PART - II
(CHAPFER - 2 TO 4)
SARKARA AND BRADLEY
ON PROBLEM OF
ONE AND MANY
Chapter - 2

Śaṅkara and Bradley on concept of One

I Introduction: Śaṅkara is very outstanding and important philosopher of the east and Bradley is most subtle and best known English idealist thinker of the west. Both's line of interpretation is apparently same. So we have taken them together.

Here we will try to compare their concept of One regarding our problem of One and Many.

II Nature of Ultimate Reality

(a) Ultimate Reality as One:

According to both of them ultimate reality is one. But to reach this conclusion, first of all they have fixed a criterion of reality and with the help of this criterion they conclude that reality is One. Now question is that what is this criterion of Reality?

i) Criterion of Reality:

Both Śaṅkara and Bradley accept non-
contradiction as the criterion of Reality. But their basic conceptions of non-contradictions are different and they have given different answers to the question, what is the nature of contradictions?

Non-contradiction or the impossibility of being negated or sublated by subsequent experience is for Śaṅkara, the supreme criterion of reality, both in the relative sphere of experience and in the sphere of absolute. From the relative or vyavahārika standpoint, Śaṅkara says that empirical world, waking experience is real and not unreal like the dream, because it is not contradicted by any experience of this world. But ultimately even this waking world with its multiplicity and relations is contradicted by the experience of non-dual Ātman or Brahman and as this experience is not contradicted by any other experience, it may be taken as giving as the ultimate Reality. Thus for Śaṅkara Real is that which is present in all times. It is that whichever was, is and will be. The Real can not be present today and absent tomorrow. Thus for him Real is always in existence, experience
of it is never negated. For Śaṅkara experience of Brahman is never negated so it is only reality. He has accepted this principle stated in the Gītā.

Bradley has also accepted 'non-contradiction' as a criterion of reality. Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself, here is an absolute criterion. The ultimate Reality does not permit self-contradictions. For him this criterion does not require to be proved because it is the presupposition of all proofs and is accepted by us in all our thinking. "The all alleged origin of our criterion is delivered to us by knowledge which rests throughout on its application as an absolute test. And what can be more irrational than to try to prove that a principle is doubtful when the proof through every step rests on its unconditional truth? Thus for him non-contradiction is the essence of the reality. Again he has said that reality should be harmonious.

With the help of this criterion Bradley tries to evaluate all categories and shows that space, time, motion, activity, change, causation and self all are not realities but appearances. Because we can not think about these categories without relational term. "The conclusion to which
I am brought is that a relational way of thought any one that moves by the machinery of terms and relations must give appearance and not truth. The nature of relation being contradictory and unintelligible, the nature of everything that involves some kind of relation must be so. But we cannot point out any object in the world which does not involve some relation, since there is no object we can think of, which has no quality and as we have seen, which can exist without relation. He has examined one after another the nature of space, time, change, causation, activity, things, self and concludes that all these categories with which our intellect or thought interprets the world are found to possess self-contradictory nature. Hence none of these can be real, they must be mere appearances of reality. And he says 'If we can be sure that the inconsistent is unreal, we must logically be just as sure that the reality is consistent.'

Thus we find that both Śeṅkara and Bradley believe in criterion of 'non-contradiction'. But on closer examination it will be revealed that the similarity is just apparent and the differences are worth noting.
According to Śāṅkara non-contradictoriness of ultimate reality means absolute negation or cancellation of all contradictory appearances resulting in the bare self-assertion of the Real, the primordial non-negatable Reality which cannot be negated in any subsequent experiences, for Bradley on the other hand, it is the negation of the self-contradictory appearances and as such resulting in an affirmation of them in new sphere.

Further as Shrīvastava has noted that for Śāṅkara non-contradiction is the sole sufficient and ultimate criterion of reality, while for Bradley harmony is the complementary side of non-contradiction. 10

Again it is noticeable that both are agreeing in holding that Reality must be without relation or non-relational. But their basic conception of relation is different. Whenever Śāṅkara says that Brahman is without relation at that time he means that it is devoid of all empirical, practical relations. Because in view of Śāṅkara Brahman is only reality. There is nothing except Brahman to which it relates itself while when Bradley says
that Absolute must be without relation at that time he is talking about the relation of subject and object which we always find in thinking. Thus Bradley's Absolute is not relationless in sense of Śaṅkara's Brahman. On the other hand, he admits all beings and their relations in the Absolute. Bradley unlike Śaṅkara tries to preserve all relations in it.

Meanwhile we can say that for both of them Reality must be without contradiction. On the basis of this criterion of the reality they reach the conclusion that reality is one. How?

For Śaṅkara it is following from the criterion of reality, that Brahman cannot be contradicted by any other experience so it is only ultimate Reality.

In Brahman Sūtra² bhāṣya, Śaṅkara argues that there cannot possibly be no plurality in the Ātman, for entities to the plural they must have their respective differentiating marks and differentiating
marks can only be found in the realm of names and forms. Hence for Śaṁkara Brahman alone is one and abiding Reality and this according to him very meaning of the world Brahman. Let us therefore see the etymological meaning of the world Brahman.

Etymological meaning of the world Brahman.

The word 'Brahman' is derived from the sanskrit root 'Brih' which means 'to grow' or 'let grow' or 'to be great'. So according to Śaṁkara if we take into consideration and follow the derivation of this term from its root meaning to be great, its connotation consisting of eternal purity etc. gets at once conveyed to us.

The Absolute or the infinite is called Brahman because of its greatness. It is known as Brahman because it is most fully accomplished of the greatest of all.

Thus for Śaṁkara Brahman to be Brahman must be only ontological reality. There is nothing besides Brahman. All that is, Brahman. It has no second to it.
Bradley also like Śaṅkara believes that ultimate reality is only one and that is Absolute. Absolute is not many, there are no independent reals. This oneness of reality follows from the criterion of the reality. If reality is to be harmonious and free from conflict, there cannot be many independent reals. Because if there are many independent reals we have to suppose that they are connected together into a harmonious whole by some relations. But if a relation between any two reals affects their natures, they are mutually influenced and determined and then we can no longer think that the reals are mutually independent. But if a relation does not so affect the reals, then it is external to or outside and then another relation has to be supposed to connect the first relation with either term. In that case, there would be infinite regress and no relation can be established. From this follows that Reality should be one.

Again he says that "Reality must be single because plurality taken as real, contradicts itself. Plurality implies relation and through its relations it unwillingly asserts always a superior unity. To suppose the universe plural is therefore to contradict
oneself and after all to suppose that it is One". He says "If we try to deny that the Absolute is one ... our denial become meaningless or itself turns round into an assertion". In short we can say that for Bradley 'there is but one reality', 'The Reality ... must be One ... there is plainly not anything which can fall outside of the real'. Plurality of Reals is not possible.

Thus impossibility of many reals is proved and along with it the unity of the reals is also established. In a word "bewildering mass of phenomenal diversity must hence somehow have at unity and self-consistent, for it cannot be elsewhere in reality and Reality exclude discord." Thus Reality is one in the sense that it is a positive natural exclusive of discords. Further 'It is One in the sense that it is positive character embraces all difference in an inclusive harmony.'

Both Śāṅkara and Bradley therefore are agree in holding that ultimate reality is one but the resemblance between their views should not, however, be carried too far. For Śāṅkara Brahman is not a harmonious whole but really one without the second. It is Absolute on admitting no divisions or distinctions in it. From the more strict point
of view of Śaṅkara as Dr. Radhakrishnan has rightly observed 'even harmonious truth is not reality. We cannot say that reality is harmony, for the later means a number of parts interrelated in a whole. This distinction of part and whole is empirical one which cannot be the attributes of transcendental reality.\(^7\) For śaṅkara One is without distinction so cannot be harmonious whole. While for Bradley one is harmonious whole of parts Bradley's one is a system or whole of finite facts. It is, no doubt not appearance itself, but all the same it embraces all the appearances and has, in fact no other asset except the appearances themselves. As Thilly has put it "... it is the unity in which all things coming together are transmuted in which they are changed all alike, though not changed equally... Errors, ugliness and evil are transmuted and absorbed in it. They are all owned by and all essentially contributed to the wealth of the Absolute.\(^8\)

iii) Negative-Positive description of Reality

Again for Śaṅkara Brahman is not object of thought so it cannot be defined in the terms of any categories. It can only be expressed
negatively in terms of what it is not. We can compare this view of Śāṅkara with the similar position maintained by St. Augustine. 'we can know what God is not but not what he is.' Now question is why did Śāṅkara believe that Brahman can always described in negative terms?

iv) Śāṅkara's reason for negative description

The negative description of Brahman is not the result of Śāṅkara's caprice of whim. It has some certain logical difficulties in the attempt to describe Brahman in positive terms. These are the difficulties that make Śāṅkara stick to the negative description of Brahman.

The logical difficulties are as following:

(1) To describe a thing is to relate it with some other things that itself. In the case of Brahman there is nothing besides it to relate it with anything else.

(2) Further, description pre-supposes some measure in terms of with we describe a thing. Brahman is the measure of all thing. We cannot measure the measure. We can not light the candle to see the sun.
Again in a memorable passage of the Brhadāraṇyaka describes the difficulties "For where there is duality as it were, there one smells another, there one speaks to another, there one thinks of another, there one understands another ... "where verily, everything has become the self, then by what and when should one smell, then by what and whom should one see then by what and whom should one hear, then by what and whom should one speak, then by what and whom should one understand?"... "By what should one know that by which all this is known? By what, my dear, should one know the knower 33. From all these it follows that Brahma as a one and basis of all things, can not be described positively but only as 'not this' 'as not this' means 'Neti' 'Neti'.

But that does not mean that it does not exist. It is not non-existing. It can be known indirectly and realised directly through spiritual experience. The negative description of Brahma has irritated the critics of Śaṅkara at home and abroad. They equate Śaṅkara's Brahma with absolute non-existence. They declare with Hegel and the Nyāya School that pure being is no being at all. Śaṅkara knew his
critics well in advance. He has remarked in his commentary on the Chhāndogya\textsuperscript{34} that Brahman which as bereft of Space, time, quality, genus, fruit etc. and of all differences is the secondless Reality. It appears as absolute nothingness to men of feable intellect (manda buddhi). Sāmkara's Brahman is self-luminous unconditioned existence, unexcellable bliss. It is real of all reals.

We can say that Bradley has also accepted the method of negative description in his philosophy. He starts his search for reality with the questions that Is cause reality? Is space reality? Is self reality? etc. And always he answers that this is not reality, that is not reality, this means that Bradley also like Sāmkara accepts the method of negative description.

But basic difference between them is that Sāmkara clearly states that Brahman cannot be known by the instrument of knowledge and after this clear statement he describes the nature of One, for our understanding. Whereas Bradley has not said this clearly but we have been able to find out thanks to our way of comparison that he has also accepted the method of negative description.
Another difference is that though Samkara believes that we cannot know Brahman directly yet for him, we directly realised this one reality, while Bradley positively describes the nature of one, still he believes that we cannot fully know this ultimate reality.

V) **Knowability of Reality**

Samkara emphasizes on the knowledge or experience of Brahman, which is the very goal of life. The knowledge of Brahman is the highest idea of human beings. The greatest good of man, Samkara says, lies in the realization of One, the highest self and nowhere else. Thus Samkara is perfectly certain about the knowledge-realization of One.

Whereas with respect to Bradley we can say that for him we cannot know Absolute. He confesses that the Absolute "is an experience of which, as such, we have no direct knowledge." For him to know means to think and he proves that thought is relational and relational way of thinking cannot reach the reality, "the whole relational model of thinking and in the end all modes of thinking are one way or another relational cannot claim to attain knowledge of Reality."

Hence for Bradley we have no direct knowledge
of the Absolute. In addition to this he says we can get general ideas of its main features and this is the only kind of knowledge we possibly can have of the Absolute. He says that in mere feeling or immediate presentation we have the experience of a whole, "Reality... .... is a unity to whose nature only the undifferentiated unity of feeling give any clue."

Thus for Bradley we cannot get detail knowledge of Absolute. In this context we can say that this complete inability to understand the Absolute in detail is no good ground for our deding to entertain it.

Further according to Bradley, immediacy of the Absolute is abstractly intelligible but never factually attainable by human experience. "we never have", he tells us, "or are, a state which is the perfect unity of all aspects." Whereas Sāṅkara holds that the factual experience of One Brahman is attainable by anyone who submits himself to the requisite forfold discipline, the Śādhanā-catustaya as it has been called by him. In affirming the possibility of the
knowledge of Brahman, Śamkara takes his stand on three things (i) śrutī texts (ii) Rational argumentation (yukti), (iii) the testimony of the knowers of the Brahman.

(b) Ultimate Reality as sat, cit and ānanda.

For Śamkara Brahman is saccidānandā Svarūpa sat, cit and ananda are the svarūpalakṣaṇa of the Brahman. It is sat meaning that it is not asat. It is real having authentic. It is real and yet devoid of the nature of the world. Brahman alone is 'exists' which that its manner of being is not comparable to the supposed existents of anything else.

Brahman is not barely existence. It is intelligence as well. Brahman is consciousness. It is self-effulgent by its shine everything shines.

Again Brahman is not only the pure intelligence which is the witness consciousness of this world drama. It is also unexcellable bliss. "Thus which is of the nature of the impartite essence is the supreme bliss of that
all other beings enjoy but a fraction. The bliss of Brahman as contrasted with material happiness is unsurpassable.

Thus it follows from the above discussion that for Śaṅkara Brahman is sat, cit, ananda-svarupa. Here we must note that these sat, cit, ananda are neither parts of Brahman nor its properties; sat, cit, ananda constitute the very nature of Brahman. They are not different from Brahman.

Now question is that can we call Bradley's Absolute as sat, cit and ananda? In one sense Bradley's One is sat because it has existence and also cit because for him Absolute is experience means consciousness of itself and we can say it is also ananda because he has stated that "There must be... a balance of pleasure." But in the strict sense of term it is not sat, cit, ananda like Śaṅkara's Brahman. Because Bradley's aim for the description of reality is not to reveal the nature of the Absolute reality but on the contrary in his description of Absolute he emphasizes more on the denying the ultimate reality to appearances
and show appearances cannot be real.

Whereas Śāṅkara’s negative description is also revealing the positive characteristics of the ultimate reality. So with respect to Śāṅkara we can say that his reality is sat, cit ānānd svārūpa. For Bradley, we would say that he also may be considered Reality as saccidananda but he has never tried to describe Absolute in the terms of saccidananda, because he has very much concerned to negate the reality of the appearances.

(c) Reality as supra-Personal:

According to Śāṅkara and Bradley one is not personal but for Śāṅkara One is impersonal while for Bradley it is supra personal.

For Śāṅkara Brahman is impersonal reality since personality implies distinction between self and not self. Brahman is devoid of all differences, all distinctions so he must be impersonal reality.

Bradley also states that Absolute is neither self-conscious spirit, nor a person.
Selfhood and person are essentially marks of finitude. The self as pitted against not-self can not be Real, that is, the all inclusive whole, but only a part of aspect of it. Personality implies self-hood and will and progress in time—all marks of imperfection Bradley says therefore "... for me person is finite or is meaning less" and therefore "assuredly the Absolute is not merely personal. It is not personal, because it is personal and more. It is, in a word super-personal".

Thus according to both of them personality is the mark of finitude. So One is not personal. For Śaṅkara it is impersonal, while for Bradley it is supera-personal. And this supreme personality is not be mark of finitude In this respect Lotz has rightly noted that "The supreme personality is perfect whereas finite personalities never are."

(d) **Reality as Perfect being:**

As in the opinion of the Śaṅkara so also in the opinion of Bradley Ultimate reality is perfect being.

For Śaṅkara Brahman is the only being
which is real and so it is beyond all
imperfections and totally perfect. Bradley's
opinion is as same. Absolute is beyond any
type of contradictions. So it is above all
imperfections. There can not be any imperfections
of any kind in it. In every sense it is perfect, says Bradley.

It follows from this that Reality as
perfect being must be self complete.

Bradley too says that Absolute is self-
complete, self-developed, reality. He makes no
use of Hegelian principle of self-development of
the Absolute through time and carries on a vigorous
polemic against the reality of time as such "The
Absolute he repeatedly mentioned, is timeless has
in itself no history or progress. Nothing perfect,
nothing genuinely real can move. The absolute has
seasons but all at once bears its leaves, fruit
and blossoms". Hence for Bradley One is self
complete reality. It is the not developing reality.

Samkara's thought is same as Bradley. His
Brahman is also self-complete perfect being.

(e) Reality as Eternal being:

According to both Samkara and Bradley One
is not created being but eternal being.

Śaṅkara says that Brahman is not created being because the creation of it, is not reasonably sustainable.

If we consider that Brahman is created being then question arises that from which it comes into being? Brahman is purely sat. It is not possible that it (Brahman), may come into being from another such purely 'sat' entity, because in the absence of some speciality a relationship such as between a cause and its modification, is not reasonably sustainable. Nor can it (Brahman) come into being from any particular special 'sat' in as much as it is contrary to what is actually observed, because the particular is derived from the general as for example a pot comes from clay etc. and never the general from particular. Nor can Brahman come into being from 'nothingness (A sat) because nothingness is devoid of the self (Nirātmaka). Besides the scriptures themselves have taken exception by the passage "How can 'sat' come into existence from nothingness?" Another passage from
the scriptures rules out any such creation of Brahman, thus Brahman is the cause, the Lord of the sense-organs (Jiva-self). He has no creator and nobody is his Lord. Hence we can say that according to Sāṅkara Brahman is eternal being. A being which is real cannot be created being.

We can say that Bradley also considers Absolute as eternal being, although he has not explicitly says.

For him Absolute is only ultimate reality. There is nothing real except Absolute to which Absolute comes into existence. He nowhere maintains that Absolute is created from this or that. We can infer from this that he too believes like Sāṅkara that One is eternal:

(f) Reality as devoid of all differences:

If has been shown by the Sāṅkara that Brahman is devoid of all differences, homogeneous, heterogeneous and internal. There is not other reality similar to it from which it may differ. There is no other reality dissimilar to it, from which it may differ. There are no other realities within it, which differ from each other, as branches, leaves, flowers and fruits differ from one another in a tree. Brahman is absolutely undifferentiated
Whereas with reference to Bradley, we can say that his Absolute is devoid of heterogeneous and homogeneous differences but it possesses internal difference. Because for him Absolute is a whole which includes all appearances in it.

Thus here we find difference between Śaṅkara and Bradley.

(g) Reality as inactive being:

For Śaṅkara Brahman in its essential nature cannot be an agent or doer. In the right sense of the term, an agent or doer must be a self-conscious personal being, but Brahman as such as we have seen, is not a personal. It is beyond all distinctions and determinations, perfectly immutable and actionless. Accordingly it can not said to be an agent in any sense whatever. Śaṅkara has explicitly stated that in and by itself the true self or Brahman neither acts nor makes other act.

Whereas Bradley has not attempted to describe the Absolute in terms of activeness or inactiveness.

(h) Ultimate Reality as individual:

Bradley says that Reality is all-inclusive
whole and so individual. Bradley distinguishes individuality from personality. For him individuality carries the idea of a unity of distinction, something which includes, harmonizes and unifies many contents. Perfect individuality implies perfect harmony and unity. To Bradley Absolute is harmonious whole, unity, so perfect individuality belongs only to the Absolute. He adds that individuality is the symbol of perfection and uniqueness.

Hence for Bradley Absolute is individual.  

Can we say Śaṅkara’s Brahman is individual? Our answer is 'No'. In Bradley's sense of the term individuality, Śaṅkara's Brahman cannot be individual because Brahman is not harmonious whole. For Śaṅkara Brahman is only real being. There is nothing except Brahman whom he unifies or harmonizes.

(i) Ultimate Reality as concrete Reality:

For Bradley, as D.M. Datta has noted Absolute is concrete universal, that is, a universal which is not obtained by merely
abstracting intellectually what is common among different things, but a universal which includes all diversities of concrete existence within itself. Reality as the concrete all inclusive whole is not therefore to be confuse with the abstract thing-in-itself which does not include phenomena but excludes them completely. 57

While Śaṅkara's Brahman can not be concrete reality. It is not like Bradley's One includes all diversities of the concrete existence. Because for him there is nothing except Brahman. There are no diversities of the concrete existence. Only Brahman exists. So His Brahman can not be concrete like the Absolute of Bradley.

(j) Reality as Sentient Experience:

As to the matter which fills up the outline of the Absolute chalked out above, Bradley holds that it must be made up of the very stuff of which every given or immediately present fact is composed, namely experience.
As to the proof that what is given is experience or that experience constitutes existence, Bradley says, "Find any piece of existence, take up anything that any one could possibly call a fact, or could in any sense assert to have being and then judge if it does not consist in sentient experience. Try to discover any sense in which you can still continue to speak of it, when all perception and feeling have been remove, or point out any fragment of its matter, any aspect of its being, which is not derived from and is not still relative to this source. When the experiment is made strictly, I can myself conceive of nothing else than the experienced ... I am driven to the conclusion that for me experience is the same as reality." Bradley says, "Sentient experience, in short is reality, and what is not this is not real... there is no being or fact outside of what which is commonly called psychological existence. The Absolute... is one system and its content are nothing but Sentient experience."
The whole is one experience. 60

But this position of Bradley should not be confused with subjective idealism which tries to reduce all objects to the percipient subject. The distinction between subject and object is the result of our mental abstraction, our thought splits up the concrete whole of experience into its fragmentary aspects like subject and object. As such the subject, according to Bradley, is as much a fictitious appearance as the object. We do not find these fragments in immediate experience. Experience for Bradley means immediate experience, whereas, yet there is no distinction of subject and object. "What we discover rather is a whole in which distinctions can be made, but in which division do not exist." 61 It is such experience that Bradley means when he urges "that reality is sentient experience." Here we must clarify a point that when we say reality is experience at that time it does not mean 'my experience.' 62 According to Ward, experience implies an ego which has the experience. Bradley refutes the doctrine of Ward. For Bradley the absolute reality
is experience, and a further question whether the Absolute is Mind or a Person which has this experience, is perhaps not important. That Reality is one system which contains in itself all experience, and again, that this system itself is experience. But this unity of all experiences, if itself not experience, would be meaningless, says Bradley. In short we can say that for Bradley Reality is One, and it is experience. It is not merely my experience.

We can say that Śaṅkara's Brahman is also in a sense sentient experience because for him too One is conscious. He accepts consciousness as the swarūpalakṣaṇa of the Brahman.

Ultimate Reality as distinct from God of Religion:

From first sight Bradley and Śaṅkara's concept's of God and Absolute seem similar. According to both of them Absolute is different from God. But if we scrutinise the system we find difference between them.

For Bradley in every respect God is different from Absolute. There is sharp contrast.
between God and the Absolute and therefore between religion and metaphysic and between practical and ultimate truth in the philosophy of Bradley.

To him the Absolute is not God. The Absolute is related to nothing because all relation implies limitation and therefore imperfection. In relation the finite will of men stand in practical relation to God as in worship and prayer. Therefore religion, though it likes to regard its object of worship as perfect being, makes its God imperfect by the very relation of the finite and infinite will which it involves. It will make it, God a personal being in so far as He by His very relation to finite wills, will be a self-conscious centre and do His best towards ensuring joy, peace and added strength to finite wills with limited knowledge and power. Thus God will be a truth to man but only of lower degree and fall short of the ultimate truth, which is the Absolute without any limitation. Hence, the God of religion is a lower category as it involves want of the comprehensiveness of the whole of experience which
is Truth. As Bradley put it: For, if God is perfect, we saw that religion must contain inconsistency, and it was by seeking consistency that we were driven to a limited God\(^67\) and this finite limited God cannot be identical with Absolute.

Thus God as an object of worship must be distinct from the worshipper, hence he is only an aspect of it and that must mean, but an appearance of the Absolute.\(^68\) This God is not identical with the Absolute because "If you identify the Absolute with the God that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God becomes finite factor in the whole God is a appearance among other appearances though of high level."

While for Śaṁkara from vyavāhārika viewpoint God whom he calls Saguna Brahman is different from Brahman whom he calls Niguna Brahman. But from ultimately point of view, God is as same as Absolute. Śaṁkara defines God as 'Brahman, limited by the name - form limiting adjuncts (upādhi) created by avidyā becomes God, just as the universal space is limited by
the upādhi as pot etc. Thus Brahman is God limited by māyā.

For him God is not appearance of Brahman. God is Brahman in its conditional of aparadhika aspect. God-Īśvara is the personal aspects of the impersonal Brahman. Īśvara is not different from Brahman. He accepts two forms of a reality, the one is estoric, ultimate or real and the other exoteric, or phenomenal. For he has openly declared that Brahman is apprehended under two forms, in the first place as qualified by limiting conditions owing to the multiform of the evolution of name and form, in the second place as being the opposite of this, i.e. free from all limiting conditions whatever. But this should not mislead us to think that he believed in two really different Brahman or that by recognizing two forms of Brahman he contradicted his belief in one ultimate Reality. Saṅkara has in fact, plainly told us that it is one and the same Brahman which has been propounded in two different ways in one way as being 'connected with limiting conditions and forming an object
of devotion and in the other as being free from the connexion with such conditions and constituting an object of knowledge. Speaking about Śaṅkara's view in this connection, Prof. Maxmuller has rightly observed that, "It was the highest aim of the ancient vedanta philosophers to show that what we might call the exoteric. Brahman was substantially the same as the estoric. that there was in reality and there could be one Brahman only, not two."

In short for Śaṅkara Īśvara is only empirically different from Brahman but not numerically or ontologically different from Brahman.

Here we find disimilarity between Śaṅkara and Bradley. For Śaṅkara God is not ontologically different from Brahman and God is not a appearance of Brahman while for Bradley God is different from Absolute. It is a appearance of the Absolute. Bradley does not believe like Śaṅkara that God is a aspect of the Absolute.

Further Śaṅkara claims cosmic importance to the God. His God is the cosmic subject with the world as his object. The relative reality
end objectivity of the world are due to him. Its (worlds) regularity and law-abiding nature are due to him. He is supreme from the cosmic end. We can never realise Brahman by denying and eschewing God. Only by realising and transcending him, we can have Brahman realisation. God is necessary step in the Advaita discipline for Brahman realisation while Bradley has not claimed such a status or importance to his God though he believes that God's personality is relatively true and it has partial value in so far it satisfies the popular religious consciousness."

Thus Śaṅkara’s distinction of Sagunā Brahman-God from the Nirguna Brahman - Absolute stands in sharp contrasts to Bradley's distinction of God from the Absolute in two importance respect.

In the first place, for Bradley God is an appearance within the Absolute, a finite elements within the whole. For Śaṅkara Isvara is Brahman in Its conditioned or sopādhika aspect. God is a conditioned aspect of reality.
Secondly while Bradley dismisses God as self-contradictory appearance and as an appearance among appearances, Śaṅkara's God has a unique cosmic significance as the supreme ruler and controller of the universe conditioned by māyā or to the appearance of a greater and more ultimate being.