CHAPTER IV

"THE SUPREME"
IT is not only difficult but also impossible to describe the 'Reality' in precise terms. Hence the Upanisads and Advaitic school lay more stress on enunciating it through negative terms but here there is the danger of conceiving it as a negation only and without a character of its own. Again if a definite character as such is attributed to the Reality there arises the possibility of a duality, and multiplicity, the qualified and qualification on one hand and the rest on the other. Yet some attempt, however inadequate
IT MAY BE, has to be done to give a picture of it at least in outlines to serve as a goal to the seeker.

THERE arises naturally a doubt here: Is there any need for assuming such a Reality at all, especially in view of the possibility of a personal God satisfying the needs of religious experiences? Dr. Radhakrishnan answers this question: "While the character of God as personal love meets certain religious needs, there are other which are not fulfilled by it. In the highest spiritual experience we have the sense of rest and fulfilment, of eternity and completeness. These needs to be provoked from the beginning of human reflections conceptions of the Absolute as pure and passionless being which transcends the restless turmoil of cosmic life."

BUT to get an idea of this Absolute, which is far beyond the personal God, only the experience and words of mundane existence are the beginning sources. By comparing what little of the Supreme available in the actuality of the seeker with what he assumes as a goal, he tries to see the final infinite in the present finite.
Hence, Advaitins, even though they are firm that only the Veda, revelation, can approach the Reality as near as possible, give a place to reflection also, in their arguments.

**VEDAHTINS** establish the Supreme Reality as constituting the triple principles of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. These three are cognisable in the external Universe since it is evolved from the Supreme Reality and hence the way to the latter is through the analysis and experience of them as they are available to us here and now. The elevation of these principles to their Supremacy and infinitness in One's own experience is the final revelation.

It should however be clear that these three are not separate and varied constituents of the Reality; they are not even separate phases of it. But in the process of realisation, the seeker from his own stand of experience, does have an order of his own in the matter. He feels that the aspect of Existence is
the nearest to him, then consciousness and lastly the Bliss, even though each of them permeat into the other and all put together constitute the whole reality. It is however convenient to follow the same order in discussing what ever these signify from the view of Vedāntins.

SUREŚVARA has his own conceptions of these three aspects of Supreme Reality. He has a fancy as it were to use certain qualifications or adjectives with reference to each of these and they clearly denote his view of them and explain the logic and experience that stand behind. Śrī Śaṅkara uses of course all these adjectival phrases profusely in his Bhāṣyas and other works but perhaps the speciality of Suresvara consists in making use of them with correct significance which he might have gathered during the discussions of his Guru. Here is an attempt to analyse these discussions.

THE Existence of 'SAT' as a phase of the Supreme Brahman has a number of significances and the very primary experience of the same in the mundane universe
is that it is one with the multiplicity and yet different from it (Anamugata and Avyavṛtta). An analysis of this conception, as explained by Suresvara, reveals that it signifies most valuable philosophical concepts of existence. In fact, the basis for this conception is in the Real and Immediate getting itself entangled in the opposite. The reality of the Supreme basic self indicates that it is quite different from the Universe. This immediacy is the source from which the world cognition of the unreal itself as the real arises.

The process of identification of the Universe with the personal self leads to all complications because the personal self has no existence except as the Supreme self. The latter manifests in the form of both the personal self and Universe and those two cannot, ipso-facto, be taken entirely the Supreme one itself, because they are its projection through Avidyā. However the nearest point where the Supreme is made available to human reach is personal self, eventhough the immediacy experienced in the external Universe is due to the all perva-
In fact the personal self is the very Supreme and yet different from it and through it alone the Realisation is possible to achieve. Hence the Supreme is the same and yet different from it.

THIS conception also signifies the all pervasiveness of the Supreme and absence of duality in the creation. This very fact that the Supreme pervades the duality and yet is not the same i.e., in its modified form, is represented in the Vedanta Vakyas too the primary meaning of which is the supreme. These Vakyas do not signify anything if we eliminate both the common and dual elements of its component words. In fact the primary and essential meaning of these Vakyas is to be taken as the supreme, the common element only and the duality as the secondary one. The supreme is not at all secondary as it is within the immediate experience, so says Suresvara.

Suresvara also holds that only by accepting this conception of pervasiveness and yet differen-
tiation, the Supreme self can be considered as shining by itself. The commonness with duality is not a source for this shining nature Supreme consciousness because the former is limited. Again, the differentiation from it cannot be justifiable in the case of Supreme consciousness because it loses its all pervasiveness and the consequent Supremacy. Moreover the Supreme Reality is experienced through its immediacy and hence this conception, apparently self contradictory of pervasiveness and differentiation, has to be accepted necessarily.

Another significance attached to this conception by Suresvara is that it leads to the Supreme Bliss. The pleasures of the dual world are limited and represent partial bliss. The complete summum bonum of all these blisses where the limitedness is shelved is the Supreme bliss and for the realisation of the same, the all pervasive character of the Supreme in all the duality of pleasures and yet freedom from their limits is to be accepted. Hence this conception, rather its experience, leads to the Final Bliss.
which is the very end of the same. Thus through this process of differentiation and identification it is possible to reach the final goal of Advaita.

ANOTHER aspect of the Brahman which Suresvara stresses very often is its immediacy. The very essence of Advaitic thought is that it considers that the whole world is pervaded by Supreme reality and the salvation consists in realising It here and now. Even though it is in one's own immediate experience it is not being cognised due to the influence of Avidya. This very immediate is cognised by the individual even in his Avidya state by referring to himself of his personal self as "This myself" but the only distinction he usually makes is that "this self" is something else than "that One". The same "this self" freed from the delimitation of space and time is the Supreme "that self" and is within the immediate experience of all. This aspect of the Supreme is an encouraging guide to the seeker.

This immediacy is experienced not only in the so called conscious or walking stage of the human being but the dream and deep sleep too. An attachment to the worldly
affairs is due to the pleasure they externally give us but strictly speaking this pleasure is then in and during all the three states of psychosis. In the process of such a 'transfer' of pleasure, there arises the contact of the self with the non-self and in establishing this contact the immediacy of the Supreme is the cause. The non-self gets at least a temporal existence because of this contact but for which it has to be considered as mere non-existent (Tucchā) and an experience of it is merely false. Hence this immediacy is the source of partial existence and pleasure of mundane world.

Another point which Suresvāra establishes by stressing this aspect is that hence Brahman is beyond all epistemological limits. He is beyond the cogniser, cognition and the cognised of the mundane experience. The Advaita holds that the process of cognition results in that the supreme consciousness in the cogniser identifies itself with the same in the cognised. Hence the supreme is there in all these stages on account of its
immediacy. A corollary for the transgression of all such limits, the oneness or non-duality also gets established, because the limits are due to ignorance. There comes a unity cognised in all the limits caused by ignorance because of the immediacy and the consequent unlimitedness.

Another point that is attracted by this all pervasively immediacy and unlimitedness is that the Supremacy is self-luminous. Any cognition of external objects cannot and does not arise without a contact with the underlying and immediate supreme consciousness.

THUS Suresvara bases his way to Realisation on the personal self and its cognitive activities in the mundane world. The recognition of this self through its own activities is the way to Bliss. Being in utmost proximity, the Final Bliss is besmeared by extraneous Avidya, the non-self, as the latter is based on the former and not the vice versa. The flow of Reality according to Suresvara is only one way and the non-real is a thing to be discarded and he appears to be opposed to the view...
of the non-self being merged in the self at the time of salvation. His view of primordial Avidya as Avicārita-siddha also supports this conclusion. This does not mean that Suresvara accepts a duality and an existence to primordial Avidya at the final Realisation. He firmly states that the non-immediate does not remain but it ceases to have existence at all as in fact its very existence even in the Abhāsa stages in due to lack of adequate discrimination. There cannot be a possibility of projection without first accepting a distinction between Avidya and the Supreme and yet it is but true to say that Supreme only is the Real. Hence in the process of cognition as well as final realisation it is the Supreme that is actually cognised and the Avidya and non-self is practically not cognised at all. The only and yet important distinction between the normal cognition and Realisation is that in the former the non-self, even though non-cognised, is taken as cognised and worked up, and in the latter, the cognition of the Supreme experienced and the non-self is simply non-cognised.
THIS conception of Supreme as enunciated by Suresvara is very different from the orthodox Advaitic view which clearly considers that the non-self also is merged into the self and supreme. But it has a near comparison to śāṅkṛtya, the only difference being that the prādaṇa does not cease to exist but only withdraws whereas the primordial Avidyā which has only a nominal existence cease to exist, it is more correct to say, according to Suresvara, that it does not enter the field of cognition and operation as far as the liberated is concerned. In the involution the external world actually stops with the merger in Avidyā and the Reality stands aloof, even though the former and its modifications get their sustenance from It. In this stage, these modifications or their source do not touch the Supreme.

IF the Supreme is so near in the mundane world why is it not cognised at all? Suresvara holds that the Avidyā and ignorance rests on the Supreme itself and it veils its base. The result is that the non-self
Suresvara's Contribution to Advaita

Though does not possess any reality, presents itself as it were to be the very real and the reason for such a projection is the Immanence and Immediacy of the Supreme. Conversely the supreme and immediate Supreme is not an object of external cognition and means of knowledge because they are all products of Avidya and projections caused by it. There must be an inward cognition wherein the intellect is solely directed towards the Immediate; that is to say it rests in the Supremacy of one's own self. The very intellect that has previously cognised the external Universe is now useful for the cognition of the Supreme because all types of cognition being possible only due to the identification of the underlying consciousness, there exists the Supreme consciousness, Immanent and immediate in the intellect too.

Thus the Immediacy is the source through which the Supreme can be realised through the personal self and the Mahavakyas help in the process of dropping the idea of non-immediacy of the self. The real nature of the self can thus be got only through the inte-
lect in which the same is present as immanent and immediate, and thus this immediacy is also the way for the Supreme bliss. It is the nearest way according to Suresvara as well as Sankara.

HOW can such a supreme happen to exist at all be immanent and immediate in the universe? Suresvara very often when he refers to the supreme, answers this question by stressing this aspects viz., that it is there on its own account (Svamahimāsiddha) and for its own sake (Svārtha). Just as Avidyā, the existence of the supreme is not caused due to want of proper discrimination; nor like the projection of supreme through Avidyā, it is not caused by something else. For non-self to come into being there is need for the supreme because the former is the projection of the latter but not the vice-versa. The non-self has other nature of its own except that of self, strictly speaking, even though externally it presents a different nature of its own. Hence it is incorrect to say that self is a part of the non-self or the
latter is independent of the former. But the former exists by its own self because it leads to its own realisation and all cognitions of external world are merely varieties of these realisations.

Surosvora also establishes another aspect of existence. The existence of Supreme should not be construed as necessarily for the sake of causing the same in the projections of Avidya in the external world. It is a fact that the existence of the Universe draws its being from the Supreme but the latter shall not be construed as having the sole purpose of 'supplying' this existence to be former. It is the 'mischief' of Avidya that causes these projections and in that action draws and transfers the existence from the Supreme. Suresvara in this context gives a generalisation. If a thing comes into being by its own self, it cannot be there for the sake of something else. For example the enlightenment of a seeker is for his own sake and not for others. On the contrary if a thing is caused to exist due to something else, it has a purpose in that external thing only. In the case of the world, it is a projection of the Supreme and Avidya and so all its acti-
vities are caused by them and it subserves the purpose of either of the two, or both, depending on its activity of involution or evolution. But in case of the Supreme, since it exists by itself, it has no dependence on and purpose to serve the non-self.

If at all any purpose is to be attributed to this aspect of existence of the Supreme, it is the enlightenment of its own but this question arises only when the Supreme is in the stage of the most enlightened projection viz., personal self. Suresvara accepts this sort of a purpose to the personal self because otherwise there is no possibility of any cognition, whether external or internal. The Self becomes a part of the process of cognition because there is an element of purpose of serving its own self lying in it. In the external cognition this purpose is limited by Avidya and its modifications whereas in the internal cognition leading to Supreme enlightenment it is all pervasive. In either, it is the self cognising its own self.

Suresvara's Contribution to Advalita
IN fact the very experience of enlighten-
ment get through any means of knowledge is the Supreme and
the means get their authority on account of this Supreme
only. The correct knowledge is the experience of Reality
and Reality is an expression of existence. Any means of
knowledge can be considered as authoritative only when it
presents the correct knowledge and hence the existence of
the Supreme gives the said authority. This existence
which gets so presented in the form of immediate know-
ledge of experience is the basis for all the conceptions
of being and non being in the Universe. The conception
of being and non being of the external objects are only
immaterial projections of cognition and non-cognition.
Being of an object is there when it falls in the purview
of correct knowledge and the non-being when it escapes
the same. But both these conceptions are based on the
existence only which when presents itself in the form of
correct cognition of limited means of knowledge may not
be able to comprehend some objects due to the limited-
ness of the means. Hence arises the conception of being
being and non-being the distinctions which actually do not relate to the Supreme. So these two external conceptions do not limit the scope of existence of Supreme any way.

ON the other hand, they establish the limitedness of the means of knowledge and the external cognition. The Supreme consciousness which is only one of the different aspects of existence is already there ever shining and the limits caused by Avidya cover its lustre at times and places resulting in the feeling that there is no existence immanent and immediate in these closed limits.45

IN fact this is the difference in the external and internal cognition. In the mundane experience, when an external object is cognised there arises the experience that the object has shed down the unknownness and consequent identity with the being, or rather existence, whereas in the earlier period it was a non-being entity having been not cognised at all and so non-
existent at least as far as the cogniser is concerned. But in the internal cognition of the self towards the supreme there is no feeling of an earlier unknownness and shedding down the same because the self has been protruding and projecting itself in all the external cognitions and activities too, being immanent and immediate with its aspects of existence and consciousness.

ANOTHER very important and note-worthy point Suresvara stresses about this aspect of existence of the supreme is that in the evolution of the Universe this does not undergo any modification or projection and continues to be beyond the limits of space time and etc., He means perhaps, that there is the possibility of other two aspects viz., consciousness and Bliss becoming the subject of limitations in the projection of the same through avidya. This does not mean that there is a modification in one or other aspect of Brahman whereas the remaining aspect stands without any such change. Brahman is not subject to any modification through any single one of its aspects. But
modifications in the aspects of consciousness and bliss are more cognisable through mundane means and experience than the aspect of existence. As such this aspect is considered as Kūtastha when viewed from the other too.

SURESVARA expounds this theory as follows:
in all the three stages of psychoma i.e., waking dream and sleep, the self really experience its own self as this is the very essence of all cognitions and this is the significance of considering that the Supreme is immediate and immanent. Even when there is transmigraion of the soul, this universal experience and cognition, as delimited by the intellect and other elements of cognitive process continue. Even in the case of neiscence that is based on self, Suresvāra says that it is the consciousness that brings it into being, because it is something positive and is a projection of the Supreme through avidyā. So there is the possibility of neiscence because there exists the Supreme consciousness which alone in its turn can dispel the same.
SUREŚVARA also explains that the "Saksitva" ascribed to the Kutāstha is due to this cognitive aspect caused by the supreme consciousness. This consciousness is the real essence of Kutāstha and there is no desire of creation at this stage. However, there is abundance of cognition, Tksana, and not Kāguna, at this stage and by the association of the Avidya, this cognition is projected into the further manifestations and projects. Therefore it is to be surmised that Suresvara envisages a stage before that of Kutāstha where this supreme cognitive consciousness is not fully bloomed out and this is the aspect of mere existence. This aspect, even when it is drawn into the projection continues without a touch of the effects of the latter whereas the consciousness and also the Bliss get entangled in the effects and become subject to limitations.

SUREŚVARA also explains that if the self identifies itself with this supreme cognitive consciousness i.e., the stage of Kutāstha, it is the essence of realisation and then it attains Salvation automatically.
THIS is an important point i.e., the evolution so to say, of the supreme cognitive consciousness, enunciated by Suresvara. Naturally having arisen on its own accord, without the intervention of even primordial Avidya, it gives on its own accord and also shares this lustre with the extraneous objects caused by its own projection through Avidya. This self-luminosity is within the experience of even the mundane world, and is perhaps closer than the aspect of Existence and yet farther than that of bliss of the Supreme, in this matter. The reason for this proximity of self luminosity is that all such limited experiences and finite cognitions are mere expressions of the fully bloomed and all pervasive cognitive consciousness which only becomes immediate and imminent in the form of limited consciousness in the functional cognition (Vrtti-jñāna) and also the unlimited the absolute cognition (Svarūpa-jñāna).

THIS all pervasive absolute cognitive consciousness has its summum bonum and full purpose in the
pure consciousness, freed from all cognitions which is simply another way of expressing the Supreme Reality of Existence. In other words, the Kutastha consciousness itself is generated, as it were, from the absolute consciousness. The latter is a plenum and the former is a continuum both being "beyond all ripples of multiple, discrete and finite expressions or appearances." There is Absolute Bliss in the plenum because there is the unity or identification of the aspects of the final existence and supreme consciousness, whereas in the continuum, the absoluteness of Bliss is limited stage by stage, as even the absolute cognition of this Bliss is the beginning of finitude. There is the absolute Bliss as the object of cognition in this stage whereas in the salvation there is the bliss being experienced in the form of consciousness itself.56

If final stage of salvation can be termed as Brahma, the Kutastha 'Brahma Puccha'. Suresvara himself makes this distinction saying that the Supreme Bliss reaching its final limit is the sole whereas the Puccha Brahman having the beginning of a disturbance (sakala) is yet
from the contact of differentiation and is also Ananda of lower nature. This Ananda is revealed as happiness through good deeds also.\textsuperscript{57}

THIS distinction between the Kutastha and the Absolute seems to have been recognised by Sāṅkara in the same context. He mentions a puccha Brahman from which all the multiple world is considered to have derived their life and then in the next sentences continues to says that the same when freed from all duality caused by the Avidyā is called the non-dual Brahman. At the same time he calls them both as final Units (Pratisthā) the former one is Puccha Pratisthā and the latter is Brahman Pratisthā.\textsuperscript{58}

Suresvara’s speciality in this context consits in expla­ining this dormant view of his perceptor as an efficieint Vartikakāra.

AMONG the latter Advaitins, Vidyāranya seems to have clarified this distinction in the final stage more clearly then any one else. Throughout the Kutastha Dīpa of Vedānta Pañcadasī, he stress the all pervasive cognitive consciousness of the Kutastha and its limitations in the latter.
projections like intellect, mind etc. In Chapters 13 and 14 he draws a distinction between the two levels of salvation. The Advaitananda is the final realisation and the Vidyananda is that of Jivanmukta who has a cognitive consciousness of the supreme bliss.

The purpose and necessity of establishing such two levels at the point of salvation is to distinguish between the two means. The first one consists in mental disciplines like mediation and concentration proceeded by Karmas and other religious activities if needed so as to cause the Citasuddhi, purification of mind. This leads to the lower level in the salvation ending with the attainment of the Supreme cognitive consciousness. The higher level, which shall be the real goal, can only be got by the Vedanta Vakyas when the impersonal and absolute consciousness is dropped or merged so as to become one and single with the aspect of existence whence arises the Supreme Bliss.
IN this context it is relevant to examine a pertinent question in Advaitic thought. The pre-Saṅkara Advaitic tradition is considered to recognise a viewpoint of salvation called Bhāvādvaita, Ens-Monism which is often attributed to Mandana Misra. The Saṅkara school of Advaitins strongly criticises this stand and it is but natural that a pure Advaitin like Suresvara is also credited to sharply oppose this view of the Ens-monism in his Vārtikas. But a close examination of the view of Suresvara as enunciated in these Vārtikas reveals the fact that the so-called Ens-monism is not far removed from his view of salvation.

Ens-Monism is often defined in consisting in the negative realities like Samsāra Nivṛtti and Avidyā Nivṛtti continuing to subsist at an equal level with the positive reality of Brahman at the stage of salvation, "The monism of Advaita which repudiates only a second positive reality, does not come into clash with the recognition of negative realities." But Prof. P.P.S. Sastry
and Sri S. Suryanarayanasastry do not subscribe to this view that Mandana's conception of salvation is far different from the Sankara's Advaitic conception. According to the latter, Mandana does not recognise even the Anupalabadi as a Pramana because it is not ignorance but the failure to cognise some particular that causes the so called 'primary negative judgement.' But the failure which functions through being itself cognised, could not be cognised in the absence of prior knowledge of X as distinct from the locus. This cognition of negation involves prior cognition of negation and so on ad infinitum. So according to Mandana Misra, the cognition of negation simultaneous to the Supreme-consciousness does not arise at all.

Prof. Upadhyaya thinks "One thing is certain and evident from Brahma siddhi that Mandana oscillates between the two views on the point, as he equates Avidyānivṛtti with Brahmarealisation & one place and enunciates and glorifies Bhāvādvaita at another i.e., in the siddhikānda of the same work". The passage referred to by Prof. Upadhyaya have been subjected to a closer examination by Prof. Suryanarayana Sastri.
who says "If any means of knowledge claims to be valid it must in so far relate to Brahman. Thus not scripture but perception too, not to mention inference, has Brahman for its sphere, what then is the distinctive value of the scripture? In this very question is pre-supposed the need for scripture with reference to what is other than reality, since the reality is the sphere for pratyaksa etc., starting with this presupposition it unreasonable to claim again that what is the sphere of scripture viz., the negation of the Universe a Reality. The truth of course is that neither scripture nor any other means of valid knowledges can express Reality. All that can be hoped for is an approximation through channels positive and negative; it is the characteristic of scripture that it is a negative channel; since what has to be apprehended is the limitless, it is more suitable than pratyaksa which seeks to limit the object by one or more positive characterisation. It (the negation of the Universe) is however declared to be conditioned by testimony above, since perception etc., are associated with nescence since they do not apprehend their content (Brahman) in the form
in which all difference is resolved, since the resolution of difference is known through the testimony (alone). This sentence and the verse on which it is a commentary seem to suggest that the negation alone is the purport of scripture; what the author, however, is interested in and seeks to maintain is the superiority of the negative channel as leading to the realisation of Brahman as pure and not associated with neisence." Prof. Sastri continues to quote the view of Cittakha and Anandapurṇa, commentors on Brahmasiddhi, in support of this interpretation.

How far the view of Madana reflected in this interpretation is different from that of Suresvara. The negation of the nonself is caused certainly by the Agama even according to him but the purpose of scripture does not stop there alone. Moreover Suresvara does recognise the need of mental disciplines like Manana and Middhidhyāsana as helping this negation of neisence and leading to the Mūrtiṣṭhā stage and the Agama may also have its own part in this process. But Suresvara is definite that the scripture has a better place in the context of Advaita; it alone reveals the Brahman and opens the
gate of complete emancipation. The difference between these two views is only on stress given to scripture at one point or other and in the matter of place given to the perception etc., (Manana and Nidhidhyasana) as a means of salvation.

HOWEVER this difference in means does not tell on their conception of the goal which is almost the same. It has been already explained above that Suresvara considers that Avidya negated does not become part and parcel of Supreme Brahman on Realisation. Avidya is Avicarita Siddha and being only a consequent of non-discrimination simply disappears into oblivion or rather does not become an object of cognition as far as the seeker is concerned because, it being the view of Mandana too, negation can never become the means of cognition and so never the negated as the object in such a means. Hence the negative reality has no existence at all different from that of the consequent positive reality. With regards to what happens to the negative reality, Suresvara simply says that it is concealed by the positive reality which is the correct
Suresvara's Contribution to Advaita

Cognised form of the negation. But it is necessary to be clear that apart from saying Suresvara does not speak of any continuation of Reality and never existence, to this negation. He denies duality and equates this absence of duality with the Realisation. He simply says that the non-existence is withdrawn due to the Realisation and it is not cognised beyond. The consequent of this negation is Kātastha Cāitanya and the consequent of concealment of this negation and cognition of its non-existence is the Supreme Realisation.

So to say, the Bhāvadvaita's conception of realisation is the beginning stage of revelation of Kātastha Cāitanya where the negation is a negative reality continues to exist so as to identify itself as consequent positive reality of Brahman in the final salvation to follow. Mandana Misra equates these two and considers this stage itself as the final goal. Suresvara goes a step further and says that the negative reality is concealed because it is there as Avicārita Siddha; it simply goes beyond expe-
Suresvara's Contribution to Advaita

Experience whence the discrimination of "Idam, Abam" arises and has to be considered as concealed as far as the individual seeker is concerned.