Before coming to the main body of the thesis, it is necessary to narrate briefly the chief tenets of the Advaita Vedanta keeping which in view and for the establishment of which Shankara has criticised the non-monistic schools of Indian Philosophy.

a) Concept of Brahman

The highest reality of the Upanisads is undoubtedly 'Brahman' or 'Atman'. According to Shankara, it is non-dual, the one without a second. As such, it cannot be expressed in positive terms. That is why the Upanisads attempt to describe it as 'neti neti' 'not this, not this, not this'. This is not to be taken to mean that the Absolute is a bundle of negatives. Rather, it is the sole Reality. This Reality is also described in positive terms, such as "Existence, Knowledge and Bliss". These positive expressions also emphasise that the Absolute is not non-existence, not inert and not sorrowful.

A term that gets defined certainly has a definite and a limited connotation. The infinite and the absolute cannot be

1. The Panca-dashti explains these three aspects of Brahman elaborately.
limited in words which are finite categories. Therefore, Brahman cannot be exactly defined. Moreover, when we go to define a thing, we have to relate it with an object outside of itself. But with whom to relate the all-pervading Brahman? Another logical difficulty that comes in the way of defining Brahman is that we have no standard to measure it. That is why Brahman cannot be predicated. Strictly speaking from the spirit of monism, we cannot even call the Reality as 'One' because the category of number cannot be applied to it. This was most probably the reason why Shaṅkara termed his Philosophy as 'Advaita', i.e. the doctrine of the non-two.

The Supreme Brahman is Pure, all-bliss, intelligent, formless, attributeless, conscious, infinite and actionless. The distinctions of the knower, known and the knowledge are due to superimposition on It. These distinctions disappear the moment Reality is known. We are further told in the Śita-shlokī that at first the union with the Self is experienced and then dawns in practice the knowledge of the world as Brahman.

The Pancadāshi has successfully brought home to us that existence can and is the essential nature only of Brahman and nothing else. The method of Anvaya-Vyatireka that is employed there leaves no ground for doubt. Sri T.M.P. Mahadevan's observation in this connection is indeed remarkable, "...... the Asat cannot be counter-correlate

1. Cf. Śaṅkara Phāśya on Bhagavat-Gītā, XIII/12.
of the Sat, since it is non-existent and unreal. Hence there can be no entity different from and opposed to the Sat.

The category of time as being 'past' is not recognised in Advaita Vedānta. But, it may be said that this goes contrary to Shruti which says 'Existence alone was in the beginning'? If it be so, the Absolute no longer remains beyond all measures of time. Pancadāshi furnishes its answer. This passage is addressed to a disciple who is still in the realm of Avidyā, though he aspires for the knowledge of Brahman. In fact, questions and answers vanish at the realisation of non-dual Brahman.

Brahman is not an object of cognition, but the cognizer of cognitions. It is indeed very very difficult to know It.

b) Māyā, the Supreme Deluding Power

Brahman, when conditioned, is called God. The conditioning Principle is called Māyā, the supreme deluding power. It is not an independent entity from Brahman. As such, it does not introduce any new quality into Brahman. The ultimate Reality appears as diverse through the supreme deluding power,

1. "The Philosophy of Advaita" by Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, Page 119.
2. Cf. Chāndogya Upaniṣad IV/2/1,2.
3. Vide Kenopaniṣad Padabhāṣyam II/1.
just as a man of defective eye-sight sees many moons, or a rope in mistaken for a snake. In reality, the whole of parts appear different because of the change in its constituent parts, just as the clay assumes many forms of pot etc. But the multiplicity is not real as it is due to the false knowledge.

The root power due to which this world is created is of the nature of Nescience, the word Avyakta denotes it, it depends on God, it is of the nature of Māyā, the Supreme deluding power, the great deep sleep. That Māyā is unmanifest and it cannot be called true or untrue, it is Anirvacanīya.

In his celebrated Adhyāsa Bhāṣya, Saṅkara explains clearly the nature and workings of Māyā. Its cause is the wrong identification of the real with the unreal. Though the real and the unreal are so opposite in character as light and the darkness, yet their wrong identification is the fact of daily experience. Actually, every human activity is caused by Māyā. To have a more concrete and vivid view of Māyā, we may quote Swāmī Vivekānanda, "Māyā is a simple statement of facts, it is what we are and what is around us. " Though ", a completely rational explanation of the world is not within the scope of human intellect",

1. Vide, Māndūka Kārikā Bhāṣya on II/19.
yet Shankara has undoubtedly explained this phenomenon of multifarious world through his wonderful concept of Māyā. It may be mentioned in passing that Ānandabodha has brought out very beautifully that Mādyā has to be accepted as a logical consequence of finding some possible cause of world-appearance.

Māyā acts in two ways. First it shadows the Real and secondly, it projects the whole world in its place. It is destroyed by its counter-force, the right knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of Brahman.

Māyā must have some locus and a content to function. The determination of both these factors is a controversial point in Vedānta. If the embodied self be its locus, and Brahman content, then it may be questioned, how does Māyā function in the absence of the embodied selves at the time of new creation. In order to get over this difficulty, the monist postulates that Māyā is beginningless. It may be mentioned here that locus of Māyā is different according to different monists. Shankara considers the embodied self as its locus and Brahman its content.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has beautifully summed up the implications of the term "Māyā". According to him, it signifies (i) the phenomenal character of the world (ii) the relation between Brahman and the world and (iii) the power of Brahman which manifests as God.

1. "Indian Philosophy" by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Volume II, Page 573.
Some monists distinguish between Māyā and Avidyā. Panḍāsāśī says that Nescience is the Prakṛti predominated by the impure Sattva and Māyā is Prakṛti predominated by pure Sattva.

If the world is regarded as the transformation of Māyā, it is, then, natural to doubt after Dr. S. N. Dasgupta, that how can those transformations be regarded as unreal when the possessor of that power is regarded as real. This has been a controversial issue among the writers of Śaṅkara Vedānta. Appaya Dūkṣita says that Brahman is the Vivartta cause of the world whereas Māyā is the Pariṇāma cause.

c) The Concept of God

Śaṅkara's belief in Brahman "as-it-is-in-itself" and "as-it-is-in-relation-to-the-world" gives us his conceptions of attributeless Brahman and Brahman with attributes. The conditioned Brahman is called God. He is the material and the efficient cause of the world. God is Brahman as projected by Māyā. As such, he is the cosmic subject of the whole world as his object. The relative reality of the world rests in Him. Śaṅkara's God lasts till even a single embodied soul is in bondage. The Philosophical ideal is undoubtedly Brahman. The realisation of Brahman will immediately dawn when one transcends God. He is the highest symbol of Brahman.

1. Cf. "History of Indian Philosophy by Dr. S. N. Dasgupta, volume II, page 44."
God is omniscient. Shankara compares Him to rains. Just as rains are the general cause of the growth of all kinds of crops, even so God is also the general cause of the Creation of gods, men and all creatures. Though Brahman is non-dual from the absolute standpoint, yet it is empirical and assumes the form of God, the cause of origination, preservation and destruction of the world. In fact, from the absolute point of view there occurs no causation because the world is illusion in Brahman just as the snake is in the rope.

All this does not mean that God is a second metaphysical reality. Basically Brahman and God are not different. Brahman viewed in relation to the world is God, otherwise It is the same impersonal and transcending the universe. God creates the world by wielding Maya, but He himself remains unaffected.

It has been doubted that the doctrine of changeless Brahman leaves no room for the recognition of God, because, if Brahman is to be made to appear as this world, what function does their remain to be accomplished by God? It should not be forgotten in this connection that monism recommends devotion to Brahman with attributes till the destruction of ignorance. The world appears to be true till the removal of nescience. Under these circumstances, the doctrine of monism is not at all disturbed with the concept of omniscient and omnipotent God.

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1. Vide Shārīraka Bhaṣya on 2/1/34.
Shāṅkara also believes in the incarnation of God. He says in his introduction to the commentary of Bhagavad-Gītā: God is ever endowed with power, knowledge, greatness, light etc. Māyā, the supreme deluding power, obeys his command. Though he is unborn, controller of all, eternal and all pure and ever-released, yet he appears as if bearing a body in order to bless the world.

It will not be out of context to refer here the celebrated name in Advaita Vedānta, Sarvajñātmamuni, a disciple of Śiśiṣvara, who discusses in his "Sanksepa-shārīraka" the fundamental problems of Shāṅkara Vedānta. The first chapter of the book brings out in a logical and convincing manner that the pure Brahman, associated with Ignorance, is the ultimate cause of everything.

The concept of God is closely related to that of Hiranyagarbha and Virāṭa. Hiranyagarbha, otherwise called Śitrātman, is the cosmic subtle form of the Self. The collective nature of the embodied Selves is its nature. It is comparable to grains shooting up sprouts, i.e. God, the womb of the universe is in the stage of sprout. The Virāṭa is the stage of the full fledged growth of the Universe.

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1. William Wordsworth seems to have realised this attitude of monistic transcendentalism when he says in his celebrated poem "Tintern Abbey":

"Whose dwelling is the light of the setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts
And rolls through all things".
Appaya Dīkṣīta in his "Siddhānta-Lesha-Sangraha" regards Brahman and Māyā as the material cause of this world. Consequently, the world-appearance is endowed with two distinct characteristics, namely 'existence' from Brahman and non-intelligence from Māyā.

d) The Witnessing Principle

According to the Kaumudīkāra, the Witness is that form of God under whose permission, the embodied self becomes active or non-active. The Witness is not affected by it. It is characterised by indifference and non-activity. During sleep it is known as "Prājñā". In reality, it is the nature of Brahman.

Some Advaitins are of the view that Witness is the embodied Self conditioned by Nescience, others maintain, that it is the embodied Self as conditioned by the internal organ. The embodied self qualified by the internal organ is called the cogniser, and as conditioned by the internal organ is called the Witness.

Bārīṭālīrthā regards the Witness to be unchangeable, eternal, flawless and intelligence. Because it is the direct superintending entity of the two bodies, i.e. the subtle and the gross, and is unchanged, so the unchangeable intelligence which is the basis of the said two bodies, is called the Witness. The Witness is the indifferent spectator

2. Pancadashī VII/56.
of all the changing modes and fleeting moments.

The Nāṭaka-dīpa compares the Witness—intelligence to a lamp set up on a dramatic stage which gives equal light to the proprietor of the drama, actors and the audience. It goes on spreading light even when none of these is present. Similarly, the Witness manifests egoity, the intellect and the world of objects and shines even in their absence. Here egoity, is the proprietor of the drama, objects are the audience and the intellect is sense organs are the helpers of actors. All these are illumined by the Witness without distinction. The movements of the actors and the audience do not affect the lamp, even so the Witness manifests internal and the external world, himself remaining unchanged and unaffected.

The distinction of 'inner' and 'outer' have reference to body and not to the Witness. "Even to say that the self is omnipresent, is to superimpose on it the category of space". How then can it be known? Hence it is concluded that is not an object of apprehension because it is self-luminous.

Citraḍīpa says that "Kūṭāstha" is also unchangeable like Brahman, but it appears as if conditioned. As such, it may be compared to the not-ether. It is defined by subtle and gross bodies. Though it is the substrate of these two

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2. Ibid., X/16-25.
bodies, yet it is unchangeable like an anvil. That is why it is called Kūṭastha. All pronouns have selfhood as their common factor. The self is the Kūṭastha and the notions of 'I' etc., called Cidābhāsa, are imposed on it.

While some monists hold that the Witness is identical with God, Bārtītirtha and Citsukha advocate that the Witness is the true nature of the embodied self. This variety of opinion makes no difference basically because in the final stage, God, who is identical with Brahman, is also identical with the embodied self.

e) The Embodied Self

Śrīvarācārya, an advocate of the "Theory of semblance", is of the view that the embodied self is an appearance of Brahman as reflected through Nescience. But the advocates of the "delimitation theory" say that formless Brahman cannot be reflected in Māyā. They say that Brahman, when conditioned and limited by Māyā, appears as the embodied self. Thus it is the locus of Māyā. According to Śamkara, the embodied self is the combination of the Witness and the internal organ. In the waking state, these two and the sense are in operation. In dreaming, the senses cease to work. In deep sleep the witness alone remains along-with Ignorance, the internal organ gets merged in Ignorance. Thus, though the individual selves are many, yet the transcendental Self is one.

1. Pancadashī VI/18-22.
2. Ibid., VI/38-39.
According to Śaṅkara, the embodied self is a conscious entity presiding over the body. It sustains all vital airs. Though it is basically Brahman, yet it is called agent and the enjoyer etc. when conditioned by the adjuncts like intellect.

All transmigrating existences, beginning from the waking state and ending in release, are attributed to the embodied self. Deluded by Ignorance, and established in the body, he creates the objective world for himself. In the waking state, he is seen attached in enjoying the objects like woman, food and drink... etc." At the time of sleep, when all is resolved, it attains the form of bliss, being overpowered by Tamas". "And again due to conjunction with the actions of its previous life, the same embodied self dreams and wakes".

The embodied self possesses three bodies— the causal, the subtle and the gross. Ignorance is the causal body of the embodied self and it is called "prājñā" when qualified by this body. The constituents of the subtle body are seventeen in number— five organs of sense, plus five organs of action, plus five vital airs, mind and the intellect. That part of Prakṛti which is dominated by Tamas produces the basic five elements— Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Five organs of sense come up from the sattva constituents of these elements.

1. Vide Śāṅśrīrraka Bhāṣya on 1/1/6
2. Ibid., on 1/1/31.
The internal organ gets divided into mind and intellect in accordance with their difference in their function. Mind is that which deliberates and the intellect is that which decides. The five organs of action are created from the Rajas parts of the five gross elements. These organs of action collectively produce the five vital airs. The subtle body of embodied self is called "Taijas". The particular physical frame of the embodied self is its gross body, a complex of the quintuplicated elements. The embodied self is called "Vishva" with relation to this body.

From the three types of truth recognised in the Vedānta Philosophy, the nature of the embodied Self may be presented thus: The Prāmarthika embodied Self is called the substrate of the subtle and the gross bodies. Subject of the dream-world is known as the Prātibhāśika embodied Self. The agent and enjoyer of the working experiences is called the Vyavahārika embodied Self.

The opponent raises certain objections against the non-dual nature of the embodied Self as maintained by the monist.

i) If the embodied Self is non-different from Brahman, then, Brahman should also be equally held responsible for the bad actions of the embodied Self.

ii) It follows as a corollarly, from the identity of the embodied self with Brahman that the embodied Self also possesses the power to create, just as Brahman has. If it

were so, the embodied Self would never have created for himself sufferings like birth, death, old age and disease.

iii) Lastly, there is no reason why should the pure Brahman consider the impure body as the outcome of its pure Being.

Shamkara clears his position in the following way and shows that the aforesaid objections are only due to misunderstanding about the doctrine of monism. Good or bad actions are attributed to the embodied Self so long as it does not realise its non-difference with Brahman by means of true knowledge. The scripture itself speaks of the embodied self as different from Brahman when it exhorts him to see, hear, think and meditate on Brahman. But when it merges in Brahman, there is only unalloyed bliss, bliss and bliss. This clarification implies that the objections of the opponent do not hold good.

f) Liberation

Highest human value and endavour is to attain emancipation. According to Shamkara, it is self-realisation, i.e. discovering one's true nature. This state is characterised as one where all doubts are removed and the knot (of ignorance) is cut.

Shakara speaks of salvation as universal. It is characterized by cessation of all sorrows, the culmination of all desires and happiness, realm of unalloyed bliss of Brahman. When the embodied Self discriminates his real nature from the transitory and illusory world of name and form, then there results the cessation of all sorrows, born of the superimposition on the Self, in the form of enjoyment and doership. He transcends the notion of merit and demerit and so there is no possibility of misery for him here and hereafter. Future actions are not binding to him, because he leads a detached life like a lotus-leaf in water. And the accumulated actions get burnt due to the fires of the knowledge of Brahman and as such are rendered unproductive like the fried grains.

Attainment of Brahman-intuition is not necessarily followed by the fall of the body. That realised self is called 'Jīvan-mukta' i.e. released even being embodied. His body lasts till he enjoys the last drop of the fruits of his Prārabdha Karmas. No one can be saved from reaping the fruits of his Prārabdha Karmas. They can be destroyed only by being used up. Ignorance, the material cause of all actions, though gets destroyed, yet the fruits of the Prārabdha Karmas are not finished as they themselves are the results of the previous actions which have ripened and have started giving their fruit. They can perish only by being enjoyed.

The argumentative side of the released even when embodied may be presented thus:- If the body falls soon after knowledge, then who would teach Advaita to humanity?
Hence the need of the embodied released souls who live in the world but not of the world'.

**g) Means of Knowledge**

Ignorance is the root cause of all sorrows. The third chapter of "Sāṅkṣeṇaṣhārīraka" by Sarvājñātīmamuni tells us various ways by which Ignorance can be destroyed and the knowledge of Brahman may be attained. Bondage can only be destroyed by knowledge, which means immediate realisation of the identity of the embodied Self with Brahman.

Keeping in view the difference of the capacity of those who undertake the inquiry into the nature of Brahman, two paths are recognised for the realisation of Brahman. The first path is that of knowledge which is a direct and straight away royal rod to liberation. The second is that of Yoga, i.e. constantly contemplating the attributeless Brahman. But both the paths lead to the same destination.

Apart from the support of the Upaniṣads like Prashna, Katha, Māṇḍukya etc., reason also supports the path of Yoga. The application of Yogic method may logically be justified thus: If the knowledge of Brahman be within the scope of possibility, then Its contemplation must also be equally possible. Recommending the path of Yoga, Ātma Gītā says that

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1. It may be mentioned that the fourth chapter of "Sāṅkṣeṇaṣhārīraka" brings out beautifully the nature of liberation and attaining the state of being Brahman itself.
3. Śaṅkara's definition of meditation in his commentary on the Gītā and "Āṭmabodha"(38) shows that he recommended the path of meditation.
an aspirant may think himself to be Brahman and constantly
reminisce on this thought until it gets matured into a fact. 
Bādarāyana also seems to favour this view. ¹

Shaṅkara is also of the view that observation of
specified actions purifies the mind. But this action is
only a helping factor towards the goal. But action has
only a secondary value towards the attainment of the goal.
Karma-Yoga is not meant for a realised soul. ²

h) Epistemology

Shaṅkara has nowhere discussed means of knowledge. He
is justified in remaining silent over the issue because,
from the absolute point of view, knowledge of Brahman is
Prama and the Scripture that imparts this knowledge is the
only means of knowledge. But some of the later monists felt
the need of recognising different means of knowledge,
keeping in view the fact that unless and until the knowledge
of Brahman dawns, empirical knowledge goes on undisturbed
and uncontradicted. Consequently we find that "Vedānta
Paribhāṣā" discusses elaborately the following six means
of knowledge.

(i) Perception

According to Vedānta Paribhāṣā, "Perception is the
means to right perceptual knowledge. Valid perceptual knowledge

3. Ibid., 5/1.
is nothing but Brahman itself. The process of perception is explained thus: Direct contact with the object of the senses causes perceptual knowledge. For example, in the perception of a pot, the internal organ goes out, through the psychosis (Vṛttti) to the object like the ray of a lamp. The internal organ, along with the reflection of supreme intelligence, illuminates the object and cognises it by assuming its shape and taking the form of the pot itself. In this way, the pot-intelligence is manifested. The identification of the pot-intelligence, intelligence limited by the psychosis of the internal organ and the perceptive-intelligence generates perceptual knowledge of an object. This 'identification' distinguishes perception from Inference. The Vedānta Paribhāṣā goes further to recognise and analyse different kinds of perception, such as (i) Determinate and Indeterminate Perception (ii) Perception by the Witness of the embodied self and the Witness of God and (iii) Perception through the sense-organ and perception without a sense-organ.

Four factors are always present in every act of Perception. They are: The perceiving agent, means of valid knowledge, the object of intelligence and fruit-intelligence. Both the knownness and unknownness of an object are manifestations of Brahman and are caused by Brahman-intelligence.

1. Vide Pratyakṣa-Paricceda of Vedānta Paribhāṣā.
2. Cf. Pancadashi VIII/4-17.
Internal organ serves the purpose of instrument for making the object known. Only Brahman-intelligence manifests the object, not the intellect which is inert and non-intelligent.

Perceiving agent is the intelligence having internal organ as its attribute and is combined with the reflection of intelligence. The intelligence characterised by the psychosis together with the reflection is the means of knowledge. Intelligence defined by not etc. is the object intelligence. And reflection of intelligence which is generated by the relation of psychosis with not etc. is the fruit-intelligence (Phala-cetana).

(ii) Inference

Inference is the distinctive cause of inferential cognition which is caused by invariable concomitance. For example, when we see smoke on the hill, we remember "where there is smoke, there is always fire" and we infer, that the hill has fire.

Invariable concomitance is arrived at by the inductive method of logic, after observing some positive cases or incidents. It is affirmed by the absence of negative instances. Vedanta Paribhasa maintains that Inference is caused only by positive concomitance and negative concomitance, such as,"where there is no fire, there is no smoke", goes to constitute 'Presumption'(Arthāpatti). According to Advaita Vedanta, Inference is of two types
According to the Advaita system of Indian Philosophy, all objects are mere appearances, superimposed on the Self and the Self is the source of illumination. It may be asked why perception be regarded as immediate and inference as mediate when both these means of knowledge are superimpositions on the Self. The Advaitin replies that objects are causal co-relates in acts of Perception and they manifest intelligence. These two factors are determinants of immediacy in Perception and are absent in Inference.

(iii) Scriptural Testimony

The Mīmāṃsā and the Advaita schools of Indian Philosophy regard Truth to be revealed only through Scriptural Testimony. The Scriptural Testimony is the revelation of what is True. In super-sensuous matters the authority of Scripture is supreme and final. The rules laid down by the Veda have a Universal application, not limited by time. The workings of the Vedas may change at every new creation, but their import, theme and significance remains ever true, and most valid. As such, Vedas are "Anauruṣeya" or super-human and have an infallible authority.

The opponent may argue: if everything is unreal, then, the Vedānta passages are also unreal and as such, how can they lead us to the realisation of the 'Real'? No one

2. Cf. Śārīraka-Śūtra 1/3/30 and Śaṅkara's commentary on it.
is seen dead on account of the bite of a false snake or none is seen to utilize the water of mirage.

The Advaitin replies that people sometimes do die merely on the suspicion that a venomous snake has bitten them. A dreamer himself admits the reality of his experiences till the dream lasts. Even in the waking life those experiences persist uncontradicted. In fact, says Shāṅkara, incidents of certain dreams are sometimes said to be indications of some coming events of life. All these calculations last only till the dawn of the true knowledge. All the distinctions of the Vedic and ordinary life vanish at once when the non-difference with Brahman is realised. The opponent confuses the relative truth with the ultimate truth. His objection is undoubtedly the outcome of a relative plain.

(iv) Analogy (Upanamāna)

The definition of this fourth means of valid knowledge is set forth thus: The distinctive cause of the cognition of the valid knowledge of similarity is called Analogy. A person is told that Gavaya is like a cow. When he goes to a forest and accidentally comes across that animal in the forest, he notices its resemblance with the cow. The resultant cognition of similarity is known by means of 'Analogy'. The knowledge that this cow resembles the Gavaya is not the result of Perception for lack of sense-contact.

"Presumption is the postulation of an explanatory fact reached from the knowledge of a given thing which is to be explained". The knowledge of a given thing serves as the instrument here and the discovery of an explanatory fact is the resultant valid knowledge. Take for example, a well-built strong man. He does not take his meals in day-time, but still he is healthy as before. Hence it has to be assumed that he eats at night.

Thus a phenomenon is explained here with the help of a supposition which adequately accounts for it. This being guaranteed that a man is alive; if we don't find him in his house, we assume that he must be outside. The cognition that he is outside arises due to an independent means of knowledge, known as "Presumption".

Presumption is two fold according as it is based on what is seen (Drśta) or what is heard (Srūta) which again is sub-divided into two classes.

(iv) Non-Cognition (Anupalabdhi)

This means of knowledge is employed in cognising non-existence. It is defined to be that means of valid knowledge which is the distinctive cause of the apprehension of non-existence and which is not caused by knowledge as an instrument. All other means of knowledge are caused by the knowledge of invariable concomitance or similarity or words having import or the incident to be explained. Thus
non-cognition is distinguished from other means of valid knowledge.

**REASON VERSUS VERBAL TESTIMONY**

The problem before us is: whether Reason is applicable and useful towards the attainment of Brahman-Knowledge or not? If yes, in what form? The opponent urges very strongly to apply Reason as means to the process of the realisation of Brahman. He bases his stand on the following grounds:

I. Reasoning is very near to experience. On the other hand, knowledge of Brahman is also a thing to be experienced in practice. The final intuition is something pertaining to the actual experience of the aspirant. Therefore, Reason should be given its due place with regard to its contribution to the realisation of Brahman.

II. Brahman is an ever existent Reality. Therefore, it should be knowable by means other than the Scriptures. Hence reason, which is but one of the means of knowledge, is equally applicable towards the knowledge of Brahman.

III. Some of the scriptural passages are apparently contradictory and make statements which go against experience. Those passages can only be interpreted and reconciled by means of Reason. Take for example a scriptural passage...

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1. For details and controversial discussions reference may be made here to the sixth Pariccheda of *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*.
2. Vide Śāṅkara Bāṣya on 2/1/4.
passage: "The sacrificial post is the sun". Here reason tells us that the post is like the sun and not the actual sun itself. When reason is not to be discarded even in the ascertainment of the import of the scripture, why should we reject it altogether in matters pertaining to the knowledge of Brahman, which, according to the Vedāntin, is to be revealed only through Scriptures.

IV. Lastly, the opponent says and brings in a scriptural passage, where the celebrated sage, Yājñavalkya, exhorts Maitreyī, his wife, to devote herself to self-realisation by means of hearing, reflecting and meditating. The successive type of triple-method recommends the application of Reason in the attainment of knowledge of Brahman. After all, reflection is only a synonym for reasoning.

Knowledge of Brahman is after all a knowledge. Then, it must be knowable from some means of knowledge. On the above four grounds, the opponent has established that Reason is equally qualified to be utilised in attaining the knowledge of Brahman.

At this stage, a host of questions naturally shoot up in a rational mind. The chief of them may be: Is this superimacy of scripture over reason consistent with the outlook of philosophy? When scripture conflicts with Perception, why should the direct findings of Perception be accorded a secondary status? Perception is the basis of scripture, because there would have been no scripture, if the

meanings of those words were not first perceived. As such, are we not rendering scripture baseless in regarding Reason as subsidiary to scripture?

All these doubts may be cleared thus:—

Reason has got a very important place in the monistic Vedānta because of a number of reasons. Firstly, it determines the true purport of a scriptural passage; Secondly, it harmonises the passages into their non-dualistic import and finally, it ascertains the novelty of a passage. But its value is zero if it conflicts with the authority of scripture. (One may note here that it is reason alone which is to judge and tell us where does scripture conflict with it and where it does not!)

The Advaitin gives two reasons to justify his above-said stand. Firstly, Because Perception is sublatable and, secondly the Knowledge of the scripture can arise independently of itself, without standing in need of perceptual knowledge; therefore, the doctrine that scripture should be accorded the highest status of authority in matters of inquiries and pursuits into the nature and knowledge of Brahman, is correct and tenable on grounds of logic also.

The last objection may be answered by bringing in the Ultimate and the Relative truths. The field of perception may be empirically valid, it is decidedly

1. Vide Introduction to "The Bhamati Chatusūtri" by S.S. Suryanārāyaṇa Śrīmātri and C. Kunhan Raja.
invalid from the ultimate point of view, because the perceived object is, in reality, superimposed on the real. To say that Šaṅkara was deadly opposed to the use of reason would be quite unfair to him. In fact, he does recognise the importance and utility of reason and experience. In his commentary on the Gītā, he exorts us not to accept any text which declares fire to be cold. In his Kathopaniṣad Vākyabhāṣya, he declares that the tings cannot be separated from their nature, even if a hundred texts declared so. At another place, he says that Practical life would be altogether shattered if we regard all reasoning to be foundationless. To have two more illustrations:

"The validity of the Scripture cannot be sustained if it is not supported by Inference or contradicts it". 2
"Reason is the only means of knowledge in comprehending the meaning between the real and the unreal". 3

Put on the other hand, keeping in view the ultimate realisation of non-duality, Šaṅkara never for a moment seems to forget the highest authority of the Scripture because Scriptural utterances, are, after all, records of the actual spiritual experience of the great Sages. As such, they are most valid. They can certainly help in bringing the final intuition earlier.

1. Gf. 18/66
2. Vide Śaṅrīraka Bhāṣya on 1/1/2.
3. Vide Šaṅkara's comment on Kathopaniṣad IV/2.
But, Shamkara wants us to be always aware of the fact that Reason may be valid in sensible matters, but never in supersensible matters. This does not mean that there is involved contradiction between scripture and Reason. In fact, 'The supersensual is super-rational, but not irrational'. But, Shamkara dismisses mercilessly all pleas of Reason in supersensual matters.

Shamkara proves that the application of Reason towards the realisation of Brahman and its knowledge is futile and useless. His stand is based on the following grounds:

Reason cannot be taken as a dependable canon to judge a thing. Conclusions of a man can be refuted by another more intelligent person. That is why great sages like Kapila etc. are seen to be refuted by Sages like Kapāda. Reason at best can give conclusions of the greatest degree of probability, but never of certainty. Only Scripture can furnish such conclusions of certainty. Realisation is preceded by the determinate knowledge which can never be had by means of Reason. Therefore, when Reason is indecisive in supersensual matters, it is all the more so in respect of the determination of the Ultimate Reality.

The opponent may ask, how did you arrive at this conclusion, if not with the help of Reason? Hence it is incorrect to say that Reason is useless and has no definite

1. Vide Swāmī Satprakāshānanda's "Methods of Knowledge" Page 222.
2. Vide Śārīraka Bhāṣya on 2/110.
base. Śāṅkara points out here in this connection that reasoning is futile so far as the knowledge of Brahman is concerned because of the following additional reasons:

Brahman, the cause of the world, whom the poor opponent insists to ascertain and know by Reason, is not the object either of Perception or of Inference, because it is beyond senses and has no characteristic mark.

Above all, the knowledge of Brahman depends on Brahman alone because It is existence itself, one without a second and the sole Reality. As such, its knowledge must be uniform. It is a knowledge about which there cannot be two opinions, just like the knowledge of fire that it is hot. But uniform conclusions can never be arrived at through Reason. That is why we find that there exists a variety of difference with regard to different concepts in the different branches of Philosophy. For example, the Sāṅkyas determine Pradhāna as the cause of the world. The Vaishesikas determine the atoms. Which to accept? Hence it is rightly concluded that reasoning unsupported by Scriptures cannot furnish definite and decisive results whatsoever.

The scriptural passage that has been cited by the opponent in support of his assertion does not, in reality, permit the independent use of Reason towards the knowledge of Brahman. Rather, only that reasoning has to be taken

1. Vide Śāṅkara Ṛṣaya on 2/1/11.
into account which runs in conformity with the dictations scriptures. The act of reflection is to take place only in the light of what has been 'heard' from scriptures.

Thus Śaṅkara brings out the deceptive nature of Reasoning quite convincingly. He has given three examples so as to show what type of reasoning is considered to be contributory towards the Final Intuition. They are as follows:-

Sleeping and waking states exclude each other and get falsified from each other's point of view. Therefore, the soul, the experiencer of both the states, is absolutely unrelated to them.

During deep sleep, the soul unites with the Self which is pure existence. Therefore, the soul is eternally of the nature of pure existence.

The world springs from Brahman, and the Cause and the effect are always non-different from each other. Therefore, the world has no existence apart from Brahman. 1

It will not be going off the track to mention in this connection the following wonderful observation made by Dr. N. K. Devaraja:

"His (Śaṅkara's) condemnation of tarka is well known, nor are passages wanting where either reasoning has been condemned to the enquirer or the opponent

administered sharp rebuke for disregarding logic. Secondly, there is the undeniable fact that Shamkara undoubtedly, one of the greatest reasoners of all time, is only too ready to use reasoning both as a weapon of offence and defence against the opponents and as an aid to the interpretation of the Scriptures.

1) The Criterion of Truth

Truth is what it is. It is eternal and is not relative to any conscious subject. It is an undivided being. The real nature of a thing depends on the thing itself. Hence for an Advaitin, truth is intrinsic and the non-truth is extrinsic. Shamkara has admitted that truth and error are related to objects. But from a strict Advaitin's point of view, Brahman is the sole Reality and no thought can be taken as corresponding to it. Therefore, all human judgements are imperfect. But so far as the Absolute is concerned, there can't even be the touch of error. The perfection of reality and truth lies in Brahman and Its knowledge.

The criterion of truth, according to Shamkara, is the law of non-contradiction. Only that knowledge can be taken as true which is never sublated by any other subsequent knowledge. A cognition is erroneous if its knowledge gets contradicted by another subsequent cognition.

1. "A thing is valid if it is not subsequently rejected as unreal." - Advaita-Siddhih 1/12.

To mistake the real for unreal, is what is technically known as "Adhyása". It is malobservation and purely a subjective phenomenon. Superimposition is based on an existent locus. That locus is mistaken for a thing other than the locus itself. Thus ignorance causes Apramā. Śāṅkara defines Adhyása as "apprehending a thing something other than what is is". It assumes two forms: Arthādhyása and Jñānādhyása. When a rope is mistaken to be a snake, it is a case of Arthādhyása. When a crystal is perceived to be red because of its nearness to a red flower, it is a case of Jñānādhyása.

Vācaspati observes quite convincingly that superimposition cannot occur about an entity clearly perceived or absolutely out of sight. Hence there evolves a test for the validity of a thing that it should be servicable. But the illusory snake can neither be brought under the subjective category nor under the objective category. It cannot be called subjective in so far as it is actually perceived outside. It is not even objective because it is the result of the wrong identification of the perceived object with some which is presented by our memory. It is something else than the categories of existence or non-existence (Sadasad-Vilakṣaṇa). Hence the Advaitins conclude that it is "Anirvacanīya", inexplicable.

It will not be out of context to mention here briefly some of the theories of error as advocated by the different
schools of Indian Philosophy.

Ātmakhyāti vāda

This theory is advocated by the Vijnānavādins. They say that all our perceptions are the results of the modifications of our consciousness. Error, according to them, consists in recognising the external world of objects as real, which in fact are of the nature of "Vijnāna".

This theory does not stand to reason. Had the illusory snake and its substratum, rope, been both but forms of consciousness, there would not have been any distinction between them.

Asat-khyāti

The upholders of this view, the Madhyamikas, say that error consists in apprehending the non-existent as existent. Take, for example, the error of nacre-silver. Silver, though non-existent is cognised to be existent. In fact, maintaining the faithfulness towards the doctrine of nihilism, neither they admit the existence of the external object, nor they believe the cogniser and act of cognition as existent. Hence the present error. The Advaitin criticises this theory thus: Had objects been non-existent, they could have never been perceived as existent. But we do cognise the external objects.

1. "Nyāya-Makaranda" of Anandabodha has discussed in details the different theories of error held by Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Buddhism etc. Finally, he gives his view in favour of Anirvacaniya Khyāti.

2. Dr. Vidyu Shekhar Bhattacharya has minutely analysed and beautifully discussed the problem in details in his "A study..."
as a tree, house etc. Hence the Madhyamikas' theory of error is not supported by reason and experience. This is not a correct explanation of error.

Akhyaṭīvāda

The Prathamak school of Mimansa holds that error consists in the non-discrimination between the object of perception and the object remembered. Thus there arises a confusion about the percept and the memory-image which causes error.

The Advaitins are joined by the Naiyayikas in refuting this theory. They say that mere non-discrimination between perception of nece and its memory-impression cannot cause experience of silver which is positive and is present 'here and now'. The Akhyaṭīvādin "seems to have overlooked the perceptual character of the erroneous cognition".  

Refuting Akhyaṭīvāda analytically, Śrī N.K. Devaraja concludes the present issue thus: "It uncritically accepts the truth of the following propositions: (i) that erroneous knowledge is not a unit but a composite of two jñānas, (ii) that there can be a memory experience with the element of past reference filched or subdued, (iii) that mere absence of knowledge or non-apprehension can act as a motive to action".

Anya thakhyati vāda

The Naiyāyikas say that error consists in perceiving a thing other than what it is. The perception of nacre as silver is its example. The process in which this error takes place is narrated thus. Due to some reason the perceipient misapprehends the nacre as something bright which in turn arouses the memory impressions of silver. This results in the error due to the identification of the two. The Advaitins react to this theory and assert that the real can never be perceived if it does not come in sense-contact.

Sadasat-Khyāti

Superimposition requires an existent entity, e.g. the nacre. But the Advaitins maintain that error consists in the apprehension of something which is indescribable. Vijnānabhikṣu points out that no such thing as 'indescribable' is observed in experience. Hence Advaitin's theory of error termed as "Anirvacaniya-Khyāti" cannot be maintained. Thus the Sāṅkhyaśas explain the theory of error as apprehending both the real and the unreal objects. The theory cannot be said to be self-contradictory. In nacre-silver perception, the silver does exist in the shop, but at the same time it is unreal in so far as it is superimposed on nacre. Hence error is a combination of the perception of the real and the unreal both.
Aniruddha explains this theory a little differently. Take, for example, the sentence: "This is silver". In so far as "this" part of the error is concerned, it is real. But in so far as "silver" part is concerned, it is unreal. Hence error, according to Aniruddha, is a joint combination of the real and the unreal.

This theory need not be confused with that of the Naiyāyikas. The Naiyāyikas maintain that illusion arises due to a combined perception of the real and the unreal whereas the Sāṅkhyaśas say that it is the "conjoint" perception of the real and the unreal which causes error.

The Advaitin disagrees with the above view and says that the basic assumption of the Sāṅkhyaśas is untenable. It goes against experience that a non-existent thing, silver, may be perceived. He asserts that the self alone is real. The world is only an appearance having its base in the Self. Its existence lasts till the non-dual realisation is achieved, and knowledge which gets sublated due to a subsequent knowledge cannot be real.

Sat-Khyāti

The Vishistādvatāvādins, advocating this theory, say that error consists in the non-serviceability of nacre. According to them, perception of silver is nacre is real. The fact is that nacre does possess some attributes of silver.
So from the point of view of the constituent elements both the objects have striking similarities, and therefore, both are real from each other's point of view. When nacre is perceived as nacre, the ingredients of silver visible in nacre, dissolve themselves into their component parts. This theory is called Sat Khyāti. In regarding every experience as real they seek support from the doctrine of quintuplication.

The Advaitins, joined by the Sānkhyas, reject this theory. Had silver been real, its cognition would have never been sublated. Even if it is admitted that there exist the particles or elements of silver in nacre, we cannot equalise the nacre with silver. Swāmī Satprakāshānanda has given a more appealing example to refute the contention of the Vishistadvaitavādins. "When a stump of a tree is simultaneously mistaken for a thief by one person, for a policeman by another, and for a sweetheart by a third, does the stump actually turn into these objects of cognition at the same time?" This is indeed a powerful argument.

Anirvacanīya Khyāti

All the theories of error enumerated above, say, in one way or the other, that error consists in "the direct apprehension of something that is not present". The

1. "Methods of Knowledge" by Swāmī Satprakāshānanda, Page 133.
Advaitin criticises it thus:

The act of the perception of snake indicates that snake is existent, because it has given rise to its perception only when it came in contact with the sense organ. And a thing which comes in contact with a sense organ cannot be non-existent. Hence the illusory perception of snake does point to its being present 'here and now'. The positive effect of its perception has brought signs of fear in the percepient being. This cannot be attributed to memory impressions. Hence silver cannot be called unreal. It is not even real because its knowledge gets sublated at the time of the dawn of true knowledge. Hence error is inexplicable.