

**Vedanta:
The Only Consummate
Spiritual Science**

Satchidaananda Vaak-Jyoti Series

VIII



SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI

By D. B. GANGOLLI

**ADHYATMA PRAKASHA KARAYALAYA
BANGALORE**

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- 1. The Scientific Approach Of Advaita Vedanta**
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- 3. The Magic Jewel Of Intuition**
- 4. The Relevance Of Vedanta In This Modern Age Of Civilization**
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- 6. The Reality Beyond All Empirical Dealings**
- 7. Deliberation On The Ultimate Reality Culminating In Intuitive Experience**
- 8. Brahmaidya Or Knowledge Of The Ultimate Reality**
- 9. The Quintessence of Pristine Pure Vedanta**
- 10. The Philosophical Science of Vedanta**

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FOREWORD

This is the eighth and final number of a series of books under the head — 'Satchidaananda Vaak-Jyoti Series' or 'The Enlightening Words of Satchidaananda'. All these booklets are free transliterations of Kannada books which contain the enlightening and immortal teachings of Shri Satchidaanandendra Saraswati Swamiji, of revered memory, and are meant for those readers who do not have the facility and advantage of reading and understanding his original books in the Kannada language. As the title of this book implies, it champions the cause of '*Vedantic Spiritual Science*' as the acme of all 'Knowledge' and human pursuits in a convincing, rational manner.

This small plan of publishing these 'gems of spiritual literature' — unrivalled in their esoteric import and teachings of the highest order — based on the pristine pure original '*Bhaashyas*' of Adi Shankara — was first mooted by Shri D. B. Gangolli, a staunch devotee and follower of Swamiji. He had brought out the first of the series entitled — 'The Relevance of Vedanta in This Modern Age of Civilization' — and followed it up with other numbers like 'A Broad Outline of Vedanta', 'The Reality Beyond All Empirical Dealings', 'Deliberation on the Ultimate Reality Culminating in Intuitive Experience', 'Brahmavidya or The Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality', 'The Quintessence of Pristine Pure Vedanta' and 'The Philosophical Science of Vedanta' in that order. Barring the first number, for which Subharam Trust (Regd.) had provided munificent financial aid, all the other seven booklets have been entirely financed by Shri Gangolli himself and he has generously made over all the copy rights of all these books to the Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Thyagarajanagar, Bangalore - 28.

It is an irony of our times that even that great Acharya's immaculate teachings of '*Aatma Vidya*' (Self-Knowledge), purely based on the strength of the *Upanishadic* statements, their veracity based on Intuitive ratiocination (called *Anubhavaanga Tarka*) and finally on the strength of the culmination or consummation of all those teachings in one's own Intuitive experience here and now, have been distorted beyond recognition and redemption by many post-Shankara commentators. These booklets are cleansed of those misleading accretions and are sure to help the discerning seeker of the Ultimate Reality of *Atman* in a profound manner. The well-planned sequential order of these booklets is based on a spiritual theme so as to enable the student to surmount many a stumbling block that he might encounter on his path to spiritual progress.

We have great pleasure in publishing this book, the last of the series, under the auspices of Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Thyagarajanagar, Bangalore -28 and are thankful to its author, Shri D. B. Gangolli. We hope all true seekers will read these books and take full advantage of this opportunity.

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VEDANTA: THE ONLY CONSUMMATE SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

1. PHYSICAL (EMPIRICAL) SCIENCES AND VEDANTA

Vedanta is the name given to those textual portions of the *Vedas* (which are said to be very ancient religious texts in the whole world) which contain the *Upanishads* as well as to the science of deliberation on the Spiritual Reality that is implicitly expounded in those *Upanishads* utilizing a traditional methodology so as to help the true adherents and seekers to intuitively experience that Ultimate Reality called *Brahman* or *Atman*. In this sense of the word '*Upanishad*' the commentators use the word '*Vedantas*' in the plural synonymously to mean the '*Upanishads*'. For example, Shri Shankaraacharya has written: '*Yathaa Chaayamarthaha Sarveshaam Vedaantaanaam Tathaa Vayamasyaam Shaareeraka Meemaamsaayaam Pradarshayishyaamaha*', meaning — 'The fact that this alone is the meaning (purport) of all *Vedantas* we will depict in this *Shaareeraka Meemaamsa (Brahma) Sootras*.' Is there any need of this *Vedanta Shaastra* (spiritual science) to the modern man at all? The modern civilized man of the present Nuclear Age has enhanced and evolved his intellectual knowledge immensely in all its various aspects and in all walks of life; he has changed his life style on the basis and strength of the multifarious and marvellous discoveries of the physical sciences and has succeeded in acquiring the superhuman excellence of directly perceiving and examining the distant stars, planets, meteors, galaxies, quasars and black holes millions of light years away. To do so he has designed inter-stellar satellites, radio telescopes, ultra-sonic rays and such other highly sophisticated and sensitive instruments. He knows now a very expansive universe in which millions of solar systems like ours are photographed and this unending quest to find more and more galaxies and 'other-worlds' will continue for decades to come. It being so, what benefit can accrue possibly from this *Vedanta Shaastra*? What help can the whole mass of wild imaginations and bizarre concepts formulated by some *Rishis* or sages (of ancient times) sitting at a secluded place render to the present-day intelligent human being who has reached dizzy heights of knowledge both in the macrocosmic cosmological sciences and the microscopic sub-atomic science?

This question we have raised on behalf of many Westerners whom the people all over the world are believing to be far too advanced in civilization and scientific knowledge as well as on behalf of all the Westernized Indians who firmly believe that acceptance and adoption of such a Western way of life and culture alone is propitious and conducive to their own prosperity. Many

communities and large sections of societies in countries of the Eastern Hemisphere have already switched over to the Western European culture and have in the process hastily discarded their own native and ancient customs and conventions; many are still in the transient stage. Although in India there still remains a large section of educated people who have still retained the time-honoured and proven cultural heritage, the less discriminative people, having come under the baneful influence of the Western culture during the long 300-year British Rule, are giving up their native culture and creed. Present generations of families who preserved and nurtured sublime human values and virtues like contentment, tolerance, selflessness, austerity, charity, humanitarian service, faith in the existence of other worlds, rebirth etc. have very recently been deeming that the old and obsolete customs and conventions of our country have, in fact, become a hindrance to their progress and are retrogressive in the wake of our political Independence and its resultant new-found awareness.

True, by association with the Western Civilization and by an intimate exchange and exposure to the various modern ideologies and concepts facilitated by the speedy systems of communication and information like the radio, TV etc. our nation as a whole has entered the modern science era. It is a leading 'Developing Country' entertaining high expectations for immense and immediate materialistic progress. It is also true that India has become politically and economically strong and the love for freedom and independence among its people is fast increasing. As an off-shoot of this political awareness and economic progress the princely rule was exterminated and the nation embraced and adopted a democratic system of political rule. Policies like rule by Parliament, adoption of a National Constitution, formulation of new viable statutory laws for equitable justice and a sound judiciary system of administration, elections, multi-party political system, protocol, Armed Services for the effective defence of the country etc. etc. have enriched the very political and social fabrics of our nation. In keeping pace with other leading 'Developed' countries of the world in commerce, transport and communication our country has launched many high-tech projects, has built huge complicated machinery, big factories, railways, dams, electricity grids and such other 'artefacts of the Demon of Modernity', so to speak. In fact, we Indians today pride on our all-round economic prosperity as the 'leading Developing country.'

The post-Independence political leaders, particularly in post-Gandhian era, decided, though unwisely, to promulgate a government law to ban dissemination of religious and moral tenets in all educational institutions — apparently to pursue a policy of secularism treating all religions and creeds on an equal footing. As a consequence of it, and inevitably too, many old sentimental and superstitious religious beliefs have disappeared into thin air; quite understandably too, ours is fast becoming a casteless society. In

consonance with such 'progressive and modern outlook' the various forms of attire and etiquette in our heterodox and heterogeneous societies are also fast changing. Inter-caste and inter-race marriages have become the fashion of the times; consequently, laws pertaining to such marriages, divorces, alimony, succession and such other related topics have been streamlined and sophisticated. Tourism and travel facilities have taken big strides, though the rush of tourists, travellers and commuters in big cities is becoming increasingly difficult to cope with. Air travel has increased tremendously despite frequent air crashes and mishaps. As never before a large number of Indians go abroad to all parts of the world every now and then in search of new ideas, technical know-how, new ideologies, new fashions, pleasures and trends in affluent living styles. International communication and information systems and media like newspapers, radio, TV net-works etc. have made it possible to know anything happening in any corner of the world within minutes of an event. Specialization in various topics and subjects is being promoted by leading newspapers and magazines to create an artificial appetite for new ideas and concepts. Public opinion and thinking is being steadily influenced and indoctrinated by speeches and interviews of political leaders and other dignitaries and financial magnets regularly published by the news media. To sum up, India is surely no longer a 'backward poor nation', but, on the other hand, is fast becoming a leading prosperous country. We Indians today boast of our high prestige in the comity of nations and have put on the garb of modernity and Western culture.

This is one facet of the scenario that is apparent or evident to the common observer; let us turn our attention towards another facet. In India the population is increasing unabated, giving rise to such stupendous problems that politicians, sociologists, economists and ecologists, all alike, are at sixes and sevens to solve them, nay even to detect and understand their causes. Multitudes of educated youths are unemployed and are induced to take to umpteen unsocial evils and terrorist activities; those few who have somehow managed to find employment are agitating constantly to get their earnings and emoluments enhanced, unable to meet the ever-increasing needs and necessities of life vis-a-vis their high living standards. But the real value of the rupee is fast dwindling and many man-made scarcities are steadily pushing the costs of everyday commodities. Paradoxically, the life styles and social habits of the educated masses is becoming increasingly affluent, what with the multiplying new wants and artificial needs created by the blaring advertisements on TV and cinema screens. The faulty planning by our economists and half-baked politicians have ushered in a highly inflationary economy to add to our predicament. The gaping disparity between the rich and the poor, between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is ever widening. While political activities are going on at hectic pace, people at large are not at all happy with the on-goings in the country. Mental peace seems to be the first and the worst casualty of all this post-Independence mess.

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While the nation is fast moving towards a casteless, secular (religionless) society, human values have suffered a lethal blow and fissiparous tendencies encouraging secessionist and parochial movements, nepotism and such other dissipative political activities have become the order of the day. While the number of schools and colleges is increasing with geometrical progression, the standard of education, understanding and ethics is pitifully and horrifyingly declining. Parvenus abound in political sphere pursuing selfish motives and corrupt practices and principles to add to the turmoil and disharmony in the country; while they preach vociferously, with impunity, ethics and morals from any forum they can grab, they themselves do not practise them nor do they possess a sterling character to be honest in that important sphere. As a result, they have set a bad precedent to their subordinates and other executive officers in the Government to practise favouritism, nepotism and corruption without any fear of being punished. No wonder then that this contagion of immorality and corruption has spread to all other spheres and walks of life in general and the common people feel insecure and unhappy. Public demonstrations, riots and terrorism, which are symptoms of public dissatisfaction and discontent, have become commonplace events. In the field of medicine astounding discoveries have led to preventive measures being taken by big social institutions as well as governmental agencies to eradicate many dreadful diseases and epidemics with the result the general health and longevity of people have improved or increased, but, on the other hand, newer and baneful diseases, difficult even to be diagnosed, have taken root in our country. A crucial and momentous decision to divide the country into more viable units on linguistic basis was taken soon after attaining Independence, but that very decision seems to have brought about in its wake a ruinous division among various language groups and the so-called linguistic states. National integration has remained only in name and a pronounced lack of patriotism among the citizens is evident.

However, there is a streak of light and hope seen on the spiritual firmament with many educated people, with a rational and scientific bent of mind and temper as also the new awareness rampant in all cultured societies over the world, taking an increasing and abiding interest in religious values and philosophical dissertations. Why, science itself, after a blissful reign of nearly 500 years, has gone one full circle to come back to the same old problems and questions which our ancient forbears were seized of from time immemorial. Our ancient seers and sages had, after having exhausted the whole of the external world in acquiring whatever benign knowledge they could, turned their full attention towards the *internal world of man* and had pursued it to its fruition. In the process they had found out the *summum bonum* of life, enriched their lives with human virtues, morals and ethics and had left a lofty legacy in the form of scriptures and spiritual works. There is today an ever increasing section of people who do not at all wish to be gullible while studying the ancient scriptures or mythological texts. They opine that whatever

religious faith one may follow arduously but it becomes absolutely necessary for him to discern that his faith should be in consonance with scientific knowledge and reason. In other words, the modern educated man with his incisive scientific temper would like to put every iota of knowledge to a severe litmus test, so to speak, before he accepts it or gets convinced of its veracity. He argues that the fact that the various physical and empirical sciences have perceptibly and immensely helped the suffering humanity all over the world cannot be ignored or refuted; but he admits, at the same time, that philosophers and sages even today are in their own exclusive and extra-ordinary way contributing greatly to the welfare and progress of society by dint of their own examples by practising human excellences. As a *via media*, these people with a profound sense of rationalism not opposed to any person pursuing a religious faith opine that irrespective of the faith that any human being pursues at any time and in any region it should never be allowed to devolve and degenerate into blind faith and superstitious beliefs, but, on the other hand, all religious teachings, be they ancient or modern, must per force be in consonance with reason and scientific physical laws or theories. Paul Davies, world-famous physicist, cryptically puts it in his recent book, 'Superforce', — 'The penetration of physics by advanced mathematics means that most theoretical work ends up as a maze of incomprehensible symbols. Cryptic mathematics, coupled with the strong mystical flavour of the new physics, imbues the subject with a quasi-religious appeal, the professional physicists playing the role of high priests. Undoubtedly, this has a lot to do with the current popularity of the new physics among people of a religious or philosophical persuasion. Yet it must always be remembered that physics is a very practical subject, and in spite of the Alice-in-Wonderland flavour of some of the concepts, much of modern technology depends upon our present understanding of these abstract ideas.'

Thus, it becomes quite relevant and necessary for us to consider the basic and burning question — "How much and how far is this modern and scientific temper or approach acceptable to and is in consonance with *Vedantic* philosophy (popularly known as '*Sanaatana Vaidika Dharma*', meaning — Eternal Religious Faith) — which is more comprehensive, consummate and eternal?" One great misconception and an incessant obsession with scientists, in general, and particle physicists or astrophysicists, in particular, is that their theories and knowledge as a whole are ultimate, absolute and inviolable. Even in our workaday world the psyche plays a subtler and more important role and therefore is given more value and credence. No wonder then modern psychology has taken big strides and has been trying its utmost to grapple with topics concerning Consciousness and supramental experiences. In fact, much of modern science takes recourse to Intuition more than intellectual understanding or comprehension. However, all physical scientists and psychologists should bear in mind that *Vedanta*, unlike other schools of philosophy, has never evaded any scientific queries nor neglected them. In truth, *Vedanta*

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as a highly developed spiritual science *par excellence* has itself adopted a superlative, comprehensive methodology which comprehends, assimilates and finally transcends all psychic concepts to culminate in Intuitive experience, at once immediate and abstract beyond any description or delineation.

It is common knowledge now that during the Middle Ages when science was slowly but steadily getting developed and old religious beliefs with regard to cosmology, the order of creation, infinite universe etc. were being proved to be wrong, unscientific and quite opposed to the Christian tenets as propounded in the Bible, which was the canonical text of the Church, many a scientist or revolutionist was chastised and excommunicated. In fact, Giordano Bruno was burned by the Church authorities for suggesting that there was an infinity of worlds. Such atrocities were perpetrated in the name of religious faith, but in due course when the scientific inventions and discoveries proved these age-old religious beliefs to be false and untenable, empirical sciences ruled the roast, and even today the intelligentsia and the elitist society shun, pooh-pooh and show indifference to religion and philosophy alike. In fact, Western culture as a whole projects and professes a rank materialistic outlook on life and seems to be predominantly averse to religious faith of any hue or milieu, and unless and until any philosopher can show tangibly that his brand of philosophy is in total consonance with present scientific theories or models the Westerner refuses to be convinced. Just as in the West many people thought that the Christian religion was opposed to scientific knowledge and started ignoring it, similarly in India the majority of the educated masses have begun to discard religious teachings in favour of a scientific temper and a materialistic approach to all problems of life.

All said and done, in India which is fundamentally spiritual in its culture and ancient heritage, handed down to present generations through a proven system of *Guru-Shishya Parampara* (an unbroken lineage of preceptor-pupil pedagogic system), the native *Rishis* and *Munis*, who were extremely ascetic in their bent of mind and were totally free from all worldly attachments (and thereby were unselfish and humanitarian in their outlook), spent the entire life, as it were, in solitude in the forests eating bulbous roots and fruits, wearing clothes or body coverings made out of plant fibres and continually contemplating on spiritual matters and realities. These divinely saints without fear or favour formulated and wrote authoritative and scientific treatises on subjects ranging from astrology, astronomy, mathematics, music, dance, drama, sculpture, painting, medicine, mysticism, psychic healing etc. to more empirical sciences like economics, political science and morals, agriculture, animal husbandry etc. etc. to render selfless humanitarian service. Even today in these days of advanced science and highly sophisticated gadgets and instruments it is difficult to gauge or guess the profundity, proficiency and deep Intuitive insight they showed in many fields of human endeavour. Some of their esoteric writings are beyond the modern man, who is too materialistic

and impure in his heart with all his selfish and acquisitive proclivities, even to fathom the excellence and richness of a multi-faceted, consummate approach to their subject of study because the present-day human beings rarely can rise to those dizzy Intuitive levels of knowledge wherefrom one can draw infinitely for all times.

These veritable gods walking on earth, so to speak, eventually realized the fact that human beings all over the universe pursue four human goals or objectives, viz. *Dharma* (religious and moral norms), *Artha* (acquisition of material wealth), *Kaama* (rightful desires) and *Moaksha* (emancipation). In accordance with the differences seen in the vast masses of people in their respective qualifications, capacities and mental affinities and inclinations, those sages provided all the knowledge required by them to make their lives purposeful and meaningful. It is an acknowledged law of life, acceptable to all religions and their preachers even today, that those rare seers or sages who give up all worldly desires and practise renunciation even to shun other-worldly pleasures and enjoyments are the most qualified people to have attained Intuitive experience of the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman*, of the *Vedantic* philosophy. Quite rationally too, it becomes evident that unless a human being has acquired the necessary mundane knowledge to earn money with which he can buy his necessities of life (*Artha*) and to pursue desires (*Kaama*) as taught in his respective religious texts but not opposed to *Dharma* (religious sanctions), he can never even think of the fourth objective (*Moaksha*).

Naturally, this comprehensive philosophical science of *Vedanta*, as envisaged by these spiritual preceptors, though in the beginning started from the empirical sphere and culminated in the various physical sciences and fine arts which provide *Artha* and *Kaama*, later extended its deliberations to *Dhaarmic* and metaphysical, philosophical questions like the one unitary Reality which is 'behind and beneath' all the physical phenomena. No wonder, then, the first basic question that was raised in *Vedantic* texts was pertaining to that Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* and this superlative knowledge also was called '*Brahma Vidya*' (Self-Knowledge), which is in truth the *summum bonum* of all human existence. Thus, the pet query that is raised in most of the *Upanishads* is analogous to: "Which is that One Reality or Entity by knowing which everything becomes known?" The *Mundaka Upanishad* (1-1-2) states that: "*Sa Brahmapridyaam Sarvapridyaapratishthaam Atharvaaya Jyeshtha-putraaya Praaha*" — meaning, "He taught *Brahmapridya* which is the fountainhead of all *Vidyas* (sciences or knowledges), to his eldest son *Atharva*." Since it signifies or teaches that the Ultimate Reality alone which is the root cause for the manifestation or formulation of all empirical sciences or arts and which is to be sought out in the end, *Brahmapridya* that is propounded in *Vedanta* texts is called '*Sarpapridyaapratishthaa*' (the very fountainhead or substratum for all sciences, arts or knowledges). Thus from *Vedanta* philosophy, which is from all aspects or viewpoints all-comprehensive and

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consummate, how at all can there be any opposition or contradiction to any matter or aspect pertaining to the physical or empirical sciences which are, in fact, a part and parcel of *Brahmavidya*, which is, in turn, the very goal or purport of the *Vedanta* philosophy? *Vedanta* is truly a complete, comprehensive and consummate spiritual science; naturally such an all-consuming knowledge of *Brahmavidya* can be attained by only those rare personalities who are able to fathom out or divine this Ultimate Reality as the very substratum of all existence, knowledge or consciousness and happiness or bliss by pursuing a difficult path of reason and Intuitive experience. It being so, how at all can such a consummate and immaculate spiritual science of *Vedanta* come in the way or oppose any branch of the physical sciences, which stipulate that — "Only that entity or thing which is in consonance with reason and one's experience (perceptual or psychic) should be taken into the reckoning and not otherwise?" It is as irrational or prejudicial as saying — "The whole is opposed or contradictory to the parts."

It need not be gainsaid that all empirical sciences, unlike the spiritual science of *Vedanta*, have been predominantly pre-occupied and entrenched, as it were, in perceptual knowledge and thereby are taking into the reckoning only those aspects of life which are perceived by human beings in the external Nature. To some extent, the modern psychology takes into its deliberations the whole gamut of psychic experiences common to human beings in general. But human existence or the life-span of human beings does not exhaust itself only in the waking experiences, but extend to a greater degree and depth to the other two universal experiences of dream and deep sleep. The present-day psychologists and psychiatrists have dabbled into the realm of dreams and have formulated their own theories and deduced their own conclusions. But yet they find it almost beyond them or inscrutable to fathom the deep sleep experience. Thus all the empirical sciences become lop-sided in their approach and method of analysis of the whole gamut of human experiences, for they take only the extroverted and objective viewpoint of life without taking into the reckoning the subjective and plenary viewpoint of *Vedanta*. In fact, the spiritual science of *Vedanta* is holistic and, in a manner of speaking, goes beyond both the subjective and objective viewpoints to the Intuitive, supramental level. Consequently, its methodology too, which is in the beginning and inchoate stages mostly dwell on the empirical details and experiences, slowly adopts an Intuitive reasoning based on universal experiences to reach out to the abstract, transcendental state of the Self or Pure Consciousness.

For the empirical sciences the '*Paraagdrishti*' (extroverted viewpoint) is the mainstay. Examining meticulously the external objects through the senses aided by highly sophisticated appliances, gadgets and instruments, analysing by repeated and various experiments the structures, qualities and behaviour of those objects and then comparing that comprehensive knowledge, taken as

the data, with those of other known objects and phenomena belonging to the same category or species is the methodology or '*Prakriya*' adopted by all empirical sciences. But what the spiritual science of *Vedanta* has taken up for its main deliberation is not at all the mass of varied objects in the external sphere; nor has it ceased its deliberations with the whole gamut of functions of the psyche; its real purport hinges on the focal point of all mundane transactions — which is nothing but the 'I' notion or ego. It would not be untrue if it is stated in this context that this spiritual science really comes into its own when it teaches us all human beings as to what exactly is this 'I' notion, how to examine it and analyse it and finally transcend it, and it achieves this superlative purport by adopting a '*Pratyagdrishti*' (introverted viewpoint). Its methodology in this regard is so immaculate and immediate that no human being, whether he is a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, or one following any other faith, can possibly deny its truths, provided, of course, he is honest and sincere about pursuing this divine knowledge.

Now this *Pratyagdrishti*, it is self-evident, is not in need of any intermediate means or instruments; for this, one has per force to take recourse to his own direct and immediate Intuitive experience, called in *Vedantic* parlance '*Anubhava*'. Further, the methodology too which has been followed or adopted by *Vedanta* for comparing as well as contrasting the extra-ordinary or extra-sensory experiences — discerned and divined by means of that viewpoint — among themselves as also for formulating the teaching techniques for this holistic science is naturally different. Thus, the object of study and examination, the viewpoint adopted or followed and finally the methodology of deliberation and teaching being extremely different, how can it ever be stated that this science is in all respects opposed to empirical sciences. Even among empirical sciences such differences in the subject-matter, the viewpoint and the methodology as also the conclusions arrived at do exist; if only the scientists give up their high sense of pride (egoism) and utilize their own rationality to be able to rise to the level of Intuition (of *Vedanta*), the scientists will, much more than other rational beings, surely launch themselves into this science of the Spirit, *Atman*, Self — the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* of *Vedanta*.

Here at this juncture a ticklish big question may raise its head: "Thus if the subject-matters of deliberation for these two sciences of *Vedanta*, on the one hand, and the entire physical sciences, on the other, are quite different, how is it proper to claim that *Vedanta* has included and assimilated in itself the whole gamut of knowledge gained from the subject-matter of the various empirical sciences? Since the subject-matters of these two sciences are quite different in all respects, is it not reasonable or justifiable to reckon that these two sciences are totally different? Since the viewpoints adopted or followed by them are proceeding in quite opposite directions — extroverted as against the introverted — like the East and the West, their respective results and deductions must necessarily be opposed to each other indeed! Since reason

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tells us that two opposing viewpoints cannot both be correct, will it be proper to assume that physical sciences alone are correct and real and not otherwise? Lastly, the physical sciences are discovering and inventing ever new means and appliances to provide ever new comforts and amenities to enhance and better the human living conditions and to add lustre to them. Now, in which aspect of that kind does *Vedanta* provide any succour or solace to humanity?"

In order to find out an answer to this question, an analogy will be of immense help. Although among the various physical sciences both physics and biology may deliberate upon and analyse one and the same object or substance, the conclusions drawn by these empirical sciences have different applications and utilities in our life. Further, when these sciences are weighed and evaluated against psychology, psychiatry and such other modern sciences, their knowledge seems to be of greater benefit and of an abiding nature. For, it is common and proven knowledge that psyche plays a subtler and more important role in human dealings than the soma, i.e. the corporeal body. In fact, without the psyche associating itself with the physical senses and the body which comprises them there does not accrue any sensation, feeling. Yet, these branches of science together go to make our life's total knowledge of the external world. Thus their *Paraagdrishti* exhaustively and extensively help gain the rich knowledge of the external manifest world and how best to utilize that knowledge to make our life comfortable and safe. On the other hand, the *Vedantic* science with its superlative *Pratyagdrishti* and infallible methodology undertakes to divine that one Ultimate and Absolute Reality behind all these physical and psychic phenomena in their totality and essence *per se*. In this sense, it can be surely said that *Vedanta* subsumes and consumes as also assimilates in itself all those different and special knowledges of the physical sciences. In short, *Vedantic* philosophy takes up all the experiences of our life in its totality and hence it is more comprehensive and consummate as also more beneficial to humanity than the physical sciences which are useful in our workaday transactions only.

Even if observed from empirical viewpoint, it has to be acknowledged that by means of *Vedantic* intuitive knowledge a profound benefit accrues. While the empirical sciences are totally blind and averse to human values and virtues like morals, ethics, emotions, love, compassion etc., the spiritual science of *Vedanta* deals with this valuable aspect of human life and leads us to transcend this vicious circle of *Samsara*, full of *Shoaka* (grief) and *Moaha* (attachment). The *Ishavassyoapanishad* (7) states: "*Tatra Koa Moahaha Kah Shoakaha*" — meaning, "Therein where is attachment and where is grief?" The *Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad* (4-2-4) states: "*Abhayam Vai Janaka Praaptoasi*" — meaning, "Oh Janaka, you have attained fearlessness indeed!" Such scriptural statements praise the supreme state wherein one has gone beyond, or conquered, *Shoaka*, *Moaha*, *Bhaya* (fear) etc. and that enlightened state is attained by means of the *Vedanta Jnaana* (Intuitive

experience) of the Self, as taught by the *Vedantic* spiritual science. The *Kathopanishad* (2-1-2) states: "*Paraachaha Kaamaananuyanti Baalaaste Mrityoaryanti Vitatasya Paasham; Atha Dheeraa Amritatwam Veditwaa Dhruvamadhruveshviha Na Praarthayante*" — meaning, "People lacking discrimination follow or seek the external desires alone and fall a prey to the tentacles of Death; those who are discriminative remain without praying or desiring for anything whatsoever in this transmigratory life (*Samsaara*), cognizing the immortal Truth." Thus what the *Upanishadic* statement purports to teach is not a frivolous or hollow platitude. It does not need a saint or a scholar to bring home to us that those amongst us who are selfless and who are not hankering after ill-gotten wealth are more rational in their outlook and are generally more sagacious than the selfish and avaricious people. Naturally, those *Mumukshus* (seekers of Emancipation or *Moaksha*), as signified in the scriptures have gone through the rigours of spiritual disciplines like *Nitya-Anitya Viveka* (discrimination between what is eternal and what is non-eternal); *Iha-Amutra Artha (Phala) Bhoaga Viragaha* (renunciation born out of the discrimination stated above with regard to wealth, assets gained either here in this life or in other worlds mentioned in the scriptures), *Shama-Dama Aadi Shat Sampat* (the six human excellences of control over one's mind, over his senses, introvertedness, extreme tolerance, devotion and dedication towards his goal, mental equipoise) and lastly *Mumukshutwa* (steadfast desire for Liberation). As a result, they have become disillusioned and dissatisfied with flitting pleasures not only of this world but also of the other worlds (celestial, as stipulated in the scriptures).

But people who have the innate ignorance (*Avidya*) of the type — "The body, the senses etc. are themselves myself and are mine intrinsically" — have quite naturally identified their Self to be their body, senses, mind, intellect and the ego. Taking this whole organism as the 'I', they entertain desires for acquiring objects outside or external to them and seek enjoyments or pleasures from them. In the process, they are prompted to perform *Karma* (action). According to *Vedantic* philosophy or science, *Avidya* gives rise to *Kaama*, which in turn causes *Karma*, the latter giving rise to its *Phala* or fruit. When a person seeks these ephemeral enjoyments or pleasures by *Bhoaga* (actual enjoyment), that very *Kartu* (one who performs the action), takes on the form of a *Bhoaktru* (enjoyer), and this desire lurks in a subtle form as a latent or potential impression (*Vaasana*). This latent *Vaasana*, which is stored up in the unconscious mind, instantaneously takes on the form of a strong desire when the external and environmental conditions or situations are congenial and convenient for it. Thus this vicious and whirling circle of *Samsaara* can never be transcended unless and until the fundamental cause for it all, i.e. *Avidya*, is rooted out. Thus *Mumukshus* take to the higher spiritual discipline of Intuiting or cognizing the Ultimate Reality of *Atman* beyond the ego or 'I' notion here and now in this very life. But the people lacking in discrimination as envisaged and expounded in the *Upanishads* are caught in

the drag-net of Death, which is dreaded most by man, nay every creature. Taking a holistic outlook, even nations who are utilizing all their knowledge, particularly the scientific knowledge, for their selfish gains and ends have of late developed the demoniac trait of destroying the environment around them and even the whole universe. Everyone is caught in the grip of fear, which is, in truth, another name for Death alone. In such chaotic conditions prevailing in every nook and corner of the universe the *Vedantic* call to adopt a spiritual approach to solve the fundamental ills of the world and human beings comes as a beacon light in stark darkness.

In concluding this Chapter, it should be always kept in mind by every human being, especially those who have a science-oriented mind or a rational approach to all mundane problems backed up by a scientific temper, that *Vedantic* science is not at all in opposition or contradictory to the physical sciences and their findings. It need not be gainsaid that both categories of sciences (*Vidyas*, as they are called in *Vedanta*) are in search of Reality, the former adopting a comprehensive Intuitive approach while the latter pursuing it in the objective sphere, not yet prepared to accept the basic truth that the 'I' notion, which is the very fountainhead of all empirical transactions and the cognitive source of all phenomena, material or mental, is in fact the root cause for *Avidya* or ignorance, and unless and until this basic egoistic approach yields its pride of place and surrenders unto the really real Self (*Atman*) or Pure, Absolute Consciousness, beyond all concepts of duality, pairs of opposites, time-space-causation categories there is no way of knowing the Ultimate Reality 'behind and beneath' this manifest world of macrocosmic and microcosmic wonders. This *Atman* or *Brahman* of *Vedanta* is immutable, immortal and inscrutable beyond words and concepts, never changing with times or susceptible of any other interpretation or conceptualization. All economists, ecologists, sociologists, nuclear scientists, religionists and philosophers will do well to shed their differences and work in unison with one another in their prime purport of serving humanity as a whole and through that attain the knowledge of this universal Reality.

II. THE LIMITATIONS OF PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Since the empirical or physical sciences are invariably adopting the extroverted viewpoint (*Paraagdrishti*) and thereby examining in detail only the objective, material parts and aspects of the world (*Prapancha*), excluding the subjective part or aspect of life, it has not been possible for the modern scientists to find the right path or doorway to the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* of *Vedanta*. It has already been affirmed that only following the all-comprehensive method and approach of the *Vedantic* science and in

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adopting its highly rational and moral values and principles in all practical, technological and utility considerations of the various sciences lies the solution for achieving an abiding peace and prosperity for mankind.

Any science, whether physical or metaphysical, is undoubtedly devoted to the discovery of the Reality behind all phenomena perceived by all human beings; the physical or empirical sciences have directed their attention and energies towards the objective part, viz. the expansive universe of matter, time-space-causation categories, the various forces and their fields, the complex symmetries and laws of Nature, its plausible methods of creation etc. while the metaphysical or spiritual science has devoted itself to the divination of the subjective, psychic aspect of life and thereafter to the Ultimate, Absolute Reality of the Self, the very prius of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, beyond all duality. Whether the modern scientists acquiesce in and acknowledge the conclusions arrived at by the spiritual science of *Vedanta* or not, it would be a worthwhile exercise to study comparatively their different approaches or methodologies and to find out as to which of these two sciences really bring home to us the Ultimate Reality with all certitude and finality and hence is the one consummate and comprehensive science. In doing that, it should be remembered that while the empirical sciences invariably rely mostly on the perceptual and, to a lesser degree, to the conceptual experiences or knowledges, the spiritual science of *Vedanta* delineates or unravels a holistic methodology according to which the whole gamut of percepts and concepts that human beings are capable of imagining are rolled up into one category, as it were, and all these are contrasted with the weird but wonderful universal 'experience' of deep sleep in which the empirical experiences of percepts and concepts are totally absent. While we are analysing this universal experience without the 'experiencer' in it, adopting, in the process, the unique *Vedantic* methodology, we are, in truth, forced to invoke, as it were, the Intuitive experience or, shall we say, Pure Consciousness that is inherent in all human beings. Further, *Vedanta* does not stop at that; taking recourse to Intuitive reasoning and continuing its superlative method of going beyond, it culminates and reaches its acme in Pure 'Intuition', the fountainhead of all existence and the knowledge, nay the source, of all creation. At that Transcendental state of 'Intuition' even the mind and its functions and faculties are shed and one remains steadfast in his Pure Being, unrelated, non-dual in its essence. Words, percepts and concepts fail miserably to reach out and comprehend and describe It, called in *Vedantic* parlance '*Atman*' or '*Brahman*'. And this *Vedantic* Reality is universal, which means that no human being can ever negate It or refute Its existence. *Brahman* or *Atman*, of *Vedanta*, is that Ultimate Reality which never goes out of existence and reckoning during the three states of Consciousness. The uncaused, uncreated Reality of such enunciation and exposition alone deserves to be called by that name, and further It has necessarily to be universal and incontrovertible ever.

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According to ancient, time-honoured *Upanishadic* texts all the external phenomena which the empirical sciences are probing are, in the ultimate analysis, mere illusion, a 'phantasmagoria' without any substantive content *in esse*. In fact, the present-day sub-atomic (particle) physics, adopting its weird 'Quantum Theories', has verily substantiated the *Vedantic* truths, what with its GUTs, 'supersymmetries' and 'superforce'. Besides, its mind-boggling theories cannot evoke any high sense of certitude and finality for the simple reason that their very region of observation and experimentation is external to and 'alien' from one's own innate organic being and ever in a state of flux or change. No wonder, some old scientist-philosopher was compelled to say, pertaining to the external phenomena, that — 'The thing in itself can never be known'. What he implied was clearly that what is subjective in us is more innate and direct for our consciousness (cognition) than what is objective and external to our being. To wit, the 'I' notion with its concomitant constituents up to the physical body forms an aggregate about which all of us do not need or seek any proof of any external media to be 'conscious' of. The external world evidently falls outside this conscious being and ever remains an object to it. In short, this 'I' can always 'know' the external world, the objective 'this', but this order can never be reversed so as to make the object know the subject. If at all one has to give a 'logical priority' between the 'I' and 'this' it would be clearly in favour of the 'I'. In fact, if one were to define very clearly the two terms 'subject' and 'object', it would always be something like this: "The subject is one which objectifies the object, while the object is one which is always objectified by the subject." In other words, the conscious subject 'I' can never become or take the position of the object in our ordinary workaday transactions. This also implies that although the percepts and the concepts are one's own experiences, the concepts are always subtler than the percepts and lurk in the mind or psyche, while the percepts desiderate not only the help of the subjective 'I' unit but also the objective 'this'. In truth, our whole life comprises the knowledge gained from the totality of these percepts and concepts, called in *Vedantic* parlance '*Pratyayaanubhava*' and '*Vedanaanubhava*', respectively. *Vedantic* spiritual science not only takes into the reckoning the whole gamut of perceptual and conceptual knowledges (experiences) but also reveals that Reality, which transcends all these knowledges as also which happens to be ever the very substratum for all of them. It means, *Atman* or *Brahman*, of *Vedanta*, is that Transcendental Non-dual Reality which is the 'uncaused cause' for both the 'I' (all living beings) and 'this' (the whole cosmos of both astro and sub-atomic physics). It should be evident by now to all *cognoscenti* that the '*Pratyagdrishti*' of *Vedanta*, culminating in '*Saakshi Chaitanya Drishti*' (Intuitive viewpoint of *Atman*), over-rides and over-sails the '*Paraagdrishti*' of all empirical sciences, including psychology or psychiatry.

Having stated briefly the differences in the domains of the spiritual science of *Vedanta* and all the empirical sciences as also their respective methodologies and conclusions, it would be of immense benefit if we trace briefly

the chronological development of the various physical sciences and their theories so as to be able to appreciate the eternal truth that the very sphere or realm of these empirical sciences is itself synonymous with change.

The science devoted to the study of elements and their laws of combination and behaviour, popularly known by the name of 'Chemistry', had in the past divided matter into two categories of fundamental elements and compounds. People who had studies that science were ridiculing our indigenous, oriental science devoted to minerals and metallurgy (*Dhaatu Vidya*); hearing those people who had known that science and were stating that from mercury-gold could be produced, these occidental chemists used to laugh derisively and say: "Not at all; the fundamental elements are absolutely independent entities; what relationship on earth can exist between mercury and gold?" But in due course the Western chemists came to know that in sulphur there were five different kinds; in charcoal, there were three kinds and in phosphorus there were two kinds. Naturally, the question — "How did a variety or diversity occur in a fundamental, unitary element?" — became a big source of bother. But analytical examination did not stop at that stage; in due course it was found out that all 'basic or fundamental elements' were produced from one single element called 'hydrogen'! It also became known that some objects known previously as basic elements were actually compounds! In the beginning it was found that all substances comprised some molecules, but in due course it was found, on further analysis, that those molecules were compounds of 'atoms', and these minute atoms or particles were supposed then to be 'indivisible' further. That theory also was shattered and was found to be not the ultimate reality or fact. Now, in this modern age of stupendous scientific advance atoms are further split into a nucleus consisting of still minuter particles called 'protons and neutrons' and around this nucleus small microscopic particles called 'electrons' are found to orbit around. Thus this science of Chemistry has slowly yielded itself into the realm of Physics, which has developed into a colossal science of sub-nuclear invisible particles and forces or fields.

Physics, which is the science devoted to the study of the building blocks of matter and their properties, is now divided into the 'old classical' and the 'new modern' kinds. With technical terms like 'force' and 'gravity', the scientific findings of the old physics have become false notions or mere misconceptions from the viewpoint of the modern particle physicists. After nearly 300 years Isaac Newton's law of gravity is thought to be wrong and it is suggested that there exists an unknown 'fifth force' in Nature. Further, the modern physicists opine that this fifth force is more complex in character than gravitational force and have, in fact, named it 'Supergravity'. They carried out experiments in August 1989 a mile below the Greeland ice sheet which have yielded substantial evidence to prove Newton's three-century-old law of gravity to be wrong. This fifth force, which is highly debated in science circles all over

the world, is said to be accompanying the known four forces, viz. gravity, electro-magnetic, weak and nuclear. It is evident that if the existence of such a force could be proved beyond doubt, then it would be one of the biggest advance in the history of physics. The earlier classification of matter, force and radiation was found to be unsatisfactory and inadequate. The present-day physicists consider all matter or substance to comprise more in terms of 'waves' and 'particles' than 'atoms' as of old. The beliefs of the old physicists with regard to the immutability of matter, its dimensions and force have become mere blind beliefs indeed. In the beginning the phenomenon of light was considered to be merely a cluster of particles (photons), later it was thought to be a 'wave' spread out in empty space and quite recently, because it is found out to be radiation it is assumed that light can be both a cluster of particles as well as a wave. The phenomenon called 'ether' became a controversial topic, some physicists opining that it exists and others saying that it does not exist at all. Especially from the day theories like Albert Einstein's two theories of Special and General Relativity Theories (in 1905 and 1915, respectively) and the 'Quantum Theory' by several physicists in the Thirties were discovered it has been enunciated that space and time are mutually inseparable and consequently space-time is one 'continuum' and is the fourth dimension of all matter. Besides, the present-day physicists have been realizing more and more that Nature should not be examined only from the viewpoint of any mediatory instruments, but if it is done all the theories arrived at are vitiated. The importance of the subjective aspect of life has been fully realized. Naturally, the science of physics, which plays a rudimentary role in all other branches of science and has been given the pride of place, is slowly yielding its place to Psychology.

Mathematics is believed to be an 'exact science' among all scientists and its usage is so very vital to prove any new scientific theory. In fact, if it is said that mathematics is the language of science it would not be an exaggeration. Hence mathematics is believed to indicate a thing or phenomenon distinctively and conclusively with a high degree of certainty, without the defect of being unconventional or of resorting to any bizarre conduct or procedure. Present-day physicists use advanced mathematics and its highly complicated equations and formulas even to predict a future event or a totally unknown law of Nature. Even so, in this integral science of the numbers the laws of addition and subtraction have been extended and even applied to imaginary numbers; for example, to the square root of three and such other numbers. It seems that a great scientist-philosopher has expressed that: "The integers are divine creation, while all the rest are human creations." Euclid's geometry, which had exercised its magical sway on man's mind for 2,000 years, has now been dumped into cold-storage. In Geometry with regard to one of its first premises that were conceived, viz. two circles cut each other at two points, some people question (taking into the reckoning the present-day multi-dimensional outlook of relativity) as to which is the basis for such a conclusion to be drawn.

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Anyway, with regard to certain mathematical findings or discoveries it is very difficult to say whether they have been established on dialectical or logical devices or whether they have been conceived on the strength of universal, natural experiences! The British astronomer-scientist Arthur Eddington has said in so many words that for scientists 'mathematical proof or justification' has become a worshipful icon, and the followers of this mathematical science are wastefully prostrating and submitting themselves meekly before that image; further, he affirms that it is never possible to get convinced that mathematics is logically sound and totally reasonable, what its weird infinities and renormalizations.

Western science in general has branched off into many spheres of specialization pertaining to the phenomena external to human beings as also internally to their physique, health, psyche and its therapeutic systems. Some of the most modern sciences are Astronautics (the science of space travel), Astrophysics (the branch of astronomy concerned with the physical nature of heavenly bodies); Cosmogony (the science of the nature of heavenly bodies), Cosmography (the science that describes and maps the main features of the universe) and Cosmology (the science of the nature, origin and history of the universe); Baceteriology (the study of bacteria), Bio-Chemistry (the study of chemical processes of living things), Bionics (the study of functions, characteristics and phenomena observed in the living world and the application of this knowledge to the world of machines), Bionomics (the study of the relation of an organism to its environment), Bionomy (the science of the laws of life), Biophysics (the physics of vital processes in living things); Cytogenetics (the branch of biology dealing with the study of heredity from the point of view of cytology — the study of cells especially their formation, structure and functions — and genetics — the branch of Biology dealing with the phenomena of heredity and the laws governing it); Ethnology (a branch of anthropology that deals with the origin, distribution and distinguishing characteristics of the race of mankind); Gerontology (the study of old age, its phenomena diseases etc.); Psychology (the science of the nature, functions and phenomena of human soul or mind), Psychiatry (the science of treatment of mental diseases). It should be emphasized here that in almost every branch of these sciences the theories and discoveries of the old — whatever they were — have been invalidated or improved upon continuously and there does not seem to be any finality being reached in all of them.

As mentioned before, Psychology being a science of the soul or mind and subtler than the physical sciences in its approach and treatment of human values and behaviour, it may be stated that this branch of science is nearer and dearer to Philosophy, which is nothing but the science of religion and religious beliefs. Leading psychologist of yester-years Carl G. Jung has defined 'Consciousness' as the relation of psychical facts to 'a fact called the ego', its character being dependent on the general attitude type of

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the individual, whether extrovert or introvert. Its relation to the outer world was through the four functions of thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. As the ego, the focal point in consciousness, is derived from the 'unconscious', consciousness — he says — and its functions could only be understood in conjunction with the hypothesis of the personal and the 'collective unconscious'.

The Evolution Theory of zoologists, the ever-changing and inconsistent medical discoveries and harmful devices and treatments followed by the medical men, the havoc wrought by the present-day political economy by our politicians who are almost totally unconcerned with the global problems of pollution, ecological disasters etc. cannot be expected to be dealt with in detail in this small treatise. Suffice it to say that — from the deliberations that we have carried out so far — the empirical sciences, including modern psychology, have in general been ensnared by the multifarious and befuddling phenomena of Nature (*Prakriti*) because they have invariably pursued the extroverted viewpoint (*Paraagdrishti*) and believing in the 'reality' of the external appearances. True, these sciences have stumbled upon many invaluable jewels, but they have also found several useless but shining marble stones. If one takes a holistic viewpoint of *Vedanta* it can be safely said that in that dark forest of Nature — as projected by *Avidya* (ignorance, delusion or misconception) — human beings in general have mistaken the shining marble stones for jewels and vice versa because of a lack of discriminative scrutiny of their real worth. Philosophically speaking, when and where can these physical or empirical sciences — which have assumed time and space to be eternal entities — be expected to end their pursuits in analysing the whole gamut of objective phenomena which appear only within the parameters of time and space? How and when can it be established that all the facts or realities that are decided by the limited human intellect are ever final and inviolable?

What we have considered so far is the objective aspect or part of our life. Further, if we discern as to how the empirical sciences are scrutinizing the Pure Consciousness (*Jnaana Tattwa*), it will have to be said that their plight is pitiable. In the science of Psychology there is no definite opinion as to what the phenomenon of 'mind' itself really is! More than observing the mind as an instrument or means of acquiring knowledge, the weakness of, or rather the addiction to, the inclusion of the mind in the mass of objects themselves and also subjection of it to the scrutiny and examination suitable to the external objects has caught hold of these psychologists in general. Among the psychologists themselves it appears as though there is hardly any unanimity or unity. If all these aspects are considered, even if it is said that psychology is not a science (in its true sense of the term) at all, it may pass muster.

Even to indicate an outline of the predicament of the empirical sciences as it actually is — which we have tried to do so far — is perhaps beyond lay people who are ignorant of the profound knowledge and subjects. Whatever has been

stated by us here as our opinion may not be acceptable to the scientists themselves. Anyway, one thing is certain and that is: Many exponents of the various empirical sciences are themselves now slowly acknowledging the defects as well as the limitations of their sciences. People who wish to know more about this fact should read the book — "Reason, Science and Shaastras" published by Dr. Naliniranjan Sengupta M. D., Calcutta. They should also read — "The Mysterious Universe" and "The Nature of the Physical World" by Sir James Jeans, the famous scientist, and such other books published recently.

In any case, it need not be gainsaid that, as and when the physical sciences have advanced their researches in their respective fields and have hit upon astounding discoveries their conclusions have kept on changing indeed. Sir James Jeans in his book — "Mysterious Universe" — has written: "Whatever has been enunciated and whatever decisions have been presented before the public (by the scientists) all that is merely a mass of imagination, uncertain; thus the scientists will have to acknowledge.... Our important theory is that the present-day science cannot at all pronounce in the manner — 'This is our final verdict'; the empirical sciences should give up stating that their findings are final. For, the river of knowledge has reversed its track or course and flown over itself so often." (P. 188). The English astronomer-thinker A. S. Eddington in his book — "Science and the Unseen World" (P. 16) — has stated that: "The concepts of empirical sciences have in the past committed errors invariably; there is no doubt that they are committing errors even today." Ever since these old scientist-thinkers expressed their candid opinions, there have been several latest scientific discoveries which have not only startled the researchers themselves but also the lay men all over the world, and it is surprising to note that these modern nuclear sub-atomic scientists utter a language which is unbelievably akin to the *Vedantic* philosophical jargon, so to speak.

From the 'probability-wave' theory of Max Born the physicists have been induced to arrive at a concept that 'photons' and 'electrons' may be 'conscious' or 'organic'. The Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum physics and the Everette-Wheeler Interpretation coincided to project the idea that the external world is a creation, nay a 'figment', of our mind. No wonder then to the quantum physicists the universe is slowly appearing as an 'omnijective' (meaning, a combination of the subjective and the objective aspects of our life), universe. It is increasingly believed by these particle physicists that the observer of any experiment is no longer a detached observer but is an active participator in the very processes of his experimentation. Further, they believe staunchly that whatever theories they deduce from their observations are vitiated by this factor of the observer. All this runs quite analogous to the theories of the *Vijnaanavaadins* of India (i.e. Idealists).

Modern physics, with its gigantic and abstract theories like Relativity and Quantum mechanics, has already entered the areas of 'Eastern Mysticism' as Fritzof Capra calls it. Space which appeared as 'curved' (Can you make any sense out of it!) in Einstein's Relativity Theory and time which appears to travel back in its course as Stephen Hawking opined, have produced such a stupendous impact of the new physics on the Western civilization itself is already being felt. Rockefeller University physicist Heinz Pagels in his latest book — "The Cosmic Code" (Quantum Physics as the Language of Nature), 1982 — has said that we are in the wake of physics revolution, 'comparable to the Copernican demolition of the anthropocentric world', which began with the invention of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics in the first decades of this century. The sub-atomic world is, as Einstein said, like an 'unopenable watch; where we can see the pointers on the dial move but can never know the exact mechanism underneath. John A. Wheeler recently in an interview remarked: "Increasing knowledge of detail has brought an increasing ignorance about plan." Physicist Heinz Pagels writes: "By the nature of phenomena it studies, science has become increasingly abstract. The Cosmic Code has become invisible. The unseen is influencing the seen." And unavoidably and unconsciously, as it were, since 1970s physics has slowly started moving towards something profoundly simple and unifying. The goal of most theoretical sub-atomic physicists today is the 'grand unification', which is nothing but the one Reality 'behind and beneath' all this manifested universe as dreamed of by philosophers and saints from time immemorial. It would not be out of place here to underscore the *Vedantic* doctrine that as and when the human mind, adopting the *Paraagdrishti*, proceeds in unravelling the reality of things external to it (in other words, in knowing things) the mind goes on realizing that there are more things that have remained without being explored and anticipating that further ahead so many more things may exist unexplored!

This indeed is the essential nature (as also the hallmark of) *Maayaa* (illusion). "*Daivee Hyeshaa Gunamayee Mama Maayaa Duratyayaa; Maameva Ye Prapadyante Maayaametaam Taranti Te*" — (*Geeta* 7-14) — meaning, "This My Divine power of *Maayaa* full of qualities is very difficult to tackle; only those (devotees of Mine) who surrender unto Me will be able to overcome it." This statement of Shri Krishna in the *Geeta* purports to state that all this world of duality, which is divided into three categories, viz. *Aadhyaatmika* (the corporeal world within the body), *Aadhibhautika* (the external physical world) and *Aadhidavika* (the celestial world), is merely an illusion misconceived in the Ultimate Reality. Although that *Maayaa* is false, unreal in the form it appears, because it has to thrive or subsist on the substrate of the Ultimate Reality alone it is, in a manner of speaking, manifesting the reality of its substrate indeed. Therefore, the exponents of the empirical sciences cannot possibly assert in the manner — "We have come to know the Reality" or the opposite view of "We have not been able to know

the Reality". Scientist James Jeans has aptly said;: "Can the present-day physical sciences give any answer whatsoever to certain complicated or intricate questions? Those questions may forever be beyond the ken of human intellect. More than saying that — 'We have come to know a faint glitter of that light' — nothing else whatsoever can possibly be boasted of. That too may be completely the appearance of delusion alone; for, even to observe that small thing or appearance we had to rub our eyes and see meticulously without flapping the eyelids." — (Mysterious Universe, P. 188).

Both the knowledge and the known object or phenomenon have thus appeared before us in our sphere of deliberation and they have been continuously provoking our curiosity indeed. If we deliberate upon those means of knowledge and the objects of knowledge adopting the extroverted viewpoint or methodology (*Paraagdrishti*) of the empirical sciences, many hitherto unknown phenomena and laws of Nature become visible or perceptible to our senses; however, the conclusions that we have drawn by those viewpoints or methodologies repeatedly slip away from our grasp. But those who wish to discern that Ultimate Reality, which is the substrate for the entire universe of duality and which never gets falsified, should discard this *Paraagdrishti* and adopt the *Pratyagdrishti* (introspective viewpoint) of *Vedanta*. Then this *Maayaateeta Paramaatha* (the Ultimate Reality beyond all illusion), will flash to our mind; in other words, It will be Intuited, cognized. Further, it would also be cognized as to who that *Maayaavee* (great Magician), in whose control this *Maayaa* rests, is. At the same time, it would be Intuitively experienced that this phenomenon of *Maayaa* is really the glory of the Great Magician, viz. *Ishwara* or Pure, Absolute Consciousness of *Brahman* or *Atman*.

III. IMPERFECT PHILOSOPHIES

"Svaavidyaavibhava Vipuladvaita Prapanchaahita Spashtabhraanti Tiroahita Aatmamatayoa Yam Bhaagashoa Manvate; Nirbhaagam Sakalaabhidhaana Mananavyaapaara Doorasthitam Vande Nandita Vishvam Ayyaya-majam Bhaktyaa Tamekam Vibhum."

Meaning: "That Pure Being whom those for whom *Aatmajnaana* (Self-Knowledge), is hidden as a result of a clear or distinct delusion caused by a pervasive dual world projected by or born out of the glory of their *Avidya* (ignorance), is reckoned part by part — such a birthless, non-dual Supreme Being (*Vibhum*) who is indivisible, who is far away from all empirical transactions involving speech and mind and who provides happiness or bliss to the whole universe I adore and implore."

Vedanta: The Only Consummate Spiritual Science

Thus Shri Sureshwaraachaarya has written an invocatory stanza at the beginning of his '*Vaartika*'. It has become quite a natural and innate habit with the common run of human beings to reckon each part or aspect of the Reality that they have assumed out of *Avidya*, although there are no real parts or divisions in the Ultimate Reality. Just as Shri Gaudapaada, the grand preceptor of Shri Shankaraachaarya, has stated: "*Yam Bhaavam Darshayed Yastu Tam Bhaavam Sa Tu Pashyati; Tam Chaavati Sa Bhootwaasou Tadgrahaha Samupaiti Tam.*" Meaning: "Just as a rope is misconceived to be a snake and a stream of water etc., similarly all the beliefs of people are misconceived in or superimposed upon the Ultimate Reality alone. When a preceptor teaches his disciples in the manner — 'This alone is the Reality' — that entity alone is cognized by those pupils to be the Reality. That teaching of the entity captivates the minds of those listeners (*Shroatrus*) in that particular form alone (to wit, the teaching creates an inexplicable affinity and sense of deep conviction and faith in the followers) to such an extent that it does not allow another viewpoint to be pursued. They become haunted or possessed, so to speak, in its vice-like grip.

In the discussion of the previous Chapter we have already found out as to how the physical sciences divide both the knowledge and the known objects into various parts and how that knowledge is limited and is thrusting us into an illusory realm indeed. Now the fact as to how the various protagonists of various schools of philosophy as also thinkers are believing their respective imperfect viewpoint alone to be perfect — we will indicate to some extent for the sake of edification.

Philosophers and thinkers who are not Vedantins have come and gone both in our country and other Western countries. Although they too entertained the belief that they are also expounding the Ultimate Reality in consonance with their respective '*Anubhava*' (personal experience), only, we should always keep it in mind that all of them were predominantly logicians or exponents in various systems of dialectics.

In our country *Chaarvaakas* (an ancient school of materialism or Realism) were exponents of perceptible knowledge. They had evolved the philosophy that — "Because Consciousness (*Chaitanya*) appears in the physical body alone, *Atman* is nothing but the body imbued with Consciousness alone." They were saying that because *Praana* (the vital force), and the various organic functions (*Cheshta*), Consciousness (*Chaitanya*), memory (*Smriti*) etc. — all such features are manifested in the physical body alone, all of them are in fact the physical body's qualities only. People who follow the viewpoint of the modern or present-day empirical sciences and believe that — "Knowledge is a quality or function of the brain alone; the mind is not an entity apart from the bodily functions" — can be said to be following a systematized '*Chaarvaaka* philosophy' indeed. Among the *Buddhists* those who were

saying that the external objects or phenomena existed had eventually come to the conclusion that everything is '*Kshanika*' (transient or ephemeral) only; some others used to say that the phenomenon of the external objects existing is one that is to be imagined only on the basis of or with the help of the valid means of '*Anumaana*' (inference) alone and not that those external things are directly perceived by us. The *Vijnaanavaadins* (Idealists) were believing in the theory that the continuity of transient ideas alone is enough for all spiritual matters too. In their viewpoint, apart from the idea or intellectual concept there does not exist any external object whatsoever; that intellectual concept keeps on knowing itself. In the opinion of '*Shoonyavaadins*' (Nihilists) everything is relative alone. The eyes, the sight and the manifested form — all these are such phenomena that without the relationship of one the other cannot be established at all. In the same manner, it can be said that the effect exists desiderating a cause. Independently neither the cause nor the effect exists at all. If observed properly, in an absolute sense, without any relativity whatsoever involved not a single object or phenomenon exists at all. Those theorists or protagonists of Nihilism were establishing, on the strength of logic or dialectical argumentation, that the essencelessness (*Nisswabhaavatwa*) which is beyond the four-fold dialectical fortress of the type — 'exists', 'does not exist', 'existing, it does not exist' and 'does never exist' — is itself the Reality.

In the same manner, *Saankhyans* were logically establishing their teaching that — "The mutation of *Prakriti* (the primordial matter) alone is the world; by means of discrimination about *Prakriti* and *Purusha* (the spiritual Being or Self), the ignorance (*Ajnaana*) disappears." They have established, on the strength of logic, that there are 25 fundamental elements (*Tattwas*), viz. *Moolaprakriti* (the fundamental primordial matter), *Mahat* (the second great element among the 25), followed by *Ahamkaara* ('I' notion or ego), the five *Tanmaatras* (subtle elements — all these seven grouped together into *Prakriti*) and their further mutations called *Vikritis*, numbering 16. Quite bizarre or queerly different from all these 25 elements is *Purusha* (the Self).

Vaisheshikas have acknowledged six entities like *Dravya* (substance), *Guna* (quality), *Karma* (action), *Saamaanya* (genus), *Vishesha* (particular) and *Samavaaya* (inherence). Some times they add one more category to these six and that is *Abhaava* (non-existence). *Naiyyaayikas* have divided the objective world (i.e. the known perceptible universe before us) into 16 entities like *Pramaanas* (valid means of knowledge) and *Prameya* (the perceptible objects) etc. Because each one of these oriental philosophies have followed or adopted their own distinctive viewpoint and have deliberated upon the Ultimate Reality, it becomes quite evident that their doctrinaire teachings are necessarily different.

Now we will briefly examine the methodologies of some important thinkers whose philosophical theories have become famous in the Western countries. *Descarte* may be said to be the pioneer among the modern thinkers of

Europe. He had assumed that for establishing one's existence reasoning alone is the prime means. Anything can be brought within the purview of the doubt of the type — "Does it exist or does it not exist?" But with regard to the question of one's own existence especially, there is no possibility of a doubt arising in one's mind; according to Descarte's method of reasoning, doubt means a transaction of the mind itself. Therefore, the 'I' that is the basis for that doubt should per force exist. His logical conclusion is: "I think, therefore I exist." Just like the syllogistic argument that — "On the mountain there is fire; hence, it means that there exists smoke at that place" — Descarte's dictum — "Thinking is the means or cause for one's own existence" — appears quite strange or queer to Indian thinkers; and this is quite but natural indeed. What does it mean if one says that one has a doubt about one's own existence? One who doubts is himself the 'I', or the one who exists; this need not be gainsaid. Let it be; taking one's thinking ability as the basis, he has tried to establish, on the strength of thoughts and emotions that arise in one's mind alone — because Descarte believes firmly that reasoning is self-evident and is an independent valid means — all phenomena like the Lord (God), the universe etc. For him, logic alone is the prime judge; that which is accepted or deduced by logic should per force exist.

Spinoza, another prominent Western philosopher cum thinker, opined: "For the whole gamut of the perceptible, objective phenomena there should necessarily exist a substratum. That basic substance or entity itself is the Reality. Whatever an object may be, it is capable of causing a special concept arising in the mind; therefore, there exists a substance or an entity which is the root cause or substratum for this perception. There exists a basic substance which is the substratum for everything and That alone is the Reality, That alone is the Lord, Creator. In other words, everything exists in that Lord. The entire universe which is so wonderful exists on the support of that non-dual substance alone; the world is, in truth, its mere illusion alone. The Reality reflects in the mind. To cognize that Reality alone is the paramount goal of life." Although this Reality is the same Truth or Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* (*Atman*) that is accepted and taught in *Vedantic* philosophy, in Spinoza's teaching there is no support sought either of logical arguments or Intuitive experience which is universal and comprehensive. The conclusion that — "There should be a substratum or support for a wonderful percept or the objective universe" — is merely a concept but not an irrefutable, inviolable logical argument at all. What support of the type of Intuitive experience can there exist for the mere statement or concept that — 'Immutable or impartible Reality has become transformed into this divided variegated wonderful world of duality? What logical argument or device can be presented or adduced to conceive or conclude that that Reality has lent a form to this multifarious universe? Naturally, Spinoza has not clarified such aspects in his philosophical tenets.

Berkeley, yet another Western thinker, has argued in the manner: "The mind and the ideas, which are the special conditions caused in it — barring these there is no possibility of any other thing or phenomenon being known or cognized by us. The external objects mean nothing other than these ideas alone. If it is said that the objects are different from these ideas, then are they with qualities or devoid of qualities? If they are with qualities, then these qualities are mere ideas alone; otherwise, what are they? If it is said that they are devoid of qualities, then what evidence or valid means are there to prove that the thing or object exists? For the sequential order of ideas as well as their governance according to certain rules or regulations there should necessarily be a cause, is it not? That root cause is itself the Lord. That Lord too is an entity belonging to the category of our mind alone, but any other entity different or alien to the mind's category we cannot possibly conceive at all." In this doctrinaire theory the question — 'Whether the Lord (Self) exists apart from the mind or not?' — is not dealt with or clarified. Because of the reason that the conclusion to the effect — "Just like me there exist many other human beings" — is merely a decision made by the mind, the rudimentary question that — "Whether their (the other human beings') existence is merely our idea or not?" — is not deliberated upon and clarified. Because we are not responsible for the changes taking place in our mind in accordance with certain rules and regulations, to conceive that a great mind belonging to the same category of our mind is fit to be called 'the Lord' seems to be contradictory to his own dictum — 'Our mind alone can know it and nothing else.'

Hume is another thinker whose method of argument is as follows: "Although, as Berkeley says, it is true that we directly come to know all such phenomena like feelings or emotions, concepts, knowledges, likes and dislikes, sensations of sound, touch, form, taste and smell etc. we are not able to cognize whatsoever as to what this our mind is. Internally apart from the feelings and emotions, concepts etc. we are not perceiving a mind existing or externally, apart from the qualities, we are not seeing a substance which is an substratum for those qualities. Apart from the changes taking place regularly, one after another, no one has ever seen real substances which are of the form of cause and effect. Thus everything is merely an idea." In this theory too, because there is no convincing answer to the question — "To whom do these ideas occur?" — it is tantamount to saying that everything is merely a delusion. Neither does the Ultimate Reality nor real knowledge exist really; it amounts to saying that everything is merely a concept alone.

Comparatively speaking, the mode of thought in Berkeley and Hume seems to be in contrast to the mode of thought in the natural, empirical sciences. If Berkeley relies upon the fact that we do not directly grasp the 'things' of the external universe through our senses, but that only events causally connected with the presence of 'things' reach our sense organs, then this is a consideration which gets its persuasive character from our confidence in

the physical mode of thought. For, if one doubts the physical mode of thought in even its most general features, then there is no necessity to interpolate between the object and the act of vision or perception anything which separates the object from the subject and thereby makes the 'existence of the object' problematical indeed. Hume saw that concepts which we must regard as essential, such as, for instance, causal connection, cannot be gained from material given to us by the senses. This insight led him to a skeptical attitude as regards knowledge of any kind. It can be safely stated that Hume has permanently influenced the development of the best of philosophers who came after him.

Man has an intense desire for 'correct, assured knowledge'. That is why Hume's clear message seemed crushing and clinching; the sensory raw material, the only source of our empirical knowledge, through habit, may lead us to belief and expectation but not to the knowledge and still less to the understanding of lawful relations. Then Kant took the stage with an idea which, though certainly untenable in the form in which he put it, signified a step towards the solution of Hume's dilemma: 'Whatever is knowledge is of empirical origin is never certain.' If, therefore, we have definitely assured knowledge, it must be grounded in reason only. This is held to be the case, for instance, in the propositions of geometry and in the principle of causality. These and certain other types of knowledge are, in a manner of speaking, a part of the implements of thinking and hence do not previously have to be gained from sense data, which means they are *a priori* knowledge.

Kant had analysed the mind and had found out that time, space and causation were not external objects but are the *a priori* forms of thought that precede our perceptual knowledge. His conclusions were: "The mind has per force to know objects only after placing them in the crucible of time, space and causation. It is not possible at all to say as to how the things outside the mind exist in or by themselves. The independent external objects become perceptible to us as the world appearing before us through the mind and after being restricted by the rules of the mind." Because he arrived at these conclusions merely on the basis of logic, when we examine it logically the question — "Are there many objects externally or is there only one object or is all this exterior merely our imagination or ideation alone?" — remains undecided. For, to use the plural word, 'objects' — because of the reason that without the support of time and space the phenomenon of number itself cannot come into the reckoning — there is no scope for us at all. Even if there exists an object externally, there is no supporting evidence to imagine or surmise that that external object will cause any effect on our mind; for, the categories of cause and effect too, being merely different forms of mental ideations, there is no scope for us to infer or imagine any cause-effect relationship between the mind and the separate external object.

Hegel formulated his own exclusive modern philosophy, predominantly based on logic (dialectics), as follows: "Each and every object, each and every percept inheres (hides within itself) its own opposite phenomenon; mere or pure existence, essencelessness — both these are one and the same phenomenon. If the special features or characteristics of any object are removed or sublated, then it becomes mere or pure being or existence; between this and the non-being or essencelessness there is no difference whatsoever. An object or a thing comprises the conglomeration of special features alone; these special features are merely percepts only. Therefore, being or existence and perception are one and the same. The whole universe is the independent mind alone; it is not the mind of any one individual at all. Between the objects and their perceiver there exists a non-difference with difference. If being and non-being (non-existence) are combined together, then 'becoming' — a new category of being — is formed. Similarly, if this 'becoming' is joined with its opposite, viz. 'non-becoming', yet another new category is formed. Finally, the category called 'Absolute Idea' is formed. From this Absolute Idea Nature is established; if both the viz. Absolute Idea and Nature, are added together the culminating entity called 'Absolute Spirit' is formed"! This mind-boggling-logical or dialectical method is surely beyond the comprehension of our 'inferior' intellect, we have to admit! Only those few people who are great exponents in such bizarre logic may perhaps cognize this fact as to how 'being or existence' remains as a residue after all the special characteristics of a thing are sublated! The statement that — 'Percepts are independent and that the entire world itself is merely a non-related or absolute mental imagination or misconception' — is itself a misconception and nothing else.

Schopenhauer founded a philosophy which, without giving or attaching any great importance to percepts, asserted that 'will, volition or mental resolve' alone is the fundamental reality. It must have flashed to him that because neither will or volition nor mental feelings or emotions can be called mere percepts it is justifiable or reasonable to give prominence to volition or will in life. If observed properly, it is not seen or experienced by anyone that among the three phenomena of will or volition, emotions or feelings and percepts — any one of them exists without desiderating the remaining two. It is not possible to imagine or conceive these independently without the knowledge or cognition of the one who deliberates upon them. It is not known how this philosopher established that the whole universe is a mere transaction of volition, a mere delusion.

Many more Western philosophers or thinkers have come and gone, but there is no scope for examining or considering the doctrines of each and every one of them. However, we will examine here the system or method of deliberation of one more among them, and that is **Bergson**. His doctrine is: "The Ultimate Reality is mere change alone; this flow of movement or change,

by virtue of ever new methods of creation, is continuously evolving itself. Both time and continuity are the Reality alone; to consider them to be mere delusion is wrong; the theory of cause and effect too is not proper, the Reality is not steady; to consider both change and movement to be a delusion is wrong. Knowledge, rather consciousness, is always of the form of change alone; the ever-changing knowledge or consciousness has the natural varieties of forms of feeling, intelligence and experience." This is his opinion in a nut-shell. How can this queer conclusion too be established in any other manner than on the basis, or with the support, of mere logic alone? How is it possible at all to imagine or conceive the phenomenon of 'change' without the help of a changeless consciousness? How can it at all be asserted that the consciousness which is the means of knowing or measuring the change is itself of the essential nature of change? If it is concluded that eternal change alone is the Reality, then it will have to be said that an absolute or non-related Reality can never be determined by any one, whosoever he may be, is it not?

It is quite clear and evident that all the systems or methods of deliberation which we have so far considered and others similar to these have determined or established their respective conclusions or doctrines by examining, scrutinizing through their own distinctive viewpoint only a part or one aspect of the Ultimate Reality indeed. For that reason alone, among these thinkers various groups or factions like protagonists of Monism and dualism, Realists and Idealists and Nihilists etc. to arise their partial or lop-sided viewpoint alone became the root cause. Why, even among the members of one group several internal factions have arisen, and every one among them have an aspiration of establishing, on the basis of their profound logical arguments, one and one Ultimate Reality alone acceptable to all others. In the Bible there is an anecdote which says that in a place called Shinar all the people assembled, constructed a fort and aspired to live within it with unity and camaraderie; but after sleeping overnight when they woke up in the morning their opinions had become so different and varied without any agreement mutually among themselves! It seems that chaotic state of affairs was called 'babel' — (Gen. xi). The jargon of the logical-minded thinkers and philosophers too has become such 'babel' only; for, one's opinion is not acceptable nor is it appreciated by another. For all such chaotic conditions, taking or adopting an incomplete and imperfect viewpoint alone is the root cause. Just as it becomes incomplete as also imperfect if a person is said to be a *Praanee* (one endowed with the vital force), *Vaktru* (one who speaks), *Chakshus* (one who sees), *Shroatru* (one who hears), *Mantru* (one who reasons out) etc., similarly all the philosophical systems which propound their teachings or doctrines by restricting their spheres of examination or deliberation to one partial aspect of life naturally become lop-sided, incomplete and imperfect indeed. Just as *Atman* (the Self), who pervades everything, connotes an all-consuming and all-comprehensive meaning, similarly that philosophy which deliberates upon the whole of the objective sphere in which right from the 'I' notion, which is

the focal point of all empirical transactions, to its corporeal associates like the intellect, memory, volition, pertaining to the psyche, and the senses embedded in the physique — all these are included becomes truly a complete, consummate, perfect philosophy; in fact, by virtue of such a profound teaching alone everything will be known, and this plenary, comprehensive viewpoint alone has been eulogised in the spiritual science of *Vedanta*. The true seeker will do well to pursue this *Pratyagdrishti* while trying to cognize or Intuit that Absolute Reality which is beyond all reasoning, logic or any kind of intellectual gymnastics. If this *Vedantic* approach is not adopted by philosophers and thinkers, then there is hardly any scope for attaining unanimity at any time about Reality.

IV. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE METHODOLOGY OF SHANKARA'S VEDANTA

The physical scientists in general, the Western thinkers and philosophers and the protagonists of various schools of philosophy in our country are all logic-minded alone; the experience that is a support for their logical disputations is a partial experience indeed. Because they have all pursued the *Paraagdrishti* (extroverted viewpoint) alone they have developed a fad, an addiction towards indulging in logical disputations supported by or based on partial experiences of life; consequently, one's philosophy is becoming more and more opposed to another's philosophy. This assessment we have arrived at as a result of our deliberation so far.

Among the philosophers or preachers of the Ultimate Reality some base their doctrines on a particular religious treatise or text, which they hold out as an authoritative source. There are many preceptors who have held out texts like the *Karma Kaanda* and the *Jnaana Kaanda* of the *Vedas* of the Hindus, *Avesta* of the Parsees, *Bible* of the Christians and Yahoosis, *Kuraan* of the Muslims and so on — as their respective authoritative texts and have argued out through earnest solicitation that their respective disputation alone is proper and justifiable. Merely by propounding a philosophical system based on logic so that there are no apparent contradictions in the tenets from the beginning to the end, that system does not become exclusively the final verdict; for, in the same manner it is possible for another preceptor to adopt another viewpoint so as to be able to propound his own philosophical treatise wherein there are no apparent contradictions throughout. Then in that event, we do not have any valid guidelines or means whatsoever of judging as to which of them is the right and proper system. In the same manner, just as those who have held their own religious treatises as authoritative sources argue with others, the latter also hold on to the authoritativeness of their

respective religious texts and thus these protagonists of various systems are seen clamouring and clashing among themselves and some times within their own conclaves; all these people have invariably followed logic or dialectics and have given it the pride of place in all their teachings.

On the other hand, if we turn our attention towards the deliberative methods of *Vedanta* we will find that in the pre-Shankara period too there were many preachers who were protagonists of *Advaita Vedanta* philosophy; all of them were believing the scriptures to be authoritative sources alone and were forwarding logical arguments in order to strengthen and substantiate their respective interpretations or commentaries. Even today those Vedantins who follow these commentaries and those Vedantins who oppose those teachings are both, based on their respective viewpoints, are interpreting and writing commentaries on the scriptural texts and have been trying to establish their own respective methodologies on the strength of logic alone. Thus logic, one's intellectual faculty of reasoning or inferring from the available sensory and psychic experiences and related data, has been deified, as it were, and nothing other than logical or that which is within the realm of reasoning is acceptable to these philosophers and thinkers in general. Hence it becomes quite relevant to consider the questions — "Among all these types of Vedantins is there any decisive means whatsoever to prove or establish that such and such a methodology alone is the correct, proper one? What are the special features or hallmarks which are implicit in the *Vedanta* belonging to the tradition followed by Shri (Adi) Shankara?"

Generally speaking, in the *Vedas* both the religious portions (i.e. *Karma Kaanda* and *Upaasana Kaanda*) and the *Upanishads* (i.e. *Jnaana Kaanda*) which are also found in those *Vedas* alone have been held as authoritative sources indeed. But with regard to the question — "For what reasons have we to accept the *Upanishads* as authoritative sources exclusively in deciding the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman*?" — there are differences of opinion among the protagonists of various schools of philosophy as well as among Vedantins. Some among them have acknowledged *Vedas* to be '*Aapta Vaakya*' (statements of our ancestors who are our well-wishers); it is their belief that just like the traditional religious texts other than the *Vedas*, the latter too — because they are the statements by omniscient Supreme Lord — are the authoritative and unquestionable sources. An answer from all people who are of this opinion or belief remains to be given to the important and searching question that — "Why don't these people with a broad-based outlook of catholicity equally accept the precepts of those who acknowledge the authority of the traditional methodology based on the scriptural texts of the *Vedas*, on the one hand, and the tenets of Muslims, who believe that their '*Koraan*' was bestowed upon Mohammed Paigambar by the Lord, as also the tenets of Christians, who believe that their '*Bible*' was written by the holymen who were blessed by the Lord?" Further, it will not be possible for these

people to give a convincing answer to the question that — “If among these scriptural texts which are reckoned as ‘*Aapta Vaakya*’ there exist mutual contradictions, then by which criterion should one judge and select a particular text alone to be the final authoritative source?” Some followers of *Karma Meemamsakas* (those thinkers who give more importance and prominence to the *Karma Kaanda* portions of the *Vedas*) used to assert in the manner — “Because the *Vedas* are ‘*Apourusheya*’ (a text given to humanity by the Lord Himself and hence of non-human origin), there cannot be any defects whatsoever — that are likely to be committed by any human being — to be found in these texts of divine origin; hence we affirm that the *Vedas* are the valid authoritative sources.” In the same manner, if the followers of other religious texts argue that their respective scriptures are ‘*Apourusheya*’ alone and are the works of the Lord alone, then there cannot be any unanimous solution to the problem of choosing or deciding as to which a particular religious text should finally be acknowledged as an authoritative source and why.

In the traditional method of teaching followed by Shri Shankara, an answer which is universally acceptable and quite natural and convincing has been given to the question — “Why are the *Vedantas* (*Upanishads*) considered to be authoritative sources?” “*Jnaapakam Shaastram Na Tu Kaarakam*” — meaning, “The *Shaastras* or scriptures do not create (an object which does not exist); they merely remind us (of that entity which really and eternally exists).” Because the scriptures, particularly the *Upanishads* which are to be found invariably in the *Jnaana Kaanda* portions of the *Vedas*, signify to the aspirant and help him cognize or Intuit the Reality as It is, they are said to be authoritative sources (*Pramaanas*). This is Shri Shankara’s ‘*Abhyupagama*’ (axiomatic assertion). Unlike in the case of a potter, a wheel, a wooden pole and clay — all these together go to make a pot, the *Shaastras* do not create afresh any object or entity. Just as the empirical valid means of perception (*Pratyaksha*) and inference (*Anumaana*) etc. are called ‘*Pramaanas*’ because they signify an object as it is, similarly the *Shaastras* (here in this context the *Upanishads*) are called the right *Pramaanas* to cognize *Brahman* or *Atman*, the Ultimate Reality, because they help cognize (Intuit) *Brahman* or *Atman* as It is. It should be understood that whichever *Pramaana* it may be, unless and until it helps us cognize its ‘*Prameya*’ (the object of knowledge) it cannot be called a *Pramaana* at all. In fact, that particular *Pramaana* alone is exclusively the valid means enabling us to cognize its particular *Prameya* and no other *Pramaana* can help us in this task. To wit, universally the eyes alone are the *Pramaanas* to see an object; the ears alone are the *Pramaana* to hear and so on; but their tasks cannot be interchanged at all. Here merely on that count alone, we acknowledge each of them as the correct *Pramaanas* for sight, hearing noise etc. There is no question whatsoever of believing in these transactions involving *Pratyaksha Pramaana*. When a thing or phenomenon that is known through a *Pramaana* is opposed to another experience or cognitive knowledge, that experience or knowledge which is falsified between

the two becomes invalid. Realizing all these truths, Shri Shankara has stated: "*Na Dharmajijnaasaamiva Shrutyaaadaya Eva Pramaanam Brahmajijnaasaayaam; Kin Tu Shrutyaaadayo(s)nubhavaadayascha Yathaa Sambhavamihha Pramaanam; Anubhavaavasaanatwaat; Bhootavastuvishayatwaachha Brahmavidyaayaaha*" — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 1-1-2). Meaning: "Unlike in the case of one's deliberation with regard to *Dharma* (religious tenets or beliefs), the *Shaastras* alone are the valid means, with regard to the cognition or Intuition of *Brahman* (the Ultimate Reality behind the universe and the souls), the *Shaastras* alone are not the valid means; on the other hand, according to the context and the topic of deliberation in a particular *Prakarana* or chapter the *Shaastras* as well as one's '*Anubhava*' (Intuitive experience) are the valid means; (in the ultimate analysis) *Brahmajijnaasa* (one's deliberation to find out *Brahman*) culminates in *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience) and this *Brahman* is truly a '*Bhoota Vastu*' (existing Entity or Reality)." In the *Karma Kaanda* of the *Vedas* the various rituals are stated to bear fruits in other worlds and in another period of time, and hence with regard to such invisible fruits of rituals the *Shaastras* alone may be the *Pramaana*; but because *Brahman Vidya* (Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* or Self), culminates in Intuitive experience (*Anubhava*) here and now as signified by the *Shaastras* as the Reality which ever exists, both the *Shrutis* (scriptures) and '*Anubhava*' (Intuitive experience) and other valid aids or accessories for the latter (like *Anubhavaanga Tarka* or logic based on universal experiences) are *Pramaana* here. Thus it amounts to saying — "Because the Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman*, which the *Vedantas* or *Upanishads* teach is One which can be universally and always cognized or Intuited readily, the statement which signifies and helps cognize that Entity can be, for all practical purposes, called a *Pramaana*." When observed in this perspective and viewpoint it becomes evident that in Shri Shankara's opinion irrespective of which sect or which scripture helps one to cognize this Ultimate Reality of Self will necessarily have to be accepted as the *Pramaana* which is authoritative too. For this reason alone, he has stated: "*Paramatamapratisiddham Anumatam Bhavati*" — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 2-4-12). Meaning: "If we do not refute others' teaching (in any particular aspect) it becomes acceptable to us indeed." This is analogous to the proposition of certain commentators on logical texts to the effect that in the matter of '*Aapta Vaakya*' there is no distinction to be made whether the well-wishers are *Aryans* (members of noble families showing greatness of character and moral elevation) or *Mlechhas* (heathens).

Anyway, it is quite evident now that the teaching — "*Anubhava* (Intuitive experience) is the touchstone to test the veracity of the *Shaastra* statements and their being authoritative sources"— is a special feature of the system or methodology of teaching adopted by Shri Shankaraachaarya. In the above statement of his, namely, "*Anubhavaadayascha*" — the words '*Aadayaha*' and '*Cha*', meaning 'etc.' and 'also', respectively, indicate that in addition to *Shaastra* statements (*Vaakyas*) Intuitive experience and the like, meaning,

'*Anubhavaanga Tarka*' (logic in keeping with universal Intuitive experience) are also equally *Pramaanas*. This purports to say that here in this context logic which is not at variance with everyone's Intuitive experience can be invoked. In fact, logic which is not in consonance with everyone's (Intuitive) experience can never be called rational or proper; on the other hand, logicians themselves will brand it as 'illogical' and untenable and discard it. There is a humorous story that is narrated to bring home the moral of this teaching. A student of Sanskrit grammar came across a sentence like "*Bhattasya Katyaam Sarataha Pravishtaha*"; the student literally and purely from the point of view of grammar considered the case, number, gender and syntax etc. of the words and translated it in the manner: "A chameleon entered into the waist of a scholar." With this the grammar-minded student was satisfied, but the logic-minded student felt that this meaning is totally irrational and such an event to occur, it is not possible at all. He reasoned out that such an event is not at all in agreement with our experience. In the same manner, a statement may signify any meaning by interpreting it in a particular way, but the important purport here must necessarily be to see whether it is rational and feasible. Although the topic taken up for logical disputation is without any apparent contradictions from the beginning to the end, the conclusion that is drawn from that logical deliberation cannot be said to be invariably a philosophical truth or an irrefutable final teaching; for, if there are two philosophical teachings both of which are in consonance with logical disputations and arguments, it can never be deduced or decided that, on the basis of the single, mere premise of both those tenets being devoid of any contradictions from beginning to end in their expositions, both of them are correct and proper.

The language used by *Tarka Shaastras* (logical treatises) in vogue in our country is of two varieties. The language of ancient system of logic which is used in *Sootra Bhaashya*, *Vaartikas* etc. is akin to the language used by Shri Shankara in his extant *Bhaashyas* or commentaries on *Vedanta* texts like the *Upanishads*, *Geeta* and *Brahma Sootras* (together called *Prasthaana Traya*). But in recent times, the language used by the logicians in our country differs from the old in many respects and is to be found in works like — '*Chintaamani Deedhiti*', '*Gaadaadhari*' etc. These texts are engaged and engrossed mostly in arranging or formulating drawn-out proto-type sentences with a view to showing the ridiculousness of the arguments of the opponents in various ways and depicting the areas of ambiguity or obscure expressions or statements so as to be able to conquer or score over the opponents by disputation. There are similar attempts galore amounting to an indulgent exercise in futility. With the result, modern logicians have accepted this language replete with technical terminology or jargon of the type — "*Avachhedakaavachhinna*" (that is, distinctive feature excluded from all other things by the properties predicated of it) and "*Niroopyaniroopakabhaava*" (that is, the thing or being — 'that which is defined' and 'that which defines it'). Because of the reason that in recent times the protagonists of *Dvaita Vedanta*

and *Advaita Vedanta* schools of philosophy, while engaged in argument with each other, adopt or follow this modern style of a language brought into vogue by this modern system of logic, which has formulated its own peculiar and exclusive technical terminology used more and more in spiritual deliberations, a sad state of affairs has come to pass prompting many people to discard the rudimentary dictum or rule of law that logic must necessarily be in consonance with universal experience. It is regrettable, nay reprehensible, that the uninitiated common run of people are taken in by this gimcrackery indulged in by modern logician-philosophers and show, unconsciously though, an ever-increasing admiration for this dry, fallacious logic in purely spiritual matters which are profoundly esoteric and Intuitive where logic formulated by any intellect cannot stand the test of '*Anubhava*'. Consequently, as a baneful effect of this modern trend the methodology and deliberation of present-day Vedantins has deviated and digressed so far away from its proper course as to discard the prime principle of Shri Shankara that in the study of *Vedanta* philosophy and its Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* the scriptural texts like the *Upanishads* alone are the valid means (*Pramaana*). The present-day Vedantins take a vain pride in prattling about the whole gamut of modern logical jargon and cliché. What a pity this!

Thus, logic which was, in the ancient times (when Shri Shankara wrote his *Bhaashyas* on the *Prasthaana Trayi*), thriving in the shadow of Intuitive experience alone — whether it was in the beginning, in the middle or in the end parts of any deliberation — that 'science of logic' unfortunately has now become a prominent and helpful device for the modern philosophers (many of whom address themselves as 'Vedantins') to foist all sorts of imaginary and hypothetical defects or faults on Shri Shankara's pristine pure *Vedanta* which was exclusively based on Intuition and, in a secondary sense, on Intuitive reasoning (*Anubhavaanga Tarka*). The defects are said to be of the type of: "*Avyapti*" (inadequate extension or pervasion of a proposition — one of the three defects of definition); "*Ativyapti*" (unwarranted extension of a definition to things or phenomena not intended to be defined by it); "*Asambhava*" (something which is improbable or unlikely to occur); "*Aatmaashraya*" (dependent upon or within the purview of *Atman* or the Self); "*Anyoanyaashraya*" (dependent upon each other) and "*Chakrakaapatti*" (decisions arrived at by arguing in circles or labyrinthine argumentation). Naturally, because the present-day '*Shaastraas*' or *Vedantic* treatises have digressed far too far from '*Anubhava*', which is universal but at the same time Absolute, Transcendental beyond time-space-causation categories which are rudimentary for the mind to function, today we have reached a pitiable predicament when anybody can pick sentences which he wants in the canonical scriptural texts to substantiate any whimsical theory as *Vedantic* philosophy. So much so, all the shades and varieties of *Vedanta* are established merely based on quoting certain sentences from the scriptures as examples and asserting in the manner — "Because it is stated — '*Ekameवाद्वैतेयम्*' — *Advaita* is established;

'Dvaa Suparnaa' — proves *Dvaita*; and *'Ya Aatmani Tishthan'* — establishes *Vishishthaadvaita* — and further to substantiate these their own whimsical conclusions they seek these present-day logical arguments and profess that this kind of method alone is the genuine *Vedanta*. Evidently, in these systems *'Anubhava'* is the worst casualty.

As if this decadent trend in *Vedantic* circles was not enough, the front-line Vedantins of today are showing an increasing addiction or a fad of resorting to the methodologies expounded by highly controversial schools of *'Bhaamati'* and *'Vivarana'* in *Vedanta*, and the disputants keep on arguing in the manner — “According to the *Bhaamati* approach it is like this, but according to the *Vivarana* approach it is like this; according to the theory of *Drishti Shrishti* it is like this, but according to the *Shrishti Drishti* theory it is like this; this is the opinion of the protagonists of *'Avachheda Vaada'*, while this is the opinion of the *'Pratibimbavaadins'* and so on and so forth.” Showing total indifference to the golden rule which Shri Shankara had enunciated in his *Sootra Bhaashya* 1-4-15 that — “*Kriyaayaamiva Vastuni Vikalpasya Asambhavaat*”, meaning, “With regard to an action although the doubt of the type — ‘It can be done this way or it can also be done that way’ — can arise, one cannot possibly doubt or think with regard to a substance (*Vastu*) or an entity in the manner — ‘It can exist in this way, as also in that way’ — has become almost the hallmark of *Vedantic* erudition or scholasticism! In the modern treatise — “*Shatabhooshani*”, which is recently written in reply to a former work — “*Shatadooshani*”, by *Vedantadeshika* (which is also highly logic-oriented) is a case in point where in all such different methodologies of various schools of philosophy are enumerated and exemplified. In complete contrast to the *Mundaka Upanishad* statement: “*Vedaantavijnaana Sunischitaarthaaha*”, meaning, “In *Vedanta* philosophy the Intuitive knowledge of the Reality which is the subject-matter must become fully established beyond doubt (and fully convincing)” — (*Mundaka* 3-2-6), these present-day scholars of *Vedanta* have split up this philosophical science — just as it has happened in the case of empirical scientists propounding all kinds of mutually contradictory theories — into various brands and are leading the aspirants into dark and dangerous blind alleys. Their deity seems to be ‘Logic or Dialectics’ alone! under these chaotic circumstances, it become almost a crying need for those who are genuinely interested in Shri Shankara’s pristine pure *Vedanta* and who seek real solace in attaining Beatitude here and now to go into serious and searching questions like — “What are the special features of genuine *Advaita Vedanta* philosophy as propounded by Shri Shankara in his extant *Bhaashyas*?”; “What is meant by *Tarka*, and what are its limitations?”; “Which *Shaastra* or scriptural text can be called a genuine authoritative source?”; “Which is that phenomenon called *'Anubhava'* referred to by Shri Shankara in his extant *Bhaashyas*?”

The genuine aspirant should without fail attain the Intuitive experience here and now in this very life span as mentioned in the scriptural texts in

the following manner: "*Abhayam Vai Janaka Praaptoasi*" — (*Brihadaaran-yaka* 4-2-4), meaning, "Oh Janaka, you have attained fearlessness, indeed"; "*Taddhaasya Vijajnou*" — (*Chhaandogya* 6-16-3), meaning, "He (his son Swetaketu) understood the purport of his father's (Uddaalaka's) spiritual instructions and attained that Intuitive experience (Self-Knowledge)"; "*Tadyoa Yoa Devaanaam Pratyabudhyata Sa Eva Tadabhavattatharsheenaam Tathaa Manushyaanaam Taddhaitatpashyan Rishirvaamadevaha Prati-pade(s)ham Manurabhavam Sooryascheti, Tadidamapyetarhi Ya Evam Veddaham Brahmaasmeeti Sa Idam Sarvam Bhavati Tasya Ha Na Devascha Naabhootyaa Eeshate*" — (*Brihadaaranyaka* 1-4-10) — meaning, "Whosoever among the *Devatas* (deities) cognized in the manner — 'I am *Brahman* alone' — he alone became That Reality; the same in the case of Rishis, in the case of human beings; having cognized (Intuitied) this reality of *Brahman*, Rishi *Vaamadeva* came to realize in the manner — 'I myself became *Manu*, became the Sun too'; even today one who cognizes in the manner — 'I am myself *Brahman*' — he becomes all this; to prevent one from becoming everything, it is not possible even for the *Devatas*." When one who is hungry is told by another (who is trustworthy) in the manner — "Food is ready" — and if the former doubts in the manner — "There is no rice, then how is it possible for the food to be ready?"; further, if a third person (who is logical-minded) gives an answer to explain it away in the manner — "Then, an evil spirit must have eaten it away" — merely on the basis of such vain statements or doubts can the real hunger of that person be removed?

The need of the hour is not the mind-boggling logical disputations or squabbles in which the present-day Vedantins indulge, but we should earnestly seek a practical path by following which we can attain to that Reality of *Brahman* — which is the prime goal of all human existence (*Purushaartha*). It should be evident by now that the true seeker of *Vedantic* Reality will not at all rest satisfied by merely reading the scriptural texts perfunctorily just as common people read newspapers or novels. Those of us in whom this 'spiritual hunger' is created should without much loss of time and effort deliberate upon, with utmost introspection and discrimination, the real import of the *Vedantic* teaching that — "The seed form of *Samsaara* (transmigratory life) comprises *Avidya*, *Kaama* and *Karma*, and merely by gaining *Jnaana* (Self-Knowledge or Intuitive experience of *Atman*) this *Samsaara* disappears." Our aim should be directed towards getting rid of *Ashaanti* (disquietude) and *Duhkha* (misery) and achieving *Shaanti* (equanimity) and *Sukha* (blissful mental state). We should ever be alert and introspective to check 'whether we have pragmatically overcome the ravages of *Duhkha* and *Samsaara*; whether we have attained the Intuitive experience of the Self, which is taught as the *Purushaartha*'. It should further be discerned that this spiritual Self-Knowledge (Intuition) is not rooted so much in books as it is in one's pure heart or mind. Shri Shankaraachaarya in his *Sootra Bhaashya* 2-1-1 has affirmed that — "The scriptures alone are the valid means

(Pramaana) in the matter of extra-sensorial truths, just as the brilliant Sun is the valid means to illumine any form (of any object) to be perceived by us". The scriptures are, in truth, like the guiding posts which should enable us to 'trek the path' and be able to cognize (Intuit) the Reality of our own Self as It is. Only then, we can be sure that the scriptures are *Pramaanas*. Any logical devices we use should necessarily be in consonance with Intuitive experience which is universal and consummate (plenary) and help us reach nearer to our Self or Pure Consciousness, beyond and subtler than our 'I' notion. In fact, this latter is merely a misconception, an illusion, a reflection of the real Self, which is truly our essence of Being. This alone is the special feature of Shri Shankara's unique methodology. Let us then pray and invoke the blessings and grace of Adi Shankara in this regard: "*Shrutismriti Puraanaamaalayam Karunaalayam; Namaami Bhagavatpaadashankaram Loakashankaram.*"

V. SHAASTRA, PRAMAANA AND TARKA ACCEPTABLE TO VEDANTA

The word '*Tarka*' or logic is used by disputants in two senses. One kind of logic is of the type — "Because there is smoke there must be fire." As we all have found that wherever there is smoke there is always fire in our workaday world, on the basis of a characteristic vestige or distinctive mark of any smoke being perceived by us, we determine that there must necessarily exist its cause, namely fire. The logic which decides in this manner is called '*Anumaana*' (inference). When a doubt of the type — "Whether the surmise made by virtue of this kind of inference is proper or not?" — arises in one's mind and it is further enhanced by the inquiry of the type — "Where there is smoke, why should there always be fire?" — the disputant uses a supplementary logical argument — "If there is no fire (cause), then the smoke too (its effect) cannot exist" — and thus establishes that his inference was correct. This is another type of logic called 'syllogism'. Thus even after a theoretical concept is established by means of these two kinds of Logic, viz. inference and syllogistic supplementary argument, that experience of a phenomenon is not gained by us directly. By this reasoning or logical argumentation the concept — 'Such a thing must necessarily be there' — merely becomes established. That is all. If that perceived characteristic feature or sign is not actually smoke (as surmised), the logical conclusion drawn on syllogistic or inferential reasoning may be wrong. In the alternative, when we argue in this manner if the rule that we follow is wrong; then also our conclusion drawn may be wrong; for example, 'wherever there is fire there invariably smoke exists' — suppose this rule is contrary to perception; then the conclusion or surmise that — 'Because here we see the fire and therefore there must be smoke' — will also be wrong indeed.

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Anyway, while signifying an object externally even logic has to face the problems of 'semblances of reason'. In *Vedanta*, however, such a defective or inferential logic has not been relied upon. The fruits of *Karma* or *Vedic* rituals and *Upaasanas* which the believers in the religious texts refer to are also in the external world alone. As the fruits mentioned in the scriptural texts have necessarily to accrue in the future, it is not possible to determine whether those very fruits will accrue or not (just as we ascertain this fact in accordance with our experience here and now). For that reason alone, in the matter of the fruits or results that accrue externally there may be differences of opinion mutually among the various disputants. An anecdote which Swami Vivekananda had mentioned with regard to religious belief may be remembered here: A missionary derisively asked a villager — "If I hit this your idol of your deity (say, Hanuman) with a cane what will it do to me?" (The padre's real purport in asking the question was to drive home the idea that the idol which the villager believed to be a deity, was in reality insentient as it is made of stone and hence it could not grant any fruit whatsoever). But that villager (who was clever enough) counter-questioned the padre — "If I abuse your Christ what will happen to me?" The missionary instantly replied: "He will punish you in the other world." Pat came the reply to the padre's earlier question from the villager: "Our this deity too will punish you in the other world only." Whatever kind of fruits 'in the other worlds' as stated here may be, since those fruits can never be possibly checked against one's actual experience here they can never be ascertained to be 'true' or 'not true'.

The Reality that is propounded in *Vedantic* texts and the final fruit of *Moaksha* or Beatitude that is mentioned to accrue therein by Intuiting or cognizing that Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* is not this kind of an imagination or a surmise. In the teaching of Shri Shankara, the scriptural statement that — "*Jnaapakam Shaastram Na Tu Kaarakam*" (*Brihadaaranyaka* 1-4-10) implies that the *Shaastras* merely signify that Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* which already exists and is eternal as It is. In fact, the scriptural texts which the *Meemaamsakas*, who are experts in etymological science, have acknowledged as authoritative sources (*Apourusheya*) are also of the nature of reminders alone; for, those scriptural texts in the *Karma Kaanda* and *Upaasana Kaanda* remind their adherents of the relationship of the means, viz. the spiritual practices like *Karmas* and *Upaasanas*, and their ends, viz. their respective fruits in other worlds. Evidently, these future other-worldly fruits cannot be ascertained against the yardstick of one's experience now. But in the *Vedantic Jnaana Kaanda* texts the Pure Being-Consciousness of *Atman* is expounded as the Ultimate Reality, which is ever an existing entity and its (Intuitive) experience here and now itself is the fruit that is mentioned. In truth, in Intuiting one's own *Atman* both the spiritual means and end converge and coalesce, so to speak.

Because *Brahman*, which the *Vedantic* texts propound to be known or cognized as one's own innate or innermost Self, is invariably '*Aparoaksha*'

(immediate) and hence It does not desiderate any *Pramaana* whatsoever; in truth, It is itself illumining (and pervading) all *Pramaanas* (of the empirical transactions) and so no valid means can ever help 'objectify', much less 'illumine', *Brahman*. In this context, to the question — "For establishing *Brahman* it has been affirmed that *Shaastras* alone are the proper valid means and authoritative sources; but now that statement is contradicted, is it not? Then, what is meant by the earlier affirmation?" — the answer given by Shri Shankara is: "Because *Brahman* is verily our *Atman*, It is *Swayam Siddha* (self-established and self-effulgent)." In truth, whenever *Atman* desires to know anything other than himself he uses the *Pramaanas* to establish the *Prameya*, and in this scheme of things *Atman*, the *Pramaatru*, who is self-established and who should necessarily exist prior to the advent and usage of the *Pramaanas*, whatever they may be, how can it be possible at all to expect any *Pramaana* for the establishment of *Atman*, who is the starting focal point of all empirical transactions? Thus though *Brahman* (the Ultimate Reality) stands ever established as the Self of everyone (universally), there exist many differences of opinion with regard to the question — "What or which is this '*Atman*'?" Therefore, it has become very essential now to determine and establish as to what exactly is the essential nature of *Atman*. Now, how can the scriptures, which are also in the category of the *Pramaanas*, solve this dilemmatic problem, especially when the *Shaastras* affirm that — "*Atman* can never be the *Prameya* for any *Pramaana*; for, *Atman* is '*Aprameya*', needing no *Pramaana*." Shri Shankara solves this knotty problem in the manner — "*Na Hi Shaastramidamtayaa Vishaya-Bhootam Brahma Pratipaadayati; Kin Tarhi Pratyagaatmatwena Avishayatayaa Pratipaadayat Avidyaakalpitam Vedyā Veditru Vedaadi Bhedam Apanayati*" — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 1-1-4), meaning, "The *Shaastras* do not signify *Brahman* in the manner — 'It is this particular thing' — by objectifying It; on the other hand, they teach us that It is nothing but our *Pratyagaatman* (our innermost Self) alone; further, by means of bringing home the truth that — '*Brahman* is not at all an object (*Prameya*) to any *Pramaana*' — the scriptures falsify or help us get rid of the differences of the type of *Veditru* (the knower or cognizer), *Vedana* (the valid means of knowledge or cognition) and *Vedyā* (the object of knowledge or cognition) — all of which are projected by *Avidya*." On the basis of three counts viz. (a) the empirical triad of *Pramaatru-Pramaana-Prameya* is itself a projection of *Avidya*; (b) the Reality of *Atman* (*Brahman*) can never be known or cognized through any *Pramaana* whatsoever; (c) when this divisive empirical transaction involving the triad of *Pramaatru-Pramaana-Prameya* does not exist there is no scope for any doubt of any kind to subsist and thereby the *Shaastras* have indirectly but quite significantly helped us Intuit the Reality that cannot be falsified or refuted ever and by anybody — we all can acknowledge the *Shaastras* (scriptures) as a '*Pramaana*' to that extent and in that particular sense.

If observed properly, it would become evident that because *Atman* is not at all a '*Prameya*' and never can be one, there is no need or any question of Him

having a *Pramaana* whatsoever. In truth, any *Pramaana* should invariably illumine and show that particular object which is different or away from us and exists externally, but because of certain hindrance or hurdle that object is not 'known' or 'perceived' by us. On the other hand, *Brahman* (the Ultimate Reality) is verily our *Atman* alone; therefore, there is no need of a *Pramaana* for It at all. To wit, *Brahman* or *Atman* as the Absolute Reality is not external (*Paroaksha*) to our Being, but our very core of Being; hence, there is no question of cognizing It with the aid of any extraneous *Pramaana*. If observed properly from the standpoint of *Atman* (Pure, Absolute Consciousness) there does not 'really' exist any thing second to Itself and hence there is once again no question of any hindrance or hurdle in Its path of cognizing or intuiting. Can any sane person make any sense out of a statement like — "We are far away from ourselves (our real Being) because of a particular hindrance or hurdle"? For this reason too, there cannot arise any need for a *Pramaana* for *Atman*. Apart from all these valid reasons, there still is one more important and strong reason for not anticipating any *Pramaana* in order to establish the 'existence' or 'reality' of *Atman* through a *Pramaana*. That is, *Atman* is of the essential nature of eternally — a term used in *Vedantic* parlance with the special meaning of 'beyond the time and space and causation categories', devoid of any temporal, spatial and causal considerations — existing Consciousness which is Itself self-established and self-effulgent Reality. To wit, by the 'light' of *Atman's* Pure, Absolute Consciousness alone we are all 'cognizing' or 'perceiving' everything. Our mind and senses perceiving the external objects, our entire gamut of knowledge, including the terrestrial sources of light like the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, are themselves illumining other objects devoid of that kind of light; all the psychic experiences (*Vedanas*) like emotions, feelings, thoughts, inferences and the like — all these are made possible by virtue of that 'Light' of all lights, knowledges and experiences, which in truth is the Pure Consciousness of *Atman* alone. It need not be gainsaid then that all our activities and transactions, whether they are physical or psychic, are being carried out 'in the light of that Pure Consciousness of *Atman*' alone. If this eternal truth is discerned, then how can any need or question of a *Pramaana* to affirm or confirm this self-effulgent and self-established Reality (*Nitya Swayam Prakaasha Swaroopa*) arise at all? While we are seeing a sea-shell, at that moment alone because the delusion of the appearance of silver is created, we say that we are not seeing the sea-shell, is it not? In that illustration, the sea-shell is outside us; but *Brahman* or *Atman* is our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness indeed. Hence, here in this case apart from the *Pramaatrutwa* or cognizership (i.e. our 'I' notion) that is super-imposed or projected by *Avidya* there is no possibility of any other hindrance or cover whatsoever existing to shield or hide *Brahman*. Therefore, because of this reason alone that *Shaastras* falsify or sublate this *Pramaatrutwa*, we say, for name-sake, that *Shaastras* are the *Pramaana* for *Brahman*; that is all. Thus *Aatmajnaana* (Pure Consciousness of the Self) is '*Prasiddha*', meaning self-established and self-effulgent, not desiderating any action or *Saadhana*

or supplementary aid whatsoever; in fact, in the *Geeta Bhaashya* Shri Shankara has written that — “The seeker should sublimate or give up his *Aatmabuddhi* (innate identification) in (superimposing the reality of *Atman* on) *Anaatman* (not-self)” — (*Geeta Bhaashya* 18-50). It is his fervent opinion that *Shaastras* are ‘*Antya Pramaana*’ (the final valid means). He explains in that context that *Shaastras* falsify all our empirical transactions themselves; further they signify that they themselves are not any more *Pramaanas*, as their prime purport of signifying *Atman* or *Brahman* has come to fruition; finally, they bring home the Intuitive experience of *Atman* being self-established and self-effulgent (*Swayam Siddha*) and to that extent and in that particular sense alone they can be called ‘*Pramaana*’ or ‘*Antya Pramaana*’.

Both the *Meemaamsakas* (Jaimini school) and the logicians (*Taarkikas*) believe that *Atman* is an object for the cognition of ‘I’. The truth that quite different from and subtler than this ‘I’ notion there exists a ‘*Saakshi*’ (Witnessing Principle) who is really *Atman*, the core of Being Consciousness of everyone (nay, everything) is not known or realized either by those people or any other class of thinkers or philosophers. “*Na Hyahampratyayavishaya-kartruvyatirekena Tatsaakshee Sarvabhootasthaha Sama Ekaha Kootasthanyaha Purusho Vidhikaanda Tarkasamaye Vaa Kenachidadhigataha*” — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 1-1-4) — meaning “The *Kootastha Atman* or the immutable Self, propounded by the *Vedantas* (*Upanishads*), is quite different from the *Atman* (self) of the form of *Kartru* (doer or agent of action), who is the object of the ‘I’ notion; this *Kootastha Atman* is the *Saakshi* (Witnessing Principle or Consciousness) of this *Kartru* and exists as the innermost core of Being of all creatures, but He is not known by anyone who seeks Him in either *Vidhi Kaanda* (the ritualistic portions of the *Vedas*) or *Tarka Shaastras*.” Thus Shri Shankara has expressed very clearly in his *Sootra Bhaashya*. One special feature of his methodology of teaching is that — “Such an *Atman*, who is not at all an object for any kind of *Pramaana* whatsoever but who is *Swataha Siddha* (self-established) and non-dual, can be cognized or Intuited exclusively to culminate in one’s own *Anubhava* or Pure Being-Consciousness.” Or, in the alternative, it will be still more proper if, instead of saying that ‘*Anubhava*’ or Intuitive experience is a *Pramaana* for *Atman*, it is discerned that *Atman* Himself is ‘*Anubhavaswaroopa*’ (of the very essence of Intuitive experience or Pure Being-Consciousness). In Sanskrit lexicon the word ‘*Veda*’ connotes ‘*Yena Vetti*’, meaning, that by which one cognizes or Intuits; in this sense, the very essence of ‘*Vedas*’ is nothing but *Atman* alone. For this reason alone, both the eternity (*Nityatwa*) and validity (*Praamaanyatwa*) of the *Vedas* have been established to be irrefutable. This indeed is the essence of the *Shaastraic* validity.

Let us consider the topic of *Tarka*. It is a firm belief of the logicians that their ‘science of *Tarka* or Logic’ helps infer or predict something that is not perceivable (*Adrishta*) just now from the data collected from the present

perceived (*Drishta*) facts. Because of the reason that *Atman*, being neither an object for perception nor for mental inference, remains eternally as the '*Dr̥k*' (the Witnessing Observer), the above-mentioned *Tarka* is of no avail in determining the essential nature of *Atman*. For this reason alone, in *Vedanta* such a type of empirical methodology of pure logic or dialectics is not utilized. This has already been explained previously. In the matter of *Praamaanya* or validity there exists a very wide difference of opinion between the various religious texts of the numerous sects and schools of philosophy and their respective methodology in their bid to justify their own tenets, on the one hand, and *Vedantic* texts and their unique methodology. In the same manner, there exists a Himalayan difference between the logic or dialectics that the various thinkers and philosophers press into service to propound their own respective doctrines or theories, on the one hand, and the *Tarka* that is used by Vedantins. In this context, Shri Shankara opines that — "*Shrutyānugraheeta Eva Hyatra Tarkao(s)nubhavaangatwena Aashreeyate*" — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 2-1-6) — meaning, "The logic that is indicated by the *Shrutis* is itself adopted here (in *Vedanta*) as subservient to, or in consonance with, Intuitive experience (*Anubhavaanga Tarka*)." Of course, there are some instances to be found in the *Shrutis* wherein some logical arguments are analogous, though seemingly, to inferential logic in their outward form or structure and to intellectual reasoning; but there is no scope to reckon in the manner — "In all such instances only the valid means of inferential logic has been used." For instance, in *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* it is stated that — "In obedience to the commandments of this *Paramaatman* or Supreme Self, defined as '*Akshara*' or immutable, imperishable, the celestial bodies like Sun, Moon etc. are performing their duties perennially; the earth and the celestial regions are held firm in their respective positions; the parts of time pass off eternally; the rivers are flowing in their known directions; the philanthropists are eligible for the people's praise" — etc. in order to justify logically the existence of *Paramaatman* as the Lord Creator. In these contexts it is not possible to assert that all these are inferences which are acceptable to logicians at all; for, the adepts in logic may point out defects of some kind or other in such statements. But because this *Paramaatman* called *Akshara* is our own *Atman* alone, for the purposes of establishing the existence of *Atman* whichever type of inference can ever become *Pramaana* and how will it be possible at all?

However, the logic that is approved by the *Shrutis* for the purposes of signifying the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness of *Atman* is of a different type altogether. In support of this fact, Shri Shankara has given two illustrations in his *Sootra Bhaashya* 2-1-6, viz. — "*Swapnaantabuddhaanta-yoarubhayoah Itaretaravyabhicharaat Aatmanoa(s)nanwaagatatwam Samprasaade Cha Prapanchaparityaagena Sadaatmanaa Sampatteh Nishprapancha Sadaatmatwam; Prapanchasya Brahmaprabhavatwaat Kaarya*

Kaarana Ananyatwa Nyaayena Brahmaavyatirekaha — Ityevamjaateeyakaha — (Sootra Bhaashya 2-1-6) — meaning, "Because of the reasons that — 'since dream and waking are getting separated from each other (and their inherent defects) they are not affecting *Atman* at all; in deep sleep being devoid of the world of duality he has merged (or become one) with *Atman* of the essential nature of Pure Being and hence *Atman* is in His essential nature world-less Pure Being; since the world has per force emanated from *Brahman*, by virtue of the axiom that the categories of effect and cause are not different, the world is, in truth, not something different from *Brahman*' — only such types of *Shrutyanyugraheeta Tarka* (logic in consonance with scriptural directives) are used here." Another *Upanishadic* sentence runs like — "*Swapnaantam Jaagaritaantam Choabhou Yenaanupashyati; Mahaantam Vibhumaatmaanam Matwaa Dheeroa Na Shoachati*" — (Katha 2-1-4) — meaning, "By whom we cognize both the waking and the dream — He alone is *Atman* who is the all-pervading Lord; the wise discriminative person who cognizes this truth does not grieve (or suffer)." Here in this context, just as the logicians take smoke as the sign or symptom for the existence of fire — in *Vedanta*, assuming waking and dream as the characteristic symptoms or signs, it has not been taught that — "One who cognizes both these He alone is *Atman*"; instead, it is taught that — "One should Intuit directly that the Witnessing Pure Consciousness who or which has pervaded both these states is, in truth, one's *Atman*." Here the *Jneya* (the object to be Intuited) is our *Atman* alone; but as in the case of inferential logic this *Jneya Brahman* or *Atman* is not *Paroaksha* (external to or other than our Being). On the basis of the symptoms or signs we do not discriminate about the *Jneya*; instead, making the symptoms themselves a pretext, we directly Intuit the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness of the *Jnaatru* (the cognizer) himself. Although this kind of ratiocination or Intuitive discerning or discrimination has apparently the form of inference, in truth it is not inference at all; for, here in this context both the *Linga Jnaana* (knowledge of the symptoms) and the *Vyaapti Jnaana* (knowledge of invariable or universal concomitance) are not at all the instruments or means for Intuitive knowledge or experience. In the deep sleep *Atman* exists, but the world of duality does not exist; therefore, being devoid of the world of duality is *Atman's* essential nature of Being. The world of duality emanates or evolves out of *Atman* alone and appears in the waking as well as the dream; but the world does not at all exist apart from *Atman*. Therefore, the world, really in its essence of Being, is *Brahman* alone — this is one kind of *Vedantic* logic. In this logic (which is Intuitive and not intellectual) it will be evident now that the logic that adopts or follows the direct Intuitive experience alone is indicated, but not the empirical inferential logic.

In any case, *Atman* is self-established; the statement that — "The scriptures teach *Atman* after sublating all those things or phenomena that are superimposed upon, or misconceived in, *Atman*" — is also a mere formality

as part of a device. For, even that valid means of *Shaastra* is illumined or made perceivable by *Atman* alone. Even the statement that — "On the pretexts of deliberations on universal experiences like the dream, the waking and the world, logic helps us remember *Atman*" — is also a mere formality. For, the states and the world within them too are believed to be true and all such 'beliefs' are established on the strength of Pure Consciousness of *Atman*; in fact, logic itself — whatever kind of intellectual deliberation it may be — is illumined and recognized by *Atman* (the Pure Consciousness) alone. Why speak more? The whole gamut of *Anaatman* (not-self) concepts is established on the substrate of *Atman's* Pure Consciousness alone. Therefore, to say that — "That Reality we establish on the basis of *Shaastra* and *Tarka*" — is nothing but a mere formality.

Now, let us consider the question of various ideologies. Vedantins forward their arguments primarily for the purpose of reminding the seekers of the Ultimate Reality of *Atman* on the strength of logic subservient to, or in consonance with, Intuitive experience but not merely to refute others' teachings or doctrines; nor is it merely to establish, by way of propaganda, their own brand of philosophy. For, there is no need for refuting others' tenets; all of them belong to the categories coming under the one head of '*Anaatman*' (not-self), which is of the essential nature of misconception. Since what is supposed to be the objective of our 'school of philosophy' is self-established and self-effulgent *Atman* (Pure Consciousness), there is no need whatsoever for 'establishing' it. Observed from this Absolute (Intuitive) viewpoint, it will have to be said that one who endeavours to refute others' opinions or doctrines (and makes this a regular habit) has indeed no support of Self-Knowledge (Intuitive experience of the Self as Pure non-dual Consciousness). The statements in *Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad* to the effect that *Yajnavalkya* defeated other *Brahmins* or scholars in arguments by means of *Jalpanyaaya* (logical debate or wrangling discussion) also should be understood in this above manner only. The purport of the scriptures indicating as if there ensued a debate between *Yajnavalkya* and other *Brahmins* in the form of an anecdote of an ancient event of dialectical wrangling as well as the fact that in such a debate *Yajnavalkya* was eventually victorious is only to suggest to people like us, who indulge in all kinds of verbal warfare in our day-to-day life, to utilize that faculty of intellectual reasoning in discerning the scriptural methodology, pressing into service a special kind of Intuitive formal reasoning culminating in Intuitive experience alone. We should realize that in this debate that took place during a sacrifice conducted by Emperor *Janaka*, *Yajnavalkya* did not endeavour to establish any truth or topic by means of *Anumaana Pramaana* and fallacious *Shushka Tarka*. Stage by stage, the exposition of the subject-matter has been carried out in consonance with Intuitive experience alone till the Ultimate Reality of *Parabrahman* who is known by the epithet '*Akshara*' is completely signified.

In any case, those who use either *Pramaanas* or *Tarka* are people with *Paraagdrishti*, Vedantins, who help cognize or Intuit the Ultimate Reality of *Atman*, beyond the purview of any *Pramaanas* and hence '*Aprameya*', by means of logical devices (*Yukti*) in consonance with Intuitive experience, are people with *Pratyagdrishti*. It should be evident now that the others' viewpoint is '*Apooma*' (incomplete) since it deliberates by selecting only a 'part' of the ultimate entity or Reality; the Vedantins' viewpoint is '*Pooma*' (comprehensive and consummate) since it examines the entire gamut of the 'objective phenomena' of life in its entirety. In this *Vedantic* philosophy alone there is indeed complete agreement, nay coalescence, of the validity of scriptures as authoritative sources and dialectics.

VI. INTUITION OF BRAHMAATMAN OR ULTIMATE REALITY

From the viewpoint of *Vedanta* philosophy the scriptures (*Upanishads*) are the '*Antya Pramaana*' (the final valid means). It says that if observed from the Absolute Intuitive viewpoint the transaction of using *Pramaanas* is in itself not possible at all, for it teaches that — '*Yatra Hi Dvaitamiva Bhavati Taditara Itaram Pashyati, Taditara Itaram Jighrati.... Yatra Twasya Sarvamaatwaivaabhoot Tatkena Kam Pashyet Tatkena Kam Jighret....?*' — (*Brihadaraanyaka* 4-5-15) — meaning, "Where as a consequence of *Avidya* a second thing appears as if it is existing, there one sees another, there one smells another.... (therefore that is a sphere where the valid means of knowledge like *Pratyaksha* or perception, *Anumaana* or inference etc. can operate); but where everything has been merged in the Pure Consciousness of *Atman* — there by what and which object can be seen by whom?" Quite analogous to this, in *Vedanta* the language of logic also can be utilized, but in this regard the methodology of using it is not akin to that used by the logicians. It is, in fact, merely an exhibition of the logical devices which are projected in so far as they are in consonance with Intuitive experience so as to culminate in comprehensive, consummate Intuition of the Ultimate Reality of *Atman* or *Brahman*. Failing to discern this secret, even many Vedantins of today too have formulated or conceived of a technical terminology used by logicians — some of them have even formulated their own new or unique language of dialectics — and are quarrelling among themselves. In this system of spiritual science there does not exist anything whatsoever which has to be established by the method of logic; a scriptural text which helps us remind in any one particular manner the Reality of *Atman*, which is self-established (which means, desiderating no valid means whatsoever), in consonance with one's own Intuitive experience — that alone is sufficient here. For example, in answer to a question — "Do our body and senses belong to our essential

innate nature of Being or not?" — look at one particular statement that the scripture presents before us in order to indicate to us that these do not really belong to our innate nature of Being — "*Sa Samaanaha Sannubhou Loakaa-vanusancharati Dhyaayateeva Lelaayateeva Sa Hi Swapnoa Bhootwemam Loakamatikraamati Mrutyoaropaani*" — (*Brihadaaranyaka* 4-3-7) — meaning, "To *Atman* who being endowed with the adjunct (*Upaadhi*) of *Antahkarana* or the inner instrument of the mind is experiencing both the states of waking and dream, while He is seeing or enjoying the dream, neither the waking body nor the waking mind or senses exist; even so, He appears therein as if He is carrying on the transactions or functions of the *Jnaanendriyas* and the *Karmendriyas*. If at all the waking body as also the waking senses were His essential, innate nature of Being, they should have continued to exist even then while in the dream, is it not? The truth is not like that at all." — In this manner it is the methodology of the scriptures to signify the truth that the body and the senses that are seen to belong to us now in the waking do not really belong to our essential, innate nature of Being by projecting a logical device in consonance with our Intuitive experience.

Here in this context, there is a need of deliberating a little with regard to the question as to what is meant by '*Anubhava*' (Intuitive experience) which is in keeping with the *Vedantic* teachings. For, merely by exemplifying the scriptural statements and interpreting them according to one's own imagination or inferential logic it cannot be made acceptable to others; because the scriptures have necessarily to remind us of an entity which is already existing alone by the valid means of the scriptural statement itself, we should gain the Intuitive experience (*Anubhava*) here and now. If as a result of the dullness of our intellect the purport or meaning which the scriptures signified was not grasped or comprehended by us, then in order to indicate to us its real genuine meaning by stages the scriptures have themselves acknowledged the utility of logic also. If that logic were to be without any support whatsoever of '*Anubhava*', then it would not be universally acceptable at all. Therefore, logic too will have per force to traverse a course, so to speak, with the motive support of *Anubhava* or Intuitive experience, which is universally acceptable only. If such a logic propounds any particular philosophical teaching, then that also will have necessarily to be in keeping with our Intuitive experience. Thus the deliberation should start on the support of Intuitive experience, keep moving from one Intuitive experience to another subtler Intuitive experience, as it were, and finally it has to get fully established or stabilized in the Ultimate Intuition called '*Aatmajnaana Nishtha*'. This final, consummate *Anubhava* should not be inferential any more at all; should not be Intuition of others; but should necessarily be our own innermost, intrinsic *Anubhava* alone, self-effulgent and non-dual. In that event alone we can justifiably say that by means of the scriptural statement we attain *Aatmajnaana* or Self-Knowledge. Even the mitigation or removal of *Shoaka* or grief and *Moaha* or attachment by means of this *Aatmajnaana* has per force to be seen in our experience here

and now alone. Thus to look after the *Mumukshus* and guide them carefully and purposefully in their rigid and rigorous course so as not to allow them to deviate or digress away from Intuitive experience at any stage or level of their discrimination or deliberation the *Vedanta* philosophy provides a fool-proof and perfect methodology.

In order to indicate that *Vedanta* philosophy is experience-oriented there are several instances of some people exemplifying magical or mysterious powers which *Sadhus* or sages utilize or exhibit; they also keep on saying that people who perform such mysterious acts or miracles alone are experienced holymen or Realized souls. But this is not proper. In the methodology that is followed or adopted for establishing the non-dual Reality of *Atman* if the deliberation and the corollaries or the inferential deductions that evolve out of it all are outside the purview of universal Intuitive experience, then it cannot justifiably be said that those deliberative conclusions based on it are in consonance with Intuitive experience or that they culminate in everyone's Intuitive experience. It is not at all our opinion here in this context that by means of penance or practice of *Yoga* certain '*Siddhis*' or supernatural (mystic) powers are not attained; but it will have to be said as a forewarning, especially to genuine seekers, that there does not exist any relationship whatsoever between those supernatural powers (*Siddhis*) and the philosophical truth of non-dual *Atman*, which is determined on the strength of universal Intuitive experience.

It should be evident by now that for the non-dual Reality of *Atman* to be established beyond doubt and with utmost certainty, when the ultimate or consummate Intuitive experience is attained there cannot possibly be any cognition of a second entity whatsoever. Merely by the statement that duality comprises appearances or phenomena which are changing, it does not thereby become established that that duality is false at all. The state of Realization, in which duality of any kind cannot or does not ever exist in the least, should invariably become our genuine Intuitive experience. Does such a unique state exist? While indicating that *Atman* is ever of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness the scripture states in this regard: "*Yadvai Tanna Vijaanaati Vijaanan Vai Tanna Vijaanaati Na Hi Vijnaaturvijnaaterviparilopaavidyate(s)vinaashitwaanna Tu Tadviteeyamasti Tatoa(s)nyadvibhaktam Yad Vijaaneeya*" — (*Brihadaraanyaka* 4-3-30) — meaning, "*Atman*, of the very essence of Pure Consciousness, does not cognize anything whatsoever in deep sleep; even so, He exists therein too as of the very essence of Pure Consciousness alone. In that case, how is it that He does not cognize anything therein i.e. deep sleep? The answer is: Because a second thing separate or apart from Him does not exist therein. Because His Pure Consciousness is His own indestructible essential nature of Pure Being Itself, it is not possible to say that in deep sleep state He has become incapable of, or that He has lost the power of, cognition." This is a logical argument that is

forwarded on the strength of the Intuitive experience of deep sleep which is in the experience of everyone of us that in deep sleep there does not ever (any time in the past, or in the future) exist any possibility whatsoever of a second entity being there (and if it is perceived or felt like that, then no one calls it deep sleep but a dream, that is all); but the dualists do not accept this to be so; if they do, then they too become non-dualists only. For that reason alone, they are forwarding a contra-device or argument of the type — "If one person is sleeping, don't the others remain awake? For this reason, it amounts to saying that even when one is in deep sleep duality can exist, is it not?" To this objection we should endeavour to find a solution which is in consonance with all the three criteria, viz. scriptural statements (*Shruti Vaakya*), reasoning (*Yukti*) and Intuitive experience (*Anubhava*); then alone the Vedantic teaching that — "Non-dual Reality (*Advaita Tattwa*) is that which culminates, or becomes consummate (reaches its final fruition), in one's own Intuitive experience here and now" — is not a mere statement but an eternal truth of universal experience.

Here in this context some *Advaita* Vedantins have expressed the opinion that — "Duality remains in deep sleep in the seed form of *Avidya*. For that reason alone, there is scope for people who are asleep to wake up once again. But in the state of *Samaadhi*, *Avidya* vanishes completely; therefore, that *Samaadhi* state alone is the genuine Intuitive experience of non-dual Reality (*Advaitaanubhava*)." If those Vedantins are asked the question: "Even after waking from the *Samaadhi*, does not duality appear, or manifest itself, once again?" — they give a reply that — "Because that duality appears in that manner as a consequential concept of the subtle impression of *Avidya* (*Avidyaavaasana*) which is falsified, that is not harmful to the experience of *Advaita*; or, to the extent one experiences the fruits of his *Praarabdha Karma*, even among *Jeevanmuktas* a remainder of *Avidya* (*Avidyaalesha*) exists invariably; when the mortal coil falls off the *Jeevanmukta* gets rid of *Avidya* totally and finally, and then the main *Moaksha* called '*Videhamukti*' is attained." In this opinion there is no scope to assert that the experience or Knowledge of non-dual reality has accrued culminating in Intuitive experience here and now. For, to imagine or conceive a qualitative difference of the type — "The experience accruing from *Samaadhi* is non-dual Intuitive experience — not that which is gained from deep sleep" — especially when duality is appearing even after getting up from *Samaadhi* state just as when waking up from deep sleep, there does not exist any extra-ordinary or exclusive *Pramaana* to support or substantiate. If it is said that after death the non-dual Reality is attained, then it amounts to saying that just as from *Karma* so also from *Jnaana* imperceptible fruits alone accrue. If one were to admit in the manner — "Let it be like that" — then, this concept runs contrary to the universally acknowledged philosophical teaching of Shri Shankara that — "Because *Jnaana* or Intuitive Knowledge of *Atman* is *Vastu Tantra*, it signifies per force its object at that very instant, coeval with its very birth indeed; and

by means of *Jnaana* or Intuitive Knowledge *Ajnaana* is completely wiped out or destroyed." Not only that, but also the scriptural statements like — "*Tattwamasi*" — meaning, "That thou art", and "*Brahmaivedam Vishwam*" — meaning, "All this universe is *Brahman* alone" — purport to say that both the *Jeevas* and the *Jagat* are, in their essence, of the very innate nature of *Brahman* (Pure Being-Consciousness), and not that these two phenomena 'become' *Brahman* in *Samaadhi* state, nor that the *Jeevas* (transmigratory souls) become *Brahman* after 'death'. Therefore, if the new interpretation of some present-day Vedantins is acknowledged, then it amounts to saying that — "The *Shrutis* are not the valid means (*Pramaana*) for reminding us of that Reality which is established on the strength of Intuitive experience (*Anubhava*)."
This opinion also is contradictory to Shri Shankara's spiritual teaching. In the same way, even propounding that — "In the empirical state there exists *Dvaita* (duality), whereas in the Transcendental, Absolute state there exists *Advaita* (non-duality) — both these are real and correct" — will also be rendered to be a mere futile exercise in avoiding the issue and can never be stated, by any stretch of imagination, as Shri Shankara's genuine spiritual teaching if it is not put to a severe test of one's own Intuitive experience, which is truly the touchstone. For, if *Advaita* is '*Paramaarth*' (the Ultimate Reality beyond time-space-causation categories), then It should not be something which exists exclusively in one *Avastha* (state of being); on the other hand, It should be an eternal entity or Reality and such an immutable Reality alone should be signified by the *Shruti* sentence.

Shri Shankaraachaarya has clearly affirmed that — "*Anubhavaaroodham Tu Jnaana Phalam; Yat Saakshaadaparoakshaad Brahma Iti Shrutehe; Tattwamasi Iti Cha Siddhavadupadeshaat*" — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 3-3-33) — meaning, "Because it has been stated (in the scriptures) that *Brahman* is directly and immediately Intuited and because it has been taught — 'That thou art' — which denotes that 'one is here and now *Brahman*' — it becomes evident that the fruit *Jnaana* (Self-Knowledge) is to culminate in one's own Intuitive experience." Therefore, if anyone preaches that — "Only after death the genuine *Videhamukti* is attained" — it will not be in conformity with Shri Shankara's teaching at all. *Shaastra*, if it has to be called a *Pramaana*, should necessarily remind one of an entity (eternally) existing, is it not? By means of the instructions given by the scriptural statement — '*Eko Devaha Sarvabhooteshu Goodhaha*' — meaning, "One Supreme Self alone exists potentially (implicitly) in all creatures" — we have it as our own innate Intuitive experience that in us the *Saakshi Chaitanya* (Witnessing Consciousness) is capable of objectifying the *Pramaatru* ('I' notion or ego). We should not doubt in the manner — "Our *Atman* has feelings like *Sukha* and *Duhkha*! How can He be one who is '*Asamsaaree*' (devoid of transmigratory existence) and a *Paramaatman* who is '*Sarvasaakshee*' (the Witnessing Consciousness of everything)?" Shri Shankara's solution to this kind of a doubt is: "*Dehaadiva deva Chaitanyaat Bahirupalabhyamaanatwaadduhkhitwaadeenaam; Sushuptaadishu Chaananuvruttehe*" — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 4-1-3) — meaning, "Just

as we have the Intuitive experience of the body, the senses etc. being extraneous to Pure Consciousness, in a similar manner we have the Intuitive experience of *Duhkha*, *Sukha* etc. too being objectified; hence they are indeed extraneous to our Pure Consciousness. It is also in our Intuitive experience that in states like deep sleep (*Sushupti*), trance (*Samaadhi*) etc. those phenomena like *Sukha* and *Duhkha* etc. have completely disappeared." If it is asked — "What about *Atman*'s Pure Consciousness in those states?" — the answer is: "Even in deep sleep His Pure Consciousness exists all-pervasive alone". In fact, on the strength of that Pure Consciousness alone we do 'experience' deep sleep. "*Tasmaat Sarvaduḥkhavinirmukta Ekachaitanyaatmakoa(s)ham Ityesha Aatmaanubhavaḥ*" — (*Sootra Bhaashya* 4-1-2) — meaning, "Hence, the cognition that — 'Pure Consciousness which is rid of all kinds of miseries is Itself my *Atman*' — is alone '*Aatmaanubhava*', i.e. Intuition of the Self." Being devoid of any kinds of mutations like rebirth, death etc. as also devoid of all kinds of categories like substance, qualities etc. this '*Aatmaanubhava*' has been described by Shri Shankara in his *Sootra Bhaasya* (4-1-3) further as: "*Vyaavrutta Sarvasamsaaradharmakoa(s)nubhavaatmakoa Brahmasamjnakastatpadaarthaha*" — meaning, "The innate essential nature of Intuitive experience devoid of any characteristics of transmigratory life is Itself given the nomenclature of *Brahman*. That Reality of *Brahman* alone is the true meaning of the word, '*Tat*' in the *Upanishadic* sentence — '*Tattwamasi*' ('That thou art'). Thus it is taught by the scriptures. Therefore, it is possible for the discriminating and fully qualified seeker to cognize that It is his own Intuitive experience that — "*Brahman* which is the significant meaning of that word — '*Tat*' — is nothing but my own Self Itself."

Here in this context, there may arise a doubt of the type: "To our *Atman*, who is the *Saakshi* (Witnessing Consciousness), the objective phenomena or things are appearing. Now, if He perceives them, how can He be said to be the non-dual Reality, one without a second? If He does not perceive anything, then how can the logical device or argument which was forwarded to say that — 'Just as the body, the senses etc., feelings and emotions like *Duhkha* and *Sukha* etc. also are perceived as extraneous to the Witnessing Pure Consciousness' — be justifiable?" To this doubt the answer lies in: "There is no doubt in the mind of anybody with regard to the fact that just as the body, the senses etc., feelings like happiness and grief etc. too are seen to be objective experiences to our Pure Consciousness; for, it is in everyone's Intuitive experience indeed. By means of this Intuitive experience it is established that feelings like *Duhkha* and *Sukha* etc. do not belong to our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness. But first of all, is the scriptural statement that — "Our *Atman* is the Witnessing Consciousness of everything" — true at all? Is *Saakshitwa* (Witnesshood) ever tied up with *Atman*'s essential, innate nature of Pure Being-Consciousness? If the Intuitive experience that — "In states like deep sleep etc. although there is no perceptible object whatsoever the Pure Being-Consciousness of *Atman*

invariably and eternally exists" — is fully realized, then the truth that — "*Atman's Saakshitwa* has been hypothetically presumed in relation to the '*Saakshya*' (the witnessed object)" — will become very clear. When it is stated that — "The Sun always illumines everything" — if we interpret it to mean that the functional quality or capacity of the type of 'illumining an object' belongs to the Sun's essential nature of resplendence or brilliance, it will not be justifiable at all. Though in our empirical dealings because of the reason that we reckon the phenomena like 'day' and 'night' — when the Sun shines it is day and when the sun sets and disappears it is night — in the ultimate analysis are there any dealings of 'day' and 'night' in the Sun himself? Is he not of the absolute, innate nature of eternal brilliance or light? In the same manner, even this *Saakshitwa* which the scriptures deliberately conceive of by way of superimposition (hypothetically) in relation to the '*Saakshya*' (the witnessed states of consciousness like waking, dream and deep sleep, as also the whole gamut of phenomena within them) does not belong to *Atman's* intrinsic nature of Pure Being-Consciousness at all. Thus it should be evident that the scriptural teaching that — "*Atman* is of the very essence of Pure Consciousness" — is quite rational and justifiable.

Only to such genuine seekers of this Ultimate Reality of *Atman*, who have by virtue of spiritual practices like *Shaanti* (control over their mind), *Daanti* (control over their senses) etc. discriminated about their own essential nature as Pure Being-Consciousness adopting the '*Pratyagdrishti*', this Intuitive experience of their core of Being-Consciousness beyond their 'I' notion will accrue. In the minds of such true aspirants this profound spiritual teaching that — "*Atman* of everyone of us is one and the same; He alone is that *Paramaatman*, of the very essence of Intuitive experience (*Anubhavaatmaka*); although He is of the essential nature of non-duality, in Him alone everything is conceived and is being illumined by the light of His Pure Consciousness" — will flash in their minds as Intuition. Because of the reason that even by means of profound states like *Samaadhi* etc. this essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness becomes manifest, the fact that this alone is the proper, genuine Intuitive experience of the Self, the Ultimate Reality, gets fully rooted or ensconced in our minds.

VII. BENEFITS ACCRUING FROM VEDANTIC KNOWLEDGE

The stage that we have reached by following the methodology that has been elucidated so far is: As a result of the empirical sciences using the various practical methods of anticipation, examination and comparison with a view to analysing deeper and deeper the external phenomena utilizing the *Paraagdrishti* — although it is true that those sciences have rendered yeoman

service to humanity by providing many amenities and facilities in our daily life — they have not been able to fathom or divine the Ultimate Reality behind the objective phenomena. As and when those sciences made any progress, the objective phenomena have been assuming ever new forms and are, in fact, slipping away from their grip, so to speak. In the same manner, the Western thinkers and philosophers, who have been deliberating upon the spiritual truths adopting a predominantly *Paraagdrishti* alone, have as a consequence of their complete submission or surrender to logic and their failure to take within their purview the entire range of objective phenomena arrived at different philosophical or spiritual conclusions. Our Indian thinkers and philosophers too are no exception; because they too did not adopt a comprehensive plenary viewpoint, they formulated each his own set of tenets according to his own individual viewpoint. Especially in the case of those who had taken their own respective religious texts as the valid means or authoritative sources their mutually contradictory opinions or doctrines have become conspicuous. In fact, the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* has not been cognized by any one at all.

The *Pratyagdrishti* that *Vedanta* has adopted in all its deliberations is exclusive in itself. Although *Vedanta*, like the rest of the theistic philosophies and other religious schools, has also assumed the authoritative validity of *Vedic* texts, because of the reason that it has at the same time acknowledged the rule that — “The *Upanishadic* statements are merely a reminding media to signify an entity as it is or exists and not a valid means capable of producing afresh an entity which did not exist” — in *Vedanta* there is no cause or scope for different opinions to arise as regards the purport or interpretation of the scriptural statements. Although *Vedanta* too has adopted logical devices just like the empirical scientists and religious thinkers, since it has at the same time followed the rule that — “*Tarka* or logic should always be in consonance with universal experience and the pursuit of the Knowledge of the Reality of Self should culminate in Intuitive experience alone” — in *Vedanta* all its philosophical deliberations — whatever logical arguments that have been mentioned in the scriptures or any other types of logical or dialectical disputations in keeping with them — cannot possibly give rise to any differences of opinion. Because the word ‘*Anubhava*’, meaning ‘Intuitive experience’ has always been used in the sense of ‘universally acceptable Intuitive experience’ alone, no one can ever introduce his individualistic experience in the manner — “My experience is like this” — and create any hindrance or harm to genuine *Vedantic* deliberations. All this is pertaining to the deliberation of the fundamental rules of the methodology that is adopted by *Vedantic* philosophy.

Now a few words have to be mentioned pertaining to the methodology itself. Both in the *Poorva Meemaamsaa* school of philosophy and *Tarka Shaastras* *Atman* who is the object of the ‘I’ notion (*Ahampratyayagamyā*) has been acknowledged; it has also been acknowledged that one such self belongs to

each one of us separately. Even so, the phenomena that such selves are many is not any one's experience at all. First of all, the word 'I' cannot possibly have a plural number at all; to wit, just as it is said one tree plus one tree plus one tree equals three trees, 'I' + 'I' + 'I' = three 'I's is not true. It is not possible at all for us even to conceive of objects belonging to the same species as 'I's. Everyone is calling himself as 'I' and others as 'you', 'he' or 'she' etc. Even so, the belief that — "*Atmans* or selves which are the objects of 'I' notions are many" — is deep-seated in everyone of us. The question as to why it is so has not been examined by any proponents of the various schools of philosophy. In *Vedanta*, however, it has been propounded that apart from this *Atman* or self who is the object of 'I' notion, as also quite contrary to his nature, there exists another *Atman* called '*Saakshi*' (the Witnessing Consciousness) and that this *Saakshi* alone is the 'real *Atman* or Self' of everyone of us. The method of cognizing this truth so as to culminate in our Intuitive experience has been explained to some extent in this series of topical discussions. Because of the reason that this *Atman* or 'I' notion who is '*Ahampratyayagamyā*' is extremely near to this 'real *Atman*, the Self' or *Saakshi* and because this 'I' is more internal when compared to all other misconceived *Atmans* as also subtler than all others, people have quite naturally gained an innate identification with this 'I' notion and entertain a staunch belief that he is the real *Atman*. With a view to signifying pointedly that real *Atman* or *Saakshi*, who is of the very essence of Pure Being-Consciousness, is Himself appearing in the empirical day-to-day life of everyone as the '*Asmatpratyaya Goacharaha*' (one who is appearing as the 'I' notion), Shri Shankara, in his introduction to the *Sootra Bhaashya*, has used the qualifying adjectives in the manner — "*Asmatpratyaya Goachare, Vishayini, Chidaatmake*".

Although the *Shaastras* are not the valid means (*Pramaana*) in the same manner or sense as the common empirical *Praamaanas* which have been indicated by the other schools of philosophy, we should keep in mind the important fact that — "Because by means of the *Shaastras* alone — by virtue of their removing or sublating all those characteristics or qualities which, in the ultimate analysis, do not belong to *Atman* — the essential nature of *Atman*, the Ultimate Reality, becomes known," — they have been called '*Pramaana*' only for name's sake indeed. In the same way, we are reminded by the deliberations made so far that — "Although the logic that it is a device (*Yukti*) helpful for the seekers, firstly, to compare topics or phenomena which are in their Intuitive experience in accordance with the valid means of the *Shaastras*, and secondly, to cognize or Intuit the Ultimate Reality of *Atman* — that logic utilized by the *Shaastras* (*Upanishads*) is called 'logic' or '*Tarka*' merely for name's sake." Further, the seekers should remember the fact that — "Although in *Vedanta* the Reality of *Atman* has not been delineated as a percept to be objectified — just as the *Pratyayaanubhava* (perceptual knowledge) gained through the senses and the mind — as described or exemplified in other religious texts, because of the reason that at the end of

the so-called (Intuitive) logical disputation or deliberation made exclusively on the strength of direct Intuition this Reality of Pure Consciousness of *Atman* flashes or becomes self-effulgent in our mind, as it were, and because of the reason that It finally culminates or manifests in the form of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of *Atman* alone, of the very essence of Intuitive experience, *Aatmajnaana* or Self-Knowledge has been termed '*Anubhava*' or 'Intuitive experience' merely for name's sake." Here in this context it should be clearly discerned that we do not Intuit *Atman* by any other *Anubhava*; in the absolute sense, *Atman*, being self-effulgent and the very fountainhead of all Knowledge or Experience, Intuits Himself by Himself, in a manner of speaking, Being 'illuminated' or 'lighted up' by this *Atman* Consciousness, of the very essence of Intuitive experience (*Anubhava Swaroopa*) alone, all the other empirical experiences of our day-to-day life get manifested.

Now, we will have to find out proper answers to certain knotty, time-honoured questions like: "Thus, because in *Vedanta* words like *Pramaana*, *Tarka*, *Anubhava* are used in special esoteric senses (*Aloukikaartha*), it becomes evident that the non-dual Reality that is established by means of such words too is *Aloukika* (metaphysical or supernatural) indeed. If it is stated that apart from the six essences mentioned in culinary science texts there exists yet another essence and this is the food prepared from such an essence — does it not amount to saying that that food is essenceless alone? In a similar manner, if it is stated that *Atman* is '*Nirguna*' (quality-less), '*Nirvishesha*' (devoid of all distinctive characteristics) — that is, one who does not possess any special features at all; one who does not have any characteristics like *Naama* (name), *Jaati* (genus), *Guna* (quality), *Kriya* (action) etc. — how at all can the knowledge of such an *Atman* be gained by the ordinary run of people like us? Or, even if in some manner or other such a Self-Knowledge accrues, what is the benefit that we gain from such supernatural knowledge?"

Here we should keep in mind the important teaching of *Vedanta* that this Reality of *Atman* is really, in the ultimate analysis, *Nirguna* (devoid of qualities) only; the essential nature of Being, the present existing stage or form and the functions of all objects of this world with qualities are, in truth, belonging to that Reality of *Atman* alone. Because this Reality of *Atman* alone, though devoid of qualities of any kind, is the substrate for all qualities — just like the stationary air itself manifests as a storm — this *Aatmajnaana* or Self-Knowledge provides strength or vigour to the entire range of empirical transactions. As the statement goes — "*Beejasyaantarivaan-kuraha*" — this whole universe, having been '*Avyakta*' (unmanifest) in this *Atman* alone, gets manifest in this present distinctive form. Therefore, it amounts to saying that in this universe wherever we see superlative qualities and actions, in all such instances we should reckon that all those extra-ordinary qualities and superhuman actions have emerged from *Atman*

alone. For that reason alone, it amounts to saying that for any one to thrive as an exemplary, illustrious personality the practice and pursuit of Intuiting this all-pervading Reality of *Atman* is necessary. When observed from this viewpoint, it also amounts to saying that because of the fact that all the prophets and proponents of various religious sects are teaching the public their respective tenets keeping as their goal only one aspect or facet of the Ultimate Reality, the religious tolerance that enables one to appreciate the good aspects that are to be found in all religious faiths accrues from this Self-Knowledge (*Aatmajnaana*).

When viewed on the strength of this Ultimate Reality of *Atman* of *Vedanta*, there are justifiable or rational arguments available for all the teachings or tenets of religious prophets. In many religions it has been merely propounded that *Ishwara* or the Lord exists; that *Atman* exists; but, for those teachings the justifiable arguments are to be found only here in *Vedanta*. The scriptures state: "Our *Atman* alone is *Ishwara*; one who tries to expound that — *Ishwara* does not exist' — himself becomes non-existent." Although all of a sudden, on the face of it, the statement that — "I alone am the *Paramaatman* (the Supreme Self or Lord)" — seems to be contrary to our present experience, by means of the *Shruti* teaching that — "Transcending time and space all the *Jeevas* or transmigratory souls become one with *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality, in deep sleep" — which is in consonance with universal Intuitive experience, it becomes established that this statement is correct. Although even now (while in this waking embodied state) we are invariably of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness of *Atman*, the *Shruti* is elucidating to us, on the strength of the examination of the three states of consciousness, the truth that — "Because we, the transmigratory souls, do not have the Intuitive Knowledge that we have emerged from the Supreme Self (*Paramaatman*) we are appearing here in the waking state as different souls." In the other schools of philosophy or religious sects, because *Ishwara*, the Lord Creator, whom they propound, does not transcend time and space categories, it amounts to saying that He is merely a big *Jeeva* indeed; not only that, but also the defects of '*Samsaaritwa*' (transmigratoriness), *Anityatwa* (non-eternality) etc. get attached or tagged on to *Ishwara*. But if the support of *Vedandata* is sought, the Reality of the Almighty Lord, which the other schools of philosophy or religions propound, is reckoned to be not without plausible, logical justification. In this manner, the fact that — "Any philosophical treatise which propounds both the Reality of *Ishwara*, the Lord Creator, as also the Innate, subtle relationship that exists between *Ishwara* and the *Jeeva*, the transmigratory soul, in accordance with one's Intuitive experience is truly the valid means or an authoritative source (*Pramaana*)" — becomes logically justifiable. Further, in whichever religious text there are statements which praise the wonderful and blissful qualities of the Supreme Lord as well as His qualities of omnipotence, valour or brilliance etc. — all such qualities spoken of Him can be substantiated by

Vedanta philosophy alone. Although non-duality of Atman alone is the Absolute Truth, because in Vedanta philosophy it has been acknowledged that Dvaita (duality of the Jeevas and the Jagat) is superimposed or misconceived by virtue of Avidya, it amounts to having established, on the basis or strength of logical devices or arguments, that the philosophical teachings pertaining to the fruits in other births and other worlds stipulated or signified in the religious texts or portions of the scriptures dealing with religious rituals in the manner — “Although as long as the seeker does not Intuit or cognize the Ultimate Reality of Atman both the Jeeva and the Parameshwara appear to be different, in order to enjoy the fruits of scriptural rites or rituals which the Jeeva performs with innate identification with his present body, senses etc. he has invariably to acquire over and over again new bodies *ad infinitum*; in order that he enjoys Sukha and Duhkha there has to exist per force Heaven and Hell etc. Although the Supreme Lord Ishwara is eternally compassionate alone, because it is quite logically justifiable that for those who — without cognizing the Reality of the Supreme Lord Ishwara and having receded, as it were, from one’s own essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness and further having been prompted by worldly desires — behave as they like or according to their own whims and fancies — in the case of all such people they will reap, according to their respective deeds or actions, proper and relevant bad fruits or consequences alone, neither the defect of incongruity nor disparity on the part of Ishwara to the effect that He created different types of Jeevas nor the defect of His being pitiless or cruel in granting different kinds of grief-oriented fruits having different proportions of knowledge and power will ever taint Him. The teaching that, irrespective of the fact that some people worship a stone or a tree or a cow or idols or pictures etc. as God or in whichever manner they worship them as God, by idol worship (*Vigraha Aaraadhana*) and such other methods of worship the compassionate Lord who is all-pervasive and eternally contented becomes happy — is also in consonance with this above-mentioned philosophical teaching alone.”

A secondary philosophical tenet becomes evident on the strength of the Vedantic knowledge that for the empirical sciences and fine arts like music, dance etc. Ishwara alone is the goal; Ishwara alone is the support. It also becomes established that one should make proper and good use of those sciences and fine arts and should dedicate them as spiritual practices or disciplines for attaining the grace of the Lord; and that those who misuse them get far away from the Supreme Lord and become victims to grief and misery. By this scriptural statement — “*Eeshaanaha Sarvavidyaanaameeshwaraha Sarvabhootaanaam*” — meaning, “The Lord is the presiding deity of all knowledges as well as all creatures” — becomes valid and meaningful.

People who have realized emotionally with a sense of religious devotion and fervour the Vedantic teaching that — “The entire universe as well as the whole range of sentient and insentient beings and objects in it are

the '*Vibhooti*' (great, glorious manifestations) of the Lord Creator alone (to wit, the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* Himself is appearing in these various forms)" — develop an outlook of respectful admiration towards all things in the world as also an attitude of wishing the well-being of all fellow-men and creatures. The *Smriti* statement that — "*Santoasham Janayet Prajnastadeveshwara Poojanam*" — meaning, "That which produces happiness to everyone is itself the worship of *Ishwara*, the Lord Creator" — becomes valid. The *Geeta* statement that — "*Samam Pashyan Hi Sarvatra Samavasthitameeshwaram; Na Hinastyaatmanaatmaanam Tatoa Yaati Paraam Gatim*" — meaning, "Because one who realizes or cognizes the Reality of *Ishwara* who exists everywhere in one and the same form cannot injure or harm himself; he attains the transcendental state of Reality" — has become an authoritative dictum for moral science. Further, according to the *Geeta* statement that — "*Eeshwaraha Sarvabhootaanaam Hriddeshe(s)rjuna Tishthati; Bhraamayan Sarvabhootaani Yantraaroodhaani Maayayaa; Tameva Sharanam Gatchha Sarvabhaavena Bhaarat; Tatprasaadaatparaam Shaantim Sthaanam Praapsyasi Shaashwatam*" — meaning, "*Ishwara*, the Lord, exists in the heart of every creature; because these creatures have not cognized Him alone they are deluded by *Maayaa* (illusion) and are immersed in *Samsaara*. You surrender unto that Lord with all devotion; by His grace you will attain the supreme blissful peace; you will attain the eternal state of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss" — it is quite proper to say that by Intuitive Knowledge of the Self (Self-Knowledge) both *Vaiyyaktika Shaanti* (individually each person gains eternal peace) and *Vishwa Shaanti* (universal peace) will be gained and everyone can attain the *Parama Purushaartha* (the paramount goal of all human existence — in other words, Self-Knowledge).

Thus on the basis of many such reasons, the manner in which *Brahma Vidya* (Self-Knowledge) is praised, for instance: "*Brahmavidyaam Sarva-vidyaapratishthaam*" — meaning, "For all kinds of sciences and fine arts (*Vidyaas*) this *Brahma Vidya* alone is the substrate" — is to be acknowledged as proper and justifiable. The reason for all the special features that are to be found in other religious sects being included in '*Sanaatana Dharma*' (eternal religion) is that it has relied upon the strength and support of the *Vedantic* philosophy, which is truly a spiritual science *par excellence* and the fountainhead for all sciences and arts that have been created or formulated by Man. For the wisdom behind, or rationale in, adopting the '*Varna Bheda*' (system of different castes) like *Brahmins* (who dedicate their entire life span for knowing or cognizing the Ultimate Reality of Supreme Self exclusively), *Kshatriyas* (who utilize all their strength and valour in protecting those people who are engaged in religious or spiritual paths of *Pravrutti* and *Nivrutti*), *Vaishyas* (those who amass or produce the necessities of life and other requirements of the common run of people and distribute those commodities through healthy commerce) and *Shoodras* (those who desire to satisfy

everyone by his dedicated service and thereby attain happiness both here in this life and hereafter); and 'Ashramas' (the well-planned four stages of spiritual growth and progress in an individual's life span) akin to a graded path (staircase) to *Jnaana* (Self-Knowledge), viz. *Brahmacharya* (a celibate's studentship), *Gaarthastya* (householdership), *Vaanaprasthya* (the life of an anchorite with secluded habits) and *Sannyaasa* (the last stage of asceticism) — exclusively in this 'Sanaatana Dharma' of Vedic culture, this Vedantic Self-Knowledge (*Brahma Vidya*) alone is the stimulating force indeed.

Let us all pray to that great sage and savant of all times, Shri Shankaraacharya, who alone is highly qualified to be eulogised as a 'world teacher', to shed His benign grace on each one of us so as to enable us to attain this Vedantic Self-Knowledge (*Aatma Jnaana*), which is, in the ultimate analysis, the root cause for not only all mundane happiness in this world and other worlds too, but also 'Parama Purusha' (the ultimate goal of all human existence), according to our individual capacities and qualifications!

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Vedanta means the spiritual science that is hidden or implicit in the *Upanishads*. Many people prior to Shri Shankara had explained and had written their own commentaries and compilations with regard to the purport of Vedantic texts. All of them had predominantly followed the non-dual teaching in them. Even so, there is one special and unique feature in the traditional methodology that Shri Shankara has adopted and bequeathed to the spiritual world. Projecting before the true seekers these three special features, viz. (i) a highly deliberative method which does not advocate the validity and authority of the scriptural texts and statements merely on the basis of blind belief or faith but on their being fully in consonance with universal Intuitive experience; (ii) a unique method of teaching based on the scriptural logic (*Yukti*) and dialectical devices which again are not at all opposed to, but, on the other hand, are totally in consonance with universal Intuitive experience; (iii) a highly esoteric method of deciding the Vedantic (spiritual) truths only on the strength of this universal Intuitive experience (*Saarvatrika Saakshi Anubhava*) of the innate Witnessing Consciousness, which can never be restricted or controlled by any time, space, causation categories whatsoever — Shri Shankara has handed down to us this time-honoured and time-tested traditional methodology to be able to Intuit this non-dual Reality of *Atman* here and now while in this body.

Serving verily this ambrosia to genuine seekers who are hankering after and hungry for this Self-Knowledge, Shri Shankara has provided us all with a superlative but unique Vedantic methodology. Those who show an apathy

or indifference to this life-saving panacea are indeed like the fools who throw away valuable gems without knowing their real worth and value. The scriptures themselves proclaim in the manner — “When the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of *Atman* can be Intuitively experienced (here and now) can anyone afford to discard It and get immersed in *Ajnaana* which is the root cause for all ills and miseries of life? People who get attracted and fascinated by this *Avidya* fall into the abyss of darkness and destruction indeed.” True, *Vedanta* philosophy as a spiritual science is meant for qualified human beings; but this *Paramaatman* is truly the *Atman* of each and everyone of us. Man is endowed with better and higher discriminative power than animals and all other fellow-creatures; there is every scope for him to develop introvertedness. Therefore, in order that the golden opportunity of utilizing this God-given discriminative power to serve the supreme and prime purpose of this life, it becomes the duty of every human being to discern the *Vedantic* teachings comprehensively so as to culminate in his innate Intuitive experience, which is nothing but divine Bliss. The senses, at best, can look outside externally and perceive only the limited objects and phenomena. One among millions who is holy and full of spiritual merits alone becomes introverted in his outlook, and he attains immortality on the strength of his having cognized or Intuited this essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of our innermost *Atman*.

Man has a capacity for enjoyment (*Bhoaga*) as well as renunciation (*Tyaaga*). As long as he is a victim of *Kaama* (desires or attachment) for the external things and *Kroadha* (hatred or dislike) for things which he does not like, he keeps on hankering after things or shunning certain other things. This, in short, is his *Samsaaritwa* with its concomitant ups and downs of pleasures and miseries untold; but he is under a total delusion which does not allow him enough scope for knowing the root cause for it. However, when he discerns that all those apparent pleasures and miseries ultimately culminate in mental perturbations leading to miseries alone, then he begins to recede from this very region or realm of misery with the vigour of detachment and a high sense of disillusionment (*Vairaagya*) and slowly becomes introverted in his outlook. From thereon he attempts to discriminate and cognize subtler and subtler truths of life and finally to Intuit the Reality of *Atman* Himself. The spiritual teaching of this kind to recede unto oneself through introspection or ratiocination is practised by highly qualified persons endowed with Intuitive discrimination and this fact is propounded by way of a forewarning by the scriptural statement: “*Na Karmanaa Na Prajayaa Dhanena Tyaagenaike Amrutatwamaanushuhu*” — meaning, “The wise learned people have attained immortality by means of *Tyaaga* (renunciation) alone, but not by means of *Karma* (religious rites or rituals), *Prajayaa* (getting progeny) or *Dhanena* (by wealth).” Those who attain, rather earn, this Self-Knowledge in this very life are called ‘*Jeevanmuktas*’; because, whatever *Karma* they are performing are for ‘*Loakasangraha*’ (the well-being of the world or the entire

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humanity in general) indeed, and for that reason alone, there does not exist any bondage from any *Karma* for them. From the absolute or transcendental viewpoint of *Saakshi Chaitanya* (Witnessing Pure Consciousness) they are not, in truth, performing any action at all, since their very '*Kartrutwa*' (doership — 'I' notion or ego) is burnt out like a seed and cannot sprout out into its fruits. Nor do these *Jeevanmuktas* induce others to do any avaricious action, since other than his own 'I' notion which is the very substrate for all empirical dealings or desires there are no other '*Kartrus*' or for that matter any duality (in the ultimate analysis).

The delineation of the Ultimate Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman* in consonance with not only the scriptural (*Upanishadic*) statements and subtle logical devices but also universal Intuitive experience (*Saarvatrika Poorna Anubhava*) so as to directly flash to our concentrated one-pointed mind or pure heart, and, at the same time, in a lucid, pleasing language and style is to be found uniformly and incontrovertibly in all the *Bhaashyas* of Shri Shankara. In order to attain this invaluable *Brahma Vidya* or *Aatmajnaana*, which is the *summum bonum* of all human existence, a sincere seeker should, if possible, learn Sanskrit, the mother of all Indian languages as also the language of 'celestial beings', in a manner of speaking, listen to these *Shankara Bhaashyas* in their original recensions being elucidated by holy, spiritually-qualified preceptors so as to reach this prime goal or *Purushaartha*.

In these present times of ever increasing mental tension and turmoil due to man's total indifference towards human values and virtues born out of his over-indulgence in *Adharmic* pursuits and vocations, this spiritual science of *Vedanta* is like a beacon light for a ship which has lost its course in a stormy ocean. Let us seek guidance and succour of this complete and consummate philosophy.

OM TAT SAT

