The Vedantic self-identity thesis was haunted by Samkhya theory of purusa and Buddhists' anatman and Carvaka's atheism. Yet in all periods of continuity other systems got concealed by the metaphysical identity, which the Brahmanic tradition nourished. Moreover, the experiential elements of spiritualism were highly concealed by metaphysical aspects in India than in any other country. Indian metaphysics was so powerful that it concealed the other so systematically and with precision. Though there were frequent ruptures in Indian history, yet the mutation was so week. Vedanta seems to embody a type that stands midway between the highly particularized logos of a religion like Christianity and the unp particularized logos of the Greeks and yet sharing traits of both. Having stated thus, the second part of this chapter is an itinerary towards the end.
PART - II

INDIAN THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE

This part is an outcome and sequel to Derridian deconstructive standpoint and designed to apply in the field of Indian philosophy. Consequently, the first part of this chapter, proposes to look at Indian philosophy altogether in a novel perspective by formulating a fundamental distinction between the teachings of the Gurus based on their spiritual experiences and the theories of interpretations formulated by scholars. Consequently, the second section of the chapter tries to analyse the causes and effects of the close intervening of the streams of experiences and their metaphysical theorizing. Our analysis intends to show as to how metaphysics and experience differs from each other despite the attempts to ensemble them into one stream and how the process of deconstruction and concealment takes place between them in concrete forms and thereby emanating cultural aspects. It is our endeavour to show as to how cultural contradictions arise in Indian society as Advaita on the metaphysical side and casteism on the practical side, Brahman as the ultimate reality on the metaphysical side and polytheism and evil worship with an absence of salvation which is concealed and completed by metaphysics. This part is concluded by suggesting to replace the filled up metaphysics by the experience of the “other” in order to eliminate the contradictions that foreshadow the cultural dimensions of any society for the emancipation of its cultural tradition in its concrete aspects.

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Philosophy in India is regarded generally as the pursuit of wisdom, which includes the metaphysical inquiry into the nature of reality as a whole and the moral and spiritual endeavour to realize it. Thus understood, Philosophy is understood as Darsana in Indian thought especially in its Vedic aspect.

‘Darsana’ is the term used to name the philosophical systems in India. The term includes an epistemological import in the process of direct perception. Such an epistemological process is quite unique to Indian context of the pursuit of Truth, for, in the Indian tradition, truth-seeking pursuit is not merely an intellectual exercise. Intellectual knowledge is regarded only as a preliminary step. The most essential phase of truth seeking is the realisation of truth. Knowing by thinking or referring – ‘anumana’ culminates into knowing by experiencing – ‘anubhavam’. To realize is to experience the Truth or Reality in its manifold dimensions. It constitutes a shift from the ideal to the real, from abstract concepts to spiritual experiences. Experience is said to be the experience of subject about an object. Ultimate truth is an objective reality, which is to be experienced so as to be realized.

Brahman

Indian seers, right from the beginning had queried on the truth that exists externally. The External Force from which the world originated was the focus of their query and resultantly the Indian seers focussed their inquiry into the origin of the universe and considered themselves as a part of it. Hence the question of individual self did not appeal to them much of an importance. Their curiosity was to know as to where does this gigantic universe emerge from and the power
behind it that makes the world move according to certain rules and regulations? For these seers, the activating force of the universe was not a mere soulless mechanism. They invited the presence of a universal soul behind it.¹¹

According to Radhakrishnan, Upanishads give a specific name, which become the corner concept of the whole Vedic tradition of Indian thought.

The Upanishads raise the question; what is that reality which remains identical and persists through change? The word used in the Upanishads to indicate the supreme reality is Brahman. It is derived from the root brh. to grow, to burst forth. The derivation suggests gushing forth, bubbling over, ceaseless growth, brhattvam.²²

It is an example of the Indian philosophical mind of the rshis to inquire into the self of the world rather than the self of the individual. The Indian seers were in search of an omnipresent Principle–Atman—which is said to be the infinite Self. It is the force that makes the matter live and function in multiple ways as the universe. It is regarded as the all-working, all wishing, all tasting, all embracing, silent, unconcerned universal Soul. This ultimate principle is the Brahman. It is the eternal power of creation, sustenance, destruction and even liberation. Here a possible question may arise: What do we know about such a reality? What is our experience of that power?

If we trace the history of the word Brahman from its beginning through the latter, sustained, ontological use of it in the sense of being, it is noticed that the concept of Brahman comes comprehended in Sat, although, no doubt, Brahman
is Sat and Sat is Brahman. Accordingly, when we read about Sat we are inevitably reading about Brahman, but conversely, when we are reading about Brahman, we are always reading about Sat. It is also true that every important concept in the Upanishads appears not only in conjunction with but as inseparably identical with Brahman, whether language (Vak), mind (manas), or whatever. Thus it helps us to remember that the word Brahman originally indicated a power of being, known in the phenomenon of growth, expansion etc. Sankara defines it thus: "(It is called) Brahman because of the property of growing. It is the power whereby things, the world, and the gods themselves are and also are not."13 The Kena Upanisad depicts it effectively. Accordingly Brahman is regarded as the ultimate force that makes the dead matter a world of life. If such an outlook is not adequately demonstrated in the concept of Brahman then the ultimate power will be reduced to a mere generalization. Hence, even from the very beginning the term Brahman meant with reference to being.

Brahman as Prayer

The concept of Brahman is used in different senses or meaning in different texts by different personalities in different times.14

Brahman means originally prayer. Wherever it occurs in the Rgveda almost every time it means prayer. It is peculiar to prayer that in deep concentration with its emotional overflow the devotee feels himself elevated above his own individuality. This elevation is due to the emergence of certain heightened consciousness where the devotee obliterates the world-

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consciousness. Space, time and the multifarious factors of experience are transcended.

What is the power that we experience in prayer? The answer is said to be the power that is Brahman. Accordingly it may be said that the devotee experiences the power of Ultimacy in his prayer. Hence, the power that is felt within was considered as the other or caused by the other. It is stated in Taittiriya Brahmana, which says, "Brahman was the wood. Brahman was the tree, of which they have carved heaven and earth." It is from the power of Brahman that everything else originates. The above statement denotes the theological significance that is attached to the word Brahman besides the meditative transcendental experience. However, it is the same experience in prayer that paved way for the subjective notion of Atman as an internal principle. It culminated into an identity between Brahman and Atman. In fact, the word Brahman, which was meant originally prayer, expressed a subjective feeling. Later there was a philosophical development circled around the subjective feeling, which is different from the theological significance that was attached to the power that felt. The philosophical tendency with its metaphysical character gave rise to a subjective internal principle, which intensified the subjective feelings contributed to the later metaphysical enrichment of the concept of Atman. Hence the word Atman, gradually and increasingly, became the most striking and happy expression for the inner essence of the individual.
Atman

The inner essence of the individual is indicated in the concept of Atman, which contributed enormously to the development of the meaning of this term. It got developed in two directions – physical and metaphysical. In the physical aspect there are two states: either it simply means the physical human body, which may be considered as the primordial notion of the concept of atman. It has got two meanings of opposition and difference. It is opposed to the world yet different from other human bodies, though they are somewhat similar and belong to the same category. The sense of opposition is implied in its opposition to the world of both animate and radically to the inanimate. In such a case too, it lends the meanings of opposition to and different from the limbs. A third semantic content is quite special to the concept of atman in the development of its meaning. But it makes it central to the limbs. This notion of centrality derived its development in its metaphysical aspect culminated into an Identity with the Absolute. In respect of Atman and atma-vidya (self knowledge) as the theme which derives its interpretable meaning from the central identity postulate, the greatest of the statements of identity is “that thou art”, (tat vam asi) repeated nine times in Chandogya upanisad, the meaning is apprehended as “Self”. It is Sankara who through his bhasyas, teaches us that the meaning of ‘Self’ is concealed in the truth of identity which he sees as the essential import of all Upanishadic passages. Even when there is no express declaration of identity, it is implicitly there, and even the bare descriptions of Atman (i.e. Brahman) are indelibly stamped with it and the meaning of ‘Self’ emerges from this stamp.
Accordingly, Sankara argues that even the description “not this, not this” (neti, neti) really has the purpose of teaching identity. This is feasible, he suggests, because identity is conceptually and formally defined as the total absence of any relations — and relations imply separateness. Separateness is defined by species, quality and distinguishing marks. To negate such things is to assert identity. In Taittiriya Upanisad the physical aspect of individual is called as annamaya Kosa — the corporeal body. The Annamaya Kosa, which is translated as the outer sheath, envelops the other four inner sheaths of atman. The other four sheaths are metaphysical and opposed to the outer material self, which is the physical or bodily self.

The metaphysical aspect of the term atman is primarily opposed to its physical aspect. In this direction of development, it has got four aspects. In the first aspect it is considered as the ‘breath’ as opposed to the physical adjuncts. Taittiriya Upanisad declares it as pranamaya Kosa — the second sheath. In the second metaphysical aspect it is considered as ego or Aham. It is the psychological ego with its desires, wishes, aspirations, etc. In Taittiriya Upanishad it is known as manomaya atman — the mental self. It is the psychical sheath of willing self — the emotional self. In the third metaphysical aspect it is called consciousness so to say the conscious self or awareness or the rational, intellectual self. It is purely cognitive in nature. In Taittiriya Upanishad it is known as Vijnanamaya atman — self-consisting of consciousness. This sheath is said to envelop the inner most sheath. According to Taittiriya Upanishad it is the final sheath of atman and known as anandamaya Kosa — the self of blissfulness.
It is regarded as the essential sheath of an individual, the self-consisting of bliss. It is of the nature of qualitative existence as experienced. It is considered as the fifth metaphysical case where it means ‘soul’ and becomes essentially theological and metaphysical. The revolutionary nature of the conception of atman notwithstanding, it would not be proper to attempt to completely distance it from theological aspects and metaphysical speculations pertaining to the soul and supreme spirit.

Identity

As Brahman is the external principal underlying the world, atman is the internal principle of the individual human being. It is generally considered respectively as the supreme self and the individual self. Once these two concepts are established, a relationship between them is also inevitable. Radhakrishnan's study of Upanishads shows this fact as following:

"In the early prose Upanisads, atman is the principle of individual consciousness and Brahman is super personal ground of the cosmos. Soon the distinction diminishes and the two are identified. God is not merely the transcendent numinous other, but is also the universal spirit which is the basis of human personality and its ever-renewing vitalising power. Brahman, the first principle of the universe, is known through atman the inner self of man."

An important question that arises here is as to which of them is most prime? The answer is, the supremacy of both of these concepts can be considered from the vantage point of truth. From a theological point of view if
Brahman is prime, atman may be regarded as supreme from philosophical point of view. Atman is said to be the experienced foundation of certainty. Without this foundation Brahman is merely reduced to a conceptual generalization. The foundational value of the latter depends on the epistemological realization of the former. Hence, the concept of 'atman' dominated the philosophical arena. Atman as the ontological entity provided a substantial understanding of the concept Brahman. It is made up of the identity thesis between the two.

The concept of identity includes the intelligibility of the epistemological experience of Truth. Truth unfolds the unity of being to a greater degree. Reality cannot merely manifest from outside in a totally detached way to the subject who experiences it. Reality reveals itself as an insight so as to say, an intuitive inner experience of the subject. The subject in its inner aspect experiences Reality as identified purely as his inner being. The epistemological reality of identity or oneness leads to the identity thesis of inner reality and outer reality as atman and Brahman as soul and the Supreme Self. Thus the unintelligibility in the epistemological dimension turns out to be the ontological aspect. Howsoever limited this revealed experience is, it is the only possible exploration of Reality. The same fact makes, according to Radhakrishnan, an individual more than a mere individual.
“Narayana is the God in man who lives in constant association with nara, the human being. He is the immortal dwelling in the mortals. The human individual is more than the universe. He lives independently in his own inexpressible, infinity as well as in the cosmic harmonies. We can be one with all cosmic existence by entering into the cosmic consciousness.”19

This identity of the self and qua self is established in different ways such as in the mystic experience of prayer or in the blissful experience of the self or in the pure consciousness of self. It was the philosophical tendency that surrounded the concept of ‘atman’, which later ended in all these identity theses. Thus, Atman is regarded as the foundational entity upon which everything else can be postulated as existing and experiencing. By means of identity with atman, Brahman is granted absolute existence. Hence, Atman is Brahman and Brahman is atman or Brahman and atman are one and the same. It is experienced thus in the mystic experience of prayer. The experiences of the mystic tally with those of the Brahma-jnani and accordingly Brahman is primarily equated with ‘prayer’. Although the power is subjective it is an experience of Sat or Being.

In Taittiriya Upanishad the blissful sheath of self is explained. It is the blissful essence of self; it leads to the identity of the self as the oneness of its existence. Accordingly, blissfulness is regarded as unity. In this absolute unity or oneness there is no other to be afraid of. The question naturally arises here is: what did Brahman know by which it became all? The answer is: Brahman did
not know any other, as there is no other. Man in so far as he is that which is other to itself (anatma) should not be that to which identity of the self refers. Therefore, the identity of the self is shown as the infinite plenitude of Being, and as the only ground for Being to be no longer chained to beings or to a particular being. Chandogya Upanishad explains this blissful state of consciousness by means of the famous thesis of pure consciousness. The thesis of identity consciousness is adequately expressed in Chaturvakyas too.

According to Vedantic tradition, meaning of realization goes beyond mere experiences of the self qua Self. To realize the truth means to realize the identity between individual self and Ultimate Self. This identity is said to be the Truth/Reality and the realization of which is the culmination of Vedic enquiry.

This is beyond the sway of object-subject (visaya-visayin) co-ordinate predication. Consciousness is directed to itself as constituted of different layers of cover, which hides the space less "self" within. "Sankara in different places forces consciousness to reach an understanding of itself in this manner. He begins faithfully by giving an analysis of consciousness as having a structure of visaya and visayin (object and subject). These two belong to the respective spheres of operation of yusmat (the base form of the pronoun 'you' and its declensions) and asmet (the base from the pronoun I and its declensions) and have natures as opposite to each other as darkness and light. Accordingly, it is found to be a characteristic of everyday conduct of man (naisargika – lokavyavahara) to super impose each of these and its proportion upon the other) resulting, in such consciousness as "I am this", "this is mine" (aham idam, mama
Such mutual super-imposition (adhyasa) is due to the pervasive factor of false knowledge (mithya-jnanam). This false knowledge is so pervasive that one's knowledge of one's own self is conditioned, even though in the smallest degree by objectivity.

**Four States of Self**

All schools of Vedanta describe four states of consciousness. First state is the Waking state. In this state consciousness is projected outwards through internal and external sense organs and thus is engaged and confronted with the external objects. The second state is the dream state. In this state consciousness is engaged with illusory dream objects. Vedanta claims that when we are awakened those objects will get sublimed. What still remains is consciousness. It is pure consciousness without any objects. According to Vedanta just like dream objects, objects of waking state too will get sublimed if pure consciousness is realised. But do we have any such experience of total sublimation? Vedanta affirms that we experience it in our every day consciousness. That is the third state of the self namely 'susupti' i.e. deep sleep. This state is devoid of any object. But it does not mean that there is no experience or the self is absent. It means exactly the opposite. All knowledge process affirms three factors. The subject, the knower, the object, the known and the knowledge of the subject about the object; and the experience of the subject about the object as known. Knowledge cannot occur without the duality of the subject and object. If knowledge is absent, it means either that the subject or the object or both are absent. In deep sleep state we know nothing. There is
no knowledge about anything. But the subject consciousness is there. An evidence for such a claim is usually explained thus: that whenever we are awakened we know that we knew nothing and hence slept well. If the subject were absent we would not have come to know that we knew nothing and slept well. Here knowledge is present. It is because the objects were absent or so to say that consciousness without any object is pure consciousness. Hence it seems to be absent from both points of view of experience and knowledge. From the point of view of knowledge there is no object to know. From the point of view of experience only the pure consciousness exists and nothing else to experience other than pure consciousness which cannot become a datum of experience.

The above explications amply suggest the relative relationship of experience between subject-object dichotomy. Subject without any object to have the experience is beyond the ordinary relative relationship between subject and object. At the same time, it can transcend all objects. Then, what is the status of relative objects? According to Vedanta, those objects do not exist at all. The objective status is illusory. It may seem that if the subject as the inner reality exists and the external objects also exist then how can knowledge be impossible? In other words how do we lose the subject object relationship? Vedanta answers that these objects only seem to exist. But what does not seem to exist does really exist everywhere by pervading all objects. Pure consciousness is the reality that is filled up. It is said to be the true nature of self. That is the fourth stage of the self, which is called ‘turiya’ state, which is otherwise present in all previous stages of the self as well as pervading in the
objective non-self. Accordingly, the fourth Mahavakya says that Prnjanam Brahma. Brahman is pure consciousness.

Historical Deconstruction of Identity

There is a trend of bold idealism in Vedanta tradition beyond this identity. It is declared by some of the oldest texts of Upanishads that the sole reality is Atman. They deny whatever exists beyond Atman. It may be regarded as a bold standpoint beyond identity. Hence Atman is considered as the sure foundation of existence. To identify it with something unknown is only a presupposition. But the bold idealism suffers from the negation of a phenomenal world, as it is incorrigible to maintain both the poles equally existing. Phenomenal world exists only in an apparent way. It does not have foundational and experiential surety as Atman has. Yet phenomenal world is maintained as existing. It leads to a theory of pantheism and chiefly represented in Chandogya Upanishad, which suggests the identity of the universe with Atman.

Another theory that accounts for the phenomenal reality is the cosmogonism. It says that Atman is the cause and the world is the effect. Having created the world, Atman incorporated itself as the individual soul. Such a philosophical perspective further paved a way for the development of a kind of theism. According to this theory, the individual souls are different from the highest atman. Katha Upanishad suggests such a kind of theism. According to Katha Upanishad atman that created the world is different from the atman that lives in it. This type of theism is against the identity of individual atman and Ultimate Atman. This theism was later followed by Atheism. As the Ultimate
Atman gains its certification only in the individual atman, once these two principles are distinguished then it becomes very difficult to give certification to the highest principle. Having lost its sufficient certification it was later rejected by many thorough going realistic systems. As for instance Samkhya system proclaimed the existence of a material substance – prakrti and a multitude of individual atmans called purusas. The process of deconstruction is completed in Buddhism and also in Carvaka systems. They put forward the theory of apsycharism. According to this theory there is nothing called atman as an eternal, essential, internal principle. According to them, there is only a psycho-physical compound organism that exists. In general, it was the climax of realistic tendencies in Indian philosophies and the dominant teaching among them was of Gautama Buddha's.

Anatman

According to Buddha the fundamental truth is that existence is painful. Buddha's entire teaching was pragmatic in character, which cantered on the removal of human suffering. Buddha explained the reality as our mind and sense experience. He explains reality on either sides of human existence and the existence of world. According to him, the conditions that make an individual are precisely the same that give rise to suffering. The individual is constituted by five aggregates such as corporeality, sensations, perceptions, dispositions and consciousness. Human existence is the composite of these components. None of them is a permanent constituent. According to Buddha, a person is a process of continuous change with no fixed underlying entity such as atman. The
individual self is only a transitory subject of action. There is no metaphysical and eternal substance in it. The Karmic subtle body or samskara is not centred around a permanent external self or soul though it undergoes rebirth. All karmic elements are blown up or purified completely in Nirvana. Hence the person enjoys the perfect happiness in the present life. It is the state of removal of all Karmic influence with clear vision of reality as a process of becoming, although involved in the process, yet untouched by it. It is the detached experience of the reality itself – the Buddha state.

The course of suffering starts from the desire to possess something permanent. Such a desire springs forth from the ignorance of the nature of reality. The concept of permanent self, according to Buddha is a popular delusion. If self is something permanent, then there is no self. The stream of becoming is anatman. The basis of our experience is our individual self. To mistake it as something permanent is a wish for a permanent principle in our day-to-day life. But the very nature of impermanent self is deeply penetrated to the core of experience too. No particular experience is permanent as it is always penetrated by an absence in time. Experience is a play of presence and absence. Buddha's realistic aspect of teaching and philosophy provided considerable importance for the nature of experience itself. The self is a flow of presence and absence. Hence it is not a total nothingness. Anatman means absence of absolute presence. Consequently a wish for something permanent is inevitably to meet with dissatisfaction. It is further endangered by the nature of
external reality. The external world is also relative and mediated by cause effect relation in temporal dimension.

Nagarjuna expresses this inherent nature of the world with a little bit of philosophical cum poetic jargon like the following, which is followed by Jay L. Garfield’s commentary.

"Everything is real and is not real,
Both real and not real,
Neither real nor not real,
This is Lord Buddha's teaching.

This is the positive tetralemma regarding existence. Everything is conventionally real. Everything is ultimately unreal (that is, not unreal in just any sense, but unreal when seen from the ultimate standpoint). Everything has both characteristics – that is, everything is both conventionally real and ultimately unreal. Nothing is ultimately real or completely nonexistent. That is, everything is neither real in one sense nor not-real in another sense. Interestingly, the tetralemma can also be asserted in a negative form with some of the same force: Nothing is real (ultimately). Nothing is not-real (everything has a kind of reality). Nothing is both real and not-real (in the same sense – that would be contradictory). Nothing is neither real nor not-real (the law of the excluded middle). Both forms of the tetralemma are found in this text".20
Lord Buddha visualized the emptiness of permanence within impermanence. He wanted to get the transcendental experience of permanent happiness beyond the impermanent experience of impermanent world as well as impermanent self. The transcendental permanent reality is to be experienced as spiritual permanent happiness. It is the Reality of external Truth that causes the experience of bliss unlike the impermanent world that causes the experience of suffering.

The Spiritual bliss is different from intellectual pleasure as well that one may enjoy in philosophical speculation with the help of sophisticated concepts of metaphysical meaning such as Eternal Truth, Ultimate Reality, Transcendental Experience etc. According to Buddha in mundane experience also there are mistaken attitudes such as permanent world, permanent self, etc. This false attitude leads one to further false desire for permanent happiness in impermanent entities.

The mundane experience is impermanent in nature as a mixture of pleasure and pain. Because of the transient nature it results in suffering only. Nevertheless, the desire for permanent happiness is a true desire but only available in transcending the false attitude of deriving happiness from impermanent world. For this one should get access to the permanent Buddha world or 'Nirvana loka'. It is the Reality that causes permanent bliss to be experienced. Nagarjuna expresses this view of transcending conceptual thought and cognitive error but commits a serious error of mistaking transcendence as realisation of emptiness that goes straight against Buddha's teachings that proclaims transcendence as experiential reality of bliss of Nirvana. In
Nagarjuna's analysis such a positive reality and its experiential aspect is absent. Consequently, the experience of emptiness itself becomes a reality for him through which cognitive and conceptual fabrication of essence is removed.

“Action and misery having ceased, there is nirvana.

Action and misery come from conceptual thought.

This comes from mental fabrication.

Fabrication ceases through emptiness.\textsuperscript{21}

Jay. L. Garfield comments it in the following way:

“The diagnosis, though, of the predicament of samsara and the corresponding prescription are clear: Grasping, contaminated action, and suffering are rooted in delusion, and this delusion comes from cognitive error. The root delusion – the fundamental cognitive error – is the confusion of merely conventional existence with inherent existence. The realization of emptiness eliminates that fabrication of essence, which eliminates grasping, contaminated action, and its pernicious consequences.”\textsuperscript{22}

The world taken as permanent is only an appearance to be equal to the mistaken notion of permanent self. The wish for something permanent itself is the result of the impermanent nature of self. It is the impermanence of both the subject who craved and the object of craving that cause disappointment and sorrow. Between the two transitory poles what remains is suffering. Buddha's essential teaching is that the condition of suffering can be overcome and peace and
tranquillity can be experienced. It is the experience of the very nature of reality with a pure vision devoid of any misconception and karmic influence. Once this pure vision is attained by complete cessation of past karmic influences then there blossoms the world of Nirvana with full of bliss. Hence Buddha's teaching is not a doctrine of despair as commonly held. Rather it aims at neither the negation of a world and life nor to the establishment of a religious other world and a life after death but to remove suffering from one's day-to-day life causing the descend of the truth of Nirvana loka into the present world into the present life.

Nagarjuna explains this Buddhist doctrine replying to the opponents who claims consciousness as independent permanent self. Jay. L. Garfield's commentary upon Nagarjuna makes his argument explicit.

"Just as the birth of a son is said to occur
In dependence on the mother and father,
So consciousness is said to arise
In dependence on the eye and material form.

Here the opponent offers yet another argument in favour of the inherent existence of the visual faculty (and, by extension, the other sense faculties): Consciousness is a consequence of vision, and it surely exists – in fact, its existence, one might say is self validating. Given the reality of the effect, one might say, is self-real...... The reply consists in pointing out that the other faculties and aggregates, including introspection and consciousness, exist
and fail to exit in exactly the senses that vision and its objects exist and fail to exist: All are empty of inherent independent existence. But all exist conventionally. So the effect that, according to this interlocutor, exists inherently and demands that it exists, its causes also exist." 23

The temporal stream of consciousness, according to Buddha, was mistaken as an eternal substantial atman. It projects a world with absolute presence and may be regarded as the cognitive ego. Once it is mistaken as the permanent Principle, suffering becomes inevitable due to its automatic attitude to be in possession of something, which is permanent. Emotional aspects of the psycho-physical individual adds power to this cognitive egoistic attitude. It gives rise to the powerful field of 'Kamma' creating selfishness, greed etc. and ends in discontent suffering and rebirth.

"Therefore, Ananda, Kamma is the field, consciousness the seed and craving the moisture for the consciousness of beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving to become established in a lower realm. Thus there is re-becoming in the future." 24

Dhammas

The core of Buddha's teaching is the transitoriness of existence. Existence includes that of both the world and the individual. The changing nature of perishing and renewing essentially takes place in time. Time is one of the most crucial aspects of reality that Buddha never disregarded. If we see reality
only in spatial dimension, then it may seem to be permanent in both the cases of individual and the world. Once we include time then impermanence occurs. Devoid of time, perception of presence is a mere illusion. Nothing permanent in the transitory reality. Buddha called the time factor as dhamas i.e. microseconds. Time factor makes Reality a series of manifestations and extinctions. Reality consists in a succession and concantation of microseconds. Permanence is popular delusion. Hence there is a difference between the way things appear to be and the way that they actually are. The external world is relative. It is mediated by cause-effect relation, which is temporal in dimension. Permanence is only an appearance. Thus, Buddha departed from the main currents of traditional Indian thought in not asserting an essential or ultimate reality in things as well as in self.

"Monks, there are these four distortions of perception, four distortions of thought and four distortions of views. What Four? To hold that in the impermanent there is permanence: this is a distortion of perception, thought and views. To hold that in suffering there is happiness: this is a distortion of Perception, thought and views. To hold that in what is non-self there is a self: this is a distortion of perception, thought and views. These, monks, are the four distortions of perception, thought and views."25
Sunyavada

Buddha had always emphasized on experience than speculation. Reality is to be experienced. Truth is to be lived. Seeing must be living and vice versa. But this emphasis upon experience was later missed and caused a great damage to Buddhism in practice and to the essential teachings of Buddha.

In the case of the concept ‘Sunya’ it was so crucial culminating to Nihilism. By this concept, Buddha meant the absence of the ultimate eternal truth in transient world. The truth is to be experienced internally rather than craving for the worldly objects, which are ‘sunya’ of it. According to Sangharakshita, “the lankavatara Sutra, mahayana Text explains this fact:

“Despite its apparatus of what might be mistaken, at first sight, for imperfectly systematized speculative philosophy, the emphasis of the sutra throughout is on the necessity of a direct, personal experience of Reality. According to Suzuki ‘the thesis of the sutra must be regarded as centered upon the idea of an inner perception of the deepest truth, which goes beyond language and reasoning’, and further, the ‘the Lankavatara has come to see that the whole of the Buddhist life is not in merely seeing into the truth, but in living it, experiencing it, so that there will be no dualism in one’s life or seeing and living: seeing must be living, and living seeing, with no hiatus between them except in languages.’

For Buddha ‘emptiness’ and ‘voidness’ meant the absence of eternal substance in transient phenomenon. But the phenomenon appears to be with
permanent substance. Hence, there is a difference between the way things appear to be and the way things really are. Here Buddha meant phenomenon, which is empty of an eternal presence. He does not mean phenomenon itself is empty or the very nature of phenomenon is nothingness. Whereas, Buddhist's defined phenomena as actual absence and conceived reality as nothingness. Accordingly, they philosophised that the phenomenon is not real because reality is the absence in it. Reality means eternal presence of non-transient substance. Hence phenomenon is unreal and nothingness. Nothingness is the truth. Having considered phenomenon as an emptiness or void, they regarded reality as but nothingness. They interpreted nothingness as the final way of things rather than the way of appearance. The way of appearance is inherently the way of non-existence too. Thus, nothingness becomes an expression for the ultimate truth and emptiness is the intrinsic nature of things and existence. If appearance is relative to cause and conditions, then origination is impossible. Nothing can originate from nothingness. Non-origination is the truth. Reality cannot be originated from phenomena. Reality is but absolute nothingness. Reality cannot be conceived of something that is other than nothingness. Whatever is born is also empty of its own inherent or intrinsic existence. There is no self-existence, hence reality is non-existence or 'sunya'.

"Bodhisattva should stand in Perfect Wisdom through standing in Emptiness. This means that he should not take his stand on the aggregates, sense-fields or elements, nor indeed on
any of the other doctrinal categories from the four foundations of mindfulness, right up to Supreme Buddhahood."\textsuperscript{27}

This is Lankavatara's version of emptiness. For him, all elements, all categories and all Holy persons including Buddha and even nirvana itself are empty. The conscious experiential Reality of Nirvana that blossoms at the end of the suffering as the spiritual happiness is interpreted as unreal and empty. On the other hand, in Nagarjuna version of emptiness we can see that he equates nirvana with samsara. For him, the conventional reality is emptiness and hence nirvana is emptiness. It is just like the inherent emptiness of a concept or a thought.\textsuperscript{28}

Buddha used the concept of 'sunya' for spiritual upliftment that one should not get stick to worldly objects rather one should transcend them for better experiential reality of Nirvana. It is the perfect goal of life and not as thought of an otherworldly life. It is the perfect life without suffering having reached the end of the transient world. Buddha expresses it in his conversation with Rohitassa, a son of the devas.

"It is wonderful, Lord! It is amazing, Lord, how well it was said by the Blessed One that by going it is not possible to know, see or reach the end of the world, where one is not born, does not age, does not die, does not pass away, and is not reborn."

"Indeed, friend, so do I declare, but I do not say that one can make an end to suffering without having reached the end of the world. And I further proclaim, friend, that it is in this fathom-long
body with its perceptions and thoughts that there is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world.\textsuperscript{29}

Sankara understood Buddha's doctrine very well. The self-existing self that is not born and does not die is not in the phenomenon self. It is transcendental both in the case of individual self and universal self. Sankara was certain that Buddha experienced it. Thus Sankara did not hesitate to propose a transcendental reality other than the phenomenal self. For this, he took recourse to the Upanisadic concept of Nirguna Brahman. Accordingly, Sankara interpreted Buddha's silence not as negation but as an implicit affirmation, which he followed in his two-fold methodology of negation cum affirmation of transcendental Reality. For Sankara both the individual self and universal self are transcendental in nature and both being transcendental are identical.

**The Transcendental**

To a great extent unlike other Buddhists Sankara understood Buddha's teaching as the negation of the Buddhists. He followed Buddha's negation of the world as the absolute Reality. In this way he negated the Upahishadic concept of sattadvaita. Both regarded the ultimate reality as supra rational as it is beyond the scope of reason. It cannot be pictured merely by preaching. All linguistic exercise is futile in the description of absolute reality.

Discourse can give us only directions to reach the ultimate reality.\textsuperscript{30} Reality is to be experienced. According to Buddha, Nirvana state is such an experience. Having no such experiences, later Buddhists simply philosophised
with reason and ended the whole exercise with nihilism. In fact, sunyavada made a shift of negation from negating the absolute reality in the phenomenal world to the absolute reality in itself. Sankara wanted to reject such a sunyavada partly because Buddha didn’t mean it or to show that Vedantic transcendental thesis is at par with Buddha’s teaching. Hence Sankara challenged Buddha’s experiential silence with a philosophical jargon. It was necessary for Sankara to repudiate another philosophical jargon of sunyavada.

Madhvacharya accuses Sankara that his concept of Nirguna Brahman demonstrates sunyavada under the pretext of Vedanta. According to Madhvacharya Nirguna Brahman as transphenomenal entity is nothing but nothingness. He considers Sankara’s explanation of ultimate reality as a sheer abstraction, which is devoid of any content. The ultimate reality transcends the rational scheme of things and stands in splendid isolation. It is acosmic, i.e. nisprapanca. Sankara’s acosmic view was purported to Buddha’s doctrine of Sunyavada. In acosmic view, Nirguna Brahman is the reality of which the universe is but an appearance. In his effort to reject the later Buddhistic version of emptiness in order to establish transcendental reality, Sankara had to risk phenomenal reality. In this first step he rejected cosmic view in which Brahman is considered as the all-inclusive ground of the universe. This view was no longer tenable for Sankara, as it was for Buddha because of its transient nature. For Buddha, the ultimate reality was in experiential dimension as Nirvana. Sankara felt it so necessary that he should, somehow, get succeed to have a touch with ultimate reality, otherwise, it will become sheer nothingness. Hence,
he resorted to the notion of intuitive experience. It is the experience of absolute unity beyond subject object dichotomy. What Sankara meant here is the internal atman, which is transcendental in character. Or else it will become the anatman due to the transient nature of psychophysical organism. If Sankara had followed Buddha then, atman will be reduced to anatman. But Sankara, having taken up Upanishadic notion of prajna tried to overcome this difficulty. Thus, one of the five components of Buddha’s anatman, i.e. consciousness, was made transcendental by Sankara and was able to retain atman from its transitoriness to transcendental. As it is the basis of experience, Sankara identified atman with Brahman. For this, as the referential aspect, he largely depended on chaturvakyas which formulated the Bedrock of Sankara’s Advaita Vedanta. In order to make the identity thesis of the self qua Self, Sankara sought the dimension of the individual self and thereby the intuitive experience of communion. Thus to reiterate what we have discussed above has been expressed by Sankara in a dialectical form in the following words: “As long as the knowledge of the Self which is to be sought after has not arisen, so long the self is a knower, but the same knower will turn out to be the self sought after, free from all evil and blemish”.31

It is true that it will become sheer abstraction from a philosophical standpoint unless such a reality is not to be experienced. In this case what is depicted by Sankara was so crucial. The first consequence was the refutation of the realistic status of the world which Buddha could present providing a venue for the ethical life. Secondly Sankara had to refer the upanishadic concept of maya
in order to justify the refutation. But for Sankara risking the realistic status of the world was a kind of denial of ethical life, so to say, the evolution of life force. Though the unborn permanent soul is pure devoid of any karmic influence, our daily life is within the karmic field accompanying suffering. The Karmic jiva cannot simply identify with the pure atman or soul. The karmic-jiva should untie all bonds of karma through ethical life with a true perception of reality. Then only the striving individual can enjoy the perfect bliss as the essential nature of pure spirit. For this goal of life Buddha considered the world as transient and not as an end in itself.

In his teaching, Buddha strongly asserted that the ontological status (that is, whether it possess existence) and character of the unconditioned nirvana cannot be delineated in a way that does not distort or misinterpret it. But what is more important is that he asserted with even more insistence that nirvana can be experienced and experience in this present existence – by those who, knowing the Buddhist truth, practice the Buddhist path.\(^3\)\(^2\)

According to Sankara, the intuitive communion is such that it took recourse to communion between two transcendental concepts such as atman and Brahma or consciousness and ultimate reality. Here consciousness is treated as an eternal entity, which is identified with Brahma or itself. It is the pure consciousness. Pure consciousness is already at hand in the form of identity.
Consciousness becomes transcendental in the sense of pure consciousness being devoid of all contents of consciousness i.e. phenomenal entities or nama-rupas. For Sankara, both atman and Brahman in its transcendental aspects was very easy to identity. Once all phenomenal contents are removed from consciousness, consciousness will transcend the world in its experiential dimension. Thus Sankara's advaita became the latest and strongest version of identity, to say, more exactly, the pure identity. But this position can be interrogated by arguing that the transcendental experience is nothing but the experience of nothingness as all phenomenal contents are removed. In this sense, like other later Buddhists, Sankara also collapses into sunyavada. Here, what helps Sankara is the textual reference to Upanishadic chaturvakyas. Textual fact cannot be considered as an experiential fact. The concept of transcendental consciousness is also problematic. Consciousness becomes transcendental to its phenomenal objects by removing them by Nidhidhyasana. But it does not mean that consciousness is transcendental to itself. It is just one of the components (of five components) of anatman as Buddha has taught. After all, consciousness is transcendental only in its trans-spatial aspect. Consciousness functions essentially in time dimension. To transcend time means to negate its function and thereby to negate experience. Hence Sankara's intuitive experience does not go beyond the unconscious experience that is explained in Chandogya Upahishad.
Nirguna Brahman

The concept of Nirguna Brahman is advocated by a two-fold methodology of negation and affirmation. Its demonstration of negation is explicit whereas that of affirmation is implicit. Nirguna Brahman is devoid of all gunas or qualities. Hence, no positive explanation is possible about it. It can be explained only negatively – ‘Neti, Neti’. Hence, it is not an object of knowledge, it transcends all categories of understanding. It is devoid of unity and diversity, which are the character of empirical reality. Brahman transcends all empirical attributes. Hence once we negate all the immanent qualities we are implicitly affirming the transcendental nature. Negation is always preliminary to affirmation. It is impossible to deny without affirmation. This affirmation is not an affirmation of an empirical object but transcendent reality. Hence it is not an intellectually explicit act but an intuitively implicit one. The denial of the attributes of the absolute presupposes a deep positive content. It is so deep and different from the ordinary nature. In order to negate the prevailed notion ultimate reality as nothingness, he took ultimate reality as transcendental. Both Buddha and Sankara emphasized on the philosophies of world negation. Buddha’s view was realistic and negated only the presence of ultimate reality in the world but never considered it illusory. Sankara negated the world as illusory in order to establish a transcendental permanent reality. Hence the only difference is that what Buddha considered as unexplainable, Sankara challenged to explain. For this he negated the sensual world as illusory and impermanent and ultimate reality as transcendental, which is not a fact of ordinary experience. For this explanation
he took help of Upanishadic concept of Nirguna Brahman. He considered ultimate reality as experiential and realizable. In order to prove this fact he had to inevitably posit a permanent self. It should be conscious in order to make experience possible and to enjoy the bliss of the Ultimate reality, which is possible by intellectual Nididhasana. It might have been possible by Sankara himself. A non-self unconscious organism cannot enjoy the Bliss. This experience is not relative but intuitive where we get intuitive communion with the transcendental. On the other side he wanted to reject Buddhist notion of non-self too. In this case it can be argued that he didn't comprehend Buddha's essential teaching or biased by the traditional notion of permanent self. In order to establish a permanent self as having an actual experience of the permanent reality he took help of Upanishadic notion of Atmanadvaita together with the four Mahavakyas which formed the bedrock of Sankaras Advaita philosophy. Here the ultimate reality is experienced internally. This experience is not a relative mode of experience emerging from subject-object dichotomy. It is intuitive experience where reality is experienced as identified with the self. In order to explain this he took help of Upanishadic Mahavakyas. But the result is that by positing a permanent conscious self he was positing an illusory ego self. In order to make it permanent both in its nature and in its experience he made it transcendental with the help of the notion of Atman rejecting time and the process. It becomes a timeless self-identity. Thus it is free from its subject object relativity. Ultimately it collapses into a sort of linguistic conceptual exercises. We can see such metaphysical concepts contribute to philosophical
experience a lot of irresolvable problematic and thereby providing unknowable entities.

**Deconstructive Nature of Language**

The origin of the word atman is doubtful. However, the word atman came in the beginning to signify something in contrast with something else. It got expression in a series of conceptual contrasts like physical/metaphysical, spiritual/material, subtle/gross, inner/outer, internal/external, temporary/eternal permanent/changing, mental/corporeal, trunk of the body or centre/limbs of the body or periphery, essence/non-essence, real/appearance, abstract/concrete, relative/absolute. In this sense the notion of atman is relative. It points to something, which it is not. It expresses its meaning in relation to what it is not. In this case the concept of atman is not positive. It is negative because of its dependence on something other which it is not.

It is the peculiarity of philosophy as metaphysical speculation that such relative-negative concepts are very frequent. Another feature of such relative-negative concepts is that it will exclude all positive contents.

By negating the contents they acquire somewhat a metaphysical status. Because of this negation having lost all positive existential expressive aspects, they express themselves only in relation to what they are not. Hence they are mere empty abstract relative concepts. Hence they will refer to something that is eternally unknowable. Thus they attain great value for the science of metaphysics. Philosophy as metaphysics deals with such eternal themes. Philosophy calls those themes as never appearing essence of things.
avoid this problem of eternally unknowable metaphysics, Vedanta had to reach a certain inner point of experience. Hence, they considered atman as a principle of experience, the precise point of existence that reveals itself. These points got expressed in consciousness, intuitive objects of consciousness, meanings etc. It was really the restless desire of man to penetrate the depth, to the positive genuine existence of experience.

It was caused by a certain extent, the nonessential nature of the external world. In one direction, to get rid of this external non-essential existence, they posited an eternal internal existence. Once this point of essential eternal existence is lost in experience, the whole exercise collapses into linguistic dichotomic network. On the other hand, Sankara made positive existence both internal and external as transcendental. It was also another way of losing all positive contents and being trapped into linguistic network. Still there is a way of experience of subtle levels of reality in mystic and prophetic experience. The subject can experience it in the different states like swapna, susupti, turiyam and turiyatitam. But this realistic dimension of experience is lost in Sankara’s advaitic jargon.

In Sankara’s philosophy we see the same network of conceptual contrasts to the maximum. In the beginning he rejects the subject/object dichotomy as in the criticism of upanishadic suttadvaita. According to this thesis, Brahman is the universal being. Sankara says that ultimate reality is not something objective rather identical with the individual self. Here he refutes subject/object dichotomy with the concept of 'transcendental'. But this transcendental standpoint is not
positive; it is only a shift from one type of dichotomy to another type of
dichotomy. From subject/object, unity/diversity, and identity/difference to
transcendent/immanent, acosmic/cosmic and absolutistic/ theistic.

Nevertheless, it is the same category of logocentric fundamental contracts
on which all linguistic networks depend. In this sense there is nothing positive in
them. Sankara uses explicit/implicit dichotomy to bring out the demonstrative
status of his methodology of negation/affirmation which itself is nothing
demonstrative but merely dependent contrast. Positive/Negative binary is used
to explain reality as Neti, Neti. In another way, Sankara's experiential voidness is
expressed as a 'desire for centre' in his textual reference.

In Buddhism there was an attempt to find out the problematic of the
language as a structure of difference. One such an example is seen in
Lankavatara as he discriminates between the meaning or the spirit and the word
or letter of the text.

"(At the same time) a sharp distinction is drawn between
words and meaning, in particular between the spirit and the letter of
the sacred texts, any confusion of the one with the other being
declared ruinous to the spiritual life and destructive to the whole
tradition. The relation between the two is like that between the tip
of the finger and the object to which it points. Just as one should
look, not at the finger, but at the thing or person indicated, so
instead of getting attached to the letter of the Scriptures the disciple
should direct his attention to their meaning, that is to say, to the
Ultimate Reality to which they are pointers. Whereas meaning is alone with itself (vivikta) and the cause of Nirvana, words are bound up with discrimination and are the carrier of transmigration. To be learned in the Scriptures means to be conversant not so much with words as with meaning and significance.\(^{33}\)

In this explanation the original problematic still remains unexplored. It considers meaning as opposed to the superficial meaning as the Ultimate Reality. Words in a sacred texts like finger tips refer to the reality of holy meanings. Here the holy logos are the principle of presence that are to be deconstructed. According to Derrida to hear the voice of God from a holy text is a dangerous illusion. For him, meaning as such is a supplement and an addition to Reality. It is not Reality itself. It is added to the Reality and it replaces the Reality in a strange logic of supplementarity. Lankavatara discriminates between original meaning and superfluous meaning which is no longer tenable since all meanings are illusions. To mean is not to be. Hence Lankavatara’s linguistic analysis does not go to the depth of the problematic of language but only affirms the phonocentric standpoint.

**Karmic Samskara**

Buddha’s teachings of two main principles of Nairatmavada and Prititvasamutpada are interpreted as nothingness. In fact, in Buddha’s teaching, the psycho psychical person is there. Besides, he is with the Karmic subtle body i.e. samskara. Genuinely speaking, it is equal to the religious soul. According to Buddha it undergoes rebirth in accordance with the Karmic influences. This is
somewhat equal to the teachings of Jesus Christ in New Testament. It is according to the deeds that the soul goes to the hell or heaven. Here the determining factor is Karma, not the eternal substance like consciousness. It is karma that receives its results.

"I declare, monks that actions willed, performed and accumulated will not become extinct as long as their results have not been experienced, be it in this life, or in subsequent future lives. And as long as these results of actions willed, performed and accumulated have not been experienced, there will be no making an end to suffering, I declare."\textsuperscript{34}

What the vedantic tradition found wrong in Sankara is the absence of permanent substance as the essence of individual. Vedanta also, in effect, or implicitly, denies a permanent eternal religious soul in individual as long as they emphasize on consciousness as the eternal self, because it is only a by-product of nervous mechanism of brain. Indeed, it is true that, rather Buddha accepts Samskara as the subtle karmic body. Accepting such a karmic existence, it underlies the importance of ethical life without which religion cannot exist. Moreover the notion of eternal substance is implicitly against the notion of "Moksha". If there is such a substance Moksha will become impossible in its ultimate sense. The eternal substance will remain alienated from the ultimate making union impossible. In order to avoid this dilemma, Vedanta identifies the self with the Ultimate. Both are one and the same. But it would be extreme exaggeration that an individual is essentially God or Ultimate Reality. Hence

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Moksha is already attained by means of simple thought exercise. On the other side, it may be true that an individual will evolve with Karmic purification to Godhood like a seer or a prophet. For this standpoint, Buddha’s teachings are not contradictory and Buddha himself is an example for this. But whatever is evolving cannot be an unchanging eternal substance. And such a substance is absent in the evolving entity. It is as well true with the external world. But it does not mean sunyavada. The phenomenal reality is there as a process. The process is real, only that the unchanging eternal substance is absent in this transitory nature. Accepting dhammas or microseconds, Buddha emphasizes the world of everyday life which is the venue for ethical life. Even if there is a seed that is the starting point of life force activating matter it cannot exist in the life-body as an eternal presence. It would be quite foolish to search for the seed in a tree that is sprouted out of it. Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru, a seer from Kerala who lived in 20th century, speaks about such a starting substantial seed, the seed of jiva-jivavittu. According to his teachings, it is not Brahman as a whole, but only a part of it. It can be seen through vision. To see it in the vision is to see it in its initial position in time dimension of reality. It is the utpati of jiva. Here, Karunakaraguru gives a different version of Neti, Neti. It is not mere intellectual intuitive negation/affirmation. It is rather actual visual experience. One individual sees one’s own past karmic bodies of previous births and negates one by one until he reaches the starting point – jivante-utpati. There he sees the actual seed of jiva- jiva-vittu. It may dazzle with pure light. But it is not Brahman. It is only a part of Brahman. Its’ nature is only likeness to Brahman.
and not identity. Hence, Guru forbade, “Aham Brhmasmi”. It can be exemplified in the following way. Jivavittu is like a particle of photon of which sun ray is made of that emerges from the sun. It is only a part of sun since it emerged from it. The seed of jiva is not in physical body nor in spatial reality but in the beginning of the body in time dimension, the subtle karmic body in time dimension of reality. Karuakaraguru calls this experience as Trikalajyana – the knowledge of past, present and future. Hence, a seer is a Trikalajnani, a deerghadarsi, a foreseer, a prophet.

The Indian Yearning for Presence

Consciousness functions with the operative oppositional concepts on the basis of logos. Hence, a central point is privileged obviously. In Vedantic tradition the Absolute Identity is such that. This is the Indian Version of metaphysics of presence. This is the Indian yearning for the presence. It expresses the Indian desire for a centre. It is an intellectual but metaphysical aspiration of consciousness. It obviously springs fourth from the absence of the absolute presence. Consciousness by means of its functional aspect in time dimension projects an ego self. By the very nature of its illusory projection it aspires for a presence, an origin, a centre. Since in functional aspects its phase of retention is dominated, it has an automatic tendency to search for the origin in the past. Since retention projects protention, it will centralize the past into future. Hence, the ego self gets its intellectual conviction and clarification of the presence as original and absolute. Hence, in Indian yearning for presence it always tended to fall back on Vedantic identity as the absolute principle as well
as authority. Such a search was not only an intellectual pursuit in Indian context; it was possessed by the Indian spiritual Masters and activists. Even when their heart throbbed for the other, their intellect got convinced of metaphysical presence with its textual reference. Such a textual reference hints to the self-satisfaction and not to the spiritual accomplishment. Deconstructive textual analysis shows that there lies nothing outside text. Hence, textual reference as ultimate source and to consider it as ultimate authority points to the absence of experiential fulfilment. In India it was the characteristic of spiritual pursuit. Only a very few Masters could overcome it, say, for example, Gautama Buddha. According to Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru it is not a mere desire for presence. It has got the element of Karmic influence that haunts from the spiritual atmosphere. Such an identification of the ego-self with the Almighty had become a ‘Karma’ and hangs in the subtle time dimension of Reality. Since such a Karma is done by a great soul its power is so deep that it prevails ages after ages. According to Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru, the ego centralization of ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ with its proclaimed identity with the ultimate is not sheer conceptual derivation. Rather his spiritual experience reveals that it was an error that happened in vision of a certain great sage called Satyatrana ages and ages ago. There is difference between the two concepts such as ‘consciousness’ and ‘light’ in Indian spiritual texts. The former is the centralized term of logocentrism, the enterprise thought and the latter is the marginalized by metaphysics. In deconstructive reversal it is argued that consciousness is a medium through which light is experienced or perceived. Here, light is the other; more accurately
the source of light. However, it is the presence of light that heightens consciousness into an ecstatic condition of truth perception.

The Phenomenon of Non-Phenomenal Light and Word

Spiritual experience of 'light' by many seers across all religious traditions can hardly be under-estimated as far as the knowledge of ultimate reality is concerned. Almost all the seekers of truth experienced light of heaven as man's salvation. In order to get admitted to God's presence, they transgressed the boundaries between the phenomenal world and the world of light. In order to get such experiences, one need to transcend the sphere of sensation, emotion and speech-thought. By means of intensive meditation he reaches the realm of the immortal, of the really existent, where the 'light of light' is seen. Man begins in the darkness of ignorance. Once the presence of light is reached consciousness is awakened to the vision of truth. To represent the phenomenon of vision of 'light', almost in all traditions, the image of sun is used generally. Of course, the experience reveals it as the dazzling sun with a flood of oceanic light. Indians, Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, etc. in their age-old scriptures depicted the sun as an aye, the eye of heaven, the eye of universe, the eye of God, God himself. Nothing can escape the eye. None can deceive the eye. It does not mean that the phenomenal sun though it can be considered as the actual symbolization with ritualistic practices based on the spiritual experience. However, the sun and its physical light represent most nearly the light-form of God. As an evidence for this experience of such a reality, it follows the exalted psychic state of happiness or bliss as a source of inspiration. When one is blessed with such an experience
it leads to glory, victory, delivery, immortality, etc. The ancient Babylonian mystic poets sang that the light is joy, life and welfare.  

Biblical Tradition

According to the Biblical tradition it is said that in the city of God there is radiant Light. All Biblical prophets regarded light as the supreme. All semantic religions are based on such experiences. St. John teaches God himself as 'light'. According to Corpus Hermeticum God, the father is light and life.

Zoroastrianism

In Zoroastrian tradition 'light' is of supreme importance. Ahura Mazdah in his visible form is described as the sun and the light. Fire is considered as identical with his Holy Spirit. In this tradition there is a distinction between Ohrmazd and Ahriman. The substance of Ohrmazd is light opposite to that of Ahriman. The former is hot, moist, bright, sweet-smelling whereas the latter is cold, dry, heavy, dark and stinking,

"Ohrmazd was on high in omniscience and goodness; for infinite time he was ever in the light. That light is the space and place of His, some call it the Endless Light."  

According to Sassanian Zoroastrianism the divine personality is made up of Ohrmazd himself. The Ohrmazd, his Space, Religion and Time together constitute the four hypostases of the one God. In this tradition Space means Endless Light. It might signify that space is nothing but the flow of divine light that emerges from God. Religion means divine omniscience or wisdom.
The use of the term 'light' in a religious sense was present in India. This Highest Principle was denoted by the term *Jyotih* in Vedas. It is generally defined as that by contact with which man becomes illuminated. In Indian tradition the origin of light is considered as suprahuman. This powerful light penetrates into the heart of man and illumines his mind. Hence, Vedic people used to pray to God for the blessings of light. For example, Vedic poets pray to Brahaspati for the bright substance that procures brilliant light.

"brahaspate ati yad aryo arhad dyumad, vibhati kratumaj janesu / yad didayac chavasa rtaprajata tad asmasu dravinam dhehi citram" "O Brhaspati, put us in possession of the bright substance which excels in worth that of the outsider; which procures brilliant light, and is resourceful among men, which shines powerfully, O thou that art born of the rta (i.e. son or manifestation or the universal law which is at the same time truth)".37

In Rigveda we can see even one God is named after fire-Agni. He is the god of light and inspiration. He brings the light of the trembling of inspiration. This light enables man to see vision. Moreover, to see his light itself is vision. The light of *Agni* opens one's eyes. It is considered that the light is placed in his heart: 13, 22 and 2 "O Agni, help us to light and to people with those lights of thine in the sun that overspread the sky by their beams; O ye gods, bestow light upon us with the lights that are in kine and horses...."38 In Rigveda 6,9 Agni Vaisvanara is glorified as both external and internal light. Agni enables man to
see in both external and internal aspects. The light that is placed in the heart is Jyotih. The internal light glows spontaneously. It is also denoted by the term dhitiḥ in 8,6,8. The internal light of intuitive or inspired insight or knowledge is also called Keter. At times, in its internal aspect, light is also considered as the faculty of intelligence, vision and insight. The term light is also used for victory, welfare, etc. In Vedas light is also considered as immortality for which the rsis pray. It can be considered both in internal and external aspect. In the former case realizing which one becomes immortal since the light is eternal. In the latter case one becomes immortal uniting with the Ultimate light, God the everlasting reality.

Upanishads

In the Upanishads the term Brahman is used to denote light. It is also known as the ‘light of lights’. According to Mundaka Upanisad, Brahman is pure without stain and the ‘light of lights’- jyotisam jyotih. Maitri Upanishad states: “the formless Brahman is real, it is light”39 Svetasvatara Upanisad considers purusa – the individual soul – as imperishable light.40 According to this Upanishad purusa is the colour of the sun, beyond darkness. This Upanisad shows a sense of difference between individual soul and Ultimate. The colour of sun or ray of sun as purusa and the sun himself as the Parampurusa i.e. God. In Brahdaranyaka Upanisad the term light is used to denote sun, moon, fire, speech, and self in a hierarchical order. Self or atman is the last in that order in which the highest is the sun.41
Buddhism

In Buddhist texts terms for highest insight or knowledge are accompanied by the term 'light'. According to "Samy Nik" the conscious recognition of clear light induces an ecstatic condition of consciousness. It is clear that there is a difference between the concept 'light' and that of consciousness. Consciousness itself is not self-illuminating substance rather consciousness is illuminated by light to higher states. It makes Buddhism different from vedantic tradition in which consciousness itself is considered as the self-illuminating substance. In Buddhism, ecstatic condition of consciousness is called illumination. It is the awakened consciousness of means of light. It is the characteristics of Saints’ and successful mystics.

According to Miss. Harnez, in Pali texts there are two words that denote 'light' viz 'abhasa' and 'dassana'. Both the lights are produced in meditation. The light 'abhasa' gives rise to the capacity for extra-ordinary perception. This vision is known as non-psychical deva-vision. 'Dassana' is mediated for the perception of objects otherwise seen by the senses. According to the text both the light do not occur simultaneously. Once the vision of the light happens then there comes knowledge, insight and wisdom. According to the text Itivuttaku such monks who has this vision is the producer and bringer of light. They are known as teacher, caravan-leaders, passion-scatters, dispellers of gloom, torch-bearers, enlighteners.

"According to the author of the Suttanipata the inspired wise ones (dhira) are bringers or producers of light (pjojotakard). The first
among them is, of course, the noble Gotama (5,19; 11,36), the fair uprising dawn of light (suppabhatam suhutthidam, 1,9; 178) “Vision, light and wide wisdom” are indeed his (3,6,539): jutima mutima pahutapanno: Gloom wraps the shrouded, darkness wraps the blind; but for the wise there is an opening, a very light for those with eyes” (aloko passatam iva; ibid. 3,12; 763)⁴⁴

Metaphysical Tradition of Vedanta

According to A. Hoherberger, Ramanuja teaches the supreme lesson of the Upanisads that Brahman is the immaculate light, pure clearness.⁴⁵ According to texts like Sri Bhasya and Bhagavat Bhasya, light is the Highest Principle that illumines all phenomenal light. It diffuses itself in all parts of the physical personality. Sankara considers consciousness as atman, the concept of consciousness in its general sense of self can be considered as different from ‘light-form’ in the spiritual sense of soul. For Sankara consciousness is the essential nature of self whereas for Ramanuja it is one of the accidental qualities. For Buddha, the unborn light-form is a fact of visual experience and better to be silent about it to those that are inexperienced. Moreover, to be considered it as sheltered in the body as eternal presence will definitely lead to an egoistic tendency of Atman as in Upanisadic proclamation as ‘Aham Brahmasmi’.

Sankara, on the one hand, accepted Buddha’s no-soul theory and undermined Upanisadic experiential aspect of light-form or ‘jyotirupam’ and on the other hand, rejected Buddha’s theory of ‘anatman’ and considered consciousness as transcendental self-presence. In a different sense, Sankara
combined both the upanisadic concept of 'light' and 'consciousness' and considered consciousness as self-illumined. For Sankara, it means consciousness is experienced intuitively and immediately by consciousness as self-consciousness. But the transcendental non-empirical nature of consciousness lead him to conclude in 'Aham Brahmasmi' positing essential identity or pure identity between atman and Paramatman or Brahman. After Sankara, soul and God from the experiential aspect of light got a crucial shift to metaphysical speculative enterprise with reference to the concept consciousness. The Vedic and Upanisadic experiential aspect of light was concealed by the Vedantic immediate and intuitive experience of self-consciousness. Sankara was successful by this attempt to make the Vedantic truth most popular and widespread all over India sweeping away Buddhism from its motherland. He knew very well that if he had stuck to only the spiritual experiential aspect, the truth would remain to a few members of spiritual aspirants. Here he again made use of Buddha's practical intelligence of keeping silent about highest spiritual experiential reality and revealing only these things that are common to day-to-day experience of people which will enable them to ascent to spiritual experiences and that made Buddhism spread across the world. In the case of Vedantic or Advaitic religion the experiential aspect of truth came to be concealed by metaphysical principles. It ended in a tradition of interpretation as a textual interpolation rather than experiential interpolation of reality. It made everyone without spiritual experience to indulge in thought-exercises about eternal truth and reality. Hence in Vedanta tradition metaphysics
dominated especially in the form of interpretation of Upanishads marginalizing the experiential sparks in the text. It can be considered as the period of continuity with the process of concealment. In metaphysical tradition, logic played the major role as a strategy to furnish truth. Naturally metaphysicians or interpreters adopted only those concepts and texts that are befitted to their logical tools as well as to their intellectual understanding. Moreover, only those terms can be used as communicating to people.

**Tradition of Experience**

Sankara established the identity thesis even among the common mass in a convincing level as the sense of consciousness. For Sankara, Jiva is different from the self, which is identified with the universal self. Hence, according to Sankara, the individual atman does not participate in the evolution like jiva, which undergoes evolutionary process in phenomenal rather illusory life. All the versions of identity thesis may show the truth that both the source and the ultimate destiny of the individual atman are yet undiscovered facets of experience.

However, in Indian tradition Aurobindo makes a point of difference to the non-evolutionary atman. He speaks not only evolution but also involution. His theory of evolution cum involution shows that individual atman is evolutionary in the sense of descending from the ascending to the ultimate source and destiny. Aurobindo’s experiential philosophy, unlike mere metaphysics, solves the problem. In the identity thesis the origin is not a problem since there is nothing new or different in the origin. Aurobindo’s experience shows that there are
manyness of atman with individual evolutionary differences. According to Aurobindo, a certain spiritual principle, which is a fact of experience in his meditative trance called "supra-mental light", descended into the material level. It is the process of involution from the highest spiritual level to the phenomenal level. According to him, the world of supermind or supramental light is the link world between supreme and lower world.46

However, in the case of Aurbondo's experience, he never said that the supramental light-form is his individual atman. It is, rather, the prophetic experience. According to him, the supramental light descended into material plane accompanied by overmind.47 According to Aurobindo the over mind is Srikrishna, a different atma with a different evolutionary lower level but next to supramental light. It shows that there is manyness of atman with different evolutionary levels belonging to different planes of reality. The descended supramental light form functions like a mediatory principle between the phenomenal level and spiritual plane. It functions like a catalyst in the case of evolution of atman. The sense of evolution can be considered as the process of untying the karmic circles of jiva that has a tangential relationship to atman. The tangential relationship means the point of beginning of karmic stream of Jiva. It will avoid the upanisadic confusion of Aham that arise from the standpoint to consider atman as dwelling in the heart of jiva and physical embodiment.

According to Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru the individual atman is not one and the same with the supreme soul or God. It is only a fraction of it. Hence he negates the mahavakya 'Aham Brahmaasmi'. He never considered the
supramental light that is envisioned in the ashram as him. Rather, he considered it as 'Brahmaprakasam' which means the light emerged from Brahman the Supreme Father. Karunakaraguru agrees with Aurobindo’s experience of descendence and the thesis of involution and evolution. The Guru says that if it is descended through involution then there is evolution as well. It clearly shows the descendence of individual atman and goes through phenomenal evolutionary process initiating karmic stream of jiva and accumulating different levels of karmic powers. It may rightly mention that the undiscovered source of individual atman and its destiny are discovered in the spiritual experience of Navajyothyisree Karunakara Guru in Indian tradition. The causes for the undiscovery of this supreme Reality and the wrong identification of the Supreme with the individual atman revealed by Guru in his spiritual experiences.

The Word

Along with the phenomenon of non-phenomenal light there is another phenomenon of non-phenomenal word. The experience of light is followed by the experience of word as well. The word revealed from light is the truth. The concept light and the concept truth are closely interlinked. It is light that reveals things as they are and thus of all sensible things and phenomena, most nearly approximate truth. Hence in Psalm 43, 3 there are phrases like "send thy light and thy truth". The truth in its perfection is revealed from light as word. St. John’s Gospel begins thus: "In the beginning there was word, word was with God, God was word." This word revealed by God is Truth. God is experienced as light. Truth is experienced as world. It is the spiritual experience of vision or
darsanam and asariri which means hearing the word from the formless. According to Plotinus vision is the highest understanding.

The ancient seer's concern was the divine word, called Aksara, the imperishable syllable, or udgitha, the exalted song, or just AUM. He was not concerned in a practical way with naming things for informative comprehension. For knowing the real names of things, and their nature, he became one with them. Each thing has a divine name, which is the vibration of the divine word sound that is its guiding power. Such words were mantras whose sound and meaning corresponded. Such mantras were the result of deep contemplation on the being of things in the state of pure perception free of fear and desire and they let the cosmos fill with the Being [Brahman]. That is why the Upanisadic philosopher understands 'the essence of language' to be vak, sabda-Brahman [or sphota], the vimarsa [sphuratta] of god etc; It suggests again that the word, logos, vak is eternal and non-temporal.

The vak or speech provides a certain way of being in the world. It is through vak that we come to have properly human emotions and constitute our social relations. This being aspect of vak is described in the Upanisads in the following way: 'Speech is Brahman\textsuperscript{49} [vagvai Brahmeti]; Speech is virat,\textsuperscript{50} speech is the world;\textsuperscript{51} It is the gods;\textsuperscript{52} It is agni;\textsuperscript{53} It is the Rg veda;\textsuperscript{54} It is the one source of all Vedas.\textsuperscript{55} These Upanisadic texts suggest that vak [speech] adumbrates not only the speakables but the unspeakable too. The possibility of grasping that Being [Unspeakable] takes place when speech and self makes its unity.\textsuperscript{56}
These considerations obviate the necessity to regard that vak is a transpersonal unity which, instead of being a product of man, can condition him. The transpersonal aspect of vak [language, speech] is illustrated by the fact that it is revelation. As revelation it becomes the center from which man's recovery through thought and act is made possible. Accordingly, vak binds the human and the divine rather than polarize them. Language purifies the thought and act as it is said: Verily, that which purifies here [i.e.; the mind] is the sacrifice, for the moving along, purifies all this. And because moving along, he purifies all this, he is the sacrifice, of that mind and speech are the ways. When the Upanisads testify to Reality in utterances like: Whence words return along with the mind, not attaining it, it is the inadequacy of human language that is meant. But they also envisaged the possibility of expressing the Absolute [Brahman] but, negatively, the algebra of which is neti, neti [not this, not this]. Negative statements are used not only for the description of the absolute but for an apprehension, suggestion and pointedness of that Self.

Once one seer is enthroned in the stream of light he will hear the word and he utters the word. In Rig Veda, this phenomenon is expressed as "bearing light in the mouth" (bibhrato jyotir asa) Rgveda considers the sun, the light as the farther of the gift of visionary speech and recitation. It is rightly recognised that word emerges from God himself but audible through the light-form of atman. This is evidenced from the spiritual experience of great seers. In the case of Jesus Christ's spiritual experience the mediatory principle is the Holy Spirit. The mediatory principle in the case of Navajothisree Karunakaraguru is the
superental light-form envisioned by Aurobindo. It functions as a catalyst for spiritual evolution. For Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru receives word from it. Atman being a fraction of Brahman reveals the will of Brahman – Brahmanischayam a concept added to the wealth of Indian Philosophy by Sree Kurunakaraguru. Hence, his experience concludes, "Word is Truth, Truth is Guru, Guru is God". It comprises the living principle as Guru with the physical embodiment including the Karmic Jiva. It is through the same principle the word of God is conveyed and each yuga or age has its own truth. The word is truth.

It is the Guru with physical embodiment who hears or receives the word.

"I have been repeatedly telling you that from time to time such great men are born as would establish the wisdom appropriate for the yuga. Through sacrifice and the grace of God they attain wisdom. After earthly life these jivas ascend to good planets and stellar spheres. These very same souls, by the Will of God, are born again as the children of that Supreme Father. As objects of His unbounded compassion they start receiving the asariri. Only those sons who take birth by God’s Grace and Will are able to receive this voice."\(^6^2\)

**Guru and the Phenomenology of Spiritual Experience**

The metaphysical culture of the Upanishads is the fertile ground from which other cultural traditions have arisen in India. Thus the descriptions of the person of the Guru in the Kularnava Tantra, the Guru Gita from the Skanda Purana, Astavakra Gita, Tripura Rakasya, Uddhava Gita, Avadhuta Gita and
many other scriptures, are extensions of the Upanisadic archetype. It is essential for this examination of the Guru to refer though briefly, to other scriptures within the philosophical and spiritual tradition of the Upanishads, for these reveal the impact of the Upanisadic Guru Tradition in Post-Upanisadic times. The two representative scriptures to be examined here are the Kularnava Tantra and the Guru Gita.

Kularnava Tantra

One of the most thorough descriptions of the nature, role and qualities of the Guru is located in the Kularnava Tantra. This scripture describe the rarity of the enlightened being by the example of light, stating that many are those teachers who radiate light equivalent to lamps, but rare is the one who reflects the comparable to the sun (XIII, 104). According to the Kularnava Tantra, the Guru has the following qualities: He is charming (manohara); endowed with all attributes (sarvalaksana-sampanna); is a knower of all the agamas (sarvagamartha-tattvajna); knows the application of all the mantras (mantra-vidhanavid); bewitches the world (loka-sammohanakara); is of happy countenance (sumukha); is clean (svaccha), is easily accessible (sulabha); dissipates doubt and delusion (bhrama-samsayanasak) looks upon the world with an inner vision (antarlaksya bahirdsti); is all knowing (sarvajna); knows the mysteries of time and place (desakalavid) knows the meaning of gestures (ingitakaravid); knows past, present, and future (trikalajna): is capable of penetrating to the inner depths of the devotee’s being (vedhaka); is the illuminator (bodhaka); is peaceful (santa); is compassionate to all creatures.
can control the movement of the organs (svadhinendriya sancara); has conquered the six enemies, desire, anger, greed, delusion, jealousy, and pride (sadvargavidjayaksama); can distinguish between the fit and unfit disciple (patrapatravisesavid); is stainless (nirmala); is ever content (nityasantusta); is independent (svatantra); is endowed with the power of mantra (mantrasaktimana); is a lover of genuine devotees (sadbhakta-vatsala); is steadfast (dhira); is merciful (kripalu); speaks with a smile (smitapurnavak); is dear to devotees (bhaktapriya); is ever generous (sadodara); is profound (gambhira); is an excellent practicant of the spiritual sciences (sistasadhaka); is free from attachment, hate, fear, pain and ostentation (dambha); can distinguish between what is good and what is bad (gunadosavibhedaka); is unattached to the opposite sex and wealth, and dislikes bad company or other vices (anasakta); has a feeling of Oneness with all (sarvahambhavasanyukta); has the power to be silent (mauni); is free of preferences (nirapeksa); is unaffected by praise or criticism (tulyuaninidatutu).

Following the list of the Guru’s qualities of (which the above is a selection from a greater list), the Kularnava Tantra suggests methods for assessing the aptness of the Guru. It first proposes that the disciple examines the competence of the Guru by analysing his “capacity for the transmission of knowledge, perfection is the science of mantra, and the ability to make a subtle impact. If the Guru possesses these abilities, only then should one consider discipleship. If in studying with a Guru, one does not experience a subtle transformation of consciousness, then such a teacher should not be considered a Guru. According
to the above quotation, a Guru is endowed with the power to assist the student to transform slowly or quickly (depending upon the capacity of the student). Secondly, the Kularnava Tantra, in describing the consciousness of the Guru, states that it is infused with bliss, or ananda. The scripture explains that upon contact with a Guru, bliss, happiness, joy, or peace is automatically experienced by the student or person present. If irritation or agitation ensues, then one should not choose tutelage under that particular teacher. "He who imparts an instruction that is not sanctified is a sinner, his mantra is lost like paddy-seed in the sands."

The Guru Gita identifies Guru as the bearer of light, and states: "He by whose light (true knowledge) arises is known by the word Guru. The enlightened intellect is the instrument by which an avidya-ridden intellect can be illumined, much like a lit candle can be used to light an unlit one. This process of enlightenment cannot take place without the flame contacting, the wick. In this respect the Guru's very presence is potent with knowledge, contact with it and transforms the disciple into Guru. The Guru Gita claims that even by remembering the Guru, knowledge will spontaneously arise in the devotee. The power of the Guru to illumine the devotee is so heightened that even through the subtlety of thought, illumination can be attained.

This positive notion of the Guru has always had an identical or unchanging meaning in both the Indian Philosophical tradition as well as culture. More than by mere accretion, the notion has managed to incorporate the great achievements of human self-discovery for which, in turn, it has been both the
stimulus and the goal. Having looked into this cultural tradition as based on the Guru Consciousness vis-à-vis Brahma cetana, we can see the nature of the Guru through reflection on a series of paired and progressively deeper dimensions: first, as a role, and as the one who lives out this role; second, as free self-consciousness that realizes itself as the means to God and as the subject of that freedom; and third, as moral agent who fulfils the will of Almighty.

Accordingly, a philosophical and cultural tradition which is rooted in Guru Consciousness as an image of the transcendent principle transforms and sensitises its culture. Guru remains part of nature but rather than being subject there to as a mere producer or consumer, is a creative and transforming centre. This is an affirmation of existence as sharing in sat, cit and ananda and reflects the meaning of the transcendent for man and of man in the Transcendent.

It would seem, therefore, that the Guru power or Guru consciousness is a creative stance reflecting the content, not only of the past, but also of the time in which one stands and of the life project in which one is engaged. It is a creative unveiling of the content of the tradition as this comes progressively and historically into the present and through the present, passes into the future. Conversely it is this sense of the good or of value which emerges through the concrete, lived experience of a guru throughout his history and constitutes his cultural heritage as the rich cumulative expression of meaning evolved through the times to the point of normative and classical perfection. It is embodied personally in a Sree Krishna, Sree Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed or a Karunakara. Variously termed charismatic personalities, paradigmatic individuals.
or characters who meld role and personality in providing a cultural, epistemic, political or moral ideal, they supersede mere historical facts. As concrete universals, they express the harmony and fullness of perfection, which is at once classical and historical, ideal and personal, uplifting and dynamiting, in a word, liberating.

The concept of "Brahmanischayam"- the Will of Brahmam - was introduced into the age-old tradition of Indian Philosophy by Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru who emerged as a fully realized soul from Kerala in the second half of the 20th century. Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru builds a new concept of "Brahmanishchayamam" in the Indian Philosophical wealth of glorious metaphysics as the result of its experiential culmination.

Guru redefines the concept, "Brahmajnanam" as "Trikalajnanam" i.e. the knowledge of past, present and future. It has got the status of the merging reality of both the pramanas of 'sabdha' and Pratyaksha'.

Karunakaraguru is a teacher in the absolute sense of the term in the tradition of revelations and prophecies. In his life and mission Karunakara Guru proves that he is not an island in the floods of Prophecy and Revelation. There have been teachers/prophets who revealed the same thing, but perhaps not with such immediacy and fullness. Revelation is like constant rain that saturates the knowledge of man. In Santhigiri Ashram, which the Guru has set up near Trivandrum, is such a center of knowledge. Revelations which were revealed to Guru is said to complete the earlier revelations by former prophets and also rectifies the errors entered into those revelations.
Guru took birth at Chertala in Alappuzha District of Kerala State on September 1, 1927. The birth was in a humble family of a simple village named Chandiroor. After a few months of Guru’s birth his father died. His lonely mother struggled immensely to look after the newborn baby.

His was a poor childhood of starvation and poverty but rich in spiritual experience. There was a ‘light-form’ filled up within his chest. Resultantly, till the age of nine, he could not speak except uttering a few words like ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The innocent boy thought that this phenomenon is with everyone while others considered Him as dumb. Because of this peculiar nature he was unable to get formal education and remained illiterate throughout his life while the state was moving towards the status of full literacy. He had to go for a job in a coir factory in order to help his mother to earn livelihood. His stepfather was drunkard and quarrelsome. Due to his father’s misbehaviour, and witnessing his mother’s hardships, the boy developed detachment towards life.

Hoping to become a Sanyasi, at the tender age of 14, he left home. He joined the Ashram established by Sree Narayana Guru namely Sivagiri at Verkala in Kerala and rendered his service there for 17 years. In those years he was called ‘Little Santhi’ which meant the boy who does duties at the prayer place. Those were the years of great miseries and hardships. Like an orphan he had to complete a ten men’s job per day during all those years, but was only to spoil his health. He never cared for his health but was at great grief, throughout the entire Ashram Life that he could not get even a single spiritual experience and that he could not get a Guru of spiritual experience.
He got a spiritual Guru, when he met Qureshi Fakir, a Sufi mystic at Trivandrum, the Capital of Kerala. Guru Qureshi Fakir led him to spiritual experience and enabled him to evolve certain spiritual heights. Fakir Himself had realized that his disciple is an extraordinarily elevated soul with a high destiny, though the disciple new himself nothing of that. During this period, Guru started his own ashram on the opposite hill to Sivagiri, and people began to call it as “Santhigiri”. Later he shifted his ashram to Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala.

**Spiritual Vision**

According to Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru, spiritual vision is not an ordinary perception. Whatever the level of perception, there are perceived objects in perception. It can even be argued that preceptor can’t perceive or experience beyond the perceived object. Experience is confined to the realm of perceived objects only. There is a stream of that argument that the perceived entities are the only entities of existence. The external existence is mere supposition and it is a naïve attitude. Husserl’s phenomenology emphasizes this dimension of perceptibles. Subjective idealism of Berkeley manages the existence of external entities just because of the supposition that they are perceived by God. Humean empiricism will argue against such an analysis. According to him perception of God and God himself are not a truth of perception. For him, that which exists is only the experienced phenomenon. Kant posits a supposition of noumenal reality beyond the phenomenal world. For Husserl, they are inevitably internal, identified with consciousness as its essential
structure of function. Hence, the phenomenal world is pregiven within. However, Husserl had something external to suspend or bracket out. The pregiven is the original meaningful entities. But those meanings are dependent on either ego or logos. According to Derrida, the experienced phenomena or meanings are just a medium of experience of the subject. Such meanings can never become intentional entities, because intentionality itself functions with reference to the structure of language and hence depends on logos.

Deconstruction deconstructs the objects in themselves and posits the other of experience. Nothing remains within the ego that gives fixidity to meaning and experience. Hence it is the external binary opposition with logos that gives meaning. In experience there is a dimension in which the subject can transcend the experienced entity. Transcendence of the experienced qualia is possible in time dimension. According to Derrida, there is no such perceived object as a presence in the present. Perception is always the interpretation of retention. Hence, in perception what is present is the past. Presence of the past is absence or a trace or mark or an erasure. It is not a full original presence of present. Hence, phenomenologically original objects of presence are impossible. Whatever exists is a mediatory graph that undergoes change in time. Thus, Derrida deconstructs the phenomenology of perception contributing as the phenomenology of phenomenology. Deconstruction as phenomenology of phenomenology inevitably opens to the other side of experience. In other words, it affirms the other. It is the case of ordinary perception, which is supposed to be different from perception of vision or spiritual experiences. But we can see the
basic mechanism of perception is one and same in either case. It may be added that the same fundamental mechanism of perception is, in effect, more crucial in visual experiences, because corresponding objects cannot be posited as existing in the outer-space on the basis of naïve beliefs as in the case of ordinary experience. Hence, it becomes inevitably a tendency to suppose that they exist within. According to Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru, it was such a mistake that happened to Satyatranan, a great seer who lived ages and ages ago. According to Kurunakaraguru, he perceived everything and all activities with its temporal aspects within. Moreover, only the objects that have spatial aspects can be persisted as external at least based on a naïve attitude. Satyatranan visualised the whole past within and got stunned. With such a deep surprise, he mistook the whole within and proclaimed “Aham Brahmasmī”.

“The present is the seventh manvantara. In the third chaturyuga of the manvantara a great man in the tradition of Manu perceived that there is no action in this world that is not Manu’s. He saw this in both planes, the sookshmam, the subtle, and the sthoolam, the corporeal, the karyam, the effect. Out of this experience came the chaturvakyas, the four great enunciations. The first one itself is, Aham Brahmasmī—I am Brahman. The absolute.”

Satyatranan’s perceptual mistake implies an egoistic aspect too. In the Manu tradition Guru is considered as Brahmam. Brahmam has authorised him to be the Guru. It is the Brahmanischayam. For ordinary followers Guru is the
accessible reality and through him the guidance is possible. Since, Brahmam is formless, Guru is the only object of worship. Vaivaswathammanu is such an Adi Guru or First Seer of that Manwantara. Guru is Brahmam. It is the state of authority, which is authored by the will of Brahmam. It doesn’t mean essential identity or oneness.

Guru being the highest evolute has secured the power of karma to perform the will of Brahmam. Besides, only an agent with physical aspect can act in the midst of mankind being one among them. In a sense, it is the identity of the agent with the Absolute. Yet it is not an essential identity, but only a functional identity. Satyatrana mistook the functional identity as the essential identity.

He was full of his oneness with the Brahman, which he went on to mistake for himself being the Brahman. Each one of us, each blade of grass, is full of the Brahman. But is the Will of the Almighty confined to an individual evolute? One concludes this sage did not have the grace to discriminate between the Absolute and the individual even if the individual has had the realization of the Absolute. Thus was blurred his awareness of the Will of the Absolute.78

According to the revelation, another great seer namely SatyatraNan (as the same name repeats twice both in the traditions of Manu and Trinity but with a difference in pronunciation that is peculiar to Malyalam language - the mother tongue in Kerala, the latter is written with the capital ‘N’ since the difference of
pronunciation is located on this letter) in the tradition of trinity, invented a 'time-scale' that goes against the order of 'time-scale' of Brahmam. SatyaraNan calculated that a single 'day-time' of Brahma is one Kalpam. The Kalpam starts from Sristi or Creation in the beginning and ends only in the Pralaya or Flood. One Kalpam is composed of 14 Manwantharas in which each comprises 71 Chaturyugas. This is the willed time-scale of Brahmam. SatyaraNan in the tradition of trinity chronicled the time from Brahma, the deity of creation that is created by Brahmam the supreme. SatyaraNan miscalculated Brahma the deity of creation as having longer time-scale than the Brahmam, the Supreme.

The Correction

According to Brahmanischayam 2444 Acharyas or Seers took birth in order to correct this error. They all took birth in the present Kaliyuga. They ere enmissioned for this task after the period of Sree Krishna Paramatma in the last Yugasandhi. This truth was revealed to Navajyothi Sree Karunakara Guru in a vision. In meditation it was seen that in the Light of Brahmam a Lotus appeared. Then its petals began to fall down one by one. It went on. It was asked what does it mean. The word from Brahmaparkasam came as each of these petals represent each Seer who came to establish the Brahmanischayam. But somehow or other the mission was not fulfilled absolutely. Then it was asked how many of them. It was shown as '2444'. This is a unified experience of both pratyaksha and sabdha. It avoids the chance of committing error by interpretation. Otherwise the lotus with petals falling down can be interpreted in a numerous way. But none of them might not be the intentions of Ultimate.
According to Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru such visions are available for the one who has in reality merged with the Supreme.

"Only a Guru who has seen both the errors and righteous actions of humanity till today and in whom is vested the power to redeem the future through guiding today's action, and who is merged in the Supreme—a jeevanmukta—only such a Guru would be capable of this vigilant knowing. Our testament is that we have been able to see all this, undergoing the suffering that accompany such vision—vision containing a good beyond measure or words. It is on the strength of this testament that we spoke of the rishis, the sages."80

To Navajyothisree Karunakaraguru even the meaning of 'drusya' or sight is revealed by sabdha or word. Word comes from Light, the Brahma Prakasam. It reveals the will of Brahmam the Supreme Light. By this way, Brahmam establishes Brahmanichayam through Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru. Hence, it is considered that Word is Truth.

Word is Truth. Truth is Guru. Guru is God.

Spiritual Zones and Dimensions of Reality

According to Karunakaraguru, the individual jiva can evolve through karma and prarthana i.e. prayer. Karma makes the jiva efficient in doing higher levels of karma up to the level of samkalpa karmas i.e. meditative actions. Prayer is the food of jiva. Prayer is the chanting of Akhantamantra that is revealed by the
Almighty. Hence, Karunakaraguru emphasizes both ‘karma marga’ and ‘bhakti marga’. Karma marga is also karma nivarana marga in the sense it undoes the past karma. He undermines the traditional Jnana marga that is the path of pundits or Brahmins.\(^{81}\) He defines jnana as the experiential knowledge and not bookish knowledge. Mere intellectual rational exercise won’t enable one to realize experiential knowledge. He priorize Anubhavam to Anumana i.e. spiritual experience to inference, though the latter is necessary and has its own practical validity. As far as evolution of jiva is concerned spiritual experiences are necessary. Only Anubhavam provides actual spiritual knowledge. Hence, he preaches Anubhavamargam. Spiritual experiences are known as Darsanam. Hence, his ‘jnanamarga’ is ‘Darsana margam’. Darsanasm is available in five stages such as jagrat, swapnam, susupti, turiyam and turiyatitam.\(^{82}\) Regarding such stages he differs from traditional understanding. For instance, susupti is not deep sleep or an unconscious state. According to the traditional understanding susupti provides no knowledge. It is an experiential void of total rest. At times, he speaks of the five stages, i.e. Jagrat, swapnam, ‘darsanam’, turiyam, turiyatitam.\(^{83}\) Guru replaces the word ‘susupti’ with its traditional sense by the word ‘darsanam’. It can easily be understood the way when he explains susupti as ‘tunkamal tunki’ in accordance with the tamil tradition which is different from Sanskrit tradition. It is a state of sleepless sleep in which darsanam or vision is provided. Hence, for him, all stages are stages of experiences. No stage of experiential void is taken as relevant for the spiritual evolution. According to him, there are several levels of spaces beyond the gross space-time.\(^{84}\) They are the
subtle seven spaces. They are created by the samkalpa of saptharishis i.e. seven Rishis. After the seven spaces the prakasa loka i.e. the world of light starts. In this dimensions of reality jiva has dissolving nature. They are Iswara, sannidhanam, Deiva sannidhanam, Brahma Sannidharmam and Para Brabhma sannidhanam. Jiva reaching these dimensions of reality is known as Brahmavittu, Brahma Varryan, Brahma varishtan and Brahma-varishtaan respectively. According to Karunakaraguru if any individual evolute thinks that he has reached the ultimate while reaching in any of these spaces before reaching the final stage, its evolution will get stuck there. Hence, it can't evolve up to the last. According to him, a jiva can evolve up to 11 stages passing through the spaces and the three prakasa lokas or spaces of light. The fourth and the last is the Para Bramasannidhanam. It is the merging state with the ultimate. In this state, there is no individual existence but it is the total dissolution.

According to Karunakaraguru, linguistic clinging has been our attitude throughout the centuries towards spiritual truths. It worked as a hindrance to spiritual evolution. Instead of practicing and realizing the words of great souls, humankind in effect, rejects the truth realized by great souls such as Nabi, Christ, Sree Ram, Ramathirtha, Vivekananda, Sankara, Sree Narayana Guru, etc. He discriminates between a Guru of Semiotics and a Guru of Experience. Accordingly he defines the relationship between a Guru and disciple as the rectifier of spiritual experiences of disciple.\textsuperscript{\textdegree}
Notes and References:


2. Ibid., p. 85.

3. Ibid., p. 82.

4. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

5. Ibid., p. 82.


7. Ibid., p. 62.

8. Ibid., p. 63.

9. Ibid., p. 63.

10. Ibid., pp. 102-03.

11. Rigveda, I.164.4.


15. Taittiriya Brahmana (ii, 8,9)

16. Chandogya Upanisad, 6.8.7-6.13.3.

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17. Yogeshwarananda, Swami, *Sankara's Commentary on Brahadaranyaka Upanisad*, Advaita Ashrama, Almora, Himalayas, 1950, (2.3.6)


19. Ibid., p. 77.


21. Ibid., 248.

22. Ibid., 248.

23. Ibid., p. 140.


25. Ibid., p. 91.


27. Ibid., p. 143.


31. Sankara, *Commentary on Brahma Sutra*, 1.1.4

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32. Webster, Merrian, *Encyclopaedia of World Religions*, Merrian Webster, Inc. Massachusetts, 1999, p. 149.


38. Rigveda, 13.22.


41. *Brahdaranya Upanisad*, 4.3.


43. Ibid., p. 269.

44. Ibid., p. 268.


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48. Ibid., p. 8.

49. Brh; 4.1.2.

50. Chand; 1.13.2.

51. Brh.1.5.4.

52. Chand; 1.5.6.

53. Ibid., 3.13.3.

54. Ibid., 1.7.1. and Brh; 1.5.5.

55. Brh.; 2.4.11.


57. Brh; 4.4.22.

58. Taitt; 2.4.1.


60. Rigveda, 10.67.10.

61. Ibid., 30,15.


66. Ibid., XIV, 25-26; 266.

67. Ibid., XIII, 110.

68. Ibid., XIV, 12.

69. Guru Gita, 10.10.

70. Ibid., 69, 26.


73. Ibid. p.VII.

74. Ibid., p. 22.

75. Ibid., p. 23.

76. Ibid., p. 5.

77. Ibid., p. 5.

78. Ibid., p. 5.

79. Ibid., p. 4.

80. Ibid., p. 4.
82. Ibid., p. 83.
83. Ibid., p. 104.
84. Ibid., p. 103.
85. Ibid., p. 104.