CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF SUFISM AND ADVAITA VEDAINTA
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There are significant similarities and differences between Sūfism and Advaita Vedānta.

It is said that Sūfism is a progressive and growing system. It did not, therefore, identify itself with one school of thought as distinct from or opposed to another. It continued to adapt itself to the changing environment by assimilating the growth of learning and incorporating that form of reasoning which was suited to the times and circumstances. Therefore, Sūfism underwent various stages of development.

The Sūfis, however, are not systematic in their writings as the Advaitins are. They use one and the same word in different senses, and are not particular about the meaning and constructions of sentences. They speak the words as the mood inspires them. Their purpose is more to express the devotional and mystical shades of experiences emotionally than to propound a constructive system of speculative thought. They try to tell us what they immediately feel and "there is no universal formula that sums up every shade of an intricate mystical experience".

But Advaita Vedānta is a system of thought, critical, constructive and with its culmination in intuitive experience.
A comparison between the two however, will yield some significant results. We shall compare them in the following areas. (1) means to know the reality (reason, revelation and intuition), (2), God, (3) Soul, (4) World, and (5) Disciplines leading to the ultimate goal.

Reason, Revelation and Voluntary

Sufism, according to the Sufis, is the Islamic mysticism. It was brought into being as soon as the mystical verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet who was in fact the first Sufi. As it has been said that the Prophet is the messenger sent by God, who brought within a Law and a Path. The Law with its command and prohibitions is concerned with the domain of action. Hence it defines the actions that Muslims must accomplish to merit Paradise after death, which is salvation and the actions that Muslims must avoid to keep away from damnation. Because it is occupied with the actions of the individual, the Law represents exoteric Islam. The Path has to do with the domain of contemplation and hence it represents esoteric Islam. While all Muslims are under the obligation to follow the Law and not the reverse because an ordinary Muslim is not aiming at mystical experience of oneness with God in any way a blasphemy according to them. Those who follow the esoteric side of Islam are called the Ulamas (theologians) and the followers of esoteric Islam are the Sufis.
According to Advaita, too, short yajña generally, people must pass through household duties and they should follow scripture which consists of commandment of performance and prohibition. Performance of obligatory duties and prohibition of religious activities is the exoteric Advaita. Similarly Śankara's śrīmaṁkārya is the esoteric one in the stage of renunciation.

Advaita does not think that the order of succession in brahmacārya, gṛhastha, vāna-prastha and sannyāsa is a necessary one. One can get sannyāsa even from the stage of brahmacārya. Śankara believes that even without the knowledge of religious duty one can desire to know Brahmān, provided he has developed the spiritual and moral excellences like discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal and so on.

Sūfism believes that one need not be a householder to become a Sūfī, that law, however, unlike the religious duties of an householder in Advaita, is not the duties of an householder but religious duties in general viz., the Five Pillars of Islam. Even the Sūfī mystics generally are supposed to observe this. Some Sūfis however do not observe the Five Pillars for which reason they are condemned as unorthodox by the orthodox Muslims. For example, Abu Rayāsid Mistāni says, "I do not go to Kaaba (Mecca), but Kaaba comes to me". Another Sūfī Ibn al Arabī
says, that one can worship God not only in mosques, but even in churches and temples. Yet the Sufis who follow the Five Pillars do not condemn them go. Hence it seems that for Sufism the observance of Five Pillars are optional, however obligatory it might be for the Muslims other than Sufis.

Hence the degeneration of Sufism began when the exoteric and esoteric side of Islam were separated. The Sufis began to constitute themselves into a separate body, with branches spread all over the world, and in course of time they split into a large number of schools, each having its monastery and code of law.

Though all the Sufis sanctified their mind with love and devotion to God and by seeking inspiration from Qur'an and the sayings of the prophet, some Sufis interpreted them to suit their conceptions.

Idrish Shah, in his book 'Sufia', says "For the Sufis of the classical period Koran is the unceded document which contains Sufi teachings. Theologians tend to assume that it is capable of interpretation only in a conventionally religious way; historians are inclined to look for earlier literary or religious sources; others for evidence of contemporary events reflected in its page. For the Sufi, the Koran is a document with numerous levels of transmigration, each one of which has
a meaning in accordance with the capacity for understanding the reader..."

He has shown an example how the Sufis interpretation is different from the Muslims. The verse of Qur'an:

"Say, O messenger, to the people
He, Allah is Unity! Allah is Eternal
Fathering nobody, and not himself engendered
And absolutely nothing is like him."

He says, for the devout and conventional Muslim this is the basic declaration of faith. Allah is God! He has no equal, is the eternal; but such an interpretation of the meaning was not accepted by the Sufis. They claim to be able to perceive the real meaning of this verse. In order to show the difference Idrish Shab has given the passage by referring to the opinion of Ghazzali about it.

He refers to the context in which the chapter was revealed. It is said that it was questioned by the Bedouin Arabs to the Prophet, "To what say we compare Allah?" The answer is that Allah say not be compared to anything. There is no analogy possible between this being (Allah - that which is to be worshipped) and anything familiar to humanity. Allah is the word used to denote the final objectivity, uniqueness, something
which has no relationship with numbering, anything in time, anything which propagates in a sense familiar to man."

Brahman is unlike anything that is given in empirical experience. It is anādi-vilākṣana. That is the reason why the negative description as "not this, not this" is preferred. That again is the meaning of aum, which is complete freedom from everything, empirical. One definition of unreality of the world is difference from Brahman (anādi-vivikṣāta).

There are two types of analogy, positive analogy and negative analogy. By negative analogy one cannot say that Brahman is not like the world; we can say that Brahman is not, not what it is. This is the significance of the interpretation of aum in the meaning of Brahman (anādi-vivikṣāta). By secondary implication, by which Sāṅkara denies the attributes in Brahman, he says: worlds indicate Brahman but it can not denote Brahman.

The original source of Hindu's cultural life is the Vedas, which were revealed to the priests (seers) in their supra-normal consciousness. Their religion, philosophy, ritualistic practices etc., are guided by certain codes which are known as Sūtras, but all of them are based upon the sacred sanction of Vedic authority.

The word 'Veda' literally means supreme knowledge. But it is applied to the Vedic literature, comprising Samhitās,
Brāhmaṇas, Aranyakas and Upaniṣads which are considered to be direct revelations from God, embodying the supreme Truth could not be gained by any effort of the human mind. So they are regarded as śāstra, i.e., not of human origin. The Vedas are called śrutī, either because they were directly heard from God, or because the traditional method of studying and getting them by heart is by hearing them recited by the preceptor.

Dr. Radhakrishnan says, "Even when the scriptures are traced to divine authorship, it is said that even God is not completely free but has to reckon with the nature of truth. The Vedas are received by men. They speak to men in their concrete situations".

The philosophy of Advaita Vedānta is based on Upaniṣads. According to Śāṅkara, brahman knowledge is only through the scripture. And in the Brahma-Sūtra, Śāṅkara says, that the scripture is the source of the knowledge of brahman.

In another Śūtra, Śāṅkara states that Vedas give us not only injunctions with regard to ritual but also brahman knowledge. The authority for brahman is the sacred teachings, siddham brahman, śaa ma-brahmā van.
Again he says, Scripture is the way to prove the reality of Brahman. For being devoid of form and other sensible qualities Brahman is not the object of perception. It cannot be the object of inference or comparison because there is no perceivable sign or similarity in it. So it is to be known through the Vedic teaching.

Thus to both Sufis and the Advaitins, Scripture is the source of divine knowledge. The Qur'an and the Traditions of Islam are same as the Shruti and Smrti of Hindus.

Sufis and Advaitins therefore hold the view that the means of knowing the reality is only the scripture. The other means of ordinary empirical knowledge, according to the Sufis, are tradition, observation, logical reasoning, contemplation and intuition and the Advaitins admit six proofs viz., perception, reason, comparison, verbal testimony, presumption and nonapprehension as empirical sources of knowledge. These are useful in one way or the other as an accessories to the knowledge of reality as we have discussed these in detail in the previous chapters.

Knowledge which is produced by pramāṇas according to Advaitins is not pure consciousness, which is never produced nor is it a mental state but a blend of both. Correspondingly the Sufis also distinguish between knowledge through mind and knowledge of the heart.
Omar Khayyam, in his Treatise on Metaphysics, says “that the Sufis are those who seek knowledge, not by reflection and speculation, but by purifying their soul (the passive and static ego), correcting their character (the active and dynamic ego), and by freeing the intellect from the obstacles which arise from bodily nature. When this substance is presented, purified before the Divine Glory, then the (intellectual and principle) models of the (mental and manifested) knowledge, will surely be revealed in this world (of transcendental reality).”

Reason, according to the Sufis, can not give the perfect knowledge of God. They used the words 'aql, intellect and reason, synonymously. Intellect is the instrument in discriminating between good and evil. So intellect helps to purify the heart and to such a purified heart God will manifest. By intellect they mean intuitive knowing and by reasoning discursing thinking.

In Advaita, reason is useful in ascertaining the import of the Upanisadic texts. Sankara uses the concept of logical interpretation to identify the meaning of the text like 'takya ma-si', by secondary implication and similarly other Vedantins also do that in accordance with Scripture. As such reasoning does play a role though auxiliary to scripture. In the case of Sufism on the contrary, the Sufis have not preferred to show why their own view of qur'an is unorthodox. They have not tried
to show on grounds of rational interpretations how scripture could freely accommodate the philosophy of Ṣūfīsm. This is particularly a desideratum, because it is not all in Islam who subscribe to the Ṣūfī method of scriptural experience. That shows that reason has not been fully explained as an auxiliary to scriptural study in Ṣūfīsm. Ṣūfis and non-Ṣūfis seem to derive opposite conclusions from qūfūn, but neither of them seems to justify the preference.

The scriptural passages which are inquired properly with the counsel of reason give rise to the direct experience known as intuition (anubhava or saññāthāma) after meditation or even without it. H. Perry says, "Intuition is the type of experience where in the individual self, embraced by the Universal Self, passes into a timeless being. Feelings and ideas are fused, and the distinction between the knower and the known disappears. It is knowing by being, rather than by knowing, wherein the object known is a part of the self itself. Intellectual knowledge is surrounded and corrected by intuitive knowledge. The former is defined and assigned limits by the evidence of the latter. When the intellect grows and weary and disappearing, the heart starts the quest. It leads inwards, turns in upward itself and seeks to gain the truth by inner experience and waits for divine illumination."
The Sufis also talk about the same type of intuitive experience. Chisti says, "There is a 'way' beyond reason by which man is able to know the secret of reality. This intuitive power of man is hidden within him as fire is implicit in the stone. When this fire blazes forth, the word becomes bright and illuminated". The 'intuitive power' in man is the divine gift of God. It is light of divine grace that flashed into the heart and overwhels every human faculty in its dazzling beams. One cannot know God by the senses, for He is immaterial, nor by intellect for He is beyond the horizon of mental eye. Reason never gets beyond the finite. Only the heart illuminated by faith and divine grace receives immediate knowledge. Hence the Prophet said, "My earth and my heaven contain He not, but the heart of my faithful servant containeth He".

"It became evident to me", says Al-Chazanli of his own search for mystic truth, that is Sufis are men of intuition and not men of words. I recognised that I had learnt all that can be learnt of Sufism by study, and that the rest could not be learnt by study or by speech.

The Advaitins speak, as we found in the relevant chapters, of the spiritual experience which is pure inaccessibility — anubhava which is essentially incommunicable and can only be indicated through halting phrases by paradox, symbol, suggestion,
figure of speech and implication (saktana). "A mere understanding of reality is not enough" says Sankara. The end of all knowledge is spiritual realization, "nābhāsyopam eva vidyā-phalaṃ".

The Sūfīs also use symbols, similes, paradox for the spiritual experience. "Symbol", says Underhill, "is the clothing which the spiritual borrows from the material plane - is a form of artist expression. That is to say, it is not literal but suggestive; though the artist who used it may sometimes lose sight of this distinction".

The Sūfīs get this immediate experience (intuition) by constantly meditating on the words and the formulas of the Qurān, since the Qurān is the word of God in which his speech is crystallized. Since the words are divine, the Sūfīs repeat it continuously. They believe that they are pronouncing the very word of Allah and so it seems to them that they are hearing the sound of Him, with such an impression they are often thrown into a state known as wajd (ecstasy) in the course of their devotional reading. At this stage they find no difference between the subject and the object.

To the Advaitins, the study of scripture when followed by meditation results in intuition. Continuous meditation according to them in a means to jñānādhyāna or direct perception,
which is manifested when the ātman is destroyed and the individuals know that Atman and the jīva are one. It is apprehended by an immediate experience and not by discursive reasoning. In this experience everything is felt as the self. The distinction between the knower, the process of knowing and the object for the ordinary empirical knowledge are not present. There is a feeling of certitude. This intuitive consciousness is called nritātmā or ātmajāna and the Śūfī calls this intuition marājat.

The nature of spiritual experience of Advaita Vedānta is broadly similar to that of Śūfīsm. To the Śūfis, the remembrance of God is to forget the self, the ego is a kind of crystallization of forgetfulness of God. They say, that the mind is the organ of remembrance of God hidden deep down in our 'I'. In meditation, it is as if the heart rises to the surface, comes to take the place of the mind. As the Prophet said, "Protect God in thine heart; then God shall protect thee". In Advaita meditation is the control of the mind as well as the control of the senses. It is the purity of the heart, āsadamā-jñānā-sambatti.

The Upaniṣad tells us that the yogi seeks the Reality in the purified heart. In the Ānandavatī Upaniṣad it is stated that Sanat Kumāra (Śri Śuddi Sadāśī) teaches Narada after he satisfied himself that Narada was pure in heart (uddita-āsava).
we have seen that anubhāva is an immediate experience to the Advaita, where it is not consciousness of this or that, but it is to know and see is one self. As Sankara says, "All faith and devotion, all study and meditation, are intended to train us for this experience and intuition of self, however comes only to a mind prepared for it". Again he says, "the intuitional knowledge is not contradicted by anything else, so it is the highest truth".

In the Śatasāhasrika, it is said, "Scripture speaks of the knowledge of Brahman as two-fold, viz., experience relating to one self (svānumbhāti) and conclusive certainty (upapatt). The former arises in relation to the body (svānumbhāti), while the latter arises with reference to the universe (arvātmakātmā). First arises the experience that "I am Brahman" (brahman asmityamabudhi), and then that "all this Brahman" (ka vidam brahma)."

"Mystical experience", says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his book An Idealist View of Life, "is a personal experience. It is an independent functioning of the human mind that has outstripped all tradition. It is the reaction of the whole man to the whole reality, it unifies all values so that the desired object is sought by the totality of one's faculties and energies. It is an integral, undivided consciousness in which man's being seems to find itself. He dwells in a sense of timeless being
as words as it is beyond the grasp of empirical thought. It is pure inwardsness of which no conceptual description is possible.

The mystics are not concerned with argument for the existence of God. They are concerned with the knowledge of God. This knowledge they get only through experience. "Wisdom affirms that there is God and knowledge enquires into his ways, his manifestations, his acts in the great drama of the world which moves through pain and death to the ultimate kingdom of truth and love. Saints do not prove the existence of God for they have apprehended the divine. They seek to help us rise in spiritual stature by forms of worship and service to living creation through whom God works", says Radhakrishnan.

It should be noted in this connection that intuitive knowledge is not a valid knowledge, according to John Hospers. He says that through intuition one cannot arrive at a meaningful claim. He says, "It is clear that meaningless utterance does not become meaningful when it is clad in the mantle of intuition and that no reference to intuition will tell us whether it is meaningful and if so, what its meaning is".

However, it is clear that so far as the individual is concerned, his intuitive experience is a meaningful one and has an impact on his attitudes and behaviour. For instance we may refer to a Sufi, who does not weep over a loss. The desire for
perfect love i.e., the supersensual object of his quest became so strong in him that the loss of his son was nothing to him. He says "when God loves his servant, He afflicts him, and when He loves him very much He takes hold of him and leaves for his neither family nor wealth". This event was for him a divine grace. Sankara also wrote, quite without feeling, in a verse of his Katha, "The death of his children was for him like sweet meat".

Similarly, according to Sankara the behaviour of the Jivan Mukta is utterly indifferent to the sensual joy. He neither grieves nor enjoys.

"In its intuitive aspect, the mystics find the surest criterion of the validity of the experience. Being true to himself and to Sankara, the mystic regards his advancement, in the mystical life as a step towards the realization of these ends. The first hand intuition of God is the greatest criterion; the mystic himself is ultimately the final judge of himself," says Gita. In spite of such formal agreement, mystical experience is capable of great diversity, in its attitude towards the objective, the path to its attainment and in the fundamental attitude of the mystic himself. There are two types of mystical experience closely linked together, the introvertive mystical experience and the
extrovertive mystical experience in the Inward way and the way
of Unity, as Otto calls them. The Inward way is that way lead-
ing inward, withdrawing the self from all outward things, with
the consequent retreat into the round ground of one's soul,
where God abides. This is the better world, where the most
glorious life awaits the seeker. The road leading to it is
Intuition, that illuminates him with self-knowledge
as well.

The outward way or the way of the Unifying vision, gapes
upon the world of multiplicity, from which the seeker jumps to an
'intuition', or a knowledge of its own kind. It bestows upon
the individual the strange glimpse into the eternal relationship
of all things, the unity of being. The apprehension, being
filled with value and awe, brings with itself self-liberation and
blessedness. Things and events are no longer multiple and sepa-
rate, but are a whole One. Within this One all otherness as
opposition disappears. The perception of this identity of all
things results in an identification of the perceiver with the
perceived. Thus unified with the One, he sees all things in
himself, or rather as himself. The objects are transfigured in
such a manner that the unity shines through them. This One
itself is the object of intuition - as that which is superior and
prior to the many. The many is the changing modes of the One.
This type of experience is found in Sufism, as their experience is said to be only momentary. While reciting the Qur'an, when they come across certain verses containing some divine threat of punishment, they strike their chest and become unconscious. While they read a verse containing God's promise of His grace and reward, they would pass into a state of bewilderment (tahrir). But this experience is only for the time being. After sometime they come to the normal life. Such experience brought them into the new life and they are the chosen persons and hence they are known as the realized souls, though they lead a normal life and impart the knowledge to others. They look at the world in a different way.

In Advaita, the Jivan-mukta is the one who has the direct experience of the self and is embodied at the same time who could impart the knowledge of the self to others. He comes into the world after the ecstatic spiritual experience, speaks the language of the people communicates with them, understands their problems and so on.
Ultimate Reality

According to the Sufis, God is the Highest Principle of absolute reality as well as the Creator of the world. The word 'Being' is also used by the Sufis to denote God in the absolute sense. The God of the Sufis can be both God 'as-it-is-in-itself', and 'as-it-is-in-relation-to-the-world'.

In Advaita Vedanta, Isvara is viewed as the Creator of the world and Brahman is the Ultimate reality, which is unconditioned and without attributes. When viewed in relation to the empirical world, it is called God. Therefore God (Isvara) is the conditioned Brahman and the conditioning principle is called Mayā.

The God of the Sufis from the Absolute point of view may be said to be same as Advaita Brahman, as far as they consider Allah as not only the only God but also reality and since they describe God both in an absolutistic and personalistic way.

The Upanishads speak about Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman which Śankara tries to reconcile by the conception of Mayā as a limiting force. Similar is the position in Sufism also because without something limiting and bringing about a distinction, the absolute can never become personal. We can hence safely say that Sufis also have to admit that a limiting principle akin to Mayā brings about personality in Brahman or the Absolute or God.
The Supreme Reality according to the Sufis is one without a second. There is no plurality in its oneness. His existence is described by unity and known by singularity. Plurality is inconsistent with the Divine Unity. As Rumi says, "if you tie two birds together they will not fly, inspite of the fact that their wings have become four. But if a dead bird is tied to a living one, then they will fly, because there is no duality present". The realm of Pure Being is the 'realm of colourlessness' as he calls it. It is the Absolute Unity in which there is no individualisation or limitation of any kind.\footnote{34}

The same idea is expressed by Jami. According to him the term "existence" is something used as a generic concept of an abstract idea, but at other times it signifies the Real Being who is self-existent and on whom the existence of all other beings depends. There is no real existence besides Him. Everything other than Him is a mental fiction, with no objective existence and its form is a merely imaginary entity.

Jami addressed God in his poem Hadiqah with the words:

Infidelity and faith both wonder
alone thy Path saying,
He alone, without any associate.\footnote{35}

According to Advaitins also Brahman is "one only without a second". Oneness alone is real and any duality is unreal, as it is a product
of ātma. The emphatic repetition of the same idea by the two expressions "sāmya" and "savitāma" implies that there is no duality at all in brahman.

God is conceived by Śūris as one, eternal, unchangeable, indivisible and immaterial. He is all-pervasive. He is near to man, although man in his ignorance considers himself far off from God. "It is wrong to assert that God is near to some than to others, that the wise are closer to His than are the ignorant", Nārāyaṇa says in Aṣṭa-bīṣa. A similar expression is found in Gāṇḍavāna-Upaniṣa-d wherein it is said that everyday, man in his deep sleep goes into brahman. Yet does not know it. The example that is given is of a poor man who not knowing that there is a treasure under his feet buried, walks over it everyday thinking that he is poor. The fact is that, those who seek Him are near to Him and the others with their ignorance, think that they are far from Him. But God is everywhere. As the Qurān says, "we are near to his (man) than his jugular vein". Correspondingly Upaniṣadic statement is "Eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, and Life to Life, Soul of Soul".

Śāṅkara in his commentary on Gāṇḍavāna-Upaniṣad says that all that moves in this moving universe is enveloped by the presence of the Lord. He is the Self of all beings. He is a Universal presence.
To the Șūfīs also God is the Universal Soul (Auḥā-JaʿBālat). Everything proceeds from it and returns to it. *From God we are, to God we shall return.* Thus the Șūfīs hold that the soul or the principle of life which exists through all nature is not only from God but of God.

God is the "Mysterious Power," says Nuḥal, that pervades the Universe. "This power," he says, transcends the sense and is felt rather than seen. There is an unalterable law that governs the Universe. This law is not a blind law because there is orderliness in which it is acted upon.

Ibnal Arabī says, "God considered absolutely beyond relation, and therefore beyond knowledge, inconceivable and ineffable, quite independent of created beings in respect of His essence." He is the first, the last, the outward, and inward," he says.

Sāṅkara says that not only God is a mysterious power but also exercises a power to create the world and to persuade over it and to preserve over it and to destroy over it. No such explicit specific mention of a mysterious power which God exercises to produce the world like ḫūṣūṣ is not mentioned in Șūfīism. Sāṅkara speaks of ḫūṣūṣ as the power of God, but this creative power, according to him is not a permanent character of God, but only a free will which can therefore be given up at all. The wise who are not deceived by the world appearance need not conceive of such a power emphatically.
God at all as the bearer of this illusion producing power. Besides, even when conceived as a power, गृहा, is not a distinct entity in Aryan, but inseparable and indistinguishable from it "as the burning power is from fire or will is from the mind that wills".

The Śūfis hold that God's existence is ancient and permanent (dbāt-i-qādīm). He is living, active principle and everlasting. All other existence are accidents and transient (hūdith-wa-jāni). His existence and nature are unchangeable and immutable. The nature of the world is mutable. The mutable world cannot really qualify an immutable God, except through the free will of God and free adoption of God. In other words both in Advaita and Sūfīstwara world is an accident to God. It would be Absolute without the accident God would be Absolute.

The description of God as the creator of the world, according to Advaita is true only from the practical point of view, so long as the world appearance is regarded as real. Creatorship of the world is not God's essence (svātāntre-laksana) it is the description of what is merely accidental (tattvathā-laksana) and does not touch His essence.

To the Śūfis, God is not the object of thought. Whatever is an object of thought is perishable. The Advaitic dictum is that whatever objectified is illusory and perishable.
(ya-dasyamad). God is He who is not perishable. He is the Infinite without a beginning and without end.

"All that you may think of is liable to pass away; he that comes not into thought is God", says Aum. Similar Upanishadic passages may be cited which follows: "From which thought and speech returns that is God" and "who can see the knower". All that man can know about God is that He exists. 

The Upanishadic declaration is that Brahma is to be known as knower and it should be known as such. The how and why of his existence is outside man's comprehension. Man can think through the medium of mind. God is beyond the senses and as such cannot be thought of God, like the sun is His own proof. "The proof of the sun is the sun Himself. His essence can not be imagined nor comprehended".

To the Advaitins, Brahma is beyond the comprehension through the mind and the senses as an object. Sankara in his commentary on Kama-Upanishad, says that Brahma is unknowable to those who know. If Brahma be wholly unknown, then there remains no distinction between the ordinary people and the knower of Brahma. This can be explained further with the help of shell and silver analogy. Just as to the ignorant one, the silver which is superimposed on the shell is known as silver, similarly, knowablness being a thing superimposed on Brahma; the men of realization do not consider that Brahma as known. It is by
itself exist and it is unknown as an object of thought.

The Sūfīs' statement about God's existence in the state of Al-Ânâ as a mere essence devoid of all qualities and relations can be compared to the Buddhist conception in the state of nir-
as samârarâma (l.brahma, i.e., devoid of all gunâs, attributes.

The Sūfīs say that though the real is above all names and attributes except from all conditions and relations, they are distinct from him in thought but are identical in reality.

Śākūra asked the question: Are there two Brahman? sâguna and nîrâguna? He says: Yet, and explains that sâguna is the sure reality with limiting qualities and nîrâguna without without qualities. He says: Ultimate reality can be conceived from the different points of view.

From the empirical (nârika) standpoint world is believed to be real, God may be regarded as the cause, the creator, the sustainer, the destroyer of the world and therefore also as an Omnipotent and Omnipresent Being. He then appears to be possessed of all these qualities (sâguna). God in this respect is called sâguna Brahman or śivâra and he is the object of worship.

Brahman from the transcendental point of view (nârâyanânâthika) is consciousness, reality and infinity (sâtyam, dhanam, amantam brahma) is an attempt to describe His essence (svarûpa).
It cannot be considered by qualities which relate to the world or to the ego in this aspect is devoid of all distinctions. Brahman in this absolutely transcendent aspect, says Śaṅkara cannot be described at all and it is, therefore, called indeterminate or attributeless or nāma. The description of Brahman even as infinite, real, consciousness though more accurate than accidental description, cannot be directly convey the idea of Brahman. It only serves to direct the mind towards Brahman by denying of its finiteness, unreality and unconsciousness.

Hence, according to advaita Vedānta from the transcendental (paramārtha) standpoint, Brahman is the sole reality, the world is unreal, so that the very question of Brahman's immanence in and transcends over the world does not arise here at all. Hence Brahman is non-dual. From the empirical or vyākhyāna standpoint, again Īśvara is both immanent and transcendent to the world as in Ādīśa.
Individual Soul

Sufis in their conception of man, adopt a dual attitude. On the one hand they display a vivid awareness of the imperfection and sinful aspect of human nature and on the other hand, they see within the soul of man the shining of a divine light, which reveals the deepest truth of his being. Hence 'man' according to the Sufi is the complex of hub and nafs.

In Advaita Vedânta jiva in essence is the self. It is not produced and it is eternal jiva itself is Brahman, whereas 'man' of the Sufi is not hub but the hub of man is the Spirit of the divine. The soul of man is not created. But in Advaita, soulhood is illusory due to avidya. When this avidya is destroyed by knowledge, then the soul sheds its soulhood and is Brahman. But in Sufism, the soulhood is not illusory but real and this real bondage is destroyed really by a real means and the soul becomes merged in God, without losing its individuality. However, there is another current of thought in Sufism where it is exactly parallel to Advaita in which soul is the same as God or Brahman. According to this sect of Sufism, at least the soul on liberation becomes God and is no more the soul. This is because it has been purified of all ills that cause it bound.

It follows that even when since bondage is illusory the soul is in the bound condition, it is God. Advaita and Sufism agree substantially with regard to how one Supreme Spirit makes itself into many.
According to advaita Vedanta, Brahman reflected in or unlimited by mind attains to the state of Isha and falsely identifying itself with mind and its qualities, it appears as a knower, agent and enjoyer. Although it is all-pervasive, yet owing to its association with mind, it is viewed as finite. 

Isha conceals the true nature of Brahman from it and consequently Isha losing sight of its identity with its true nature i.e., Brahman experiences the recurring cycle of birth and death.

The advaitins draw support from the texts like "I will become many", "Having created that He entered that", "entering myself as the soul, I am Rama and Rupa", "The Lord by His own mayas assumes many forms", "that thou art", etc.

Sufis who follow Ibn Arabi and his school of thought say that "God breathed into Adam". This means that God Himself entered as the soul. The consequential implication is that there is only one soul that is God appearing to be many. The plurality of the souls as such as plurality of objects is illusory. For example, Abu Yazid said, "How great is My majesty". "It is God that speaks with my tongue and I have vanished", etc.

According to Advaita, the limiting adjunct of Isha is mind which influences it. Isha therefore is ignorant and bound. In Sufism, it is the nafs which is the body-mind complex into which God breathed.
According to Advaita Vedānta, when the true knowledge of Brahman arises māyā is removed and thereby the characteristic of being the agent etc. on the part of Jīva and the characteristic of being the creator of the universe on the part of Isvara, are removed. What remains then is the non-dual Brahman.

For the Sufis, the source of evil is the nafs which is comparable to ṣayyān, the principle of egoism in all its phases, which finds expressions in lust, pride, etc., which separates it from God. And evidently we shall have to think that it brings out by its delusive power the identification of the soul with the body-mind complex and uses all the empirical usages, as Śāṅkara and others say in his ādi adhyāya bhasya. The Sufis have evolved the method of practice to kill the nafs which leads them to the realization of God, which we have discussed already in the second chapter of the thesis, and mention will be made in the later part of the thesis.

Al-Khuṣṣadī said, "Everything which comes from the nafs, is deceitful, and no need of it is praiseworthy, or tends to the truth... If you follow it in its desire, you will go down to hell... It is the source of affliction and the origin of all evil."
This statement by the ḍūfī makes the parallel between advaita and ḍūfism fairly complete, because advaita would say that avāyu is that inclusive projective power concealing the truth and capable of producing pleasure, pain and illusion and is removable by right knowledge and is indeterminable as either real or unreal.
According to the Sūfis, world is not real in the sense that it is transient and illusory. Whatever is subject to change in time is by that very fact unreal, but it is not nothing or a void. It is based on a reality, owes its being with the reality and cancelled in that reality. It is not causeless and baseless. Therefore it is opposed to what is traditionally known in India as ānād-vāda, attributed to some Buddhist, who hold that any illusion is baseless and its sublation is limitless. But Sūfism evidently believes like Advaita that there is no niradhiññhāna abhinā and niravādikā badha.

It may not be far fetched if we construct the Sūfī theory of error from the fore-going account, and the error would obviously be most substratless illusion according to the Sūfis and the sublation of that illusion must result in its limit, viz., the substratum or adhiññhāna. For instance in the illusion where rope appears as snake (a shahik illustration of Advaitins), the snake appears only in the rope and does not have any reality over and above that of the rope and when the snake illusion is sublated what remains is the rope. From this it can be gathered that the Sūfis probably think that the world is an appearance like snake in the rope which does not have a reality over and above that of God. Reality and appearance are of unequal orders of reality (Vidmam-katā). In that
case it amounts practically to the *vimarsa-rāda* of the advaita
Vedānta. And the theory of error of the ārāmis if developed
out of the doctrines, would be anirvānasya va-khyāti. Cause and
effect are substantially identical and are but names of one
simple process. The potential is the cause and actuality is
called the effect but in reality one and the same principle
manifests itself in so many ways. In fact the so called effects
are only so many names of the cause and therefore false appear-
ances.

As *Aṣṭādhyāyī* in his book *Mystica Philosophy of Ibn
al Arabi*, puts it interpreting Ibn al Arabi, that God alone
exists which is same as *Advaitic Brahma eva satyam ahammithā*.
According to Ibn al Arabi, world is not more than an appearance,
it is a product of God's spontaneous yet necessary activity of
self-realization or self manifestation. Cause and effect are
only two aspects of that eternal process of self-revelation of
reality. "The movement of the creation of the world", according
to him is the fact that the world came into existence free non-
existence and intelligible. This should not be interpreted to
mean that the world came out of nothing and that it has no cause
or bases, because the world has its basis in God and produced
by God as its cause. What, however, Ibn al Arabi means to say
is that before the world was produced it was not there but only
that God its cause was there. Consequently we have to conclude
that Ibn al Arabi said that world was in God because nothing can come out of nothing. But it was not as world in name and form fully manifested that the world was there. Sankara while explaining the Chandogya text, "All this was existent alone in the beginning, one only without a second", says that the manifested world in name and form was before creation contains potentially in Brahman. This is sat-arana-vada which Ibn al Arabi seems to share.

Again the remark of Ibn al Arabi that cause and effect are mere names distinguished by mind in what is one reality highlights the conclusion that the world process wherein alone distinctions of cause and effect could arise and be spoken about is nothing more than merest speech with nothing in reality corresponding to that in fact. This view finds its parallel in the sixth chapter of Chandogya Upanishad where 'in is clearly taught that the effects are mere speech. "Vaca-rabindu vihara nāmaheva" The so called causal substance alone is real in all its varied modifications. For instance clay alone is real in all that is made of clay; artikā ityeva sa vyam. But a cause without an effect is also equally but a name. Cause and effect therefore are the base in which the human mind looks at reality for the purposes of understanding it. As Sankara would say, they are due to the samanya avai which conditions all thought and experience. In the words of Arabi, cause and effect are mere
subjective (ibāriyya) categories than objective realities. Both Arabi and Advaita substitute reality appearances for cause-effect relationship, nirūṭti-rūpa for prāṇa-rūpa.

Ibn al Arabi also holds that the world is not necessary to God, while God is necessary to the world, therefore it is a one-sided relationship between appearance and reality where appearance needs the substrate reality while the reality need not appear always as it does occasionally.

Affifi says that according to Ibn al Arabi, phenomenal objects seem to stand in causal relations to one another, but it is an immanent not a transient causality. "It is causality in which the cause and the effect belong to one and the same continuant, the divine essence, although we attribute the cause to one aspect of this continuant (the divine aspect - the Lābīr) and the effect to the other aspect of the same continuant - Naṣṣīt. It is always the divine that controls and has effect on the phenomenal".

The tathāstālākṣara of God in Advaita refers to same fact alluded to by Ibn al Arabi, viz., that God is as the creator of the world involved in the network of cause and effect relationship. He stands at the causal end. This fact common to Sufism as represented by Ibn al Arabi and his school
of thought and Advaita, is significant, because God could stand above this causal network and creation, which is not necessary to him in which case we have the concept of God in himself without the world of plurality which is roughly the concept of nirguna Brahman in Advaita.

Again the Sufi talk about the Tandulak (individualization), according to which creation is nothing but the gradual individualization of the Absolute, the process through which Pure Being manifests itself in the form of the Universe. This is of such a nature that in spite of expressing himself in different manifestation and multiple form, the Absolute Being maintains His immutable state, attributes and being and no change of any kind does necessarily take place.

This precisely is the concept of Akṣara-nītya in Advaita. This further confirms the similarity between Sufism and Advaita as shows very clearly that the world is an illusion according to Sufism. In the case of parinama, the cause is modified into effect and is no more the same. Only in vivaçya the so-called cause or substratum remains the same even when it appears as something else as in the case of rope and snake.
The Advaitins believe in पञ्चकरण्ण or quintuplication of physical elements and the evolution in the order of आकाश, the air from आकाश and fire from air, water from fire and earth from water.

For both the systems, 'individualization' is the principle of creation. It is this cosmic principle which gives rise to नाम-रूप, 'name and form'.

According to the Sufis, world is a manifestation or a reflection of something which is real and man is to attain the real and not the reflection or the manifestation. So the world though created by God, reflecting His power is the object of abandonment and neither attainment nor blessed. Man in his ignorance takes the reflection or manifestation as real and bankers after it.

Shabistari uses the similes to show the illusoriness of the world as गौणप्रमा. He says the world appears to be a reflection just as the appearance of a magic garden or the circle of fire produced by the quick rotation of the stick in flame. He says it is not real in itself.

The 'power of God', according to the Sufis can be compared to नाया of Advaita. Gāṅgādhara speaks of नाया as the power of God. But this creative power, according to him, is not a permanent character of God, but only a free will which can be given up at will. नाया is not a distinct entity -
Brahman, it is related to God as his power by inexplicable identity.

What is atman to the Advaitins is the veil according to the Sūfis. Just as due to atman the true nature of Brahman is concealed, so also for the Sūfis. As Rumi says, "From the Formless Spirit, all forms come to light. They are the clouds over the moon that is concealed in the realm of colourlessness". Rumi explains this point from the analogy of light and colour. Red and green are seen on account of the light. Men see red and green and believe that only these exist. This leads them to deny the existence of light which is their source. But as soon as the sun sets they confess that light is the form that lies behind all colour. Due to its union with colour it is not perceived. The colours were veil that obstructed man's vision of light. So also in Advaita Vedanta atman conceals Brahman, but even this concealment is impossible without the light of Brahman. Just as a finger on our eyes will conceal the sun from our vision, even so the cloud of atman is able to conceal our vision of truth which is infinite.

Again, Hūrī says that the Universe is a mirror wherein God is displayed. "It is the eye with a grunt that sees quality where there is only one and utterly fails to realise the illusory nature of duality."
The 'eye with a squint' of muni is similar to the 
avidhā śūnya, or a ṣava-lakṣaṇa of advaita. It is due to 
avidhā, brahman appears as īśvara, jīva and the world.

The essential unity is regarded by muni as the 
letter 'alika' which could be compared with advaita 'Om'.
Muni says that this letter is that in which all phenomenal
forces, all plurality and difference are harmoniously united.
The pheno real forces melt away, like snow as soon as the
divine beauty takes its appearance.

So also in advaita 'Om' is considered to be the nearest
sign of brahman. To 'meditate on 'Om' is to meditate on
brahman. It is nirupāntāna in contrast saṃsvāntāna. The
three nāḍās of om are Śiva, respectively standing for
(1) individual waking world and its spiritual counter parts
śivā, (2) the great world and its individual cosmic counter
part of hīnaparāksha, (3) the individual sleeping state and
cosmic counterpart, īśvara. The last part of om is the
ādi or which individually is the self and cosically brahman,
and this self and brahman are one and the same. This is
ādī-
svāntāna, where the individual and cosmic aspects of reality
are coördinate. Om 'Om' is the symbol for this.

Thus from the account given above it is clear that
ultimate ignorance of truth and its content viz., the reality
must belong to reality itself, because all souls are ultimately
one reality. Even though the individuals seem to be ignorant,
the principle of ignorance is in the ultimate reality.
Pathway to God realization:

Sufism is a practical and spiritual way of life like Vedanta. The root common of Sufi belief is the four stages on the path of spiritual progress, which the pilgrim must go through. The stages are called by the Sufis, Manzilas. These stages are Sariat (the Law), Tariqat (the way), Ma'ati (knowledge) and Wajhah (Truth). The Mulik (aspirant) tries to walk along the Path (Tariqat) to a goal of union with the Absolute by a process of moral asceticism and discipline to absorption in God (fanana) and the extinction of the self.

Advaitins speak about the truth which is both the reality (svayam) and value (purushārtha) and as such constitutes the goal. The way to it consists of devotion, action, meditation and knowledge, which we have mentioned in the fourth chapter of the thesis.

First of all, Sufism lays great emphasis on the necessity of a teacher to put one on the spiritual path. As Rumi says, “No one can become a Sufi without the help of Pir. Whoever travels without a guide needs two hundred years for a two days journey.”

Rumi says that visiting his master is a religious duty of the disciple.
The preceptor teaches the disciple the spiritual knowledge through the scripture. The disciple has to stay with the teacher till he masters the scripture. The Pir or Guru helps the disciple in contemplation. He communicates the knowledge either through words, or touch, or sight comparable to dhyana in Indian tradition. The pupil is expected to have certain qualities like purity of heart and spiritual qualities like dispassion and detachment. He must have, by a thorough examination found that the world wanting and must be in earnest for liberation and he must approach the teacher with offerings in his hand and the teacher puts him to task for a long time, then accepts him if he is satisfied. In Chāndogya Upaniṣad, it is said that Prajapati asks Indra to stay for one hundred and two years, before he taught him.

The pupil is always supposed to be intelligent and is compared to a person who is abducted by thieves and left in the forest blindfolded far away from his home. He finds his way back by asking someone who is the teacher. Only that person who has got a teacher can get spiritual knowledge. The Guru on his part must be himself a realized person (Arhath or pitaka) and learned man in the śrotvikas. It is also said that a guru ought not to refuse to teach when the pupil deserves it.

According to Śāṅkara, an aspirant after self-realization should resort to a teacher for instruction and guidance. In his commentary on a verse in the Mūlaśrīmad Upaniṣad, Śāṅkara says
"The emphasis in the teacher alone (sa-mama), implies that he (the aspirant) should not seek for the knowledge of Brahman independently, even though he is versed in the scripture". 72

The same is said by Śānti, "This path can be trodden only through an intermediary, the Teacher. But he alone is a Teacher, who is dead to self and is established in unity. He is the one who is above the 'sa-mama'. He can help in the path of 'Tarīkat', leading to realization of God. So seek such a one, that ye may gain union with the Lord". 73

The Sufi disciple must follow the discipline such as voluntary, poverty, mortification, obedience and renunciation of the world as much as the Indian Brahmachari does. To him there is nothing so real as God. He yearns only to attain an insight into the invisible spiritual world by constantly meditating on the unity of God in order to attain spiritual perfection and union with God. It is attained by those who fervently pray and strive for it, which is *tājaddād* i.e. faith in the master and scripture. The Bhāṣa 74-544 says that a student should serve the teacher worshipping him and enquiring in his mind what the teacher taught him. Then the teacher, who is himself a realized soul shows him the truth. 75

The Mahābhārata says, one who know the personal knowledge of God can not understand the scripture even as the space
can not know the taste of the soup. In the brahādāraṇyaka, āśvānu, śāradda, gñānā, and nīdībhāvanā, are insisted upon. They are, respectively, understanding the scripture through the teacher and reflecting on what the teacher says and continuous meditation.

It is not possible says Śāṅkara, for one and the same person to be engaged in the thought of sense-objects and to have the vision of the self as well. The Upaniṣad declares that by turning the course of sense inward, by giving up the grasping and remaining on sense-objects, a man can attain immortality. So, he says, "let us slip no opportunity to emphasise self-control, calmness, and concentration — the fundamental disciplines of spiritual life." While commenting on Gṛgūra Upaniṣad, he says, "... knowing about this kind of self alone, from the instructions of a teacher and from the scriptures (one) should attain intuitive knowledge of what has been taught by the teacher and the scripture, so as to put an end to all questioning - practise the means of this knowledge viz., renunciation, calmness, self-control, withdrawal of senses, fortitude and concentration."

Therefore, one who is desirous of knowing Brahman, shoul concentrate on the mind and external organs which is the most excellent practice of tapa (austerity).
**Tapan** or austerity is associated with physical discipline, *viz.*, fasting, vigils and so on, which is the same as the Sufi practice. According to Advaitins this kind of austerity may be beneficial when accompanied by sense-control. But 'control of passion and mind' is the real austerity. As the Sufis say, a Sufi is usually free from greed and lust knows that so long as he is a victim of lust, he is as it were in a prison.

There are many obstacles on the way to spiritual realization. As Ghazzali says, "The Sufi must divest his soul of all that is not God and decorate it with the remembrance to God... Harbouring any thought in mind but of God is an ugly desire, the womb of suffering and eternal damnation".

"Give up all worldly desires for they are gains that lure you to the net of suffering", says Abu Yazud Bistami.

Sankara says in his commentary on *Mundaka-Upanishad*, "by one who is unerring, who is free from the error of desiring to enjoy external objects who is detached from everything, who has control over his senses and has concentration of mind."

The error is desire to enjoy external objects on distraction of mind.
Thus constant struggle should be carried on says the Sufis to keep the thought of God, burning in the heart till they reach their goal. When once they attain it, they find no duality and they exclaim out 'Ana Mana' - I am God, and 'Ana Brahma.' I am Brahman. It is a momentary experience in both Sufism and Advaita, but in Advaita the result is the permanent one. The difference of the Samadhi state and emergence from it normal consciousness (Vijnana).

The final end of the Sufis and the Advaitins is thus the same, viz., liberation from the constraining limits of body-mind complex is the supreme goal of tan, and liberation Moksha in Advaita and Fana in Sufism.

As Zweig in his book, Hindu and Mus in Mysticism, observes that 'the purpose of all Indian mysticism is Moksha, 'release' or 'liberation' and this means release from our human, conditioned state ... Moksha means release from time and space and causality. It does not mean union or communion with God. It corresponds to the 'purity' of heart of the Sufis but does not carry with it the additional implication of nearness to God'. But it seems that this is not a fair representation of Sufism. All Sufi authorities agree that Fana is the union with God and not merely nearness to God. If we draw the logical implication of Sufi doctrine as a whole we are forced to conclude that there is not much difference between the Advaitic conception of Moksha and Sufi conception of Fana.
The Advaitins hold that karma to be the foremost discipline. Release is attained only through jñāna, but in order to get jñāna the mind must get purified through the ethical action, what the Sūfis call the purity of heart, because as we have said earlier only if pure heart the truth will dawn.

Thus according to the Sūfis Taqwaat is a way to the purity of heart where the truth dawns, Hanumā. Union is possible only where they have reached the final stage. After detaching himself completely from all that is not God, the Sūfi gives himself up to meditation, concentration and repetition of the Nature Name of the Lord, which is similar to mantra in Advaita where lower duties imposed upon the householder are renounced and the man devotes himself to thought and reality. Sākara goes further to say that knowledge and action can never be combined because the person who is eligible to knowledge is not the same person eligible to action. Moreover action only brings about the result but ḫokā is the natural condition of the soul to be known as such. If it is brought by an action it is non-eternal.

The practice of the Sūfis, grows by the tawāf (attention) of the Muraḥšid (teacher) and in his ṣūfā (contemplation), he actually perceived the Reality Truth which is equal as Advaitic atman, manas and nīdīrī-ātman.
This ajih of the Sufis leads him to Fana, which is annihilation of the individuality. They believe that man's separate personality is annihilated. The soul frees itself from all restrictions and limitations and enjoys divine bliss by its contact and final merging in the Divine spirit. To Abu Yasid Bistami, Ballaj and his followers, Fana is the end of their pilgrimage. The sense of personal 'nothingness' and the 'all-ness' of God, felt by Abu Yasid Bistami is same as Advaitic experience 'Thou art I'. According to these Sufis there is no difference between God and the soul, and they are identical. As Abu Yasid said, "How great is my Majesty. 'It is God that speaks with my tongue and I have vanished". And Ballaj says,

"Only spirit is mingled in my spirit
Even as wine is mingled with pure water
Why anything touches Thee, it touches me too
In every case 'Thou art I'.

The realized soul in Sufism is called the
Man (Imamiku Kasim) and in Advaita, Jivan Muktta or athikarak
dhara or shukt tas.