CHAPTER-II

AN EXPOSITION CONCERNING DOCTRINE OF ĀTMAN IN ŚANKARA

I, in this chapter, shall discuss critically the doctrine of Ātman in Advaita Vedānta of Śankara. The doctrine of Ātman is discussed here in five interrelated aspects. For the sake of procedural clarity it is divided into five parts; namely, metaphysical, ontological, psychology, epistemological, and ethical. The analysis proceeds by the elucidation of the phenomenal reality, which finally merges into ultimate reality (Brahman). Advaita Vedānta has evolved out of the Prasthāna-traya - which is consisting of three basic texts viz., the Upanishads, the BhagwadaGītā, and the Brahmasūtra.

The Upanishads are the concluding parts of the Vedas. Hence, they are also known as Vedānta. “There is no unanimity among the scholars regarding the exact date and number of the Upanishads. Some says that there were one hundred and fifty; others say that there were one hundred and eight as mentioned in Muktikopanishad, which is a work, belongs to the tradition of Yajur-Veda.”

Out of these Upanishads only eleven are known as major Upanishads on which Śankara wrote commentaries. These eleven are: Aitareya, Taittirīya,
Chāndogya, Brihadāranyaka, Mūndaka, Māṇḍūkya, Ṭṣa, Kena, Katha, Praśna and Śvetāsvatara. The word ‘Upanishad’ is a combination of two words ‘Upa’ and ‘Ni’. ‘Upa’ means nearness or quickness. ‘Ni’ means certainty. ‘Upa’ and ‘Ni’ are the prefixes to the root ‘sad’. The root ‘sad’ has two meanings:

- to attain
- to loosen or destroy.

In this way, the word ‘Upanishad’ has been interpreted in two ways. It is the knowledge by means of which the ignorance is quickly and completely destroyed, because it is considered that ignorance is the cause of attachment with the world. Or it is the knowledge by means of which one can quickly attain the Supreme Being, Brahman. Upanishads are in the main concern with what is called spiritual knowledge or knowledge of the Spirit, as it is distinguished from knowledge of matter or of the material world. The Upanishads are in short an inquiry into the ultimate truth that leads to eternal peace and immortality.

BhagwadGītā is the sacred book of Sanātana dharma. Principally the BhagwadGītā and the Brahmaśūtras did the reformulation of Vedānta. The

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2Nikhilananda, Swami. The Upanishads, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., Ruskin House, Museum Street, 1949, p.21
3Chattopadhya, B.K. The Teachings of the Upanishads, University of Calcutta. 1952, p.9
date and composition of the Gitā has been much debated. Despite the fact that interpolation and additions were made to it between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D., the period of composition of the Mahābhārata should be deemed to have been basically completed by 200 B.C.⁴ The BhagwadGitā, Upanishads, Brahmavidyā and Yogasāstra constitutes the ideal focus of the Mahābhārata. The connection of BhagwadGitā with the Upanishads is close. Śri Krishna himself figures in the Chāndogya Upanishad, and the doctrine, which was taught him there, is recapitulated in the BhagwadGitā, and other diverse teachings of the Upanishads relating to Brahman and Ātman. The ultimate analysis of the BhagwadGitā reconciles karma and jñāna in terms of bhaktī and its ultimate term is the personal īśvara (Purusottama) rather than the neuter Brahman. It is the incarnation of the personal God who without directly fighting holds the balance in the struggle of right and wrong around which the story of the Mahābhārata is woven. The main teaching of BhagwadGitā is Nishkāma karma i.e. to perform action without attachment with external world. It comprises of total eighteen chapters.

The Brahmasūtra of Bādarāyana systematizes the Upanishadic teachings and commentaries written on these sūtras by many subsequent writers

⁴ Pande, G.C. Life and thought of Śankarācārya, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas Pvt. Ltd., 1994, p.137
among whom Śankarācārya is well known. It is regarded as Nyāya prasthāna, because it sets forth the teaching of Vedānta in logical order. The Brahmasūtra have four adhyāyas with four padas in each. The major issues of discussion in the Brahmasūtra are:

1. The nature of creation and the first cause.
2. The relationship between the supreme spirit and the individual.
3. The role of work and knowledge in relation to salvation.\

Śankara’s commentaries on these mentioned three canonical texts viz., the Upanishads, the BhagwadaGītā, and the Brahmasūtra helps in elucidating the doctrine of Ātman in its interrelated aspects by discussing at the three levels of existence (sattās)-

1 Vyāvahārika (empirical)
2 Prātibhāsika (māyā or illusory or dreaming)
3 Pārmārthika (absolute)

They have not been referred to in any of the Śrutis. Śankara’s heritage gave this distinction to him from Nāgārjuna to Gaudapāda, and from Gaudapāda to Śankara. Gaudapāda also speaks of three sattās, Pāramārthika, Samvrī or Vyāvahārika or Paratantara and Prātibhāsika.\(^6\)

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5 Pande, G. C. Foundations of Indian Culture, Delhi, Sundeep Prakashan, Vol. I p.125
This is the model within which we approach to the problem of self in its interrelated aspects viz., - Metaphysical, Ontological, Psychological, Epistemological, and Ethical as discussed below:

2.1 METAPHYSICAL ASPECT

Śankara metaphysically approaches to the problem of self by discussing the nature of reality. The nature of reality is discussed in terms of “what is really real” or “not real.” Śankara approaches to the problem of Ultimate reality by distinguishing at the three level of existence (sattās)-

1 Vyāvahārika (empirical)

2 Prātibhāsika (māyā or Dreaming)

3 Pārmārthika (absolute)

At the Vyāvahārika level, the phenomenal world is considered or reveals to be real, but it is temporary and called as Kalpita Satya; it is transcended and contradicted by the bādha jñāna of the Brahman, which is due to the effect of māyā or avidyā in form of illusion or error (adhyāsa). Prātibhāsika existence is non-existence. It is the realm of illusions. It is “Kalpita eva”. It is imagined. The snake over the rope is Prātibhāsika. Its knowledge is false knowledge, it is self-contradictory, and is contradicted by bādha jñāna of the rope. However, both Prātibhāsika and Vyāvahārika is the realm of the “lower tier”. They are both like transcended, contradicted alike, and
ultimately have no reality of their own. As a result one is not able to realize the Pârâmarthika or the true nature of self. Pârâmarthika is the only real existence. It is knowledge that is existence and existence that is knowledge. It is the realm of the non-dual, where there is neither known nor any knower. It is uncontradicted, infinite, beyond time, space, and cause. It is the only real. This is Parâ Vidyâ, the upper tier, the Aksara Brahman. Here question arise that, why jîva is not able to reveal the absolute nature of self? This question arises due to the epistemological distinction between subject and object. The distinction of subject and object is based on the experience or a matter of consciousness. According to the Upanishads consciousness and experience, cit and anubhava are one and the same. Though consciousness by its very nature is undifferentiated, in our day-to-day experience it gets differentiated through the objects, which are presented to it, as a result, that it appears to be many. Experience is one, homogenous, and undifferentiated. So in this manner, the two different words, ‘consciousness’ and ‘experience’ refer to one and the same entity in Upanishadic tradition but appears to change in phenomenological exploration into consciousness, otherwise called as experience. Thought objects and experience (consciousness) are closely interconnected still it requires separate phenomenological

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7 Balasubramanian, R. Phenomenology Of Consciousness, Series-6, N.Delhi, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 2003, p.1
approaches to study them. The *Advaita* theory of consciousness is a solution to the analysis of epistemological and metaphysical issues involved in the problem of self.

In the metaphysical sense, it is considered that beside the mind, the senses and the body, there is the Self or consciousness possess by every human being. “It is like a light of lights”\(^8\), which reveals the presence and absence of objects and makes it possible for us to have knowledge of them, but here it is the subject in contrast with the object that is known but distinguishing it here “as subject not in the sense of ‘knower’ or ‘cognized’ (*jñātā* or *pramātā*), but it is the ultimate revealing principle, the transcendental a priori, which itself is not revealed by anything else”.\(^9\) So, it means the subject never becomes an object and everything other than consciousness is object. Here, *Advaitins* faces with the dichotomy of consciousness and what-is-other-than consciousness i.e. self and not-self.

The ultimate principle of phenomenal world viz. the Self or consciousness, which is involved in all kinds of activities, cognitive, affective, and conative through the mind, the five senses (ear, nose, tongue, skin, eyes)

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\(^9\)Balasubramanian, R. *Phenomenology Of Consciousness*, etc., p.6
and five motor organs (hands, feet, tongue, the organ of procreation and evacuation) and the body.\textsuperscript{10} It has been described as:-

“The highest self in so far as it is limited by its adjuncts viz. the body, the senses and the mind (mano-buddhi), is by the ignorant, spoken of as if it were embodied.”\textsuperscript{11}

Accordingly, Śankara said that the self itself, but has been limited by the adjuncts (upādhis). Here the jīva in its empirical (vyāvāhrikā) mode of existence thinks of itself as distinct from the Ātman. When the Ātman is associated with the antahkāraṇa it is said to be pure awareness or consciousness. “The term ‘antahkārana’ signifies the activities of the mind in relation to objects with which it comes in contact. The mind is spoken of as mānas (mind), buddhi (intellect).”\textsuperscript{12} Śankara further explains the role of consciousness as an underlying principle behind the process of mind-sense-body. Successively, which reveals the whole world of objects is quoted in the commentary of Brihadāranyaka Upanishads as follows:-

“The self is called light since it is self-luminous, for, through this light, the self-luminous Ātman, this aggregate of body and organs sits, goes out, and

\textsuperscript{10} Nikhilananda, Swami. \textit{Self-knowledge}, Chennai, Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2004, p. 56

\textsuperscript{11} Gambhirananda, Swami. \textit{Brahmasūtra-Bhāsyā}, Calcutta, Advaita Ashram, 1972, pp.114-115 (\textit{V.S.B.1.2.6})

\textsuperscript{12} Pandit, Motilal. \textit{Sankaras Concept Of Reality}, N.Delhi, Select books publishers and distributors, 1981, p.43
works as if it were sentient in the same way as a jar shines when it is illumined by the light of the sun.”

Further,

“The intellect, being transparent and next to the self, easily catches the reflection of the consciousness of the self, next comes the mind, which catches the reflection of consciousness through the intellect then the sense-organs. Thus the self successively illumines with its own consciousness the entire aggregate of the body and the organs.”

Thus, the mind is the central organ of the entire conscious life; through which impressions carried by the sense-organ are shaped by the mind into ideas. Further, the mind changes the ideas into resolution of the will (sankalpa). When a man directs his mānas the accomplishment of works, he then accomplish them. The very activity of the antahkarna presupposes the presence of external objects. If there are no external objects present to the antahkarna, then the mind can have no activities. The mind acts in relation to objects outside of itself.

Śankara, however, tries to refute, the opinion of those who maintain the reality of everything (viz. realists, sarvāstivādins); the opinion of those who

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13 Balasubramanian, R. Phenomenology Of Consciousness, etc., p.8 (Br. U. 4.3.7)
14 Ibid. p.9 (Br. U. 4.3.8)
maintain that only thought is real (idealists, vijñānvādins), and the opinion of those who maintain that everything is void (nihilists, śūnyavādins). Thus, Śankara maintains that the non-existence of external things cannot be maintained, because we are conscious of external things. In every act of perception we are conscious of external things corresponding to the idea, whether it be a post or wall or a piece of cloth or a jar, and that which we are conscious cannot but exist. Śankara believes that there is an actual apprehension of object as external.

Śankara also interpreted that the embodied jīva using mānas (mind) along with each of the five sense organs, enjoys the sense objects. With this, the individual self jīva is defined as the ‘amsa’, an integral part of the lord. Here Śankara compares the jīva to the reflection of the sun in water. On removing the water, the reflected sun, which is a part of the real sun returns to the original and remains as the original sun. The word ‘amsa’ is also interpreted by Śankara as being similar to the space delimited by the upādhis (adjunct) jar, which is a portion of the all-pervasive outer space. On the destruction of the cause of limitation-jar-it becomes one with the infinite

16 Ibid., pp.402-404 (V.S.B, 2.2.18)
17 Panoli,V. Gita In Śankara’s Own Words, Calicut, The Mathrubhumi Printing & Publishing Co., 1990, p.243 (BG15.9)
18 Ibid. p.241(BG15.7)
space. Thus, the individual self is an imaginary portion limited by the *upādhis* caused by *avidyā*.

The analysis of Sankara’s concept of *jīva* makes it clear that the consciousness, that is the self-consciousness of the *jīva* is directly dependent on the activities of the *antahkāraṇa* and the *antahkāraṇa* can activate itself in so far as its comes in contact with external objects, i.e. the world. It means that the *jīva* and the world are related to each other. Therefore, *antahkāraṇa* can also be analyzed by the three states of consciousness or experience viz.- waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*swapna*) and deep sleep (*suśuptī*) - and the last one which transcends the three states of experience is called *Turiya* or ‘*caturtha*’, which means the ‘fourth’. Here, it only refers to the real nature of the self or consciousness when it is free from the limitation.

2.2 ONTOLOGICAL ASPECT

Śankara ontologically approach to the problem of Self by expounding the empirical condition of *Jīva*. In its empirical condition *Jīva* is encased in five sheaths (*kośas*), one within the other. *Jīva* come across first with the gross material sheath, which includes the sheath of food (*ānnamaya kośa*), and then go deeper to more subtle sheaths, which includes sheaths of vital airs

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(prāṇamaya kośa), the mind (manomaya kośa) and self-consciousness (vijñānamaya kośa), the last being the causal sheath of joy or bliss (ānandamaya kośa). These three bodies are identified with five sheaths (kośas) mentioned in the Taittiriya Upanishad. In the words of Śankara:

"Brahman is the inmost of all the conditioned selves beginning from the sheath of Matter and ending with the sheath of bliss. The Śruti text starts with "etasmāt Annarasamāyāt," etc. with a view to revealing, through knowledge, that Brahman as the indwelling self by following a process of eliminating the five Sheaths in the same way as rice is extracted from the grain that has many husks."  

It means Jīva is comprised of these five sheaths (kośa) and forms the subject of a conversation between Varuna and his son. The dialogue between them is as follows:

"Bhṛgu was the son of Varuna. He once approached his father and said, "

"Father, impart to me the spiritual knowledge you possess."

The Father said, "Matter, vital airs, eyes, ears, mind, and speech are the things that you daily come across. You must now know that Reality from which all these things spring up and live, towards which all these move and

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[20] Balasubramanian, R. Advaita Vedanta, etc., p.100 (Tai.U.2.2.1)
in which they finally merge. That is the Brahman. You can know him by tapas or concentration and meditation.”

The son obeyed the father and after some meditation came to the conclusion that gross matter itself is the Brahman. He went and told his father so. But the father was not at all satisfied with his son’s finding and he exhorted him to go again and perform more tapas “Meditation alone will give you real insight,” said the father.

Then the son went away and began to meditate further.

Next he realized that prāna or the vital power was Brahman and that it was out of prāna that things took their birth and into prāna they finally merged. Prāna indeed is the life-giving principle.

But that too was not a satisfactory conclusion. His father asked him to go into meditation again. He then found that the mind or the psychic plane was the thing from which all creation emerged and into it merged again at the end. It was subtler than gross matter and prāna and could pervade both of them.

He reported this observation to his father. But the father sent him back again with the old advice to perform more tapas.
Bhrgu again meditated and found that the power of understanding (vijñāna) was the thing from which all things issued and towards which all things moved. But the father was not satisfied and repeated his advice to his son.

The son again meditated and finally came to the conclusion that bliss or pure joy was Brahman – the source and the goal of all creation. When Bhrgu told his father about this conclusion of his, he was over-joyed and said, “Dear child, this indeed is the highest term of existence. All these five sheaths are there, one more subtle than the other, but the finest and the subtlest is bliss eternal. These are not all mutually exclusive. They are inter-penetrating. But the basis of all is bliss, the bliss of Brahman, pure spiritual happiness. He who knows this and realizes it goes beyond all sorrow and death.” This is known as the Bhārgavi Vārunī Vidyā.”

Here the teaching ends and suggest that he who realizes this truth transcends all the five sheaths, sheds all fear and enjoys the bliss of Supreme Being, which is the greatest philosophical truth brought out by this dialogue.

Further ontologically, the notion of god according to Śankara in scriptures comes into existence when in his view the Vedanta text do not teach or purport one cognition of Brahman. In order to solve this difficulty he divide Brahman in two forms by making a distinction between the saguna

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21 Diwakar, R.R. The Upanishads In The Story And Dialogue, etc., pp.117-119
(qualified) Brahman and the nirguṇa (attributeless) Brahman. The former is referred as God (Īśvara). Śankara’s view has been seen from two viewpoints; empirical and absolute. The saguṇabrahman is real in so far as we look at reality from empirical viewpoint. The creation looks to be real, but it is a false superimposition on the nirguṇabrahman (non-dual Brahman). Śankara accepts the reality of the saguṇabrahman on the basis of scripture, but when knowledge springs up, scripture ceases to be valid. Thereby, the validity of the saguṇabrahman loses its meaning. In fact, there is no creation, as soon as it is realized the consciousness of non-difference arises in us and the whole phenomenon of plurality which springs from wrong knowledge being sublated by perfect knowledge. It shows that the knowledge of saguṇabrahman comprise of different cognitions, while the knowledge of the nirguṇabrahman is comprised of one cognition, which is considered as the real. Finally, it could be followed that Śankara did not reject god (Īśvara) in practical life so far it is known to us of having a definite form. In this way, empirical realm is an important aspect of Advaita in proving the existence of god till perfect knowledge of Brahman is realized.
2.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT

The psychological approach to the doctrine of \( \text{Ātman} \) leads to analyze the different states of mind, which helps in determining the nature of consciousness. The psychological aspect is mainly related with intellect, which is self-luminous on the realization of the true nature of Self. These three states of consciousness or experience are described at various place in *Upanishads*, mainly it has been described in *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, which brings out the nature of consciousness (\( \text{Ātman} \) or the Self) through a comprehensive phenomenological investigation into the three states of experience. "It shows that consciousness per se is one, continuous, and permanent. It appears to be fragmented and discontinuous due to the manifold modification of the mind, which is the internal organ (\textit{antahkarṇa}) mediating between consciousness and the objects."\(^2\)

The *Māṇḍūkya* is the shortest of the principal *Upanishads*. It has no chapters or sections, but only twelve verses and its twelve verses have a singular unity of theme unsurpassed in the ordered *Upanishad*. Its theme is the three ‘states’ of consciousness. *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* begins with the word or symbol ‘A U M’ or ‘OM’ in its first verse. The symbol ‘AUM’ denotes the three ‘states’ of consciousness and also that which is not a ‘state’. It is

\(^2\) Balasubramanian, R. *Phenomenology Of Consciousness*, etc., p.3
distinguishable, as the space is distinguishable into ‘Quarters’, the four quarters and Time which is distinguishable into past, present, and future; consciousness is empirically distinguishable into ‘states’, waking, dreaming, and sleeping. Each ‘state’ has a one-one correspondence with one of the three distinguishable but indivisible elements of ‘A U M’. “A U M is the original word aksara, the symbol of the imperishable and the infinite. ‘A U M’ denotes both form and formlessness, both which is a ‘state’ and which is not a ‘state’\textsuperscript{23}. ‘A U M’ is a three sound symbols denoting the gross, the subtle and the causal aspects of infinite have been equated with three states of consciousness which contains the totality of man’s experience. Hence, ‘Om is Brahman’ (Tai.I.viii.1).

‘Om indeed is all these’. (Ch. II.xxiii.3)

‘Meditate on the self as Om’. (Mai.vi.3)

The 2\textsuperscript{nd} verse of Māṇḍūkya Upanishad denotes as:

“All this is verily Brahman. This Ātman is Brahman. This Ātman has four quarters.”

The word ‘this’ means that, which appears to be real divided into four quarters namely, Viśva (the waking state), Taijasa (dream state), Prājña (ṣuṣuptī or the state of dreamless sleep) and Turīya which is same as

\textsuperscript{23} Nikam, N.A. \textit{Ten Principals Of Upanishads}. N.Delhi, Somya publication pvt. Ltd. 1974, p.166
Brahman or Ātman. The four quarters correspond to the three mātrās of ‘A U M’ and the amātrās of ‘A U M’. A, U and M are the three mātrās. The fourth, which is known as amātrās or without a letter, has no corresponding to Turīya.

The idea of sound suggests the idea of soundlessness or silence from which sound may be said to proceed is pointed out as the innermost Self, with a gesture(of hand) by the passage, ‘This is Ātman’, that Ātman indicated by ‘A U M’ signifying both the higher and lower Brahman, has four quarters (pādas), not indeed like the four feet (pādas) of a cow but like this four quarters (pādas) of a coin known as kārsāpana (kārsāpana is a coin made up of four quarters. A quarter-kārsāpana is merged in the half-kārsāpana; the half is merged in the three-fourth-kārsāpana and three-quarters ultimately is merged in the full kārsāpana). The knowledge of the fourth (Turīya) is attained by merging the previous three, such as Viśva etc. in it in the order of the previous one, in the succeeding one. Here, the word ‘pādas’ or ‘foot’ is used in the sense of instrument. The word ‘pāda’ is again used in the sense of an object when the object to be achieved is the fourth (Turīya).

These four quarters are said to indicate Ātman is thus explained in 3, 4, 5 and 6th verse of Māṇḍūkya Upanishad. The 3rd verse of Māṇḍūkya refers to the waking state as bahis-prājña-outward consciousness. Here by outward
looking senses means, all those senses by which we are engaged in outward activity and include the five vital breaths which keep up the life process. The outward consciousness bahis-prajña of the waking state is a ekonavimsatimukhah, possessed of nineteen mouths- the five senses of perception and the five organs of action make up ten, the vital forces-prana and the rest- make up five, and (there are) mind (the thinking faculty), intellect, ego and mind-stuff. These mouths are the gates of experiences. Through these aforesaid entrances Vaiśvānaraḥ, thus constituted enjoys gross objects-viz. sound and the rest. Therefore, he is sthūlabhuk, an enjoyer of the gross. He is called Vaiśvānaraḥ because he leads in diverse ways all (Viśva) beings (nara) to their enjoyment. Therefore, in waking (jāgrat) state when we reflect on our consciousness, we find it intentional. It is either the consciousness of intended objects like tree, table and other objects existing in the external world or it may be one’s own subjective state like pleasure or pain. The mind and senses which function in this state are the instruments through which Viśvā, experiences all kinds of external ‘gross’ objects.

The second quarter is explained in 4th verse of Māṇḍūkya Upanishad as Taijasa, whose sphere of activity is the dream state. Śankara in his commentary described the dream state in terms of waking state. The consciousness of the waking state, though it is only a state of mental
vibration, is associated with many means, and it appears to be engrossed in external objects and thus, it leaves in the mind the corresponding impressions. Under the impulse of ignorance, desire, and (past) action, that mind, thus possessed of the impressions like a piece of painted canvas, makes its appearance (in the dream state) just as in the waking state, but without any external means. In line with this is statement, ‘(when he dreams), he takes away a little of (the impressions of) this all-embracing world (the waking state).’\(^{24}\) In this dream state, this deity (the mind) experiences greatness. The mind is antah, internal in relation to the senses; and whose Prajña awareness in dream takes the forms of the impressions in that (antah, internal) mind is antah-Prajña aware of internal objects. He is called Taijasa (luminous), since he becomes the witness of the (modes of) cognition that is bereft of objects and appears only as a luminous thing. As Viśva is dependent on objects, he experiences the (modes of) gross cognition, whereas the awareness that is experienced here consists of mere impressions; hence the enjoyment is subtle. Dream perceptions do not look like memories of the past. They are new creations of the mind.\(^{25}\) This here implies as a whole that Self is really non-relational though it appears to be relational in these states therefore its intentionality is adventitious and not

\(^{24}\) Madhvananda, Swami. *The Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, etc., p.631 (Br. U.IV.iii.9)

\(^{25}\) Ibid. p.637 (Br.U.IV.iii.10)
natural to it, that Yājñavalkya stated as ‘asango hi ayam puruṣah’, i.e. the Puruṣa, which is another name for the Self, is non-relational. Śruti drives this point through the illustration of a great fish. Just as a great fish swims from one bank to another of a river without being affected or overwhelmed by the current of water, even so the self moves from the waking state to dream and then back to the waking state without being affected or touched by the objects, gross or subtle as the case may be, in these two states.26

With this, there is another distinctive feature of dream state i.e. wish-fulfillment dreams, according to Advaita, Śankara said that, “the creation in the dream ..... is for the purpose of causing joy and fear to the dreamer in accordance with his good or bad deeds.”27 In this sense, Śankara argues that ignorance and desire motivate various painful and pleasant dream cognitions. He explains that desires can manifest in the form of painful and pleasurable dream cognitions because dreams are one type of mental activity and are therefore, produced by desires themselves i.e., what the individual desires, he resolves and what he resolves, he works out.28 In addition to the wish-fulfilling dreams, Śankara maintains that dreams can also prophetic or veridical. In this case tradition argues that the individual’s good and bad

26 Balasubramanian, R. Phenomenology Of Consciousness, etc., p.26 (Br. U. 4.3.15-16, 18)
27 Indich, William .M. Consciousness In Advaita Vedanta, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1980, p.87(B.S.S.B.3.2.4)
28 Ibid. (Br. U.4.4.5)
deeds (dharma and adharma) actually cause auspicious and inauspicious dreams respectively. Thus, these two dream theories presuppose that there is some principle of moral justice at work in the universe. This principle is, of course, the law of karma. In dealing with the dream theories the advaitic thinkers did not give importance to telepathic dreams but interpret and describes the phenomena known as “dream-within-dream” as a variety of representative type dreams, discussed with reference to above discussed dreams.

The third quarter i.e. deep-sleep where, we do not have any dreams at all.29 Even the mind does not function. The absence of the stream of experiences does not mean the extinction of Consciousness. That is how we are able to recall that experiences of sound sleep and exclaim the next morning that ‘I slept well; I did not see anything’. If consciousness faded out in that state, the reminiscent experience would be impossible. It shows that consciousness is a thing apart and is not connected with any of these states. “Since the soul in deep sleep leaves the phenomenal world far behind and becomes one with that whose self is Pure Being, it has for its self Pure Being apart from the phenomenal world”30.

30 Iyer Venkatarama, M.K. Advaita Vedanta, etc., p.122
Let us now consider, the textual description of the state of deep-sleep and the nature of Prājña i.e., sleep-consciousness to see the phenomenological approach to the study of consciousness adopted by the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad in the 5th verse is quoted as:

“That state is deep sleep where the sleeper does not desire any enjoyable thing, and does not see any dream. The third quarter is Prājña whose sphere is deep sleep, who remains one and undifferentiated who is a mass of mere consciousness, who is full of bliss, who experiences bliss, and who is the doorway to the experience (of the dream and waking state)”.

Advaitins maintains that, deep sleep is not only a conscious experience but also it has phenomenological characteristic of bliss (ānanda). To justify it, Advaitins offer two justifications based on scriptural testimony, one is based on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, which claims that the deep sleep is full of the experience of bliss and second is based on Brihadāranyaka Upanishad which says that sleep is the experience of highest serenity (samprasada), bringing with it greater joy than can be found in the waking or dream states.  

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31 Madhvananda, Swami. *The Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, etc., p.645 (Br. U.4.3.15)
The fourth quarter which follows in order has to be stated; hence this is presented (by the *Upanishads*) in ‘nantah-Prājñam, not conscious of internal world’ etc.

Since, it (i.e.*Turīya*) is devoid of every characteristic that can make the use of words possible, it is not describable through words; hence the (*Upanishads*) seeks to indicate *Turīya* merely through the negation of attitudes. With this, it has been described in 7th verse of *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* as “that which is not conscious of the internal world, nor conscious of the external world, nor conscious of both the worlds, nor a mass of consciousness, nor conscious, nor unconscious; which is unseen, beyond empirical dealings, beyond the grasp (of the organs of action) uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable; whose valid proof consists in the single belief in the self; in which all phenomena cease, and which is unchanging, auspicious, and non-dual. That is the self, and that is to be known”. Since *turīya* is undifferentiated, “He who attains the supreme goal discards all such objects as name and form and dwells as the embodiment of infinite consciousness and bliss.”

So, in this manner *Advaitins* account for the totality of mental functions by distinguishing four aspects of mind: sense-mind (*mānas*); reason-intellect

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32 Indich, William .M. *Consciousness In Advaita Vedanta*, etc., p.107 *(AB, 40)*

41
(buddhi); I-sense (ahankār) and recollection-memory (citta). The sense mind, as its name indicates is the means by which the mind “assimilates and synthesizes sense impressions and thus enables the self to make contact with external objects”. This aspect of mind is associated with the mental condition of doubt or indecision, since it provides the knower with percepts but is incapable of discriminating among them. The decisiveness or certitude which accompanies our perception of objects is thus due to the discriminating aspects of mind, buddhi. It is by means of reason that, we discern, judge and understand the data of experience. But, through the processes of sense assimilation and reasoning, we begin to develop a point of self-reference which manifests in terms of the I-senses, i.e. in terms of self-consciousness and the pride of egoism. Finally, the fourth aspect of mind distinguished by Advaitic thinkers is recollection. In addition to accounting for the actual experience of memory, recollection also serves to explain the manner in which the effects of past experience, in the form of behavioural, perceptual and intellectual habits or tendencies (samskār), make their influence felt in present mental activity.

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33 Datta, D.M. The Six Ways Of Knowing, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1932, p.48 (B.S.S.B, 2.3.3-2)

42
Advaitins conclude that mind is nothing apart from its various functions, which in turn are merely forms or modes of the modification of consciousness resulting from the association of the self and ignorance. A text of the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* says: “Desire, resolve, doubt, faith, want of faith, steadiness, unsteadiness, shame, intelligence and fear— all these are but mind.”

Later, on a debate develop among advaitic thinkers, that whether the mind should be included in the category of sense-organ (*indriya*) or not? Śankara failed to give a decisive answer to this question and instead merely acknowledged the Śruti treats mind as distinct from the sense-organs while the *smṛtis* (indirect teachings derived or remembered from the *Vedas*) counted the mind as one among the organs of sense.

For Śankara, what we find in our actual experience is that it is the presence or absence of mind which makes the difference between knowledge and ignorance. He cites a passage from the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* to support his point, “When the mind is absent one does not hear to see. In other words, Śankara is arguing that in addition to the self, the senses and an object, knowledge requires the presence of attention and since someone who is not attentive is said to be absent-minded, while someone who attends is

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35 Balasubramanian, R. *Advaita Vedanta*, etc., p.83 (B.S.S.B 1.5.3)
mindful, it follows that knowledge requires mind. These remarks, however, do not really constitute a proof for the existence of mind. Instead, they amount to a statement of the “existential definition” (viśesa-laksana) of mind as attention, or the attention mechanism, which was accepted as the starting point for further analysis of the nature of mind by all schools of Indian thought.36

The antahkarna holds a central place in the epistemology of Śankara, and without it there is no possibility of having a knowing subject, or of having knowledge. We have to acknowledge the existence of an internal organ through whose attention and non-attention perception and non-perception take place.

2.4 EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASPECT

Śankara's epistemological approach leads from knowledge of world to knowledge of self by discussing and analyzing the fact related to six pramāṇas (knowledge). The theory of knowledge has been discussed almost by all the schools of thought East or West. As epistemology is a portal to philosophy37 so it raises the three basic questions involved in the inquiry (vicāra) of epistemological problem i.e. “how do we know?”, “what do we

36 Bagchi, Amalandu. Manas Or The Mental Apparatus, Calcutta, Our Heritage publication, 1969, p.37 (Br.U.5.3)
37 Mahadevan, T.M.P. The Philosophy Of Advaita, with a forward by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Madras, Ganesh & CO. pvt. Ltd., 1957, p.10
know?” and “what for do we know?” The first question relates to the sources of knowledge (*pramānas*), the second relates to the objects of knowledge (*prameyas*), and third relates to attain *Brahman* i.e. self or *Ātman* through detachment from ends and means of the world.

According to Śāṅkara, knowledge is broadly divided into empirical and trans-empirical or transcendental following the basic distinction between self and the not-self. The entire not-self constitutes the empirical realm. The mind, the senses, and the body also are the objects of the external world, i.e. not-self. They can be known through *pramānas* i.e. perception (*pratyaksa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda*), analogy (*upamāna*), presumption (*arthāpatti*), and non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*). The knowledge, which we acquire through these *pramānas* is the empirical knowledge. According to Śāṅkara, the self can only be known through Śruti; so Śruti is the source of trans-empirical knowledge. The first and second question deals with empirical or not-self and third question deals with self i.e. trans-empirical. The answers of above raised questions can be derived by understanding the process of knowledge.

**The mechanism of knowledge:-**

The Advaitins state that Nescience, which is of the nature of an existent, is the cause of all empirical distinctions. It conceal the Omni-present,
intelligent self, and transforms itself in the form of the world of diverse kinds. The reflection of intelligence (*cidābhāsa*) which resides in the intellect, there arise *pramāṇas* which is due to the psychosis of the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa-vṛtti*). The *pramāṇas* on reaching the object of cognition e.g. a pot assumes the form of that object.\(^{38}\) A psychosis is a transformation of the internal organ, and transformation of the internal organ is intelligible, since the internal organ, like milk etc. has parts. The term psychosis is used by modern psychologists to indicate an abnormal state of mind. But here it is employed to mean a transformation either of the mind or of its cause, nescience. The psychosis connects the cognizer and the object cognized. The same internal organ resides in the body, goes out through the channels of the senses, pervades the object and manifests it. That part of the internal organ which is defined by the body is called ego i.e. the cognizer (*pramāta*), that part which connects ego with the object is termed cognitive psychosis i.e. the means of cognition (*pramāṇa*); and that part which pervades the object, assumes the form of the object and invests it with the character of objectness is known as fitness for manifestation (*abhivyakti-yogatā*) i.e. the cognition (*pramīti*).\(^{39}\)

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid. p.12
Psychosis may lead either to valid (pramā) or false (apramā) knowledge. Pramā or valid knowledge can be unsublated and unestablished by any other means. The knowledge of something which is not contradicted and which is novel is pramā. Unsublatability and novelty are marks of valid knowledge. Pramāṇa is the distinct cause of arriving at valid knowledge. Pramāṇa is the instrument (kārana) of valid knowledge. They are as follows:-

**Perception**

The theory of perception is the basis of empirical validity belongs to the knowledge of the world. Perception is possible only of things, which are present and are capable of being perceived. The events of yesterday are not objects of perception, because they are not facts of the present. Mind, though present but cannot be perceived because it is not capable of being an object of perception. But the underlying consciousness, which lights up the Vṛtti (the modification of antahkarna is called Vṛtti) remain constant and plays an important part in giving rise to Vṛtti-jñāna. Śankara refers to two kinds of seeing (drṣṭi) and explains the distinction between them as follows:-

"Seeing is of two kinds, ordinary and real. Ordinary seeing is a function of the mind as connected with the visual sense; it is an act, and as such it has a

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40 Ibid.
beginning and an end. But the seeing that belongs to the self is like the heat and light of fire, being the very essence of the witness (self) it has neither beginning nor end. The ordinary seeing, however, is related to objects seen through the eye, and of course has a beginning. The eternal seeing of the self is metaphorically spoken of as the witness, and although eternally seeing is spoken of as sometimes seeing and sometimes not seeing.\textsuperscript{41}

If \textit{Vṛtti} does not function, the knowledge would not arise, though the other factors are all present. This could be made clear by the \textit{Brihadāranyaka Upanishad}, when it says, “I was absent-minded, I did not see; I was absent-minded, I did not hear. It is through the mind that one sees and hears”.\textsuperscript{42} Commenting on this Śankara writes, “therefore it is understood that something else, viz., the internal organ called the mind, which joins itself to the objects of all the sense-organs, exists in the absence of which the eye and other organs fail to perceive their respective objects such as form and sound although they have the capacity to do so and in the presence of which they succeed in it.”\textsuperscript{43} Śankara defines mind also in another context, “as that in

\textsuperscript{41} Balasubramanian, R. (ed.), \textit{Advaita Vedanta}, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 2000, Vol.II, Part.2, p.82 (\textit{Br. U.3.4.2})
\textsuperscript{42} Madhvananda, Swami. The \textit{Brihadāranyaka Upanishad}, Almora, Advaita Ashram, 1950, p.213 (\textit{Br. U. 1.5.3})
\textsuperscript{43} Iyer Venkatarama, M.K. \textit{Advaita Vedanta}, New York, Asia Publishing House, 1964, p.140
whose presence knowledge arises and in whose absence knowledge does not arise."\(^{44}\)

Knowledge derived from perception can be valid only when it is not sublated by any other evidence. Judged by this test only the knowledge of Brahman can be pramā; and the Vedānta, which leads to that knowledge, can alone be the pramāṇa.

Advaitins define perception as immediacy of consciousness. Perception is not a general name for valid knowledge, but as a pramāṇa in the epistemological determinate sense of the term. In other words, perception is an immediate knowledge which is not mediated by any instrument. The senses are only a more internalized and relatively less variable set of instruments like the external accessories; for e.g. Optical lens, light, etc. They do not generate or produce perception. Consciousness needs avenues to manifest the world, because consciousness is shrouded under the veil of ignorance. The treatment of perception in Advaita reflected in its recognition of the distinction between two sets of facts: perception as valid perceptual knowledge-event, and valid perceptual knowledge itself. The two are to be conceptually distinguished even though ontologically speaking, they are one and same. Valid perceptual knowledge has been defined unequivocally in

\(^{44}\) Ibid. p. 141
the Upanishads as consciousness that is direct and immediate. The peculiar
standpoint of Advaita is that all modes of knowledge, including even
perception are empirical and relational; therefore, they do not qualify
literally as knowledge. The only virtues of perception are its self-
transcending character and the help that it renders in making this distinction.

In the opening section of his commentary on the Kena Upanishad, Śankara
makes a distinction between pure consciousness, the ground of all other
forms of knowledge and the empirical cognition. The first is the very
essence of selfhood. It is transcendent, pure, and foundational. The second
appears in relation to particular objects, subject to mutations and change,
where one can speak of an increase and a decrease of knowledge and its
variability as erroneous, doubtful or true cognition. Advaitins also analyze
the empirical level of consciousness in terms of the distinction of
knowledge, the knower, and the known. Advaitins call the first of the two
kind’s herein distinguished svarupa-jñāna and the second one vṛtti-jñāna.45
Svarupa-jñāna is consciousness without differentiation of the knower, the
known, and the knowledge. It is self-luminous. Self-luminosity means that
the cognition does not depend on other cognition to be known.46

45 Deutsch, Eliot and Buiten van J.A.B. A Sourcebook Of Advaita Vedanta, Honolulu:
46 Schriften, kleine. Sankara’s Conception Of Man, Wiesbaden: F. Steiner,1978, p.128
The concurrence of the Self and the internal organ (mānas) is such that it becomes difficult to distinguish the one from the other and in turn develops the sense of “I”. Though the self is not “I” but we always refer it as “I” in our daily life. We say, “I know this”, “I am happy”, “I do this”, and so on. The sense of being “I” arises when an internal organ function in waking and dream states. But there is no “I” in the state of deep sleep, because internal organ is absent at that time. So, if “I” is the Self, then it should be present in all three states viz. waking, dreaming, and sleeping but this is not the case, the truth is that, the “I” cannot exist without Self but Self could exist without “I”, as evidenced by sleep. In order to be free from the notion of “I” it is necessary to be liberated from bondage. Therefore, it means the state of liberation is a condition in which the Self exists without “I”. It is supported by Śruti in the Chāndogya Upanishad, Indra while receiving instruction from Prajāpati, speaks of sleep as a state of “annihilation” since there is neither “I”, nor any object, at that time.\footnote{Bedekar, V. M and Palsule, G. B. (trans.), \textit{Sixty Upanishads Of The Veda}, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1980, p.202 (Ch. U 8.11.2)} In the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, Yājñavalkya tells Maitreyi that, when the Jīva attains the infinite Being, it has no more particular consciousness. Commenting on this text, Śankara observed: “After attaining (this oneness) the Jīva, freed from the body and the organs has no particular consciousness.... As ‘I’, so and so, am the son
of so and so; this is my land and wealth; I am happy or miserable....”

Conclusively, Śankara interpreted that the notion of “I” is different from Self.

**Inference**

The distinctive feature of the perceptual knowledge is its immediacy, whether it is internal or external objects. But unlike perception, inference is mediate knowledge. With inference, Śabda, Upamāna, and Arthāpatti also give us only mediate knowledge. “The Sanskrit term for inference is anumāna, literally, knowing after. It means the method by which knowledge is derived from other knowledge. This refers to the logical process of gaining the knowledge. The knowledge thus gained i.e. inferential knowledge is called in Sanskrit anumit, literally, ‘the consequent knowledge’ (anu = after, and miti= knowledge). This is the knowledge that is derived from the knowledge of an invariable relation between what is perceived and what is deduced. The Sanskrit term for this relation is vyāpti (lit., extension or pervasion). In Western logic it is called ‘the invariable concomitance’. The core of inference (anumāna) is the knowledge of invariable concomitance (vyāpti), which is gained from experience.”

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meaning of vyāpti (invariable concomitance) could be understood by the inference that the hill has fire results from the apprehension of smoke as a mark on the hill followed by the recollection of the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire. So, by above apprehension the invariable concomitance between the middle term (hetu, i.e. smoke) and the major term (sādhyā, i.e. fire) is the basis of inference, and is called vyāpti (lit. extension or pervasion) in Indian logic. It implies a universal relation of co-existence between the things denoted by the two terms. The knowledge of this is the direct means to inference.

Like Naiyāyikas, Advaitins maintains that the invariable concomitance (vyāpti) between two things is not necessarily a relation of cause and effect or their identity of essence (tādāmya). As the correlated terms smoke and fire not necessarily accompanied together because by perceiving smoke we could infer for fire but by perceiving fire we would not necessarily always infer about presence of smoke (as in the case of a red-hot iron ball). Consequently, we can infer the presence of fire from the presence of smoke, but not vice versa. The relation between smoke and fire is a case of non-equipollent concomitance (asama-vyāpti), in which fire is the principal concomitant (vyāpaka) and smoke is the subordinate concomitant (vyāpya). For equipollent concomitance (sama-vyāpti), a proposition could be,
‘Whatever is knowable is nameable’ or ‘Whatever is nameable is knowable’. These both the related terms ‘nameable’ and ‘knowable’ are equal in extension. With these two kinds of vyāpti, there are two other varieties of vyāpti-

1. Affirmative invariable concomitant (anvaya- vyāpti).
2. Negative invariable concomitant (vyatireka- vyāpti).

Where there is vyāpya (the subordinate concomitant, e.g. smoke) there is vyāpaka (the principal concomitant, e.g. fire) - this is affirmative invariable concomitance, agreement in presence.

Where there is no vyāpaka (principal concomitant, e.g. fire) there is no vyāpya (subordinate concomitant e.g. smoke) this is negative invariable concomitance, agreement in absence.

Advaita Vedānta holds that inference is a process of reasoning based on the affirmative invariable concomitance between hetu (the middle term) and sādhyā (major term); e.g. where there is smoke there is fire. So, it acknowledges only one kind of inference ‘affirmative’ (anvayi). Further, the Advaitins agreed with Nāyāyikas and consider twofold classification of inference-

1. Svārtha, meant for oneself.
2. Parārtha, meant for others.
In former case, one argues with oneself for the knowledge of the thing unperceived from the knowledge of its relation with the thing perceived. For e.g. a person sees a mass of smoke on a hill. He then remembers the invariable concomitance (vyāpti) between smoke and fire; i.e. wherever there is smoke there is fire, or smoke does not exist where fire does not. He concludes there is fire on the hill.

In the latter case, he puts forth argument to convince others of a truth thus known. To demonstrate the truth of the conclusion to others a formal statement of the reasoning process that is a syllogism is required. In view of Advaitins a syllogism consists of three steps or proposition but for Naiyāyikas it is of five steps. The three-member syllogism of Advaitins has two alternate forms which are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition to be proved (pratijñā)</th>
<th>the hill has fire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for this (hetu)</td>
<td>because, it has smoke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example (udāharana)</td>
<td>whatever has smoke has fire, such as a Kitchen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Form 1
Example (udāharana) | Whatever has smoke has fire, such as a kitchen.
---|---
Application (upanaya) | The hill has smoke.
Conclusion (nigamana) | Therefore the hill has fire.

Table 2: Form II

The second form resembles to the western logic. Given below:-:

| Major premise | whatever has smoke has fire |
| Minor premise | the hill has smoked |
| Conclusion | therefore the hill has fire |

Table 3: Western Logic

In above three forms of syllogism ‘fire’ is the sādhyā (the major term), the thing to be inferred; ‘hill’ is the paksā (the minor term); ‘smoke’ is the hetu (the middle term). The hetu is also called sādhana. 50

The pramāṇa i.e. inference is used by Advaita Vedānta in order to deduce metaphysical truths declared by the Śruti. The only knowledge which is immediate and indubitable is Self-knowledge i.e. knowledge of or more properly knowledge is the Self. This intuitive experience can be call as ātmasāksatkara or anubhūti. It is experience which is not split up into

50 Ibid.p.145
experiencer, experienced object, and experiencing. It is consciousness per se, which is the sole reality according to Advaita. It is to be noted that Advaita Vedānta denies the absolute reality of the phenomenal world but recognizes its empirical validity.

**Verbal Testimony**

The Sanskrit term of English word ‘verbal testimony’ or ‘authority’ is Śabda. In the present context, ‘Śabda’ means an articulate sound i.e. a word with meaning and applies to a verbal expression consisting of one or more words. It may be uttered or written. The essential part of a word or combination of words is its meaning. Every word is a symbol of thought or an idea.

Śabda as a means of valid knowledge is called Śabda-pramāṇa. It is also called ‘āpta-vākya (the statement of trustworthy person)’ or ‘āgama (authentic word)’. Śabda-pramāṇa, as a means of valid knowledge, has a twofold capacity: it can communicate the facts of the sensible universe and can also enlighten us on supra-sensible truths, whereas other vehicles of knowledge are capable of acquainting us only with the sensible. Thus, there are two kinds of verbal testimony: the secular and the scriptural, conveying the knowledge of the sensible and the supra-sensible respectively.

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is a unit of human speech, which is a single and complete expression of thought. A sentence is a unit of Śabda-pramāṇa, so it has been defined as, ‘that sentence is a means of valid knowledge in which the relation (among the meanings of the words) that is the object of its intention is not contradicted by any other means of valid knowledge’.\textsuperscript{52} To understand a sentence it is essential to grasp the meaning and relation between words which are syntactically conjoined. The apprehension of this relation (Śabda-bodha) means the verbal cognition of the fact or truth communicated. It is valid if uncontradicted by any other means of valid knowledge. The sentence in such a case of Śabda-pramāṇa is the verbal instrument of valid knowledge called Śabda-pramāṇa. Knowledge conveyed by such sentences as ‘he has seen a hare with horns’, ‘an elephant is like a pig’, is not valid being contradicted by one or another means of valid knowledge. Consequently, none of these expressions serves as Śabda-pramāṇa (verbal testimony).

A verbal statement uttered or written is man’s most potent instrument for transmitting knowledge. A verbal statement conveying valid knowledge must have an authentic source and must be free from defects. Only a competent person possessed of knowledge can impart accurate knowledge. The information gained from an authoritative source is valid knowledge. It

\textsuperscript{52} Satprakashananda, Swami. \textit{Methods Of Knowledge According To Advaita Vedanta}, etc., pp.173-174
needs no verification unless there is cause to doubt its reliability. If authority were not accepted as a source of valid knowledge, then the bulk of human knowledge would have to be regarded as baseless and the advancement of knowledge would be impossible. A few western philosophers acknowledge the verbal testimony as a separate means of knowledge but majority of Indian philosopher do not consider it. The Cārvākas deny it. The Vaiśesikas explain Śabda-pramāṇa as a case of inference. Moreover, Śabda can communicate what no other means of knowledge can. Man’s inner experiences can hardly be known but through his words. Since, Śabda serves as a vehicle of supersensous experience as well it does not depend solely on sensory knowledge like other means of mediate cognition, such as inference, comparison, and postulation. Thus, it is recognized as a separate means of knowledge. Neither sense perception nor any other means of knowledge based on it can communicate supersensible facts such as god, soul, life beyond death, liberation and its means. Man’s primary source of the knowledge of the supersensous is scriptural testimony (Vedas, Upanishads, BhagwadGītā, etc.). The scripture has its revelations and intrinsic value in its own. The words of the trustworthy (āptavākya) are a veritable source of human knowledge. They carry conviction without proof. When a person learns from another’s report that the hill has fire, he usually believes it
unless there is a cause of doubt as to its reliability. ‘To hear is to believe,’ as Montague says, is true in the sense that it is a general tendency of man to believe in what he hears or learns from authority. Advaita Vedānta holds that true knowledge has not to be verified by any other knowledge. It is its own proof. Its validity is due to the very conditions that cause it and is certified by them. Thus, the knowledge of a fact or truth is intrinsically valid and its validity is self-evident. It carries conviction. If any doubt arises regarding the fact or truth then doubt should be removed instead of questioning the validity of the knowledge. Śankara says, ‘(Internal states) of bondage, liberation, satisfaction, anxiety, recovery from ailment, hunger, and such other things are known only to the man concerned, and the knowledge of these to others is conjectural.’53 It refers that others can only guess them through their physical expressions. It is only the words of the experience that can truly acquaint others with the nature of his inner experience. Some non-dualistic philosophers believe that Śabda- pramāṇa can also lead to immediate or direct cognition, when the knowledge of the self empirical or transcendental is concerned. For example, a king, who under the spell of amnesia forgets that he is a king and imagines himself to be a commoner, can recognize himself as the king on being repeatedly told, ‘Thou art the

king’, ‘Thou art the king’. Repeatedly utterance of these words removes his delusion regarding himself and unveils his true status. Similarly, on hearing the Vedic dictum ‘Thou art that’ a qualified spiritual aspirant can get rid of ajñāna and realize the true nature of the self as Non-dual Brahman.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that Śabda-pramāṇa (verbal testimony) is the only valid means of knowledge which conveys profound truth, sublime ideas and the subtlest moods of the mind. Neither sense-perception nor any of the other means of knowledge dependent on it, can impart knowledge of supra-sensible facts, e.g. God, soul, their relation, soul’s journey after death, heaven, hell, the origin of the universe, merit and demerit accruing from righteous and unrighteous deeds, their fructification, man’s highest destiny and its fulfillment. Śankara says, ‘The scripture is the only source of the knowledge of the truths regarding the supra-sensible.’ In this way, Śruti and Smrti are the scriptures and valid source of means of knowledge. They impart knowledge regarding sensible and supra-sensible world.

The term ‘Śruti, lit., means ‘that which is heard’, implies ‘direct teaching (aparōkṣa upadeśa)’; whereas the term ‘Smrti’, literally means

Satprakashananda, Swami. *Methods Of Knowledge According To Advaita Vedanta*, etc., p.193 (Brahma-sūtras of Bādarayana (II, 3.1), with Śankara’s commentary and sub-commentaries-Govindananda’s ‘Ratnaprabha,’ Vacaspati’s ‘Bhāmati’ and Ananda-giris’s ‘Nyaya-nirnaya.’ Bombay, Nirmaya Sagar Press, 1934)
‘remembering’, implies ‘indirect teaching (paroksa upadeśa)’. All scriptures derived from the Vedas are generally called Smrti. It means all sacred texts other than the Vedas come under the category of the ‘Smrti’. Their authority depends on the authority of the Śruti. In case of any contradiction between Śruti and the Smrti, the Śruti has to be followed. In a restricted sense of the term Smrti is applied to dharma-sāstras, the scriptures that deal particularly with rules of conduct in different spheres of life, such as the Manu-smrti, the Yajñavalkya-smrti, the Parāśara-smrti.55 Manu stated in manu-smrti that, ‘by “Śruti” is meant the Veda, while by “Smrti” the codes of law’. Śruti is the name given to Vedas and Upanishads, which stands as an authority. It is treated with great respect in the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. According to Śankara, the Śruti is the only valid means of knowledge because Śankara says that, ‘the scripture is the only source of the knowledge of the truths regarding the supersensible’. As the Vedas and Upanishads are the ‘divine revelations’, so they are not claim to have author to human being. Consequently, they are termed as apauruseya. These revelations were occurred in the exalted imagination to the minds of saints and seers, which are not accidental or contingent but eternal varieties. Śruti is superior in validity to the other Pramāṇas like perception and inference. It is declared to

55 Ibid. p.202
be of greater value than the other Pramāṇas since it is free from defect. According to Śankara, the pluralistic universe exists and the empirical knowledge is meaningful as long as one has not attained the higher knowledge through Śruti. Advaita though accepts more than one Pramāṇa but according to them, Śruti is alone a Pramāṇa because it conveys the knowledge of Brahman-Ātman. Śruti has importance as long as Brahman – Ātman is not known, once it is known then there is no need for Śruti. But this unknown ness for empirical realm (Vyāvahārika) is due to concealment, ignorance and Avidyā. In this empirical realm, perception, inference, etc. are admitted to be Pramāṇas. It means that Advaita accepts perception and other Pramāṇas including Śruti, only in the state of bondage and that Śruti though indispensable for attaining Parā-vidyā, ceases to be a Pramāṇa once the highest truth is known. The authority of Śruti could be cited as follows:-

Prior to enlightenment there is transmigrate existence for the jīva and in this state alone there is scope for the work of perception and other Pramāṇas. But in enlightenment everything has become self; it means absence of Pramāṇas. Śruti denotes the situation in texts such as “But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the self, then what should one
see and through what?" Brihadāranyaka Upanishad point out the absence of perception etc. in the state of enlightenment if it be said that the absence of perception etc. would also mean the absence of Śruti, this conclusion is quite acceptable to us. For, following the texts starting with, “In this state the father is no father,” and ending with, “The Vedas are no Vedas,” we do admit the absence of Śruti itself on the state of enlightenment. Thus, Śruti is viewed as the only Pramāṇa from one perspective and the final Pramāṇa (antyam pramāṇa) from another perspective for attaining Parā-vidyā as there is no work for any Pramāṇa thereafter. The Parā-vidyā and Aparā-vidyā is mainly discussed in the Muniḍaka Upanishad.

The Muniḍaka Upanishad set forth the task of distinguishing the subject-matter of two kinds of knowledge viz. Parā-vidyā (higher knowledge) and Aparā-vidyā (lower-knowledge) on the basis of the states of bondage and freedom. The sphere of the lower knowledge is the state of transmigration which involves a distinction of accessories like agent, actions and results etc. This state has no beginning and no end, it has to be eradicated wholly and individually by each embodied being because it consists of sorrow; and its interrelation is like the unbroken current of a river. The higher knowledge is

56 Madhvananda, Swami. The Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, etc., pp.373-376 (Br.U.2.4.14)
57 Balasubramanian, R. (ed.), Advaita Vedanta, etc., p.89 (Br.U.4.3.22), (B.S.S.B. 4.1.3)
freedom – which consists in the elimination of that (state) which is beginningless, endless, ageless, deathless, immortal, fearless, pure, placid, it is supreme bliss that is without a second and is nothing but remaining established in one’s own self\textsuperscript{58}. The above mentioned two kinds of knowledge (higher and lower) is denoted in the interrogation between Saunaka and Angiras in \textit{Mundaka Upanishad} as follows-:

Saunaka, well known as a great householder, heard the traditional utterances of the good people that there is something by knowing which one becomes Omniscient. Being desirous of knowing that thing specifically, he approached Angiras and asked duly, ‘which [having been known]?’ Or by following the commonsense view, he puts this question knowingly: ‘There are in the world varieties of pieces of gold etc. which are known by ordinary people from the recognized fact of the substantial oneness of gold etc. Similarly does there exist a single [substance that is the] cause of the whole Universe of diversity, by knowing which one [substance] all things become known?’

The question put by Saunaka was, ‘which is it, which having been known one becomes all-knowing?’ The answer should have related to that whereas Angiras says in his answer, ‘There are two kinds of knowledge’ to be

\textsuperscript{58} Gambhiranand, Swami. \textit{Mundaka Upanishad With The Commentary Of Śankarācārya}, Calcutta, Advaita Ashram, 2000, p.19
acquired-the higher and the lower; this is what as tradition runs, the knower of the import of the Vedas say’. The lower knowledge is, indeed, ignorance. It has to be eradicated in as much as nothing in reality is known by knowing the objects of ignorance. The lower comprises the Rg-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, Atharva-Veda, the pronunciation etc. the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, meter, and astrology. Then there is the higher [knowledge] by which is attained that Imperishable.59

By the higher knowledge the wise realize everywhere that which cannot be perceived and grasped which is without source, features, eyes, and ears, which has neither hands nor feet, which is eternal, multiform, all-pervasive, extremely subtle, undiminishing, and which is the source of all. Yat, that, which is possessed of such characteristic bhutayonim, the source of all creation, just as the earth is of all moving and unmoving things; that Imperishable, dhirah, the intelligent, the discriminating ones; paripasyanti, see everywhere, as the Self of all. The purport of the whole verse is this: ‘That is the higher knowledge by which the Imperishable of this kind realized.’

The same thing has been again taken up in the Chāndogya by Narada and Santakumara:

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59 Gambhirananda, Swami. Mundaka Upanishad, Calcutta, Advaita Ashram, 2000, pp.7-14 (Mu. U. 1.1.3-6)
Narada once approached the sage Sanatkumara and requested him to show him path of knowledge. Sanatkumara said, “Let me first know what you have already learnt. I shall teach you something further that.”

Narada then said, “Sir I have learnt the Rg-veda, the Sama-veda, the Atharva-veda, history and traditional stories which are together called the fifth Veda, the method of remembering and repeating the Vedas, the technique of sraddha ceremony, grammar, philology, mathematics, astronomy, astrology, science of augury, jugglery, logic, ethics, information about different gods who represent powers, science of animals, science of war and so on. But sir I feel I merely know mantras or potent words but I do not know the Atman or the soul or the spirit of things. I have heard from men like you that, he who knows the Atman goes beyond all sorrow. Sir, I am full of sorrow, grief and remorse. I hope and believe that you will be able to lead me out of all these by favouring me with real knowledge.”

“Dear Narada, all that you have known is but mere name and verbiage, mere words. You can by your present knowledge achieve only what words can achieve and nothing more.”

“What is greater than words please teach me that,” said Narada.
“Yes, the power of speech is greater than words. If there had been no power of speech there would have been no words, no Vedas, no truth or untruth, no religion or irreligion, no good or bad.”

“Is there anything still greater than the power of speech?” queried Narada.

“Certainly, Mind is greater. It is the mind that is conscious of both the word and the power of speech. When a man thinks that he should learn the mantras, he learns them. Otherwise not, when he thinks he ought to do a thing, he does it, not otherwise.”

“Is there anything greater than the mind?”

“Yes, the will is greater than the mind. If there is no will, nothing happens. It is the will that holds all things together.”

“What is greater than the will?”

“Consciousness is greater than the will. It is consciousness that begets activity. Then there is the will that impels the mind to think. Speech follows and words take shape. If a man’s consciousness is scattered he is not alert and he cannot do things.”

“Dear Sir, is there anything that is greater than consciousness?”

“Of course, there is. Meditation is greater than mere consciousness. Even the earth and the sky and the mountains are as it were meditating and therefore
standing firm and steady. If there were no meditation, nothing would stand firm and steady.”

“Please tell me if there is something which is greater than meditation.”

“Yes, the power of understanding is greater than meditation. Good and bad, truth and untruth, the Vedas and Puranas, this world and the next, all these can be known only if there is the power of understanding.”

“Is there anything still greater than understanding?”

“Yes, dear friend. Power is greater than mere understanding. A single powerful man inspires fear into a hundred men with brains understanding. When a man with physical power gets up and goes about, when he becomes learned, when he becomes a seer, a thinker, a doer of things, becomes a man of understanding, he is greater than all. It is power that supports the earth, the sky, the mountains, beasts, men, gods and everything that exists on earth or in heaven.”

“Is there anything that is greater than physical power?”

“Yes, food is greater. If a man does not eat for ten days he may die, or even if he lives, he may lose his powers of speech, of action, of hearing, and of thinking. When he begins to take food his powers return to him.”

“Is there anything greater than food?”
“Yes, water is greater. If there are no rains no food grows. For want of water all living beings would fade away. When there are rains all animals are quite happy.”

“What is greater than water?”

“Heat or light is greater. If there were no heat, the water from the earth would not evaporate and there would be no rain without evaporation.”

“What is greater than heat?”

“The ether or ākāśa is greater. It is in ether that all things happen. The sun, the moon and the worlds float about in ether. Ether is the cause of sound waves which makes hearing possible.”

“What is greater than ether?”

“Well, there is the Ātman, the spirit. That is the substratum of everything else.”

“When a man sees not anything but one, Ātman, he is experiencing infinity. When a man sees, knows things other than the Ātman, it is misery and sorrow that follow. The abundant and the infinite are immortal while things limited are mortal. The spirit lives by its own power and exists by its own support and greatness. Those who have realized the spirit are great on account of the possession of houses, cows, servants and lands.”
“The spirit pervades the four quarters. It is up above as well as below. It is called the Ātman. He who knows this Ātman is absorbed in it. He sports with it; he enjoys its company as that of mate. He is full of joy. He is his monarch and fully self-possessed and self-controlled. This realization of the spirit can dawn upon us when our mind is clean and pure. Our mind would be clean and pure when we feed upon pure food. A clean and pure mind alone can concentrate upon truth. Truth then will shine in the heart of hearts like the rising Sun.” that is Parā-vidyā or spiritual realization which bestows immortality and eternal bliss.\footnote{Diwakar, R.R. \emph{Upanishads In Story And Dialogue}, etc., pp.81-86}

Therefore, Śruti is the only means to the knowledge of imperishable or non-dual Pramāṇa. So, says the sage Yājñavalkya, ‘I ask you of that Being who is to be known only from the \emph{Upanishads} who definitely projects those beings (that comprise the phenomenal world) and (again) withdraws them unto himself and who is at the same time transcendent’.\footnote{Madhavananda, Swami. (trans.), \emph{The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad}, etc., 1950, p.555 (Br.\textit{U}.\textit{I}.\textit{I}.\textit{I}.\textit{I.26)} The Upanishad texts, with one accord, declare the reality of Brahman free from all distinctions and differences.\footnote{Gambhirananda, Swami. \emph{Brahma-Sutra Bhasya}, etc., p.21 (B.S.S.B.1.1.4)} That is the Brahman taught by the \emph{Upanishads}; yea, that is the Brahman taught by the \emph{Upanishads}. Śruti conveys the knowledge of non dual Brahman that is beyond description. In
general, the *Upanishads* indicate the nature of *Brahman* with negative expressions as follows:

‘That *Brahman* is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior’. (Br.U.II.5.19)

‘It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long’. (Br.U.III.8.8)

‘Other than righteousness and unrighteousness, other than cause and effect, other than what has been and what is to be’. (Ka.U.I.2.14)

With negative expressions there are positive expressions of *Upanishads* to indicate the intrinsic characteristic (*svarupalakṣaṇa*) of *Brahman* which are as follows:

‘*Brahman* is Truth, Consciousness, Infinite’. (Tai.U.II.1.3)

‘*Brahman* is Consciousness, Bliss’. (Br.U.III.9.28)

‘Supreme *Brahman* is Being-Consciousness-Bliss’. (N. P.T.U. 1.6)

*Upanishads* also define *Brahman* by extrinsic characteristics (*tatastha lakṣaṇa*), which do not inhere it, but differentiate It from all else, such as:

‘That from which are the projection, the preservation, and the dissolution of the universe.’ (B.S.S.B.I.i.2)

‘That from which these beings are born, that by which, when born, they live, that into which (at the time of dissolution) they enter, they merge; seek the knowledge of that. That is *Brahman*.’ (Tai.U.III.i)
'He is the lord of all. He is the knower of all. He is the Inner Controller. He is the source of all; for from him all beings originate and in him they finally disappear.' (Ma.U.VI.)

'All this is Brahman.' (Ch.U.II.14.1)

Śruti declares the identity of individual self and supreme self in form of an individual consciousness and supreme consciousness that sustains and manifests the manifold. This is the sole reality of non dual, non-relational Pure consciousness i.e. Brahman. The whole truth reveal through the four sentences of four Vedas. Each sentence is called a ‘Mahāvākyya’, whose literal meaning is, ‘the great saying’. These four Vedic Mahāvākyas are:-

1. ‘Consciousness (manifest in an individual) is Brahman’ as stated in Rg-Veda (Ai. U. III. i.3)

It indicates that the ultimate reality is pure spirit, self-effulgent consciousness which is all bliss and the very perfection of existence. All this (the entire universe of living and non-living) is moved by consciousness, supported by consciousness, guided by consciousness, and has its being in consciousness. Consciousness is Brahman.

2. ‘I am Brahman,’ as stated in the Yajur-Veda (Br.U. I. 4. 10).

It implies that the manifold has no actual position in non-dual Brahman, even as a mirage has no existence in the desert, being only an appearance.
is a mere superimposition that disappears with the dawning of the knowledge of reality. There is no difference whatsoever in this (Brahman).

From death to death moves he who sees in this (Brahman), the seeming diversity.

3 ‘Thou art that,’ as stated in the Sama-Veda (Ch.U. VI. 8.7).

This dictum discloses the direct approach to non-dual Brahman. This is its main purpose. It is the realization of the ultimate oneness that demonstrates the first and second points. In as much as an individual is essentially identical with Brahman, he can realize the same by realizing his inmost self. The stainless, indivisible Brahman shines in the golden innermost sheath (as the luminous self). It is all pure. It is the light of lights. It is that which they know, who knows the innermost self.

4. ‘This Ātman (the individual self) is Brahman,’ as stated in the Atharva-Veda (Ma.U. II).

It indicates that Ātman and Brahman are not only identical but one. The superimposition of objective world on internal Self is the cause of error or illusion otherwise it is one. This has to be a matter of realization.

These great teachings (Mahāvākyas) is said to be akhandartha-bodhaka (indicative of the undivided absolute being free from all distinctions). The Mahāvākyā presents in a nutshell the Vedic view of god, the Vedic view of
man, and the *Vedic* view of man’s approach to god. It furnishes the clue to his spiritual life. By knowing the self one knows god, the one Self of all. The way to the Supreme Being is an inner approach. It is the gradual realization of the innate Divinity. In fact, the great *Vedic* dictum makes the inaccessible accessible, the incomprehensible comprehensible, the unknowable knowable.63

Even in order to develop moral consciousness a person has to make his life conform to ethical rules, which he must know from an authoritative source. The revealed texts have to be recognized as the final authority on man’s moral ideal. So, it is wise to hold them for guidance. Empirical facts can be known by sense-perception and by all other means of knowledge that are based on it. But in regard to transcendental truths the *Śruti* is the sole valid source of knowledge. The purpose of the *Śruti* is to communicate what cannot be known by other means of valid knowledge and not to contradict their findings. It is the sole authority on the supra-sensuous truths, which are beyond the province of other means of knowledge.

Thus, the acceptance of *Śruti* in *Advaita Vedānta* is by no means denial of reason. Truth always inherited the rational principle, so it means, reason

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63 Satprakashananda, Swami. *Methods Of Knowledge According To Advaita Vedanta*, etc., p.201
inherited the revelation. In true sense the one rests on other. Reason is the key that unlocks the scriptural truths and paves the way to their intuitive perception. According to non-dualistic philosophers, revelation, reason, and realization form the triple means to the full knowledge of Brahman. Śruti itself conveys this idea when it says: “the self, indeed, is to be seen, should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon.”

**Comparison**

The Sanskrit term for English word ‘Comparison’ is ‘Upamāna’. It is defined in *Vedānta-paribhāsa* (chap.3) as, ‘the instrument of the valid knowledge of similarity’. Advaitins regard it as a distinct method of mediate knowledge, which is unlike perception and inference. Nayāyikas rejected the view of Mimamsakas and Advaitins to interpret the meaning of Upamāna as a separate Pramāṇa. Advaitins hold that, Upamāna is the process by which the knowledge of X’s similarity to Y is gained from the perception of Y’s similarity to X, which has been perceived elsewhere. This could be illustrated by an instance; a person who has seen his cow at home goes to forest and sees a gavaya (a wild cow without dewlap). He perceives the similarity in between gavaya and his cow at home, which he remembers and form a judgment, ‘this gavaya is like my cow’ or an additional knowledge in

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64 Madhavananda, Swami. (trans.), *The Brhadāranyaka Upanishad*, etc., pp.353-356 (*Br.U.2.4.5*)
the form of ‘My cow is like this gavaya’. *Upamāna* is the means by which he gains the knowledge of similarity by the perception of *gavaya* and remembrance of his cow at home. The knowledge of similarity thus attained is termed as ‘*upamiti*’. *Upamāna* as a means of the knowledge of similarity is also used to communicate the nature of Ātman and Brahman. As Ātman is said to be all-pervading and unrelated like *akasa*, the seeker can form the idea of the nature of the supreme self. Brahman is said to be resplendent as the sun, so that by perceiving the luminosity of the sun the seeker can conceive the self-luminosity of Brahman.’

**Postulation**

The word ‘postulation’ (from Latin postulare, to demand) is close to *arthāpatti* which means supposition or presumption of fact. *Advaita Vedānta* and Mimamsa differentiate postulation from inference and treat this as a separate means of valid knowledge. It is the method of assumption of an unknown fact in order to account for a known fact that is otherwise inexplicable. This could be understand by an instance from the knowledge of the fact that a stout person ‘A’ does not eat in daytime, one can assume that ‘A’ eats at night, otherwise the fact of A’s stoutness without eating in daytime remains unexplained. One cannot grow stout by fasting. Since ‘A’

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65 Satprakashananda, Swami. *Methods Of Knowledge According To Advaita Vedanta*, etc., p.156
fast in daytime, it can be taken for granted that he eats at night. Postulation (arthāpatti) is of two types: 1. Postulation from what is seen (that is, perceived). 2. Postulation from what is heard (that is, known from testimony).66

The first kind means the assumption of a third fact to explain two perceived facts that are apparently incongruous. This could understood with an illustration: When a person apprehends something as ‘This is silver,’ and subsequently discards the same thing as ‘This is not silver,’ then he can assume that the silver that appeared to sight was false.

The second type means the assumption of an implied meaning of a sentence (heard or read) on account of the incompleteness or incongruity of its direct meaning. For instance, ‘The knower of the self transcends grief,’ (Ch.U.III:1.3) since the manifold bonds signified by the word ‘grief (śōka)’ cannot be destroyed by Self-realization unless they are false, they are assumed to be false. The second type of postulation has again two different forms: 1. that due to incompleteness of verbal expression (abhidhāna). 2. That due to incompleteness of meaning (abhihita). To illustrate first form take for instance: On hearing a part of a sentence one can assume additional word or words in accordance with its intention. To the utterance of the word

66 Ibid.
‘close’ or ‘open’ one can supplement the term ‘the door’ in agreement with the context. The second form can also be illustrate by a statement of Śruti text, ‘Then the mortal man becomes immortal’ is to be explained by the assumption that the mortality of man is false. Had it been real, it could not be eradicated by Self-realization.

Non-apprehension

According to Mimamsa and Advaita Vedānta, the absence of an object or its attribute from a locus is known, neither by sense-perception nor by any other method of knowledge based on it (viz. inference, comparison, postulation, or verbal testimony), but by a unique way called ‘non-apprehension (anupalabdhi)’. It alludes that the non-existence of a thing is apprehended by its non-perception. By not seeing a jar in a place, one knows that it is not there. It could be inferred here that, the non-apprehension of a thing is a means to the apprehension of its non-existence (abhāva). Here in fact, non-perception as well as perception serves as a means of knowledge (pramāṇa) to the knowing self (pramātā), who is aware of both. It leads to positive and negative experiences by presence and absence of things, the one by perception and other by non-perception. According to Advaita Vedānta both existence (bhāva) and non-existence (abhāva) are facts of cognition. This could be illustrate by the expressions as ‘There is no book on the desk’, ‘The
rose plant has no roses on it'. In every statement of non-existence there is a locus (adhikarna). The locus of the non-existence of the book is the desk; the locus of the non-existence of the roses is the rose plant. There is no negation without affirmation. Therefore, existence and non-existence are positive and negative facts but as a fact of cognition non-existence cannot be considered false because the counter-positive of non-existence is existence. According to Advaita Vedānta, non-apprehension is immediate (pratyaksa) where as for Kumarila it is mediate (paroksa). Advaita Vedānta also holds that the absence of multiplicity is known directly by non-apprehension in transcendental experience or immediate apprehension of non-dual Brahman.\footnote{Ibid. p.170}

Śankara gave importance to above mentioned only three Pramāṇas i.e. Perception, Inference, and Verbal testimony in elucidating the significance and process of knowledge, includes both empirical and transcendental consciousness.

Śankara emphasizes certain auxiliary virtues for the seeker of direct knowledge.

As observed by Śankara, a spiritual aspirant possessed of the following fourfold means of attainment (sādhana-catuṣṭaya) develops the yearning for
the direct knowledge of *Brahman* and also the capacity for the same. These are:

1. The discrimination between the real and the unreal, that is, a firm conviction of the mind to the effect that *Brahman* is real and the manifold is unreal.

2. A dispassion for the enjoyment of all fruits of action here and hereafter including the life of *Brahma* (the cosmic soul), as a result of the understanding of their futility.

3. The six fold asset are namely (a) control of mind (*śama*), (b) control of the senses (*dama*), (c) withdrawal of the mind (*uparati*), i.e. the cessation of distractions, (d) fortitude (*tiṭikasā*), that is, being unaffected by the pairs of opposites, (e) faith in the words of the preceptor and the *Vedānta* (*śraddhā*), (f) concentration of the mind on *Brahman* (*samā-dhyāna*).

4. Yearning for liberation or freedom from all bondages superimposed by *ajñāna*.

It is to be noted that, all the seekers of the direct knowledge of *Brahman* are not able to develop these qualities well. So it requires the guidance of a

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68 Ibid. pp.262-263 *(B.S.S.B. 1.1.1)*
competent teacher and practice of dispassion and the cultivation of the six virtues mentioned above. But a seeker of self-knowledge must possess physical and mental vigour with a keen understanding and dispassion to begin with. As stated in the Upanishad:

‘This Ātman (the self) cannot be realized by him who is devoid of strength, or who is without vigilance, or who has no spirit of renunciation along with his knowledge. But if, an intelligent person strives by these means, then his soul enters into Brahman, the Abode.’

‘The Self hidden in all beings does not appear. But it is seen by men of keen vision with their sharp, one-pointed intellect (būddhi).’

Śankara also emphasizes the reasoning power of the seeker in Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi, as:

‘The intelligent and wise man skilled in arguing in favour of the scriptures and refuting counter arguments against them – one who has the above characteristics is the fit recipient of the knowledge of the Ātman.’

Theory of Error

Śankara recognizes only one reality i.e. Brahman. Everything else other than Brahman whether reason or experience move in the realm of error. The

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69 Gambhirananda, Swami. Mundaka Upanishad, etc., p.86 (Mu.U.III:2.4)
knowledge that we receive either by perception or by inference is all because we identify the Self with the body or with the sense objects. But when we superimpose body, the sense organs and the mind on the Self, endowed with adjuncts the Self becomes the jīva and it is the subject of all experiences. This error epistemologically is spoken of as “Superimposition” or “Illusion” (adhyāsa), and in metaphysical terms it is called as “Māyā” or “Avidyā”.

The term ‘illusion’ (from Lat. Illudere, to mock, deceive) is used in the sense of illusory perception and illusory object as well. Its Sanskrit synonym adhyāsa applies to both. The two other words adhyārōpa (superimposition) and avabhāsa (appearance) have also the same significance. As defined by Śankara, ‘Adhyāsa is the apprehension of something as something else (adhyāsō nāma atasmin tad buddhiḥ)’. It indicates a twofold perceptual error:

1 apprehending a thing as other than what it is, such as perceives a rope as a snake;

2. Apprehending a thing as different from what it is, such as perceiving a white conch as yellow. The first is the false ascription of one thing to

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71 Satprakashananda, Swami. Methods Of Knowledge According To Advaita Vedanta, etc., p.124 (Govindananda’s, Brahma-Sutras Of Badarayana With Commentary And Sub-Commentaries, Introduction, Bombay, Nirmaya Sagar Press, 1934.)
another; the second is the false ascription of the attribute of one thing to another.

Some more e.g. of first type error are- when a stump of a tree mistaken for a man, a nacre mistaken for a piece of silver, a desert tract mistaken for a lake, Non dual *Brahman* apprehended as the manifold.

Examples of second type are- when a crystal appearing red in the proximity of a red flower, light transmitted through a green glass appearing green, a white conch appearing yellow to a jaundiced eye, trees appearing to move in the opposite direction from a speeding train, the changeless self appearing changeful being identified with the psychophysical adjunct. In no case is the substratum of the erroneous cognition the least affected. The rope mistaken for a snake acquires none of its properties. The white conch appearing yellow to the defective vision of the perceiver has not the slightest tinge of yellow.\(^7\)

In all these cases, it is clear that a lower order of reality is superimposed on a higher order.

As, we already know S\(\text{\v{s}ankara}\) recognizes three orders of reality- *Pr\(\text{\v{a}tibh\v{a}sika}, Vy\text{\v{a}vah\v{a}rika}, and P\text{\v{a}ram\v{a}rthika}*. If the two terms of the proposition belong to the same order of reality, there is no error. If they

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72 Ibid, pp.124-125
belong to the different order of reality, there is error. When seeing a snake where there is a rope. The snake belongs to the Prāṭibhāsīka level because it is perceived by only one individual and that also for a moment and ceases to exist along with the cessation of his perception. It has no existence independently of its perception. Dream objects also belong to this category. All these belong to the lowest order of reality called Prāṭibhāsīka. Literal meaning of term Prāṭibhāsīka is that which appears for a brief moment to a single individual. Śāṅkara stated as a criterion of reality that, whatever is perceived must be admitted to be so far real but an unreal thing is never perceived by any one.

The rope which remains there after examined by the lamp belongs to higher order. So, now it is clear that it is the same to the same individual at different times and the same to different individuals at the same time. It exists more or less permanently. These belong to what is called the Vyāvahārīka order of reality. Still it is not the highest reality; it suffers contradiction when Brahman knowledge has come to a man. Brahman-consciousness can never suffer contradiction for it is impossible to conceive of the absence of consciousness at any level. Even the denial of consciousness would amount to an affirmation of consciousness, as the denial also is a piece of knowledge. Since, it is presented to consciousness it cannot be dismissed as
unreal and since it is sublated later it cannot be admitted as wholly real. It is therefore, neither real nor unreal, neither sat nor asat. It is sadāsadvilakṣaṇa or durnirupa. It cannot be characterized in any way and hence this theory is called anirvācanīya- khyāti.

The above description alludes, that error arises when a lower order of reality is superimposed on a higher order. Where the snake belongs to the phenomenal order called as drṣṭisṛṣṭi and the rope on which it is superimposed belongs to the empirical order. It is a phenomenon that is beginning less. It is part of the order of nature, naṁsargika.

As, we superimpose the snake on the rope at the lower level, so, in the same manner, we superimpose the world on Brahman. The former is an instance of common error while latter is metaphysical error. Māyā or avidyā is a metaphysical aspect of adhyāsa. Adhyāsa is metaphysical because of the fact that non-self is being superimposed upon the self (pratyag-Ātman). The idea of this could be understood by following passage:-

“Extra-personal attributes are superimposed upon the Self if a man considers himself sound and entire, as long as his wife, children, and so on are sound and entire. Attributes of the body are superimposed upon the Self, if a man thinks of himself (his self) as stout, lean, fair, as standing, walking, or jumping. Attributes of the sense-organs are, if he thinks ‘I am mute, or
deaf, or one-eyed, or blind.’ Attributes of the internal organ (antahkaranā) are of concern, if he considers himself (his Self) subject to desire, intention, doubt, determination, and so on. Having superimposed the producer of the notion of the ego (ahampra-tyāya, i.e. the antahkaraṇa) upon the inner Self.... One superimposes again the inner Self upon the inner organ, etc., thus is the nature of the original adhyāsa, beginning less and endless (anādirananta) having the form of an erroneous notion (mithyāpratyayarūpa), cause of the fact that the individual souls are agents and enjoyers (kartrtva-bhoktrtva-pravartaka), observed by everyone (sarvalokapratyaksā).”

The function of Avidyā has two aspects. Avidyā cannot operate in a void; it needs a person or locus (āśraya) to whom it can belong and some sort of an object (vīśaya) to which it can refer. Let us consider an e.g. Snake and rope. In this situation the locus or āśraya of avidyā is the person who mistakes. The person is the locus of avidyā because he has false cognition, and the rope is its object (vīśaya). Thus, the double operation of avidyā becomes evident; it tries to conceal the rope and thereby projects snake in its place. Therefore, concealment of the object for wrong perception is a necessary condition. It is a state in which, in the words of Hiriyanna, “suppression

These two functions of avidyā are termed as “veiling” (āvarana) and “revealing” (vikṣepa). Avidyā is opposite to vidyā (knowledge). The condition of erroneous perception can be removed by the removal of the conditions of avidyā. This will take place only when vidyā (knowledge) arises in the person who is having a false cognition of the object. But in case of jīva and Brahman, which is the locus or āśraya for avidyā? If jīva (individual soul) is the locus for avidyā then it is not possible because jīva is itself its product. It means Brahman or Ātman may be said to be its locus, as in avidyā, there is superimposition of that which is not-self on the self. “This activity of superimposition has no beginning; it is both beginning less (anādi) and endless (ananta).” Staal points out that, not only the jīva (individual) subjectively involved in the erroneous activity of superimposition but empirical reality is itself the result of a cosmic act of superimposition, this is the ultimate meaning of the term “superimposition”.

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75 Madhvananda, Swami. Sankara Bhāsaya On The Vedantasūtra, etc.. Introduction, (V.S.B, 2.1,36)
76 Staal J. F. Advaita and Neo-Platonism: A Critical Study in Comparative Philosophy, Madras, University of Madras, 1961, p.122
In the seventh discourse of BhagwadGītā, lord defines māyā as the ‘divine illusion’ made of three constituents known as guṇas.\textsuperscript{77} The māyā which belongs to Īśvara is also named as prakṛti (matter). Prakṛti is said to be two-fold, the aparā (lower) prakṛti and the parā (superior) prakṛti. The five tanmātras (subtle elements earth, water, fire, air and ether), mind (mānas), reason (būddhi) and ego (ahankāra) constitute the inferior matter- the impure prakṛti which is the cause of bondage. The parā- prakṛti, the superior prakṛti or the spirit or the jīva, is the lord’s very Self.\textsuperscript{78} Śankara here interpreted māyā as ‘yoga māyā’. The word ‘yoga’ means the firm will of god and so ‘yoga māyā ’is the illusion or veil controlled by Him.\textsuperscript{79} Śankara in the introduction of thirteenth chapter of BhagwadGītā explains that the prakṛti transforms itself into all objective forms such as bodies (kārya), the senses (kāreṇa) and the sense objects (viśaya). Matter is called kṣetra or field because it is destructible or liable to decay or that in which the fruits of action are reaped. Kṣetra is what is perceived and as distinct from this kṣetra, the Self is known as kṣetrajña-‘the knower of the field’. The appearance of various kṣetrajña caused by the variety in kṣetra is illusory due to this reason it is stated that, kṣetrajña can neither be described as ‘sat’

\textsuperscript{77} Goyandaka, Jayadayal. The BhagwadGītā, Gorakhpur, Gita Press, 1999, p.73 (7.13-14)
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid. p.71(BG 7.3-5)
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. p.75(BG 7.25)
nor as ‘asat’. Here Śankara emphasizes the necessity of the technique of superimposition (adhyāropa) and negation (apavāda) for proving the existence of that which is non-dual. Śankara describes the relation of kṣetra and kṣetrajña, the mutually opposed object and subject, as superimposition (adhyāsa). Due to non-discrimination between the kṣetra and kṣetrajña caused by ignorance (avidyā), the ignorant misunderstands one for the other. The illusion disappears when a man rightly distinguishes the kṣetrajña from the kṣetra with the help of the scriptures. Such an enlightened person realizes that the kṣetra is really non-existent, comparable to that of the dream appearances. When the cause of birth kṣetra disappears, the wise man can never be born again.  

Consequently, here the ontological aspect of avidyā is denoted as māyā. Avidyā gives rise to illusions i.e. superimpositions, whereas from cosmic viewpoint māyā is a principle of illusions. Māyā is an activity which is magically creative; it is an erroneous identification which is responsible for creating the world in a magical way. The phenomenal world cannot be said either real or unreal; to the extent world is known to us. Even it cannot be real because it depends on Brahman. Therefore, it is refer as, sadasadvilakṣaṇa because this character belongs to its source, māya. Hence,

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80 Ibid. p.133 (BG 13.26)
this world is neither real nor unreal so it is known as mithyā (false). It is anirvācanīyata-vācana (inexplicable).

Māyā is the source of world but it does not act as a power itself. It is the Brahman which uses māyā (i.e.Īśvara) as a power for evolution of this phenomenal world. Māyā, as power is inherent in Īśvara, and god manifests this power through the empirical world of name and form.81

Conclusively, it can be deduced that from an absolute point of view, the māyā is not a power itself; it has no reality of its own. But from empirical point of view, māyā is a power of Brahman. It acts in relation to Brahman, and Avidyā binds man to saṃsārā. According to Śankara, man is the creation of a negative (avidyā) principle. Reality as such is non-dual, and the knowledge (jñāna) of it liberates man from the negativity of the empirical existence. Liberation for Śankara is that state of being in which māyā or non-being is transcended; it is a state which is beyond all duality.

With the epistemological and metaphysical standpoint, Śankara’s doctrine of self can be discussed in the ethical perspective also. At the level of epistemology, it is a matter of knowledge and its error (illusion), at the level of metaphysics, it is a matter of single identity i.e. Brahman which is attributed as akartā and abhoktā etc, it means the self is not doing any

81 Ibid. (V.S.B. 1.4.3)
activity here and so no ethical thinking is possible; but at the level of ethics, the self is doing either ethical or unethical actions which give rise to moral and immoral deeds. The moral actions are matter of values in form of means and ends of the world. All these moral and immoral deeds are performed in a psychological state of mind i.e. jāgrat (waking). In this, state, the individual does either right or wrong with the help of knowledge. This knowledge consciousness invariably finds expression through the ego-idea or ‘l-ness’ (aham-vṛtti or ahankāra), a mode of mind that transmits consciousness. To all appearances the ego functions as a conscious agent through this ego though lacking in true nature of Self, man realize his existence as ‘I am’. From this first expression, arise all his cognitions. His existence is self-evident and self-authenticated by knowledge that is innate in him and requires no verification or confirmation. In this, no reasoning process or no Cartesian doubt is involved in it. ‘I am, therefore I think’, and not ‘I think, therefore I am (cogito ergo sum)’. As I quoted earlier, that individual self has two aspects: empirical (Vyāvahārika) and transcendental (Pāramārthika). When consciousness reflected in finite knowledge (ajñāna) and identified with mind is the empirical self, the ego, jīva-caitanya, the doer of actions and experienced of their fruits (kartā-bhoktā). When being subject to ajñāna, it develops itself various psychical and physical
conditions. It is the immutable self that holds the reflected self, the ego, with all its limiting adjuncts. In this way, the ‘I-ness (ahankāra) is serve as a knot which tied together the conscious spirit and unconscious matter, i.e. self and not-self. So, there is an intermingling of knower and known vice versa. Due to this, it becomes difficult to discriminate one from other. The ego-idea formed and defined only in association with the body. This waking ego perceives the external world, perform various actions and experience different conditions of life. In dream state, the form of ego changes, it has no definite shape. It is fickle and amorphous. In deep sleep, the ego subsides; an individual does not know who he is or what he is. As stated in the Upanishads, ‘in this state a father is no father, a mother is no mother, the worlds are no worlds, the gods is no gods, and the Vedas is no Vedas.’ But the same individual self, which finds definite expression as the waking ego, and plays the inconstant dream-ego, persists as the cognized in all the three states. So, a person can say, ‘I sleep’, ‘I dream’, ‘I wake up’. All the while the jīva, the cognized, has its being in the kutastha, the immutable self, but is unaware of its nature due to ajñāna.

In the natural disposition of man’s mind the development of ‘I-ness’ give rise to various kind of activities which varied from individual to individual

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82 Madhavananda, Swami. (trans.), The Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, etc., p.665 (Br.U.4.3.22)
due to the predominance of *guna*. The three *guna* (strands)—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are the primal constituents of *prakrti*, which form a triad and are inseparable. It is the predominance of one or the other in varying degrees that causes all changes. *Sattva* is the principle of poise conducive to purity, knowledge, joy. It is the giver of happiness and is the real friend of man in his effort to realize truth. It manifests itself, in man, as humility, self-control, unselfishness, contentment, fearlessness, faith, and devotion. When *sattva* predominate, a man feels detached with respect to the world, lessens his physical activities, intensifies his contemplation, and strives in various ways to attain peace and blessedness. Through the cultivation of *sattva*, both *rajas* and *tamas* are kept under control. *Rajas* are the principle of motivation leading to activity, desire, restlessness. The visible effect of *rajas*, in a human being for instance, is a ceaseless activity through which expression is given to ambition, lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, egoism, envy, pride, jealousy, and so forth. Under its influence, a man becomes violently attached to the world. It is the source of suffering. *Tamas* is the principle of inertia, resulting in inaction, dullness, delusion. When *tamas* predominates over *sattva* and *rajas*, he goes to sleep or remains inactive. It deprives a man of right judgment or definite belief and subjects him to doubt and uncertainty. The three *guna* always exists together. The difference between one being
and other lies in the varying preponderances of the guṇas. These three guṇas belongs to māyā, prakṛti or ignorance, which includes everything in nature-organic, inorganic or psychic. They are the characteristics of relativity. As long as, a man is attached to any of them, he is a phenomenal being and not a free soul. Tamas wants to destroy a man; rajas bind him to the world and rob him of his spiritual treasures; sattva sets him on the path to freedom. Tamas is to be overcome by rajas and rajas by sattva. But finally sattva too, is to be given up if the aspirant seeks total freedom. Truth lies beyond the three guṇas. Śankara remarks: ‘those among men who though lacking in self-control, but possess other good qualities are the gods; those in whom greed prevails are men, while those who are cruel and violent are the demons (asuras, lit. the ungodly). So, the same human species, according to the three drawbacks- lack of self-control, greediness, and cruelty, and according to the prevalence in them of the three guṇas- sattva, rajas, and tamas, are entitled gods, men, and demons. Therefore, it is men who should learn all the three lessons.’

In this way guṇas are the basic constituent of man’s nature, which denote the individual’s psycho-physical state in this phenomenal world. In Śankara’s view, man is an egoistic and impulsive being in his actions, so it sometimes

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83 Satprakshananda, Swami. *Methods Of Knowledge According To Advaita Vedanta*, etc., p. 299
performs the sinful or evil deeds in order to gratify his selfish desires. It is
here necessary to purify mind (antahkarna) from the influences of selfish
desires and inclinations. The purification can be effected by restraining these
egoistic impulses and tendencies to action (negatively), and by performing
higher kinds of work (positively) i.e. dharma. When these impurities are
thus removed then mind is prepared for supreme realization i.e. the
realization of self.

2.5 ETHICAL ASPECT

Values are also looking to the Self. It is important to analyze and generalize
the fact of value, because it helps in regulating moral actions, which upgrade
the Self to its purest form. Śankara following the Vedic tradition conceive
value in two ways: one as a moral or phenomenal reality i.e. dharma and
other as a noumenal reality i.e., Brahman. Brahman is man’s either real or
noumenal being that constitute highest value to it, due to the attribute of
freedom. Dharma on the other hand, is the law of phenomenal actions,
experiences and is revealed as a system of prescriptions and prohibitions.
Brahman has to be known, dharma has to be practiced. It is derived by the
two distinct sections of Vedas. One of them is related to action and
prescribes the obligations and prohibitions while other reveals the ultimate
truth for knowledge. Here, it should not be supposed that the knowledge of
Brahman requires the performance of dharma or that it is itself an obligation enjoined by the Vedas. "Śankara here distinguishes sharply between the life of spiritual freedom or philosophical wisdom, on the one hand, and the practical life of morality and religion, on the other. 'The knowledge of dharma leads to abhyudaya or empirical well-being but it depends on the performance of the duties. The knowledge of Brahman on the other hand, has for its result nihsreyasa or absolute well-being which does not depend on the performance of any actions. When dharma is enquired into, it is only an ideal to be realized but not real at the time of enquiry. Its realization depends on human effort. Hence, Brahman that is to be enquired into is given as real and being eternal does not depend on human effort.'"\textsuperscript{84}

For Śankara, the dharma is constituted by both nihsreyasa and abhyudaya. "Nihsreyasa is characterized by freedom from desire, seeking pleasure, and pain. It is beyond the dialectic of action and experience, good and evil. Abhyudaya, on the other hand, is of the nature of satisfaction which is necessarily limited in duration, scope and degree. It belongs to a process of seeking, activity, experiencing. If nihsreyasa is autonomy, abhyudaya is necessarily heteronymous, a binding and tempting chain. To attain nihsreyasa it is necessary to retreat from external activity into self-

\textsuperscript{84} Pande, G.C. *Life And Thoughts Of Śankarācārya*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1994, p.219 (B.S.S.B.1.1.1)
knowledge. This is the path called *nivṛtti-lakṣaṇa dharma*. To gain *abhyudaya* it is necessary to follow the path of virtuous action and religious worship. This is the path called *pravṛtti-lakṣaṇa dharma.*

As far as, it is conceived that corresponding to the two types of reality i.e., noumenal and phenomenal there are two values i.e. *abhyudaya* and *nihśreyasa* and corresponding to them there is two kinds of *dharmas*, one is guided by law of activist life (*pravṛtti-lakṣaṇa dharma*) and other is guided by law of retreat from activity (*nivṛtti-lakṣaṇa dharma*), as prescribed by *Vedas*. As stated in *BhagwadGītābhāsyā*, ‘*dharma* is that which is the cause of the maintenance or stability of the universe and directly instrumental to the relative and absolute good of living beings. It is practiced by the ‘estates’ (*varnas*) and ‘stations’ (*āśramas*), in so far as they seek their good’.

According to *Vedic* tradition, the Hindu society was consisted of four *varnas* viz. *Brahmin, ksatriyā, Vaiśyā* and *Śūdrās*. The concept behind the division in four *varnas* is division of labour. All the four *varnas* were interdependent for the welfare and security of the society. The *Brahmins* were the custodians of learning and spiritual lore; the *ksatriyās* were the kings and military protectors; the *śūdrās* supplied the manual labour. The *BhagwadGītā*, much later, defined as follows the duties of the four castes:

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85 Ibid.pp.220-221
control of the mind, control of the senses, austerity, cleanliness, forbearance, and uprightness, knowledge, realization, and faith - these are the duties of a Brahmin, born of his nature. Heroism, high spirit, firmness, resourcefulness, dauntlessness in battle, generosity, and sovereignty - these are the duties of a ksatriyās, born of his nature. Agriculture, cattle-rearing, and trade are the duties of a Vaiśyā born of his own nature. And the duty of a Śūdrās, born of his nature, is action consisting of service. 86 Therefore, varnas was determined by virtue (guna) and actions (karma) rather than by birth of any individual. With these virtues, one is also born with three obligations i.e., riṇas (debts) in different āśramas. There are three riṇas viz., guru riṇa, pitra riṇa, and deva riṇa. There are four āśramas viz., brahmacharya, grihastha, sannyāsa, and vānaprastha. According to Vedas, in brahmacharya āśrama by leading a disciplined life of celibacy, obedience and knowledge, he repays the obligation to the sages in form of guru riṇa. In grihastha āśrama, he gets married to a girl and embraces the householder life by performing sacrifices. He repays the obligations to the ancestors and gods in form of pītra riṇa and deva riṇa. "As a result of experience and observation he gradually becomes disillusioned about the glitter of the outer world. He longed for inner peace. As the signs of old age crept in, he

entrusted his worldly duties to his children and retired into the forest (āranya) with his wife. He entered upon the vānaprastha stage and become known as a vānaprasthi, or forest-dweller. He was still, in the technical sense of the term, a householder and, as such, had to perform certain daily sacrifices obligatory for all but the monks. But, as it was not possible for him to procure in the forest all the ingredients for such sacrifices, the Vedas laid down for him symbolic worship. He meditated on the symbolic meaning of the various phases of a sacrifice and thus reaped the fruit of its actual performance.\(^87\) The last phase of lifetime is known as sannyāsa, in this stage the forest dweller renounce the world completely in the search of truth and freedom, and become a sannyāsi or monk to realize the supreme truth all alone. With this, there are certain other ethical principles prescribed by Vedas and Upanishads to lead an ethical life by following four kinds of moral ideals i.e. known as puruṣārtha. It serves as the ends of human pursuit. They spring’s from man’s action viz. dharma, artha, Kama, mokṣa.

The first puruṣārtha is dharma. Dharma is righteousness; it is the law of inner growth and the basis of man’s actions. Dharma is not a sort of duty imposed from outside but, a sense of righteousness, integrity, and honour with which one is born as a result of past actions. In this way every man has

\(^{87}\)Ibid., p.20
his own dharma and consequently reacts to the world in his own unique way until, he attains the supreme dharma of all beings i.e., the realization of the truth. Artha or wealth is a legitimate goal of pursuit in man’s life. Wealth should be earned with right means (dharma) for right purpose, otherwise instead of serving a spiritual purpose, it will aggravate greed and lust for power and ultimately be a cause of misery. It is an important basic need for leading a worldly life to rear the family and for performing rituals, sacrifices and donation. Kama is an urge of sexual organ and sense-pleasure. This is a psycho-physical need for producing offspring to maintain the cycle of family rather than be used as a craving. Therefore, Kama too must be guided by dharma; otherwise it degenerates into voluptuousness. The last puruṣārtha is mokṣa, after fulfilling the material desires in accordance to dharma, there remains a spiritual desire in self of attaining mokṣa or liberation to realize freedom and truth. Its realization is an everlasting bliss. Thus, dharma is the law which maintains human order with cosmic order. It is based on the law of karma. “Karma is an expression of freedom and also of bondage, a means to human betterment and happiness through the favour of the gods or god and also a barrier to the transcendence of the human condition and time.”

It is well-known that Śankara rejects the karam-jñāna-samuccaya as a

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88 Pande, G.C. Life And Thoughts Of Śankarācārya ,etc., p.227
means to highest good. "Hence no action can abide to the Self nor can the Self be purified by an action. Here arise a natural objection; if the Self is not affected by an action then all purifying actions get useless which contradict the scripture? Śankara answers that, what is purified by such ritual is only the embodied, empirical Self i.e., the Self insofar as it is under the power of avidyā. It is only the principle of the ego (ahamkārtra) that is the agent in all cognitions, accomplishes all actions and experiences their results." As, his purpose was not that to renounce all works - even the higher moral virtues because he was not advocating inertia. Though, according to him man cannot able to follow two objective desires as an end of his life. Unless, a man feels averted with the pleasure - giving mundane ends, he cannot able to choose the realization of self as the only supreme end. Śankara quoted few instance to express his idea as follows-

"Light and shade cannot co-exist. Interests in outward activities and interests in the inner self are mutually exclusive. The dualism between the spheres of virtue and prudence is an irreducible dualism whose rival claims it is impossible to adjust." 

Further, idea expressed as-

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89 Ibid. p.226
90 Sastri, Kokileswar. An Introduction To Advaita Philosophy. Delhi, Bhartiya Publishing House, 1979, p.193 (Mu.U. 3.1.4)
“He, who wishes to reach the eastern sea, cannot have the same road that the man who wishes to go to the western sea chooses. The difference between the knowledge (jñāna) and works (karma) is as wide as between a mountain and a mustard-seed.”  

In this manner, it could be inferred that for Śankara the highest good (niḥśreyas) is the only good (śreyas) of man, and it need not to depend on the pursuit of lower good (abhyudaya). Both the two pursuits are contradictory: ‘the pursuit of liberation requires the renunciation of the life of action in search of diverse empirical goods. Action binds, it does not liberate. Only knowledge can liberate. To talk of the synthesis of action, and knowledge is senseless. It is necessary for the person who seeks liberation to renounce all works: ‘mumukshsarvakarma-sannyasa-vidhānāt.’ These views in Brahmaśūtrabhāṣya conceive to formulate liberation. Liberation is not a product, nor a modification, nor is it an improvement or refinement, nor did something to be attain. This reflects that liberation is simply the nature of Brahma, and it is eternal and independent. Śankara expressed as: ‘For one who has been bitten by the serpent of ignorance (ajñāna) the only remedy is the knowledge of Brahma. Of what avail are the Vedas and the sāstras, mantras, and medicines to such a one? A disease does not leave off,”

91 Ibid. p.194 (BG18.55)
if one simply utters the name of the medicine, without taking it; similarly, without direct knowledge one cannot be liberated by the mere utterances of the word Brahman.’ It means that the scriptural study and reasoning is not sufficient condition for realizing Brahman without spiritual discipline, such as discrimination between the real and unreal, dispassion for the temporal, self-control, serenity of the mind, steadfast devotion, and above all meditation. In Brahmasūtrabhāsyā it is explained as, ‘Meditation is the innermost spiritual discipline. It is through this, that illumination is attained. Brahman that is unmanifest becomes manifest when the mind is purged of ignorance in perfect meditation.’ Usually in meditation, the concentration of mind is prepared by practicing to concentrate on an object through a symbol in all spiritual courses. The mind focused on an object and stays steady without flickering, like a flame of light. This steady focus on an object culminates in Samādhi. Samādhi is a state in which the gap between mediatory and the object of meditation get closes, and united with self. In meditation there is tripartite distinction of the mediatory (knower), the object of meditation (the knowable), and the act of meditation (the process of knowledge) while, in Samādhi this distinction get subsides and three of them get fused into an integral consciousness. So in this way, there are two

\[92\]Gambhirananda, Swami. Brahma-Sūtra Bhāsyā, etc., p.628 (B.S.S.B III.2.24)
different states of *Samādhi*: *savikalpa* (with distinction), and *nirvikalpa* (without distinction). *Savikalpa* realizes *sagun Brahman* and *nirvikalpa* realizes *nirguna Brahman*.

In *savikalpa Samadhi*, the distinction between knower (meditator), and known (the object of meditation) is not obliterated. The self is perceived as inseparable, but not an identical with the supreme Self. It is the realization of the adorer’s deepest relationship or union with the adorable one. As, the wave is inseparably connected with the ocean, so is the individual soul with the supreme Self. This is the goal attained by the worshippers of *saguna - Brahman*.

In *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the distinction between the knower and the known is disappeared. The consciousness beyond duality of subject and object prevails by completely destroying veil of *ajñāna*. It is said, ‘The distinction of the knower, knowledge, and the goal of knowledge does not endure in the all-transcendental Self. Being of the nature of bliss that is pure consciousness, it shines of itself’. Thus in *nirvikalpa Samādhi* by realizing the identity of the Self and *Brahman*, the seeker immersed in a limitless ocean of effulgent bliss. Sometime *nirvikalpa Samādhi* is contrasted to the state of deep-sleep (*sūpti*). In *nirvikalpa Samādhi*, the immutable Self

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beyond the ego stays as the witness of undifferentiated consciousness, while in deep-sleep it endures as the witness of unspecified ignorance or inapprehension. So, in either case, the experienced can recall the experience on his return to the physical plane. From sleep a person returns with all his ignorance. His doubts, fears, wrong notions, and tendencies rooted in ajñāna remain just the same. But, from nirvikalpa Samādhi one returns as an illumined person freed from ajñāna. As, declared: ‘when that which is transcendent and immanent is perceived then all knots of the heart cut as under, all doubts dispelled, and all latent impressions of karma eradicated.’

‘With the eradication of ajñāna the mental modification (Brahmatmakara Vṛtti) subsides; then the mind coalesces in Brahman and is suffused with pure consciousness, where the seeker’s ‘I’-consciousness merges. As, the mind of the seeker gets into this modeless state, self-luminous Brahman is unveiled and is directly perceived as ‘I am Brahman’; instantly, the self is realized as indivisible, limitless pure consciousness in nirvikalpa Samādhi. This is illumination (Prājñā), or immediate awareness (aparōksanibhuti) beyond the distinction of the knower and the known, the self and the not-self. In this transcendental experience there is no other; the mind is fused

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94 Gambhirananda, Swami. Munḍaka Upanishad, etc., p.62 (Mu.U. II, 2.8)
with *Brahman*, pure being-consciousness-bliss; the order of phenomena disappears altogether. 95

When the knower’s mind dissolves into this state, the individual consciousness merges in absolute *Brahman*, indivisible Being-consciousness-Bliss (*akhanda saccidananda*). His body drops; he attains immediate liberation. Being released from the body he is not reborn. 96 Then *Brahman* alone shines. Śāṅkara clearly states in *Ajñānabodhini*, ‘On the exhaustion of *prārabdha-karma* (the impression of past karma that are bearing fruits in the present life) the *jīvanmuktas* are not reborn.’ There are fewer seeker of *nirvikalpa Samādhi* who are able to reach the state of liberation at the close of life time and attain liberation (*videha-mukti*), otherwise returns to the plane of consciousness. In exceptional cases, the body stays alive for twenty one days, and then drops like a dry leaf.

Śāṅkara describes the nature of *Brahman* in his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* as follows:

‘*Brahman* is that whose nature is permanent purity, intelligence, and freedom; it transcends speech and mind, does not fall within the category of ‘objects’, and constitutes the inward self of all. Of this *Brahman* our text

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96 Gambhirananda, Swami. *Katha Upanishad*, etc., p.100 (*Ka.U* II:2.1)
denies all plurality of forms; the *Brahman* itself it leaved untouched...... the clause, ‘Not so, not so! Negative not absolutely everything, but everything but *Brahman*.’

This non-dualistic interpretation of reality is again fortified by Śankara when he writes:

‘By negating all the *upādhīs* through the help of scriptural statement ‘it is not this, it is not this’, we realize the oneness of the individual soul and the supreme soul by means of the great *Vedic* aphorism.’

Hence, Śankara’s doctrine of *Atman* can be summarized on the basis of above discussed interrelated aspects. The ontological aspect establishes the three realities viz., *Vyāvahārika* (empirical), *Prātibhāsika* (*māyā* or illusory), *Pārmārthika* (absolute). But Śankara’s elucidation of all these realities leads to establish the truth in form of absolute (*Brahman*) reality. According to him, *Brahman* is the only reality, which could be realizes by removing the veil of ignorance in form of limiting adjuncts (*upādhīs*) and illusion (*māyā*). The epistemological aspect discussed the empirical world by analyzing the theory of knowledge in terms of, ways of knowledge - perception (*pratyākṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda*), analogy (*upamāna*), presumption (*arthāpatti*), and non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*), but

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97 Nikhilananda, Swami. *Ātma-Bodha (Self-Knowledge)*, Chennai, etc., p.156 (AB 29)
finally believes in the Śruti or śabda, as they are authoritative in nature. All these pramāṇas are realized in the different states of consciousness- Viśva (the waking state), Taijasa (dream state), Prājña (suṣupti or the state of dreamless sleep), and Turīya, which is same as Brahman or Ātman. This leads to psychological aspect, where the true nature of Ātman is determined in the state of Turīya. In this state there is no interaction with objects of external world, neither in form of objects nor inform of dreams or impressions. The soul is transcended to its highest truth and realizes Brahman. In order to experience this highest reality one can purify his soul by performing moral deeds and following dharma, but at the same time Śankara develops a doubt that deeds can lead to attachment or bondage with an external world, which further can create obstacles in realizing true nature of Ātman or Brahman. So, he proposes a direct route of realizing the highest that is through meditation, which leads to savikalpa or nirvikalpa samadhi. Samadhi is the state where body sheds like a dry leaves and the self get coalesce with Brahman, which is the perfect state of bliss.

Consequently, it could be deduced that, the perfect state of bliss is the realization of Brahman. Brahman realizes only by the realization of Self, true nature of Self could be realized by removing limiting adjuncts (upādhis) from mind (antahkarṇa) and practicing meditation (dhyān). But Śankara
strongly recommend in his commentaries on *Upanishads* that, by practicing meditation directly one could achieve liberation - where mind get coalesces with *Brahman*. For Śankara the performance of any kind of *karma* leads to bondage, due to which at some places even he did not give an importance to ethical values, because it will create conflicting situation between self and body. This will be cause of duality. But, moral values could be followed to upgrade the Self to make it more pure. Śankara denied the duality and established the non-duality by putting reflection from all the aspect of philosophical wisdom.